Vol IV D-DAY PRE-LAUNCH June 1 to 5 lmn *6-44 Jun 1-5 ETO Final*

(Comment: This section on "Final D-Day Plans" details both the combat and the logistic histories to the night of June 5, 1944 – before D-Day. The next section provides the battle histories that predominate the rest of this ETO history.)

Period 1: D+ Days/Dates											
D	Day	Date	D	Day	Date	D+	Day	Date	D+	Day	Date
-5	Thr	1-Jun-1944	-1	Mon	5-Jun-1944	3	Fri	9-Jun-1944	7	Tue	13-Jun-1944
-4	Fri	2-Jun-1944	0	Tue	6-Jun-1944	4	Sat	10-Jun-1944	8	Wed	14-Jun-1944
-3	Sat	3-Jun-1944	1	Wed	7-Jun-1944	5	Sun	11-Jun-1944	9	Thr	15-Jun-1944
-2	Sun	4-Jun-1944	2	Thr	8-Jun-1944	6	Mon	12-Jun-1944			

A. Chapter 9 *D-Day Final Preparations; The Supreme Command,* Pogue xyza

The last weeks Eisenhower visited units and maneuvers. He, Montgomery. and Bradley, believed commanders should be seen. From 1 February to 1 June "Ike" visited 26 divisions, 24 airfields, 5 ships and depots, shops and hospitals. He wanted to see the men, speak of the value of their tasks, and their larger mission and insure that British and U.S. troops were brothers-in-arms.

M-26 Pershing Tank – 46 Tons Too Late

1. Intensified Air Efforts Against the Enemy. Air reconnaissance located defenses, bridges, airfields, airborne drop zones, flooded areas, enemy dumps and depots. From 1 April **158** AEAF flew over 5,500 photographic, surveillance sorties. In March air forces bombed rails. May they expanded to strike locomotives and bridges. Mid-April 1944 were defenses, radar, radio, ammunition and fuel dumps, military camps and headquarters, and airfields were added. V-weapon attacks increased. Leigh-Mallory thought the Germans flew just 125 reconnaissance sorties near Great Britain. **159- 160**

2. Propaganda Efforts Against the Enemy. Propaganda campaigns saw BBC radio target German morale; encourage resistance. Office of War Information used short-wave radios and leaflets - 2.75 billion! From 25 April 1944 on a million N*achrichten fuer die Truppe* flyers of German defeats were dropped; 20 May 1944, the BBC and ABC began "Voice of SHAEF" broadcasts seeking intelligence. **161**.

3. Security for the Operations. Surprise was impossible. Secrecy plans were coded "BIGOT"; being "BIGOTED" was a status symbol! The process of "locking down" forces began mid-March. Civilian travel to English coasts halted, leaves cancelled, and troops confined to camps. Gen Morgan claimed Germans needed but 48-hours-notice to defeat an invasion. Severe punishments, 162 forbidding BIGOTS from first assaults followed. Civilians were banned rom "coastal regions." Diplomatic communication and couriers stopped.

A poorly package with OVERLORD information fell open at Chicago post office meant "curtains" for a sergeant who mistakenly addressed it to his sister! An air force general dining out revealed D-Day was before 15 June. He was hastened back to the U.S. at reduced rank. **163.** Post-war revealed the Germans knew of a 1944 OVERLORD from the British Embassy, Turkey. An 8 February 1944 German Western Intelligence memo stated: "The invasion is: … planned *outside the Mediterranean* … under … OVERLORD … to produce the final military decision … *On 18 Jan 44 … Anglo-Saxon command was*

committed to a large-scale operation which would seek a final decision, Germans later learned Italy was not the big campaign." It was not helpful information. Mr. Pogue wrote by "the end of May everything which appeared in the January and February estimates, except the … OVERLORD (name), could have been easily surmised from the accounts in the Allied press."

4. The Patton Episode. Eisenhower just ended the career of one general when Patton flubbed. **164.** He lost his Mediterranean command to Bradley when he slapped patient. Then he spoke in England late April to a civic group to predict the U.S. and U.K. would run the world after WWII --- a claim widely reported to the howls of Congress; dismay of a very angry Marshal. Eisenhower agreed to "cashier" Patton but cautioned of "Patton's proved ability" to conduct "a ruthless drive." He face a need for Patton to "be rushed into the breach." Ike really chose Patton with flaws over Gen Hodges. He and Marshall agreed Patton would get **165 "**the utmost out of soldiers in offensive operations" These were the "tenterhooks" upon which Patton's fate hung.

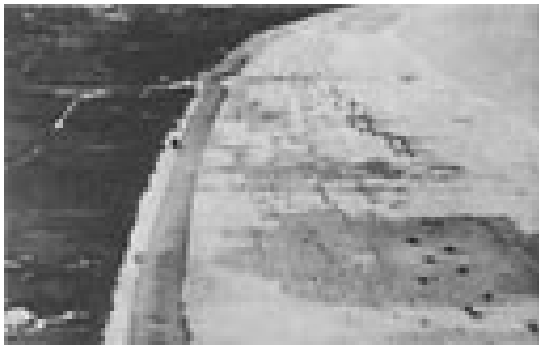
5. Exercises and Maneuvers. Final April and early May rehearsals occurred for D-Day troops who sailed to assault Slapton Sands for practice. A last event was a top-secret briefing May 15 at the St. Paul's School auditorium with the King, Churchill, British Chiefs, War Cabinet, and Allied commanders in "one of the great military gatherings of the war." Eisenhower, Montgomery, Adm Ramsay, Leigh-Mallory and Bradley revealed OVERLORD in speeches. Per Eisenhower it "…. seemed to impart additional confidence as … (the audience) learned in detail the extent of assistance he would receive for his own particular part of the vast undertaking." Thus, section planning with "compartmentalization" left many war leaders seeing "the big picture" for the first time.

Eisenhower faced the important question of OVERLORD's date. **166** June 5 began the process of moving

> … unending convoys to the south. As warehouses overflowed, the matériel was placed in carefully camouflaged positions along the roadways … Thousands of men next moved into tented areas in the fields of Cornwall, Devon, Sussex, and the other … counties … taken to landing craft waiting in near-by coves and inlets and then transported to the great concentrations of ships at Portland, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, and the Isle of Wight.

Ike urged commanders to explain the need to defeat Germans. Army publications stressed ruthlessness and combat fear candidly laying out a soldiers' survival prospects (in an optimistic vein). Psychological preparations had unit briefings in small units **167** showing how his friends relied upon him. Important to peace of mind was the claim naval and air support would "**neutralize enemy opposition**." Then came waterproofing vehicles, checking weapons and gear, inspections, invasion money, family allotments, proper behavior in liberated countries, anti-gas procedures, seasick pills. vomit bags, lifebelts, French phrase books, cigarettes, toothbrushes, extra socks, K and D rations, and rounds of ammunition, crew cut, a letter home, and more inspections.

Beach Defenses



The meteorological issues and the "decisions to go" **168** come later. Then came a final early morning meeting 5 June at 0330 hours in rain as Eisenhower decided and notified Combined Chiefs: "Halcyon plus 5 finally and definitely confirmed." **169-170**

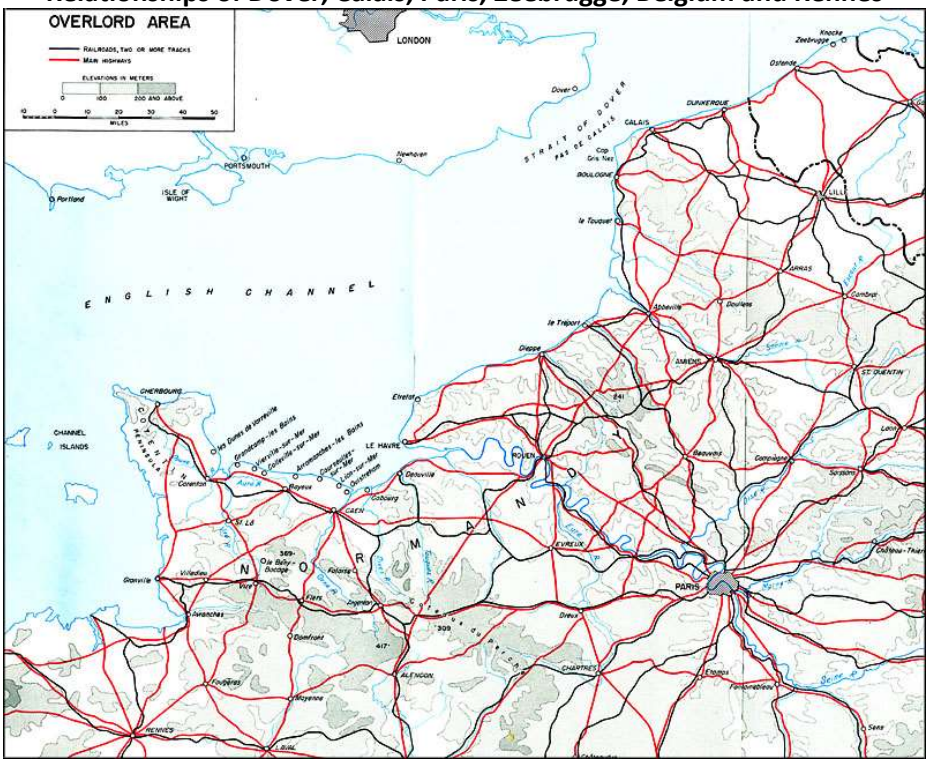
B. Chapter 2: The Assault; Report Supreme Commander in Europe, xyza

June 1944 saw the highest winds and roughest seas in 20 years for a 5 June D-day. Weather 3 June had a one day delay as craft already at sea returned or sail "in circles" for 24 hours in rough water. Next day was more bad weather, but 6 June showed hope, then then weather was likely to be poor for an unknown time after. It had to launch by 7 June or wait weeks for favorable tides.

"I was, therefore, faced with the … taking the risks involved in an assault during … a partial … break in the bad weather, or of putting off … for several weeks … (which) would have been most harmful to the morale of our troops, apart from the likelihood of our losing the benefits of tactical surprise. At 0400 hours of 5 June, I took the final and irrevocable decision: the invasion of France would take place on the following day."

"On D-day the wind moderated, clouds were broken above 4,000 feet for airborne and bombing. The sea was still rough, large numbers were sick and waves caused some craft to lag. Yet, the decision to 'Go'" caught the enemy by surprise due to the terrible weather. They guessed a full moon and high tide. Bombers preceded when 1,136 aircraft of RAF Bomber Command dropped 5,853 tons of bombs and U.S. Eight Air Force with 1,083 aircraft dropped 1,763 tons on the shore defenses one-half hour before touchdown. Medium, light, and fighter-bombers attacked individual targets and artillery positions farther inland with **19** an Inspiring moral effect of this spectacle of Allied air might as troops approached the beaches. Heavy bombers hit centers to block reinforcements. Fighter-bombers roamed the entire battle area … Strategic Air Forces flew 5,309 sorties with 10,395 tons of bombs as tactical flew 5,276 sorties.[1]

Map II OVERLORD Area (Cross-Channel Attack)
Relationships of Dover, Calais, Paris, Zeebrugge, Belgium and Rennes



Light losses are eloquent of the feeble enemy air reactions … **Our heavy bombers struck without fighter interference** … (*but missed targets!)*. The Allied Sea armada … (had) a crossing that had "an air of unreality … so completely absent was any sign that the enemy … **20** Not until the bombardment began was there any enemy activity … (a) tactical surprise "for which we had hardly dared to hope." Naval

[1] Gen Eisenhower was using "poppycock" the balance between truth and motivation.

operations were "according to plan." The enemy was uncertain if this was the invasion or a raid. The Germans intended to destroy the Allies on the beaches but lacked the defenses to do so.

The enemy knew we needed ports, so he added heavy guns and concrete …flack, mined, flooded, with encased guns … But there were no secondary defenses nor … **the main factor behind our successes**. Obstacles "were not finished and though presenting considerable difficulties, nevertheless fell short of current German theory … (and were) less troublesome … than we had feared …"

But coastal defenses were not destroyed. Naval gunfire did not put heavier batteries …out of action and **there was … (no evidence) "of damage done by bombs** … (Guns) were silenced by shellfire through the ports." Beach defenses were **21** not destroyed. Beach-drenching air attacks had most success on UTAH. "**But elsewhere … aircraft … bombs sometimes fell too far inland, especially at OMAHA beach."**

(Comment: This is tame criticism for Eighth Air Force bomber failures.) "Nevertheless, the air and naval bombardments combined did afford invaluable assistance in assuring the success of our landings …"

Field works behind beaches were "largely destroyed", "wire entanglements were broken down, and some …mine fields … set off." Enemy radar was confused. Gun crews faced a "sight … calculated to cause panic. The … heavy naval guns … and … a night of hell from the air was perhaps of greater value than its material results." *(Comment: This verges on being propaganda, which commanders often utilized.)* German batteries shot at ships, not assault forces. Close-support destroyer fire was effective. Beach defenders were Russians, non-Germans, or under 20 or over 45 years old.

Conversely, rough seas … (saw) craft were hurled on to the beaches … many swamped or holed … Many were swept off wading … Those who made land were exhausted. DD tanks could not "swim" to every beach … all but three foundered … (Yet) the landings proceeded with all but one sector … per plans.

… at 0630 hours, air transports dropped airborne assault forces … the largest ever drop … British Pathfinders put 6th Airborne Division … east of the Orne River … as bridges **22 …** were captured. Tactical surprise, accurate drops and dummy parachutist all played a part ….

The west flank on the Cotentin was for the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne who had difficulties … (with) a wide dispersal of troops and supplies as 6,600 101st AID men scattered over a 25 by 15-mile area with 60% equipment lost. Yet, it "represented an improvement upon … Sicily"! Great gallantry saw them to succeed. Gliders suffered … While the 101st AID held UTAH beach exits … the 82nd AID was in Ste-Mère-Eglise and with UTAH beach troops. Surprise was effective.

> British-Canadian assaults were per plans … The left flank had British 3rd Division assaulting SWORD … against moderate opposition. The DD tanks swam ashore … with a large penetration by night West, the Canadian 3rd Division hit JUNO … cleared beaches by 1000 hours going inland toward Caen … British 50th Division landed at GOLD against weaker opposition than expected with Arromanches, Mauveines, and Ryes soon occupied.
>
> But St-Laurent-sur-Mer, OMAHA beach, gave the U.S. V Corps … the most difficulties. The surf was worse … but the 116th IR, 29th ID at Vierville-sur-Mer and the 16th IR, 1st ID at Colleville-sur-Mer—hit beaches surprisingly defended by the regular German *352d Infantry Division* with poor bombing and bombardment results. Exhausted, disorganized soldiers were pinned … Only with extreme gallantry did they work through … at heavy costs of some 800 **23** 116th IR men plus one-third of the 16th IR, "… turned what might have been a catastrophe into a glorious victory."
>
> U.S. 4th ID at UTAH had the least opposition … (they) mistakenly landed … (where) Germans had relied on flooding … Complete surprise and minimum casualties. Airborne troops had the causeways to stop Germans …

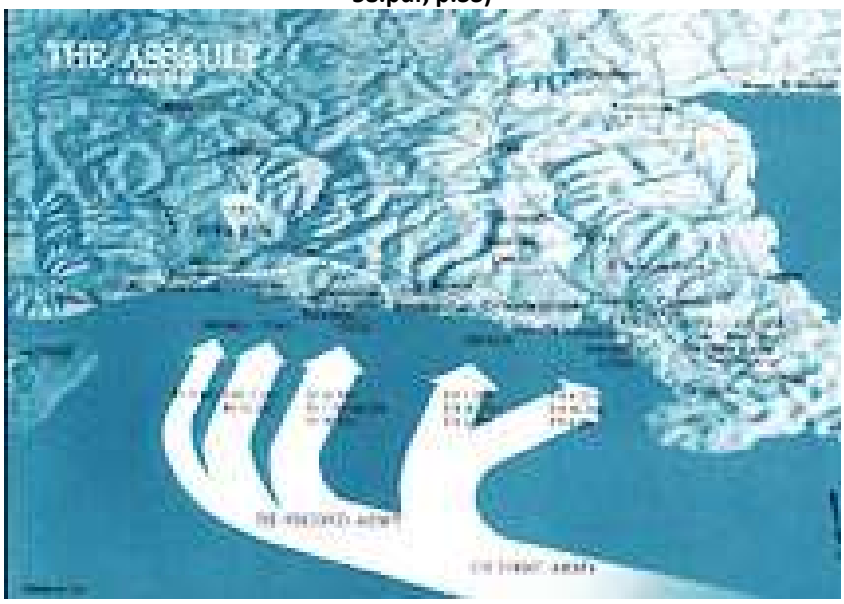
The light casualties (except at OMAHA) were attributable in part to novel mechanical contrivances … We later captured the German *Seventh Army* HQ phone journal, which documents substantial enemy confusion. First Army HQ thought Normandy was a diversion … *Seventh Army* did not hear of OMAHA landings until 0900 hours and UTAH only at 1640 hours … At the end of D+1 *Seventh Army* decided the chief danger was north of Caen on the Orne River, OMAHA action was vague, and UTAH was deemed a diversion.

On 7 June I toured the assault area by destroyer. Commanders were … hoping for better weather … **24** "Of the morale of the men whom I saw on every sector during the day I cannot speak too highly" The next five days the beachheads were joined as we worked to unload all needed to expand out foothold.

The British-Canadian sector focused upon Caen, which was still 3 miles distant, but the Germans used tanks of *21st Panzer* and *12th SS Panzer Divisions* to counterattack … to drive a wedge nearly to the landing beaches …

In the American sector V Corps assault forces overcome initial difficulties to contact British 50 Division on their left 8 June and then went south to Caumont-Cerisy Forêt-Isigny by 11 June. The Germans stiffened in hills around St-Lô … By 12 June all beaches and Allied forces were connected ... (as) logistic forces "were performing prodigies of achievement" … Tons of logistical impediments had to be landed and moved somewhere … while storage and distribution centers had to be created. "By 11 June … the machinery of supply over the beaches was functioning satisfactorily …" but 50% behind schedule … the first 6 days "326,547 men, 54,186 vehicles, and 104,428 tons of stores were brought ashore …:**25**

Map 1: The Assault: 6 June 1944 (Rpt Supreme Commander CMH_Pub 70-58.pdf, p.33)



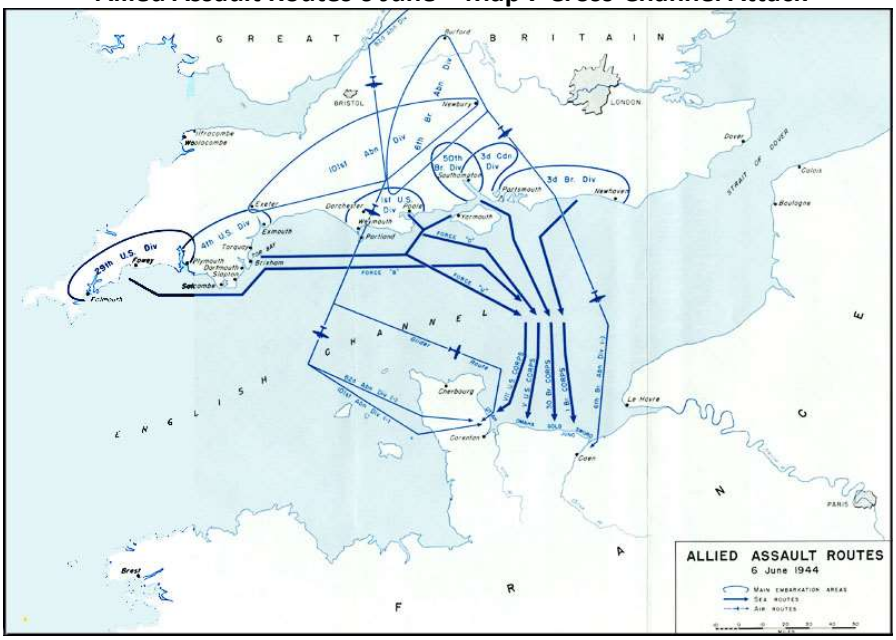
The 11 June linking of beachheads set the stage for … battles for the fate of France. The Germans never fully recovered … Symptoms … Their *Army* lost touch with *corps, … with divisions and … regiments.* Panzer divisions halted with no fuel. Ammunition was scarce and the alleged cause for losing Carentan. It explains their failure to retake the initiative … **26**

C. Chapter 3: Establishment of the Lodgement Area; Report Supreme Commander xyza

There followed six weeks of grueling struggle for a lodgement sufficient to build up a striking force to use our material superiority. It took longer due to Channel weather and the Germans tenacious defense, yet we built up to a power so the breakthrough regained lost time. We had to capture Cherbourg and needed Caen with bridgeheads on the Orne and Oden Rivers to connect with the British and push the Cotentin line south. The Germans struggled when Rommel's shoreline defense failed; they lacked depth and von Rundstedt's "mobile armored striking force … was too late." Constant pressure kept them from withdrawing mobile forces as an early August U.S. breakthrough sealed the fate of the German *Seventh Army.* Lack of infantry caused their Normandy defeat. "I cannot overemphasize the decisive value of this most successful threat (to Calais) …" that kept the *Fifteenth Army* bottled up. If it was committed in June or July, it might have defeated us by sheer weight of numbers …" **27** **"**Not until early July did the Germans bring the number divisions west that were required – It was too late then. "

Reinforcement was hazardous, slow due to Allied air and French patriots. By D-day 27% of locomotive servicing, 13% of the locomotives and 8% of rolling stock were destroyed with all but two Seine bridges below Paris as the Normandy battle was isolated to two roads in the Paris-Orléans "gap" which were perfect for sabotage and bombing. Troops unloading in east France but could not be transported without fuel. Divisions used bicycles and wagons. The *275th Division* took a week to make 150 miles as mid-July found only the *Fifteenth Army* in the Pas-de-Calais untouched.

Allied Assault Routes 6 June – Map 7 Cross-Channel Attack



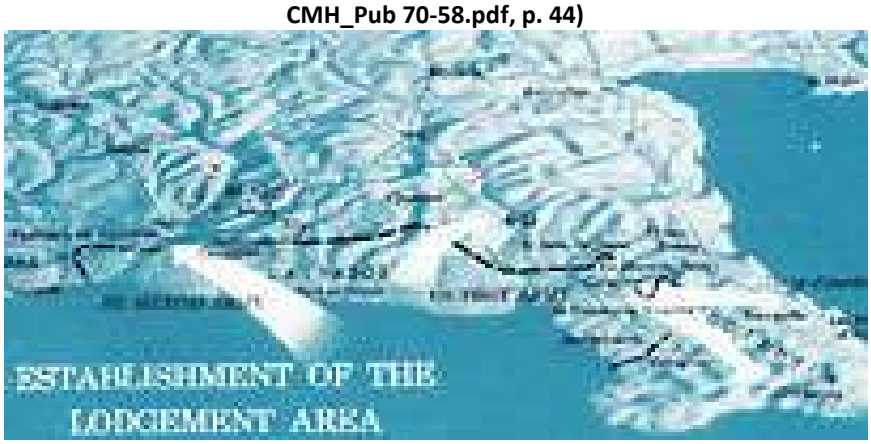
We had absolute supremacy over the Nazi-world. A normal had 1,000 U.S, heavy bombers by day and over 1,000 RAF heavy bombers by night on German oil targets. The AEAF (Allied Expeditionary Air Force) flew 4,000 sorties a day in adverse weather. **28** In weather, German movement stood still. On 9 June Allied planes were flying from France; in three weeks, 31 Allied squadrons had beachhead bases.

V-1 rockets were active starting the night of 12-13 June. GAF attacks were sporadic focused most on laying sea mines. The GAF had a Hobson's Choice; attack and lose planes, or do not attack to lose less planes. Air bases were pummeled the GAF could not concentrate air power flying just 300-450 daily sorties in clear weather with sporadic shipping attacks. RAF Bomber Command struck in daylight on 14 June with 350 bombers at Le Havre and Boulogne – a huge change. A 12 June hit with 1,448 U.S. bombers found *Luftwaffe* fighters never gaining the bombers through U.S. fighters. British-U.S. daylight bombing had minor 1% weekly losses. **29**

Enemy SS army units are superior fighting with fanatical courage. But German infantry were inferior physically and morally with spirits low as two-thirds were under 19 or over 30 years old. Foreigners deserted, but the lodgement struggle was a slugging match with Caen at center where Germans concentrated. Here Germans assisted plans for Cherbourg. The Seine River area was critical, so the enemy had to focus armor and infantry there "rendering easier the task of the Allied troops in the west but denying us access to the good tank and airfield country toward Falaise". We had to hit Caen hard to hold Germans there. **30** Caen was essential to "ultimate success." "At Caen we held him with our left while we delivered the blow toward Cherbourg with our right."

Then **31** 17 June the 9th ID cut the Cotentin Peninsula trapping two battle groups as on 19 June three infantry divisions (4th right, 79th center, and 9th left) closed up on Cherbourg. The German failures at Montebourg were corrected by Brest where the garrison was unified and ready. *(Did the Third Army expect an easy victory at Brest based upon Cherbourg?)* Cherbourg fell from 22 June to 26 June and by 1 July the Cotentin Peninsula was clear. A lack of reserves was obvious in British sectors where Tilly proved two panzer divisions inadequate. On 28 June British 8 Corps had a bridgehead over the Odon River as most "of eight (German) armored divisions was now flung into the battle … in a fruitless attempt …" SS failed "because they were put into the battle piecemeal …" as unceasing pressure kept Germans from massing armor. Yet,

Map 2: Establishment of Lodgement Area (Rpt Supreme Commander CMH_Pub 70-58.pdf, p. 44)



> in the east we had been unable to break out toward the Seine … (as Germans in) the Caen sector had prevented us from securing the ground … badly needed … (We had) American Forces smash out of the lodgment … west … (as) British and Canadians kept the Germans occupied in the east.
>
> Incessant pressure … to contain **32** the enemy's strength … (by) Montgomery during July … (let U.S.) forces in the Cotentin … fight southward … (to break) defenses at the end of the month. Field Marshal Montgomery's tactical handling … was masterly … (as we got) elbow room in which to deploy our forces …

(Comment: This has a different tenor from other U.S. histories on Montgomery's contribution. It is a bit puzzling to see U.S. "official" historians differ from the "official" history by Eisenhower)

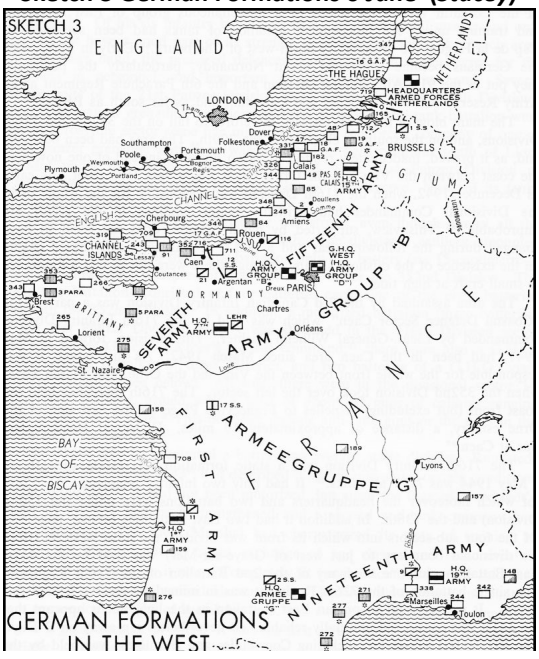
Next was opening Brittany ports but regrouping delayed Gen Bradley's forces from heading south to 3 July. Germans fiercely defended La-Haye-du-Puits 4 to 10 July. VII Corps fought in swampy terrain with heavy losses on the Carentan-Périers highway. XIX Corps attacked over the Vire for St-Jean-de-Daye, but German armor (*2d SS Panzer* and *Panzer Lehr)* arrived. The 11 July, *Panzer Lehr* counterattack was smashed by the 9th and 30th ID, but *2d Parachute Corps* rallied. This disappointing First Army effort led Montgomery to redouble east flank efforts by seizing Caen to drive over the Orne River. *(Comment: This seems very foreign to U.S. histories!).* The Germans thought Caen most important keeping 700 of its 900 tanks there under *Panzer Group West.* With the Odon River Bridgehead came Canadians hit Caen from the west in a three-day duel at Carpiquet airfield by Canadian 3rd ID vs. *12th SS Panzer.* A July 8 bombing

by 500 RAF "heavies" and Royal Navy battleships guns paralyzed the enemy and cut supplies. Gaining **33** Mahôt had a bitter Hill 112 fight. Two SS panzer divisions foundered 16-17 July to end with an 18 July attack south and east of Caen. German lack of armor reserves was the **"outstanding feature of the campaign during June and July, to it we owed the successful establishment of our lodgement area, safe from … counterattacks … (to drive) us back into the sea**."

Germans plugged holes "while *Seventh Army* and *Panzer Group West* slowly bleed to death". First Army forced a fight for the St-Lô Road with the 29th, 9th and 30th ID's. By 18 July First and Second Armies were positioned for breakthroughs.

The Allies needed room for 15 U.S. divisions (6 armored) and 15 British Canadian (4 armored) divisions versus 27 German divisions (8 armored). But German forces equaled 6 panzer and 10 infantry (16) divisions after losing 160,000 of 540,000 men and 400 of 1,200 tanks. They had 4 panzer divisions not in battle, 6 depleted Brittany divisions and 12 South France divisions (equivalent to 8 due to French *Maquis* Resistance). "Only *Fifteenth Army*, Pas-de-Calais, with 19 divisions, was still intact waiting for landings." *"We won the first round by gaining a footing and the second round expanded and consolidated the lodgement.* Building up for the third round was almost done. **The Germans never recovered from 'Rommel's reliance on the Atlantic Wall.'"**
(Comment: The math of the forces still favored the Germans with 6+10+4+6+12-4+19 = 61 divisions!) **34**

Sketch 3 German Formations 6 June (*Stacey*)



D. Chapter 4: The Plan of Attack; *Victory Campaign Canada*, C.P. Stacey xyza

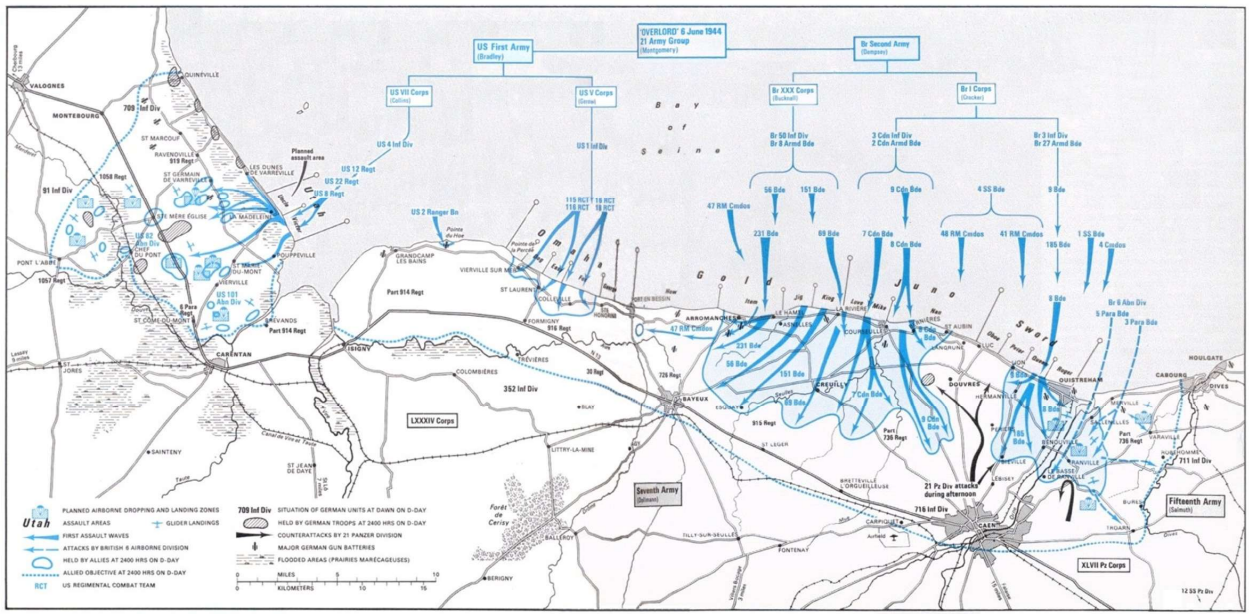
1. Setting the Stage. On the far left were Utah Beach forces where the attack was one land division, the 4ht ID, and two parachute divisions. The center of the invasion area was OMAHA Beach with unintended limited D-Day penetrations that left Rangers at Pont du Hoc just west isolated. There was a large gap between the U.S UTAH and OMAHA beaches, and between British (left) and Americans (center) on 7 June. The British made dramatic advances south on D-Day compared to the U.S. who unexpectedly confronted the "regular" German *352nd Division*. The British captured Bayeux and Caen by D+1 but did not advance for weeks after so British forces were confined near the Bayeux to Caen highway while U.S. forces captured most of the Cotentin and charged far south of Carentan and Crissy Forest (captured by D+5). Soon U.S. forces were "held-up by the failure of the British to move southward in their "zone of advance". But the British did make good advances west toward OMAHA and south to Bayeux and Caen. Bayeux was freed June 8, but Caen not so until 19 July -- six weeks later. British failures to advance south until D+50 became were major ETO controversies. By the third week in June tempers "flared" forcing Eisenhower to be a "Supreme Referee."

D-Day put British XXX Corps in the British center with British Corps east (left) of the Allied landings). I Corps held 3rd Canadian ID on its right and British 3rd ID on the left (east). The latter captured the Quistreham move south on the river toward Caen. The center Canadians had to capture Caen from the

northwest with 7th and 8th Brigades (*i.e.,* regiments). The summary describes D-Day British efforts who stopped short of Caen to "dig-in" against German counterattacks not threatened because they lacked forces to counterattack. A late (*see* map) a counterattack was made in a void west of the Orne River to the beach, but nothing else. The Germans lacked forces for a real fight with the British.

2. **<u>The Overall Plan</u>**. Sketch 3 shows German Formations in the West, 6 June 1944. *Army Group "B"* controlled from St. Nazaire northeast into Holland. Army Group G had from there south to Italy. There were four German Armies: 1) the strongest, Fifthteenth (22 divisions) defended the Seine north into Holland; 2) the Seventh Army defended the Normandy (18 divisions); 3) First Army was south thinly strung on the Bay of Biscay (7 divisions) and 4) Nineteenth Army (9 divisions) held South Mediterranean France. There were **<u>56 German divisions,</u>** but even "weak" divisions had "strength" in concrete and big. They also knew where Allied troops were located. The better assumption is both sides were roughly

The Victory Campaign – C. P. Stacey.



equivalent. The Allies thrust 8 divisions ashore on D-Day hoping to reinforce faster from England than the Germans could from France! *(Comment: There is a variance from between 56 to 61 German divisions at the time).*

British OVERLORD plans evolved summer of 1943 with COSSAC's "Initial Joint Plan". Also, all three D-Day British commanders (Army, Navy, and Air Forces) were appointed. **71** Two armies under Montgomery were the U.S. First Army (Gen. Bradley) and left (east) the Second British Army (Gen. Dempsey). The British bridgehead area was Port-en-Bessin, Bayeux, Caen to Cabourg to the mouth of the Dives River. British 30th Corps had one division at "GOLD" Beach (west) and 1st Corps had two divisions on "JUNO" and "SWORD" Beaches with the 3rd Canadian ID in the "JUNO" force.

Longer term OVERLORD had First U.S. Army 1) capturing Cherbourg, 2) driving west to cut the Cotentin Peninsula base and 3) <u>south to St. Lô join the British. The Second British Army would advance south and</u>

south-east of Caen to capture airfield sites and protect the Allied left (east) flank.[2] Airfield terrain was a British strategic goal, but they did not head southeast. So, the U.S. built airfields in the hedgerows. Success meant build-up speed for the Allies to win the "bridgehead" race with an advantage of shorter inside (interior) battle lines. **72** D+3 would see 7 Allied divisions; D+20 the Allies had 24 divisions.

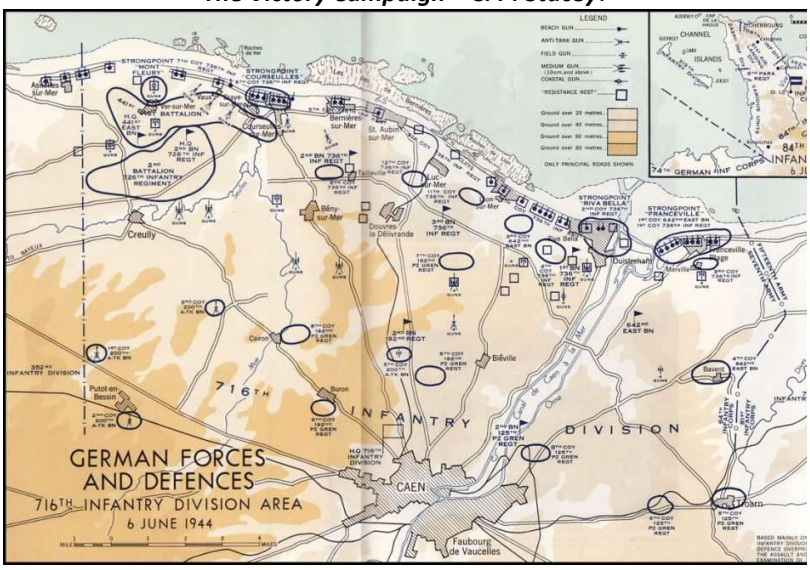
Stacey: there "has never been a naval problem of greater complexity … (Adm) Ramsay's requirements … were enormous; he had difficulties … (He) reported subsequently that the very late assignment of forces by the U.S. Navy was an embarrassment in planning." He had a large "armada" of six battleships, two monitors, 22 cruisers, 93 destroyers, 15 sloops, 26 escort destroyers, 27 frigates, 71 corvettes, and smaller naval craft for 7,016 vessels in total. Air tasks required 171 day-fighter squadrons to: **73**

a. Ensure the German Air Force (GAF) was rendered incapable of interference.
b. Provide continuous reconnaissance of the enemy's dispositions and movements.
c. Disrupt enemy communications and channels of supply by air attack.
d. Support the landing and subsequent advances of the Allied armies.
e. Deliver offensive strikes against enemy naval forces.
f. Provide air lift for airborne forces.

3. The Joint Fire Plan. D-Day began with a bomber attack between midnight and "civil twilight".[3] U.S. Eighth Air Force and Bomber Command bombers assailed "OMAHA", "GOLD", "JUNO" and "SWORD" and Caen. **74** Ninth Air Force mediums attacked "UTAH" as fighter-bombers of both forces hit pre-arranged targets, batteries and transportation. Bomber Command flew smaller formations, but their bombing was more effective. The Eighth AF bombers flew perpendicular over OMAHA beach using delayed bombing with zero effect or benefit.

The naval bombardment had 20 German batteries (see map "German Forces and Defences"). Smaller vessels had 45 minutes of "Beach Drenching Fire" LCT guns fired 35 minutes before H Hour; at 30 minutes self-propelled army artillery fired from landing craft at German "resistance nests". Rocket LCT's fired at H -5 minutes. LCA's fired as troops hit the shore. **75**

The Victory Campaign – C. P. Stacey.



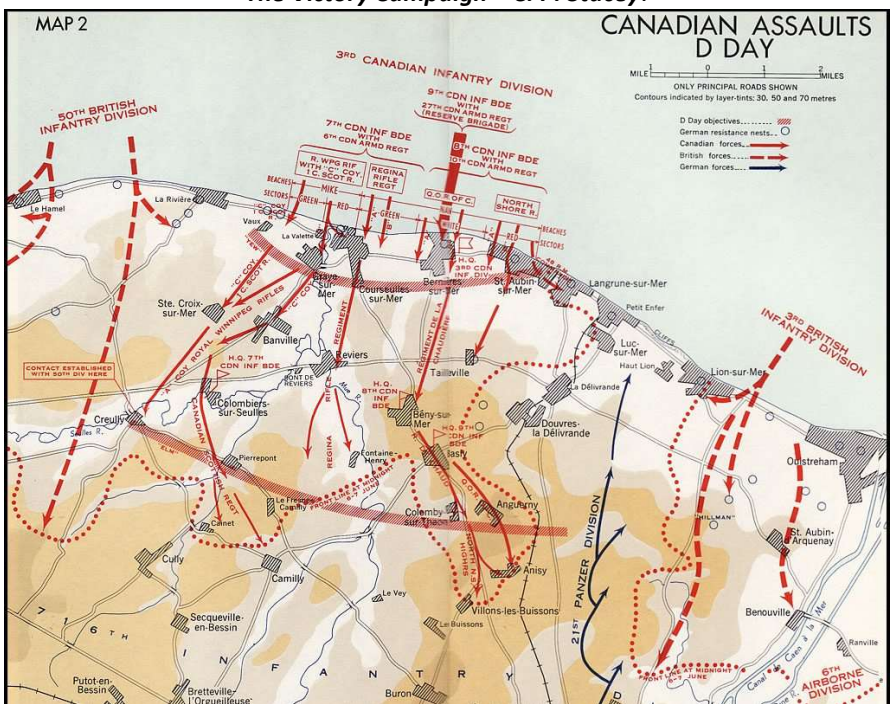
4. The Role of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division and the Failure to Capture the Carpiquet Airport.[4] The 3rd

[2] This became an irritation since the British were unable to capture the flatter and without hedgerow terrain to the south and east of Caen that were perfect for airfields.
[3] Civil twilight ends when the sun is 6 degrees below the horizon. Nautical twilight ends when it is 12 degrees.
[4] As a reminder, the British "Official" histories are permanently copyrighted and are not, therefore, included in this effort.

Canadian Infantry (Gen Keller) assaulted "JUNO" Beach with Gen Crocker's Canadian division, and 30th Corps (Gen Bucknall). West of "JUNO" the 50th Northumbrian ID hit "GOLD" to "carve out a bridgehead including Bayeux". East the 3rd British ID landed on "SWORD" "to capture Caen and secure a bridgehead over the Orne." **The seizure of Caen was described as "vital to the Army plan", yet the battle for Caen lasted from 6 June to 6 August 1944.** The Canadian's attacked on a two-brigade front, through "MIKE" (right) and "NAN" (left) at Courseulles-sur-Mer, Bernières-sur-Mer, and St. Aubin-sur-Mer. West of Courseulles the beach was one-half mile wide with sand dunes. Intelligence said infantry could "move directly inland anywhere." There were two vehicle exits. Seawalls intervened but the roads led forthrightly to Caen and Bayeux. Gen Keller would capture 10 miles inland to the Caen-Bayeux Road with the 7th Canadian battalion (right) and the 8th Infantry (left). First phases were mop up - "YEW". 76 The "ELM" second phase crossed the Seulles and Mue Rivers to Colomby-sur-Thaon. Speed was critical. The 9th Canadian I Brigade would land in the third phase to gain "OAK" west of Caen. The final act was defending "OAK". Royal Marine Commandos[5] had "NAN" and Luc-sur-Mer with low sea cliffs. On D-Day Commandos captured radar station (Douvres-la-Délivrande) and held the Seulles River**.**

The Canadians had Royal Winnipeg Rifles right for Vaux hamlet, Graye-sur-Mer and **77** Langue-sur-Mer. Winnipegs had Ste. Croix-sur-Mer and Banville two miles inland. The 7th Brigade Group (left), The Regina Rifle Regiment would land east of the Seulles, clear Courseulles for crossings over the Reviers River. The Canadian Scottish reserve battalion landed at "MIKE". Winnipeg's reserves had Ste. Croix-sur-Mer and Banville (2 miles inland). 7th Brigade (Regina Rifles) cleared Courseulles and the Reviers bridge. The Canadian Scottish had the beach and with the Winnipegs to get at Colombiers-sur-Seulles and Pont de Reviers with "speed".

The Victory Campaign – C. P. Stacey.



"OAK" had the 7th Brigade Group capturing "an area some five miles west of Caen" on the Bayeux Road. The Winnipegs had Putot-en-Bessin; centre Canadian Scottish south of Secqueville-en-Bessin and left the Reginas had Norrey-en-Bessin. All would reorganize on "OAK" to fend of counterattacks, but "the order placed 'digging' at the head of priority work on the final objective." Translation: IT WAS A BAD PLAN THAT STOPPED THE OFFENSIVE IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR A NON-EXISTENT DEFENSIVE GERMAN THREAT – AN ATTACK NOT LAUNCHED ON D-DAY BY THE GERMANS.

[5] The battle strength of a Royal Marine Commando was approximately 400 all ranks. It comprised five fighting troops and a heavy weapons troop, with mortars and medium machine-guns.

Most authorities agree Caen could have been captured by D-Day actions. The British paid for their caution, but so would the Americans.

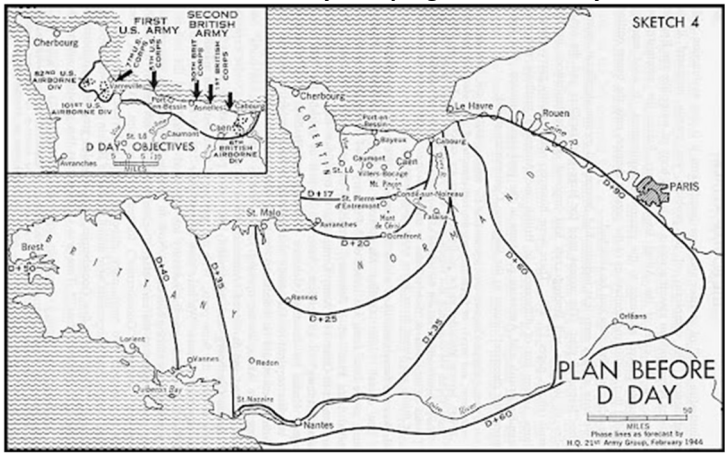
The 8th Brigade Group, east flank, landed in "NAN" sector for east of Courseulles while the Queen's Own Rifles right captured Bernières. On the left North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment took St. Aubin to Tailleville hamlet two miles inland. Le Régiment de la Chaudière battalion with tanks had three batteries **78** three miles inland, then Anisy-- halfway to the Caen-Bayeux Road. North Shore Regiment had radar stations at Douvres-la-Délivrandel, to consolidate on "ELM" for 9th Brigade Group to cross the Mue River capturing Cainet--Camilly--Secqueville-en-Bessin—Cully on D+1. The 9th Brigade planned go through "NAN" left for e OAK with the 7th landing both 2½ and 9 hours after H Hour. The 9th Brigade was not a major D-Day force but waited to gauge German reactions.

> Gen "Cunningham's final objective was the high ground at Carpiquet (Airport) … If no "serious opposition" developed … the North Nova Scotias (would capture it. Otherwise) the North Nova Scotias were to consolidate on high ground … for a further attack against the objective … The orders emphasized … (to) 'DIG IN and reorganize with greatest possible speed … for early enemy counterattack, armour and infantry'".
>
> **79 …** (by night) Gen Keller hoped to have the 7th and 9th Brigade Groups … astride the Caen-Bayeux Road. On his west the 7th would hold the triangle formed by Putot-en-Bessin, Bretteville l'Orgueilleuse and Norrey-en-Bessin. East of the Mue River, the 9th would have captured the Carpiquet-Franqueville-Authie area only a mile outside of Caen with Gen Wyman's 2nd Armoured Brigade concentrated to fend off counterattacks. "The Division would thus be … in positions of great tactical value, prepared for further offensive operations."

This is highlighted because it did not happen. Not mentioned was the great advantage the airport's open space giving the Germans open fields of fire so taking the airport took a long time with high casualties. The failure to capture Carpiquet town and airport were catastrophic. With indulgence with, and acceptance of brevity, *Wikipedia* notes:

> Less than 1 mile … from the outskirts of Caen, the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade posed a threat to German positions in the town. With most of the defence … north of Caen … (they) feared … (an) attack from Carpiquet (into west Caen to)bypass the … the defences … Kurt Meyer ordered the SS to retake Carpiquet …
>
> Shortly after midnight, the first of the SS counterattacks began … (The) 10th Canadian Armoured Regiment … defeated three counterattacks …
>
> Analysis: (The 6 June attack) by the 3rd Canadian Division … left the Germans in control of Carpiquet airport … In 2005, Reid wrote that the attack should have been made by two brigades … (The Canadians

Sketch 4 *The Victory Campaign – C. P. Stacey*.



reached) the hangars … (to) fight their way through them but were ordered to withdraw twice. The success of the German defenders … (in holding) the airfield … left the Canadians in a salient which was counter-attacked several times. The failure of the brigade to reach all its objectives, led to doubts about the fitness of (Gen) Keller …

… On 9 July, the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade captured Carpiquet airfield and … On 18 July British and Canadian forces launched Operation Atlantic and … Goodwood in which the Canadians captured the Caen districts on the south bank and the British captured … the east and south … Canadian forces … attacked German positions on Verrières Ridge in Operation Spring. (*Comment: it was six weeks later before D-Day gains were recouped).*

By D+13 British inability to get through Caen "mucked up" invasion plans that depended upon gaining airfields in the open pastureland of the area. The debate would become vitriolic with Montgomery claiming all was exactly per plans and U.S. Bradley and Patton concluding the British were insufficiently aggressive and unwilling to take risks.

5. Other Matters. Americans bitterly complained British forces had wide-open country with great "fields of fire" leaving Americans to fight all of June and July in horrible Boccage Country of hedgerow fields where every field was a major, costly engagement. Yet, British rebutted the U.S. Army simply failed to appreciate "hedgerow" warfare or design "fixes". British Gen Hobart developed armored field vehicles to aid in the hedgerows which the U.S. disdained. **80** 81

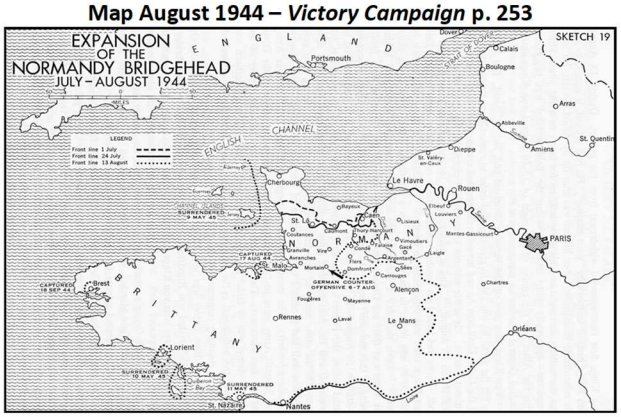
6. Operations After "NEPTUNE" (Sketch 4). Beyond the "NEPTUNE" phase lay a

… hypothesis. We could only estimate the direction and strength of the enemy's reaction. A cardinal factor was, however, our own overmastering need for adequate ports … (in) three main groups: those in the Loire area (Nantes and St. Nazaire), those in Brittany (primarily Brest), and those on the Seine (Rouen and Le Havre). In addition, the Allied planners had produced the idea of utilizing Quiberon Bay by constructing large, but simple, port facilities at Locmariaquer, a few miles west of Vannes.

(The) conception … was modified … (by) the "Joint Outline Maintenance Project" issued … 8 February. It sketched the "Outline Plan" in these terms:

a. Initial Assault will be made by three RCTs [Regimental Combat Teams] of First US Army on the right, and five brigade groups of Second British Army on the left …
b. Second British Army will secure Caen on the left flank and extend the perimeter of its sector to the south, while First US Army [will] capture the Cotentin Peninsula.
c. US forces will open up Loire ports while British forces hold the left flank.
d. Second British Army will open up the Seine Ports." **82**

Map August 1944 – *Victory Campaign* p. 253



Historian C.P. Stacey states Montgomery's plans were logical based upon his 18 May

"Appreciation on Possible Development of Operations to secure a Lodgement Area" with a cover letter stating in Part IV:

> The type of country immediately South … does not favour a rapidly advance. The Allied build-up relative to the estimated German build-up indicates … round about D+14 … there will be a grave risk of operations stabilizing on a line which gives the Germans advantages in defence. The … enemy is not allowed to stabilise his defence …. Once through the difficult bocage country, greater possibilities for manoeuvre and for the use of armour begin to appear. Our aim … (is) to contain the maximum enemy forces facing the Eastern flank of the bridgehead, and to thrust rapidly towards Rennes.
>
> On reaching Rennes … (then) Vannes (if) … the enemy weakens his Eastern (front against the British) … a strong attack should be launched towards the Seine …. **The Quiberon Bay project offers great scope for surprise. Once the bay is captured and provided constructional estimates are fulfilled, our build-up should be assured for some time to come, and our Southern flank can then be rested economically on the Loire …** For administrative reasons we should aim at securing the Seine ports as early as possible …

The influence of the Quiberon Bay project (Operation "CHASTITY") is written large in this appreciation. The actual development of the operations after D Day, as it turned out, threw this scheme into the discard. But other conceptions found in this document had great influence on events. The ideas of alternating blows on the eastern and western flanks … have prominent places in the history of the Normandy campaign (and) containing "the maximum enemy forces facing the Eastern flank of the bridgehead" was to be the foundation of Montgomery's strategy in the critical weeks following the landings. **83**

Landing, Omaha Beach (116th RCT)

(Comment: Montgomery highlights the important Quiberon CHASTITY harbor -- largely ignored in U.S. histories. Stacey supports Montgomery's claim operations into August were as he planned. U.S. historians state Montgomery failed to strike both south to protect the left U.S. flank or attack east to the Seine for ports causing the U.S. hedgerow county hardships a dangling left flank at St. Lo impacting U.S. efforts and casualties. The British "failure" to make even negligible headway for over two months in Caen brought U.S. recriminations and strained relations.)

Per Stacey, 21st Army would capture Villers-Bocage (west and south) meet the U.S. at Caumont and 1st British Corps would pivot on Caen … as 30th Corps went south for Mont Pinion (20 miles south of Caen) as 1st Corps did so on the east flank, to capture airfield terrain

"south-east of Caen, which was considered of great importance."

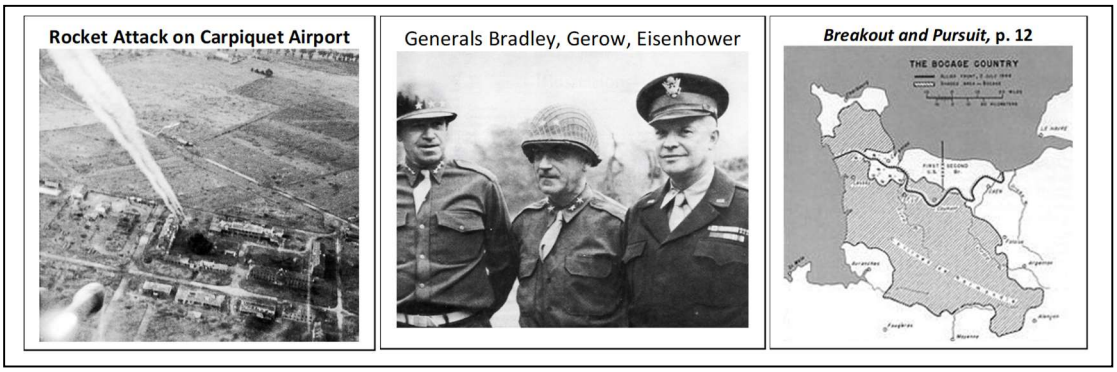
The British did not capture Villers-Bocage, Mt. Pincon or airfield areas. Stacey wrote "Second British Army would secure high ground … (to) Falaise, over 30 miles inland from the beaches." *(His claim seems disingenuous. Facts do not support Montgomery's claim the Normandy battles were fought exactly as he had planned them.)* Stacey wrote: "1st British Corps would … capture the important terrain at Falaise." The battle was August 12 to 21, 1944. *(In truth, today the French Auto-Route connects the 18-miles from Caen to Falaise in a 17-minute drive!)* While the British had a 17-minute advance, the U.S. captured Brest 218 miles from Caen (3-hours, 50-minutes on the Auto-Route plus also Nantes 170 miles southwest. Such *explanations ignore U.S. armies conquered massive territories; the British armies did not. The British-Canadian forces were stuck at Caen area for 75 days. The 12 British Army Group only gained 18 miles for a 17-minute drive to Falaise!*)

Stacey wrote the British merely protected the U.S. Armies' east as they captured Cherbourg, Angers, Nantes, and the Brittany ports stating: "There is no intention of carrying out a major advance until the Brittany ports have been captured." *(It is a misstatement).* In truth, there were no U.S. plans for Brittany ports. Its lacking was a major problem as Patton's U.S. Third Army "spur of the moment" decisions dispatched troops to the far west Brittany Peninsula.

(Claims that events went "according to plans" are untrue. All August, particularly, saw steps, missteps, guesses and stop-gaps the exact opposite of the "master strategic plan" Montgomery did not have.).

Under Montgomery's plans to August, Bradley's 12th Army Group led the major operations in August and after 9 August, he reported Gen Eisenhower – not Montgomery. In truth, Bradley had worked directly with Eisenhower merely keeping Montgomery informed. The "form" had Montgomery in control as the "ground commander", the substance had Eisenhower in control. The great Operation Cobra, July 25 - 31, 1944 saw Montgomery uninvolved. Stacey states:

> On the American front, while one of General Bradley's corps captured Cherbourg … two others were to begin a southerly drive towards St. Lô … (to the) the junction of the Cotentin and Brittany peninsulas … It was expected that this line would be reached about D plus 20 (the basis for this is unknown) … (the 12th) United States Army Group …. would assume command of all American ground forces in France. After clearing the Brittany peninsula, the Americans would face east and "pivot on the British position like a windlass in the direction of Paris" … (to) bring the Allied line forward to the Seine on a 140-mile front. General Montgomery … commented on



the "academic" nature of forecasts …. (But in truth) Allied planners had some hope … their troops would reach the Seine and the Loire 90 days after the initial assault …

As for events further in the future, well before D Day the Supreme Commander and his staff had a plan for operations beyond the Seine, dated 3 May 1944 (below, page 307). Strategy … was destined to produce a heated controversy between Gen Eisenhower and Gen Montgomery.

(Comment: As mentioned much earlier, there were, in fact, no legitimate post-Overlord Allied plans! Stacey's "Sketch 4" shows the "Plan before D-Day" bridgehead expansion. It was quite close in scope, but the U.S. captured over 90% of the territory in this phase, not the British and definitely not Field Marshall Montgomery. 84 85 -86

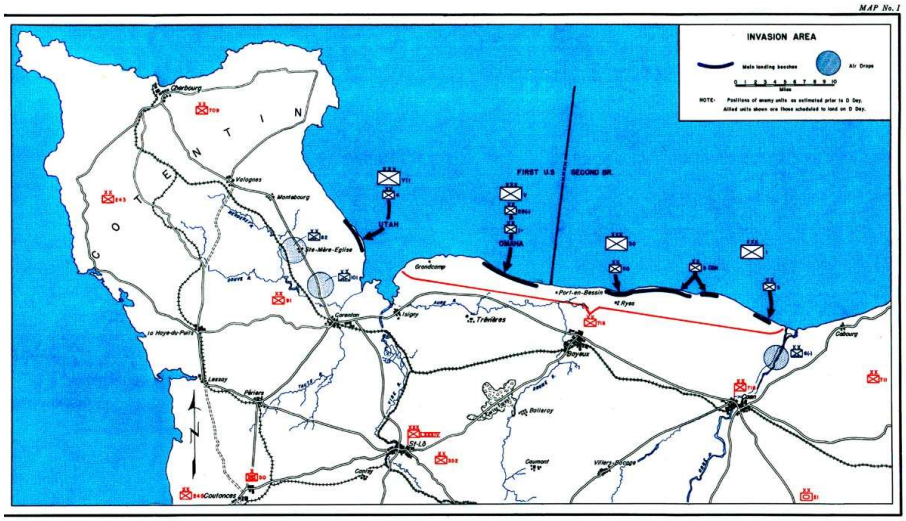
E. Pre-Operations Description of Beach; OMAHA Beachhead *(6 June--13 June 1944)*[6]*;* American Forces in Action Series Historical Division War Department, 20 Sep 1945 xyza

1. ***Beginning Comments:*** Seven short "official histories" were written soon after the battles. The first two published were *OMAHA Beachhead* and *UTAH Beach to Cherbourg (6 June – 27 June 1944***.** Gen Marshall described the intent as:

> In the thick of battle, the soldier is busy doing his job. He has the knowledge and confidence that his job is part of a unified plan to defeat the enemy, but he does not have time to survey a campaign from a fox hole. If he should be wounded … he may have even less opportunity to learn what place, he and his unit had in the larger fight.
>
> AMERICAN FORCES IN ACTION is a War Department (series) … for the information of wounded men … (to) show these soldiers, who have served their country so well, the part they and their comrades played in achievement which do honor to the record of the United States Army.

Forward by the War Department Historical Division.

Map I Invasion Area (Omaha Beachhead)



[6] The authors are the Army Historical Division, 1947 as part of the "American Forces in Action" series, 20 September 1945.

> *Omaha Beachhead* was prepared in the field by the 2d Information and Historical Service, attached to First Army … It is based on complete unit reports and records, on interviews, and on available enemy records. Some unit records … are inadequate, and … may involve minor errors of fact. Before a final official history … is prepared, the gaps should be filled … Readers are therefore urged to send directly to the Historical Division, War Department, Washington, 25, D.C., all comments, criticisms, and additional data …

(Comment: The lack of significant discrepancies between this series and the later "official" histories is encouraging. Memory recorded soon after events are superior to later recollections influenced by subsequent events and age. Newspaper editorialist and war historian, Gen SLA Marshall, comments are included. Since Omaha and Utah veterans related their stories soon after the events, these early histories may be more accurate. The one overriding fact for U.S. OMAHA forces was the Allied failure to learn before D-Day June 6, 1944, the first-rate German 352nd Infantry Division was not 30 miles away at St Lo but defending Omaha Beach with two-thirds of its veteran forces on front lines. The victory at Omaha Beach was far greater than was appreciated until several years after the event!)

2. OPERATION NEPTUNE. Two years of planning and preparation resulted in Normandy on 6 June 1944. Staffs worked out every detail with huge military resources of shipping, aircraft, and supplies. Planners chose fifty miles of west Normandy coast from the Vire Estuary to the Orne for "securing a lodgement" between Cherbourg and le Havre. Allied air attacks would isolate the region from German logistical centers. It was less heavily fortified. Staffs planned the largest amphibious invasion in military history. Critical was suppling men and materials faster than the enemy could counterattack with large forces.*1* On 21 January 1944 Gen. Eisenhower held his first SHAEFE meeting delayed Y Day from 1 May to 30 May for more assault craft and preliminary air operations *(and to increase from 3 to 5 divisions).* High level plans were done in February as "last minute" details focused upon "final loading plans" with many changes in ships and craft used.

Services of Supply ("SOS") Gen. John C. H. Lee led an "assault of materiel, operated by man." By June 1944 U.S. forces in the U.K. were 1,526,965 with 2,500,000 tons, 1,200 troop in 100 marshaling camps and 144,000 tons of supplies preloaded.

a. Navy and Air Forces. NEPTUNE Naval forces, Adm Ramsay, had to convey, supply and protect the invasion forces from German craft. He commanded 4,100 ships and craft including the war ships of both British and American fleets. Allied air forces, Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory had defensive roles to protect the armada to and off the beaches. Offensive roles included air protection, spotting and attack, plus air convoying parachute forces. **2** Attack included German airfields and industries with *Luftwaffe* losses estimated "between 5,000 and 6,000 planes in the period". In April and May 1944, the heavy bombers engaged in bombing related to the impending assault by hitting railroad marshaling yards and airfields. The hope was to paralyze rail repair and maintenance facilities until before D-Day the final air blows hit rail systems and airfields nearer the Channel coast. **3** Ninth Air Force medium and fighter-bombers in April and May strenuously attacked enemy airfields within 130 miles of the beaches. In May, 36 airfields were leveled. From March through May rail yards from Brittany to Holland received 139 attacks with many 60% or more damaged. By June 1, every road and all but one railroad bridges were downed on the Sein and Meuse Rivers that framed the "lodgement" area. Locomotives and freight cars were hit. In May France, not Germany, received ¾'s of the bombs. FAF Bomber Command and AAF 8th Air Force heavy bombers joined.

b. <u>21 Army Group.</u> Ground forces were led by Gen. Montgomery, 21 Army Group whose British troops would assault in three areas with six reinforced infantry divisions and three airborne divisions. **4** Left Second British Army had three divisions landing on three beaches as a 6 British Airborne Division brigade would drop to capture Orne River bridges east of Caen. The Second British Army objectives were Bayeux, Caen, and Cabourg.

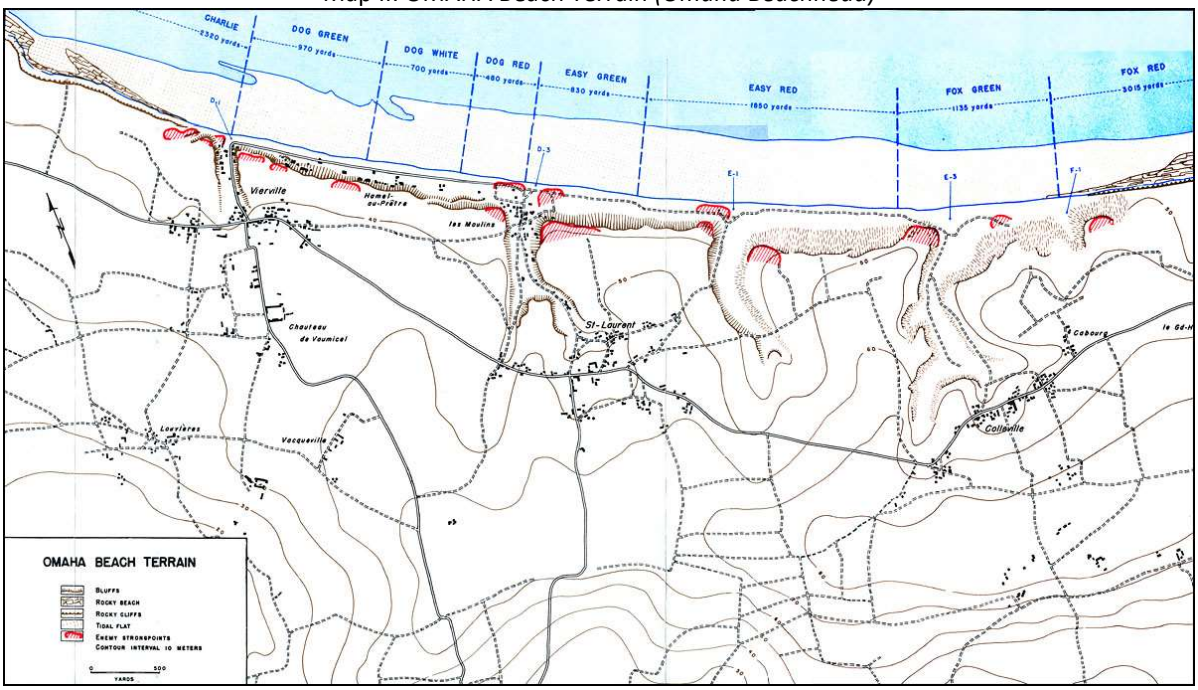
The First U. S. Army (Gen Bradley) had two assault areas with VII Corps (Gen Collins) on the Cotentin Peninsula (Beach "Utah") preceded five hours by the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions in the Ste-Mere-Eglise area to capture the vital Merderet River crossing and Douve River as barriers against counterattacks from the south or west.

Between the British and Utah Beach. V Corps of (Gen Gerow) would attack the 7,000-yards of "Omaha" beach.

Montgomery's intention was to expand a bit more east, push south on a wide front and west across the base of the Cotentin Peninsula to cut its southern base as these forces also attacked north up the Cotentin to eliminate the Germans there and capture the vital passenger port of Cherbourg. The <u>south push aimed to be 20 miles to St-Lo France by D+6. The northward push to capture Cherbourg was D+7; operating by D+15. The plans were all very optimistic.</u>

The Germans had 60 divisions, up from 53 in February 1944. One-half (26) were stuck in coast defenses to be lost. The "secret" of Allied success was to penetrate coast defense by D+3 so "half of the battle was won" as other defenders were "left to whither" or be attacked from the rear. True German

Map II: OMAHA Beach Terrain *(Omaha Beachhead)*

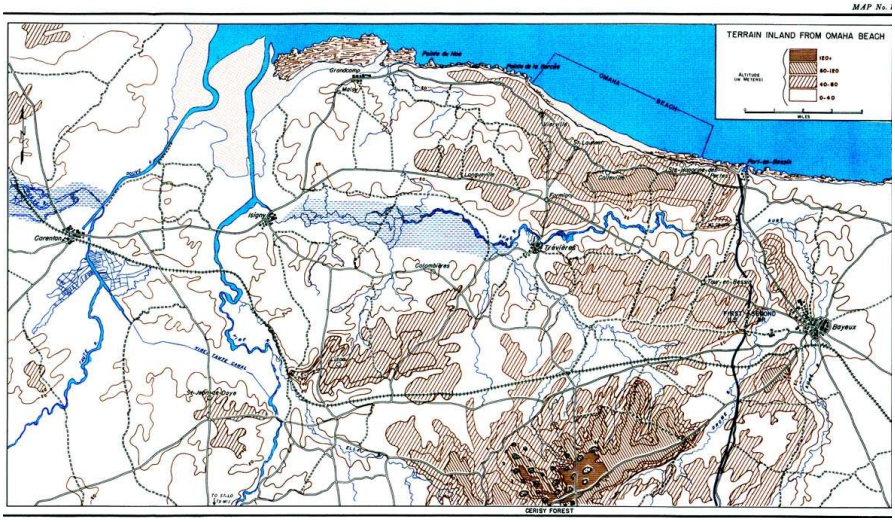


"fighting forces" had 17 infantry divisions with 7 "in training". But these "mobile" forces lacked vehicles to move harkening back to the U.S. Civil War days. The other 10 were panzer or panzer grenadier divisions that could rapidly respond but hereto they relied upon trains. Of the total *West Wall,* 22

divisions (37%) were on the coast: the Seine to Holland. **5** Air forces had to "isolate" the battle so the Allied forces could defeat 18 to 20 German divisions (8 armored). The "build-up race" was the true test of the Allied "bridge dropping" bomb efforts. After the invasion air forces could attack without disclosing its location!

c. **<u>Military Planning and "Reserves" in General (Author).</u>** *"Official" historians do not explain that military planning is not "planning" in the normal sense of a trip. Military planners "buy the ticket" and decide "what to pack" – that is all! (Histories focus on planning, but there truly are no plans beyond the landing. Warfare assigns areas and sets "objectives" within defined unit boundaries. At the company level, the Capt assigns each platoon areas and objectives. The 2nd or 1st Lt. platoon leader puts his platoon on a "start line" in a narrow sector with a goal to the front to be reached in a certain time limit. Platoons and companies win wars each conquering their little section of the battlefield day-after-day.) Thus, generals assign areas to corps, the corps assign their areas to divisions, the division assign theirs to regiments, regimental Lt. Cols and Major's assign areas to battalions, battalion Majors subdivide their area into companies for Captains to lead and so forth. At the "point of the spear" are the squads led by sergeants. This is how a battalion, a regiment, a division, a corps and an army advance one town to the next, one hill to the next and one river to the next.*

Map III: Terrain Incland ffrom OMAHA Beach *(Omaha Beachhead)*



At every level platoons to corps, each commander keeps a "reserve". In a platoon a squad is in reserve, the company has a platoon, the battalion has a company, at the regiment a battalion, division keeps a regiment in reserve. However, if one does the math the total reserve is huge – <u>as well over 50% of a division is in "reserve".</u>

d. ***<u>V Corps Planning of the Assault Plan.</u>*** V Corps HQ, established in July 1943, did the early planning. By October, First U. S. Army and U. S. 1st Army Group headquarters opened. Final plans issued in January with Montgomery's 21 Army Group. U.S. First Army NEPTUNE Plan issued 25 February, V Corps' 26 March, and 1st ID on 16 April. Troop lists were then unknown as "revisions of detail" came through May. A special planning group (Col. Talley) drafted V Corps NEPTUNE Plan.

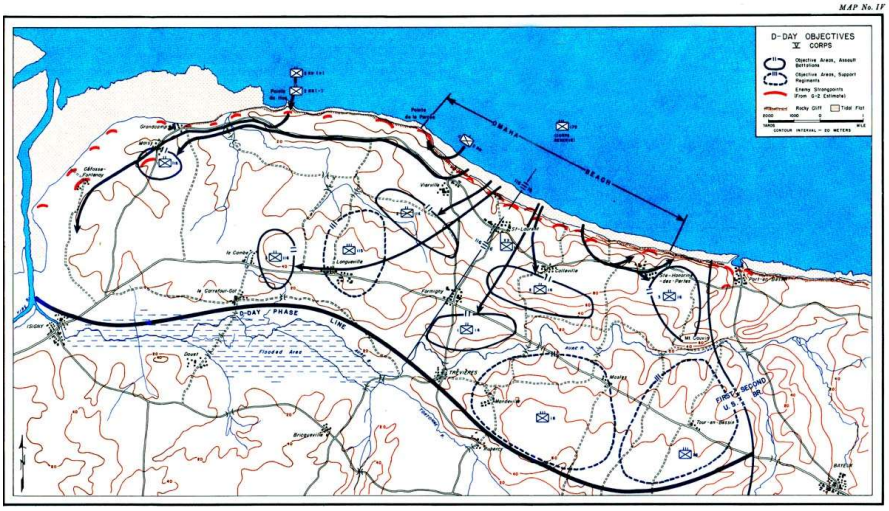
Slapton Sands showed three divisions could be mounted from the Plymouth-Portland-Falmouth-Dartmouth **6** port areas. Exercises "Fox" and "Fabius I" were dress rehearsals. <u>V Corps' NEPTUNE Plan had a "plan" with 22 annexes typed on 326 legal-size pages with 23 maps and charts!</u>***<u>7</u>*** (Comment: It was done on old-style typewriters with typed copies in an era lacking portable printers, copy machines and the Internet! The plans were so "SECRET" because there were too few copies!)

From OMAHA, U.S. V CORPS would push south to Caumont and St-Lô always tied to the British Second Army. V Corps arrived in four stages. (1) Assault Force "O" held the 1st ID with four regiments and oodles of extra artillery, armor, engineers and SOS forces. These were the 16th and 18th Regimental Combat Teams ("RCT") and the 29th ID's 116th and 115th RCT plus a two battalion Ranger Force to scale and capture Point du Hoc. Force "O" had (1) 34,142 men and 3,306 vehicles. (2) Follow-up (Force "B") on the second D-Day low tide brought another 25,117 men and 4,429 vehicles of the 29th ID and 1st ID. (3) D+1 and D+2 discharged preloaded 2nd ID ***8*** of 17,500 men and 2,300 vehicles. (4) The remaining V Corps forces (27 "groups" of 32,000 troops and 9,446 vehicles) were unloaded by D+15. In this manner a one division assault by two divisions soon became a two-division assault. The invasion area often grew in width more than depth. The key was a one division assault with the forces of two divisions. **9** The 1st ID was a veteran of Africa and Sicily. The 29th and 4th IDs had their first action in Normandy.

3. ***Terrain.*** Normandy had few beaches, and most were inaccessible to vehicles. **10** River estuaries held extensive shallows exposed at low tide. Plus, English Channel tides were "extreme" between 15' to 20' against a normal 3-4' tide. The beaches were acceptable, but very flat a low tide leaving three hundred yards to cross before any cover from enemy fire. "Omaha" was the center of the "Lazy L" shaped shore. V Corps assaulted the right one-half of Omaha -- the 7,000 yards-long Omaha at the base of bluffs the were sheer cliffs at each end. The Germans built obstacles. Second, the incoming tide hid **11** irregular "runnel" trenches (2-4') caused by tidal current. The high tide line was barricaded by 8' high "shingle" stone walls or flat rocks stacked on top of each other. On the east two-thirds of the beach winds backfilled the walls with sand so paths could not be bulldozed through. At the west end, the shingle was on a concrete sea wall from 4 to 12 feet with a several 100 -yard gap filled with stones. Behind was a paved or dirt beach road **12** from Exit D-1 to Exit E-3.

Between the dune (sea wall) lines was a flat beach leading to the bluffs at the water line at each end. In the middle theses flats were two hundred yards wide near the center with patches of marsh and high grass up the bluffs. Summer homes and the tiny les Moulins village lay clustered on the road. Some were demolished by the Germans; others had hidden guns. Most histories discuss the bluffs behind as 100 to 170 feet in height rising "sharply" from the beach. It a "bit of a stretch." The "bluffs" are more in the 60 to 100 feet range and are saleable without ropes or climbing equipment. Instead, they were "generally steep, but in varying degree" and "farther east, the rise is easier but reaches higher elevations."

> The grass-covered slopes are more uneven than they appear … Many small folds or irregularities provide opportunity for cover … and from Exit E-1 eastward the bluff sides are partly covered with low



Map IV D-Day Objectives V Corps *(Omaha Beachhead)*

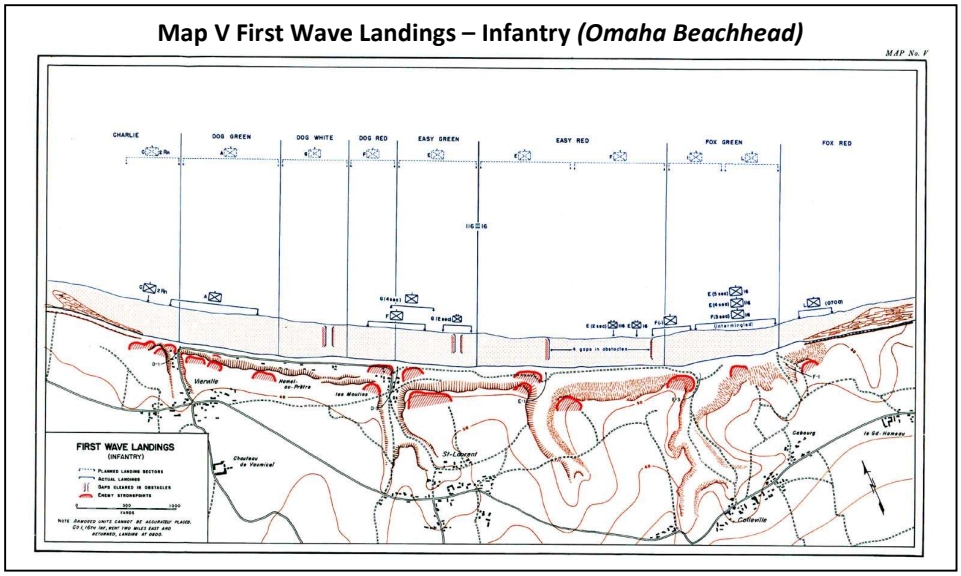
scrub and brush … (The) bluff ends in a clear-cut crest line …

At four points … small, wooded valleys slope back inland and provide natural corridors for exit from the beach flat. A paved road … at Exit D-1; the other draws had unimproved roads. These corridors were … key areas both in the … attack and … defenses. The advance inland … (required) opening exit roads for traffic and supply … (up) the draws. Near the eastern end … (a) steep draw … (was a planned) fifth exit route (F-1).**13-14-15**

On top is a rolling plain 250 feet (*more like 80 feet)* high with no ridge line and views blocked by hedgerows. Three stone house farming villages of Vierville, St-Laurent, and Colleville were on the Grandcamp to Bayeux coast road. South of the beach heights, the land plunged down to sea level for the west flowing Aure River to Carentan. It was flooded making a mile-wide barrier. South of the Aure the land gradually rises to the heights of Cerisy Forest (12 miles south and 400 feet above sea level). This was an important tactical objective – perfect for artillery and to spoil a German counterattack.

After gaining the beaches and heights above, the 1st Army had to drive both south to the Forest and west to link with Utah forces across the flooded lowlands between. These "sea level" flatlands were 10 miles by 5 miles from Formigny-Trévières west to the Vire Estuary. Here lay strong fortifications against the sea approaches to the lowland city of Carentan and the main highway Paris - Caen - Cherbourg. The highway crossed the Aure River at Insigny. Both were key objectives to join U.S. V and VII Corps. **16** **17**The east-west Carentan-Isigny-Bayeux highway was one of few paved roads as a north-south highway linked Bayeux to the St-Lô, but remaining north-south roads were poor, winding. narrow and steep shouldered. Next came local lanes and dirt farm tracks. Advances required engineering road work in a profusion of local roads hidden in impenetrable hedgerows. Thus, cutting a double-track railroad Paris (via Caen) to Cherbourg south of the Aure was mandatory. **18**

Map V First Wave Landings – Infantry *(Omaha Beachhead)*

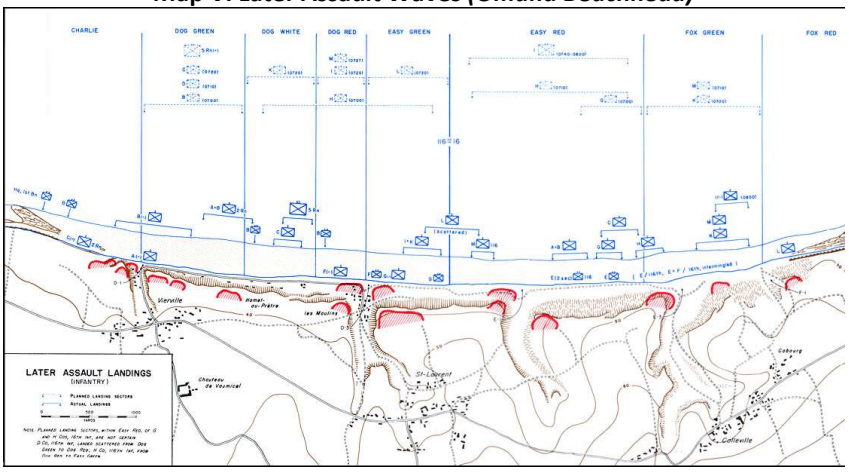


Trévières, the largest populated area at Omaha Beach had but 800 with only 10,000 in the area. Farms were grouped in small straggling hamlets of stone houses. Church towers were key to observation as proven by the ruin of most. **19** Normandy soldiers lived from hedgerow to hedgerow in a patchwork of small fields from just 10 to only 100-acres. Since fields were irregularly shaped, roads and borders drifted and turned. Over eons as shrubs and tree grew their "root balls" rose up to 9 feet above ground making an impenetrable ball of trees, roots, vines and scrub. The wood tangle above and roots below ground were impenetrable - period. Gates or dynamite – were the only ways in or out.

4. **<u>The Great Mistakes of Hedgerow Fighting and Lack of Direct Air Support in Normandy</u>**. The Allies "missed" the "hedgerows" -- a "problem was hiding in plain sight". Soldiers walking the lanes between were "picked off". If they cut through hedges the sound alerted Germans. Walking across a field was a trap. Tank tracks were designed to crawl up and over such obstacles which was a disaster exposing thin bottoms armor. Climbing hedgerow pointed guns skyward and then straight down until it hit a level field to fire. The first fantastic solution was mounting bulldozer blades on Sherman tanks it worked until someone failed to order "dozer" kits for Normandy! It very frustrating. Hedgerows were so obvious. English inventor Gen Percy Hobart also failed to see the need.[7] U.S. Army Sgt. Cullen gained fame for his "field fix" of "hedge row prongs". <u>Unfortunately, his fix came on the eve the Allies "broke out" of Normandy – a day late and far too many hedgerows short!</u> Germans hid in the rows to use flat-trajectory, short range weapons. Observation was nearly impossible as defenders preset mortars and weapons. Split up by hedgerow, attackers could not communicate or coordinate attacks anything as large as a company. Fighting was a platoon -squad affair.

Another known deficiency was close air support. Incredibly, AAF fighter planes could not communicate with ground forces by "radio". As mentioned, plane radios had 4 quartz crystals or 4 radio broadcast channels. There were not enough "channels" for AAF fighter bombers to talk to the ground soldiers they were defending and did not know <u>"enemy" from "friendly" forces. It seems odd (unbelievable) fighter planes lacked air-to-ground radios – it was inexcusable and a well-known issue since the North Africa battles!</u> Gen Quesada, U.S. *Ninth Air Force,* obtained Sherman tanks and installed AAF radios along with pilots in tanks to control air support for them. *(Not for infantry; which is hard to understand!)* Even with the mistaken bombing of U.S. forces at Cassino, the <u>term "close air support" of ground forces in "official" histories is not mentioned until Normandy! The need was missed!</u>

Map VI Later Assault Waves *(Omaha Beachhead)*



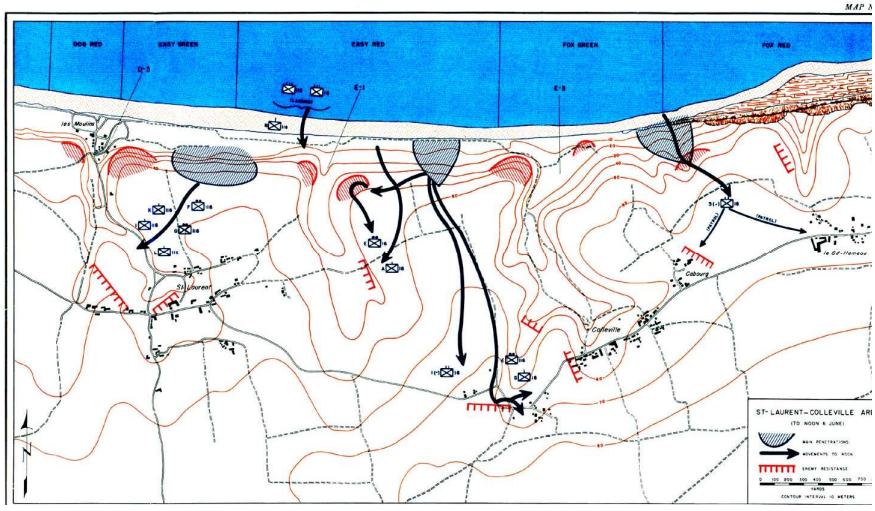
5. **<u>Enemy Defenses.</u>** Hitler touted his famous "Atlantic Wall" would defeat any invasion as a: "A belt of strongpoints and gigantic fortifications runs from Kirkenes (Norway) to the Pyrenees.... It is my unshakable decision to make this front impregnable against every enemy." Normandy had 32 fortified strongpoints from the Vire to Port-en-Bessin. The Vire Estuary, Grandcamp, and Port-en-Bessin were defended. The Omaha beach area had 12 direct fire strongpoints intended to delay the assault for reinforcements to arrive and eliminate the attackers. Direct fire machine guns and artillery would hold invaders on the beaches until reserves arrived. There was no Plan "B". Beach obstacles had Element "C," gate-like structures of iron frames and supports. On rollers *Belgian Gates* were 250 yards below the

[7] Major General **Sir Percy Cleghorn Stanley Hobart** (14 June 1885 – 19 February 1957), also known as "Hobo", was a British engineer and commander of the 79th Armoured Division responsible for many of the specialized armor vehicles ("Hobart's Funnies") of the ETO. *Wikipedia.*

high-water line with Teller mines on the uprights. Logs driven at up angles had mine-tipped ends or log ramps were reinforced and mined. “Hedgehogs” were 5.5 feet tall with 3 or more rails or angles crossed and welded at the centers **20** **21** to stave in landing craft bottoms and sides. The highwater line was mined. Rolls of concertina or barbed wire with other “mischiefs” as buried TNT set off with trip wires, French "buttercup" mines, mustard pots and dummy minefields were employed. Cliff top firing pits with base-of-hill concrete bunkers, open trench and pit firing positions were lethal. Then were mortars, anti-ship guns, mobile and fixed 88-mm guns with strong points at the draws. Sadly, Omaha succeeded because there were more U.S. targets than the Germans could kill! A smaller force would have failed.

Omaha success was simple: staying on the beach meant death. The way out was up off the off beaches by climbing slopes with small folds, gullies and grass for hiding. Gen Gearhardt led 29th ID men crawling up the folds to the top to clear their exit down the draw attacking from behind. An inventory showed the Germans had 60 light artillery; 8 concrete enclosed and 4 open casemates; 35 light gun pillboxes; and 18 antitank guns (37-mm to 75-mm). The most murderous were large pill boxes facing down the beach to shoot parallel at soldiers that got beyond the shingle barriers to dry beaches. These had concrete “flash-walls” (“wingwalls) to hide blast flames from navy view. The few tanks that made the beaches were the only weapons to counter them highlighting a Navy failure to put bombarding ships far offshore away from “field artillery” fire. The Navy finally

Map VIII – St. Laurent-Coleville Area Noon *(Omaha Beachhead)*



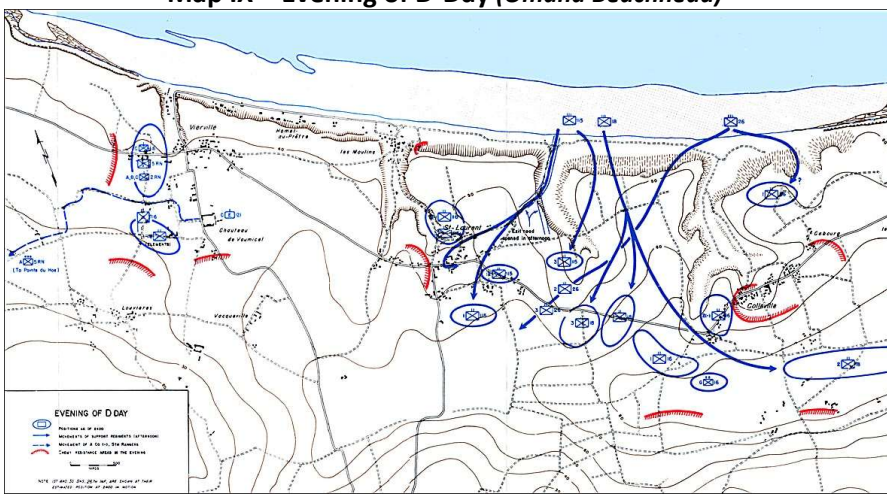
> … brought (them) to task much later when a few brave destroyers closed to within 50 yards of the beach to finally assist the soldiers. Incredibly, a lone tank on the beach caught their attention. When destroyer guns let loose on the hidden gun, the front cover wall disappeared, and the concrete emplacement was knocked off of the cliff. This apparently “turned the battle” to favor the Allies. After the battle 40 rocket pits were found hundreds of yards inland from the cliffs. **22** **23** (This speaks to the bravery of their destroyers!)

Three miles west of Omaha, Army Rangers scaled vertical cliffs to eliminate six 155-mm German guns in thick-walled casements only to find there were no guns. They were found in trees where Rangers destroyed them with thermite grenades (a welding torch heat). “This position was regarded as the most dangerous in the American … (sector)”. West behind these cliffs were the mysterious, concreted Maisy batteries with 4-155-mm guns. Little is written of Maisy in “official” histories, but now they are museums. There was confusion (or a “cover-up”) post-war about these guns and their impact. They were buried after the war. Only by private efforts located, excavated and opened a museum. ***Omaha Beachhead,* the first “official” history mentions these guns. The others ignore their existence.** The amount of fire at the invasion fleets exceeded German guns at Omaha and Point du Hoc guns were

inoperative. A search located the buried Maisy batteries. They were likely "covered up" due the failure to locate them before D-Day.[8]

Also, west at Gefosse-Fontenay were four 105-mm howitzers and east at the British Port-en-Bessin guns likely shelled Omaha. Yet, main defenses were at beaches with no "prepared positions inland for a defense in depth … (other than) a few minefields … (and) scattered emplacements at bivouac areas and assembly points … Defense beyond the beach … (involved) local reserves in counterattack." **24**

Map IX – Evening of D-Day *(Omaha Beachhead)*



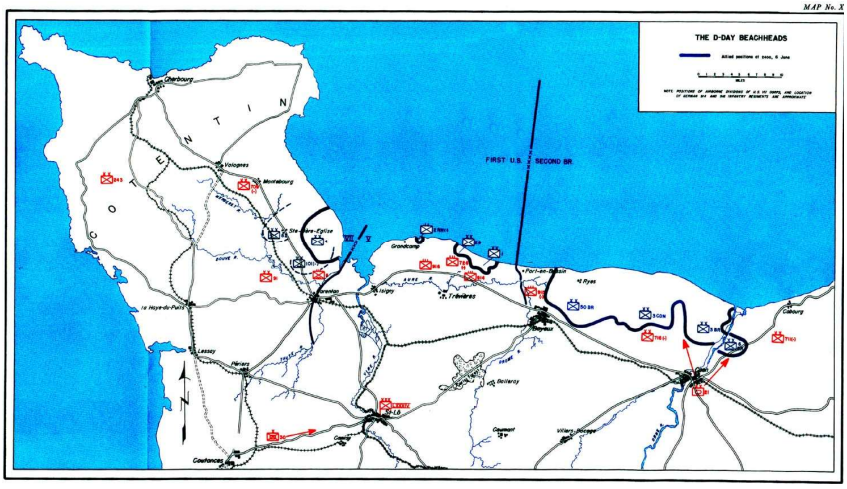
Omaha was in the 53-mile wide *716th Infantry Division* zone from the Orne River to Vire Estuary - a defensive division of two regiments and 2-3 artillery battalions with 50% non-Germans (Poles or Russians) of poor morale. The *726th Regiment* (not division) held the coast from Grandcamp east to Port-en-Bessin. Omaha Beach had a reinforced German battalion of 800 - 1,000 troops. The *716th Division* had two battalions that could reach Omaha in three hours – making shore counterattacks unlikely. The nearest reserve … was the *352d Infantry Division* at St Lo-Caumont 20 miles inland. Under Gen Hellmich it was a good offensive division with veterans of the Russian front expected to oppose **25** V Corps with its three full strength battalions of 105-mm and one battalion of 150mm howitzers. They had one of its RCTs at Omaha by D-Day afternoon and 3 small battalions of the *30th Mobile Brigade …* at Coutances. Other reserves were at Caen-Bayeux in the British zone. The three German divisions in the west Cotentin took VII Corps' attack there. "It was thought that the German air force would make a supreme effort … (with) 1,500 sorties on D Day … In view of the overwhelming Allied naval strength, there was little fear of enemy (Naval) surface action … (besides) raids by E-Boats on the flanks … underwater attack by U-Boats from bases in western France."

6. Pre-Assault Bombardment Plans. Grandiose air plans foresaw German beach fortifications eliminated with bombs as landing craft arrived. Eighth Air Force bombers would stun defenders providing vast crater holes in the beach protecting the soldiers on the sand flats -- a "perfect" plan. The Germans would too stunned and/or deaf to fire! It would be a first in history "walk-in" invasion! It

[8] Post war enthusiasts were convinced the volume and size of German artillery fire exceeded that which was found on Omaha Beach and given that the Point du Hoc batteries were "spiked" by the assaulting rangers the source remained a mystery. Interestingly, this appears to be the only Army history – written as the war preceded – that mentions the massive fortifications. Post-war they were buried. Enthusiast, including Mr. Gary Sterne, persisted, and ultimately located and excavated the buried gun positions. They now are a private museum open during summer months. Contact: info@maisybattery.com // 00447411932197. Books concerning ***"THE COVER-UP AT POINTE DU HOC" are available for sale.***

sounded too good, because it was negligently false. **The massive US AAF Eighth AF carpet bombing exceeded a 99.9% failure rate.** In fact, WWII recorded five of this miffed efforts out of six attempts --- Number six (COBRA) killed Gen McNair, Gen Marshall's Army Ground Forces Commander! The concept of stunning the Germans with mass bombing was valid (*see* COBRA), but Air Force execution was flawed. For OVELORD the Eighth Air Force insisted upon pre-assault bombing to: 1) kill or wound defenders; 2) "stun" unconscious the rest; and 3) to create beach foxholes for assaulting troops. The "official" history states: "… the entire U.S. landings on Omaha Beach were to be preceded by intensive air and naval bombardment in the half-hour before touchdown … to neutralize all known gun positions and to demoralize enemy troops … (Just) before D Day air attacks were planned against coastal batteries in the NEPTUNE area, but only as part of a widespread program which put its heaviest attacks on the French coast north of the Seine." Defenses north of the Seine in the *Fifteenth Army* zone were to be bombed to "confuse" the enemy. It did not work. The Pointe du Hoc battery west of the OVERLORD beaches was the exception as it was hit 15 April, 22 May, and 4; June. RAF bombed coastal batteries from the Seine to Cherbourg with **26, 27, 28** 1,333 heavy RAF bombers and 5,316 tons of bombs. The Eighth Air Force D-Day effort was:

Map X – D-Day Beachheads *(Omaha Beachhead)*



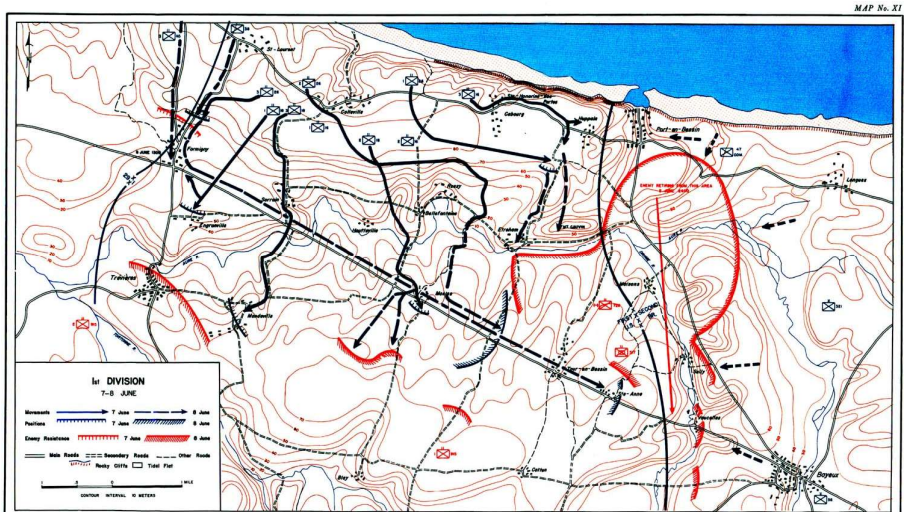
"From H-30 to H-5 minutes heavy bombers … (struck) beach defenses in the … V Corps' (OMAHA) zone (as) 480 B-24's were to attack 13 target areas with 1,285 tons of bombs. … 11 were between Pointe de la Percée and the eastern end of the Omaha landing zone, **including every strongpoint in the system of beach defenses** … (with) 100-pound fragmentation and high-explosive … (and) some 500-pound high-explosive bombs for certain strongpoints. All … (had) instantaneous fuzes in order to prevent cratering of the beach … Pointe du Hoe would receive a final attack by 18 medium bombers … between H-20 and H-5 minutes … **(and) a blow of equal weight at Maisy,** and the gun positions there and at Gefosse Fontenay were the targets of two squadrons of fighter-bombers." *(Comment: as mentioned references to the German "Maisy" batteries disappeared in later histories.)*

Pre-assault Navy fire was from H-40 minutes to H-3 minutes. Battleships *Texas* and *Arkansas* with ten 14-inch, twelve 12-inch, and twelve 5-inch guns fired from 18,000 yards lobbing 600 rounds at Pointe du Hoc and Exit D-3. Three cruisers, with 6-inch guns fired 950 rounds at Port-en-Bessin and D-3 and E-1 draws. From one mile eight destroyers (4- and 5-inch guns) sent in 2.000 rounds. Approaching fire-support craft saw: (1) five LCG (L)'s with two 47-mm guns fire 630 rounds at H-20 minutes; 16 LCT's with two M-4 tanks firing 150 rounds; 10 LCT (5) with 36-105-mm self-propelled howitzers fired 100 rounds per gun; and 9 LCT (R)'s fired 1,000 HE rockets 300 yards out. Plans put the weight on "immediate beach defenses in the Omaha area …" These were not the results!

Soldiers found few useable shell holes in sand. At H-Hour naval fires shifted inland until shore fire control parties landed to radio requests (one party for every 1,000 men)! It was slim and assumed all radios worked. It failed. Fire Support 29 Group I (a battleship, cruiser, and four destroyers) were on call for the 29th ID; a Group II for the 1st Division. They were not used. Portable, hand-held radios were rare, delicate and ineffective. Their vacuum tubes of glass were too delicate for battlefield use.

7. Plan of Assault Landings. Air and naval bombing and shelling was "designed to soften up the beach defenses"—a term undefined. But "the main job of breaking through inland would have to be done by the assault landing teams … (using) every type of specialized technique and weapon needed … (and every) unit … had been trained to carry out a particular task in a definite area." (**Maps I to IV**). The area was in sectors. The 1st ID had the two eastern sectors with two of its three regiments attacking Easy Red and Fox Green on about 3,000 yards (1.5 miles wide). Its 16th RCT assaulted with two "Battalion Landing Teams ("BLT's") abreast on each beach sub-sector. The support battalion would land at Easy Red at H+70 minutes. On the four western subsectors (Dog Green, Dog White, Dog Red, and Easy Green), about 3,000 yards, the 116th RCT would also assault with two BLT's abreast. Plus, two battalion of Rangers (six companies each) scaled Pointe du Hoe cliffs for the fortified batteries.

Map XI – 1st Division 7-8 June *(Omaha Beachhead)*



The "complexity" of landing schedules for the 116th RCT (29th ID) is shown below in the box entitled **"Landing, Omaha Beach (116th RCT)** – depicting each wave for Omaha's dawn H-hour at low tide. It was difficult, because low tide landings meant greater casualties in making the relative safety of the shingle walls, but low tide gave engineers time to clear obstacles so craft could land. At H-5 minutes Companies B and C (DD tanks) would first land on Dog White and Dog Green Beaches. These "swimmer" tanks were launched three miles out to "motor" to shore to fire from the water's edge covering the first troop assaults on Dog Beach Exit D-l. They were to aid up and through Exit D-3. At H- Hour eight LCT's would land Company A, 743rd **30**-**31** IB on Easy Green and Dog Red. Eight tank dozers would land towing explosive trailers for demolition engineers to blow up the obstacles.

At H+1 minute four companies in six LCVP "boat sections" landed. Company A on Dog Green led the attack to Exit D-1. Companies E, F, and G to the east hit German defenses. Each section had own mission. Infantry and tanks would occupy defenders as demolition parties blew beach obstacles. The teams landed in 13 LCM's 3 - 11 minutes from apart. Each 41-man assault team had demolition experts to blow and mark 50-yard wide "lanes" (or gaps) through beach obstacles. Eight tank dozers would push, break and tow off obstacles and carry the demolitions needed in 30 minutes (30 minutes of

German target practice!) At H+30 first assault forces waves began to land over 30 minutes with two regiments, headquarters, two Chemical Weapons companies and combat engineers to blow paths through the mine fields above high water. Next, vehicle beach exits cleared by H+3 hours (1000 hours) as engineers built the roads up the draws for trucks. By noon traffic would flow over beaches up the draws into the battle areas beyond! **Those were the plans!**

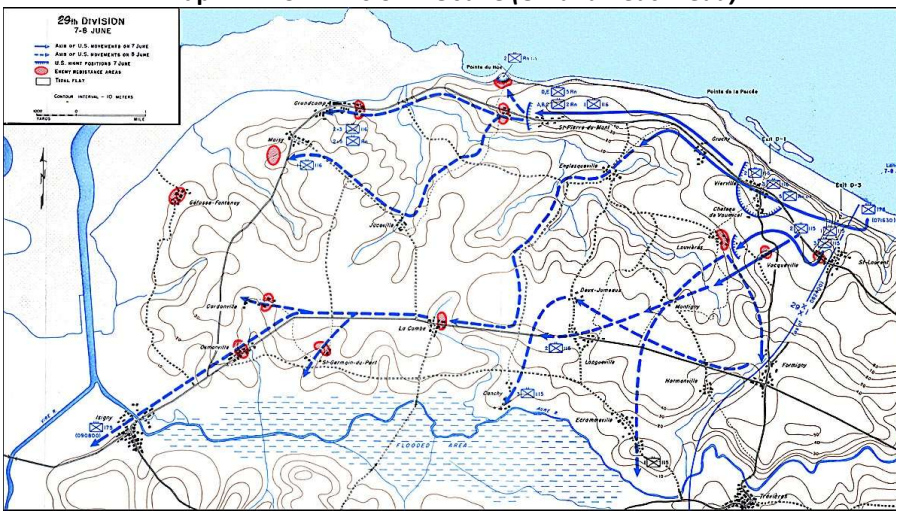
As stated, the Allies did not know the German 352nd Infantry Division was defending Omaha. At British beaches resistance was firm - not strong. Utah Beach faced almost none. Fierce Omaha fighting offset the much lighter resistance elsewhere. **32** At H+90, the 58th and 111th FAB arrived on OMAHA with the 467th AAA Battalion and 116th RCT (29th ID) anti-tank company. The third H+180 waive brought vehicles and H+240 (on D+1) had cranes, tank-recovery, half-tracks, and trucks using rhino-ferries and DUKW's.

On Easy Red and Fox Green, the 16th RCT landed per **Maps V and VI.** Three companies of the 741St TB were to land on Easy Red and Fox Green with Co A on their middled boundary. Engineers, artillery and supply had similar schedules landing at H+195 minutes with the 18th RCT at Easy Red. The 115th RCT landed behind the 116th IR.

8. Plan for Movement to Inland Objectives. The "two assault regimental combat teams were expected to break through the beach defenses within the first two hours … to open traffic off the beach by H+3 hours." After defeating beach defenses, they were to reform at assembly areas 1/2 mile inland for inland missions (**Map IV)** with 2nd BLT capturing Colleville to high ground south to guard against counterattacks from Trévières or Bayeux. The 3d BLT went east on behind German bluff defenses to Ste-Honorine-des-Pertes to anchor the division east flank at Mount Cauvin. The 1st BLT had Formigny and high ground over the Trévières and Aure Valley and the Trévières bridges. The 1st ID, 18th RCT crossed the Aure River at Colleville to high ground east of Trévières. The 26th RCT (Force "B") **33** defended south and southeast of Tour-en-Bessin to reach out and contact the 50 (British) Division.

West, 29th ID had the area between the flooded Aure Valley (south) and sea (north). After gaining Vierville, the 1st BLT and Rangers would rush west from Omaha to the Vire Estuary poised to seize Isigny in the valley west and to then connect with UTAH forces. The 2nd BLT had St-Laurent and higher ground southwest. The 3rd BLT, in capturing Longueville, had the higher ground 2,500 yards west, also ready to attack west to Isigny. The 115th IR would mop up and later move to la Combe via Longueville high ground south of the Aure River. The 175th Force "B" was corps reserve arriving D+1. Artillery had five105-mm howitzer battalions, two for assault RCT's to inland along with Navy guns directed by shore party teams. V Corps was stoutly positioned for a major D+1 attack south over the Aure River, up the hills on its south side onto high ground southward to

Map XII – 29th Division 7-8 June *(Omaha Beachhead)*



the huge Cerisy Forest and west through river valleys to Isigny and UTAH Planners hoped to force the Germans out of Vire River valley south to Carentan. **34** It was a "pipedream"!**35**

F. Pre-Operation UTAH Beach to Cherbourg Description of Beach [9]; American Forces in Action Series Historical Division War Department, 1 Oct 1947 xyza

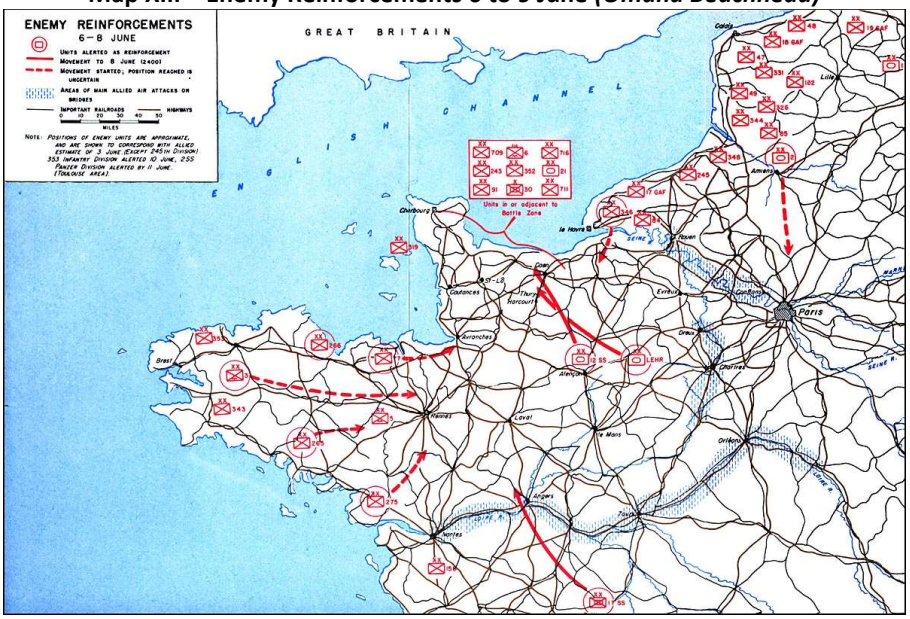
Comment: Department of the Army Historical Division, Washington 25, D.C. 1 October 1947. The following serves to introduce Maj. Ruppenthal whose history of the Services of Supply (SOS) in the ETO is included. Ruppenthal's efforts appear credible. He had the task of noting and describing a lack of post E-Day Invasion Plans, the Secret *Operation Chastity* ports and the absolute logistical nightmare Gen Bradley caused, with Eisenhower's concurrence, when he abandoned plans for a firm logistical base in France to bomb Germans into submission as Soviets "chewed up" German forces. Ruppenthal's history of the Services of Supply in the ETO adds perspective and is a valuable recording of the logistics famine in the ETO until 1 February 1945 when the "famine" was extinguished. His first history, however, is the marvelous, detailed:

> *Utah Beach to Cherbourg,* thirteenth in the series called AMERICAN FORCES IN ACTION, is the last of three narratives dealing with the U.S. military operations in Normandy … a companion volume to *Omaha Beachhead,* published in 1946, the present study rounds out the account of the landings at corps-level and below and relates the course of VII Corps combat operations which resulted in the capture of Cherbourg on 27 June 1944. The third volume, *St-Lo*, relates the operations of a single corps in the First Army's offensive …
>
> *Utah Beach to Cherbourg* is the work of Maj. Roland G. Ruppenthal, member of the 2d Information and Historical Service, attached to the First Army … The sources … consist primarily of the official records of the units … data collected by the writer and other historical officers ... Material on the enemy was derived chiefly from the War Diary of the German Seventh Army, which was captured in August 1944 by Polish forces at Falaise; from interviews with high-ranking German commanders; and from the war diaries of divisional units encountered in the Cotentin Peninsula. Of the American division records, only those of the 9th and 4th Divisions constitute adequate historical evidence. Only the barest outline of the 79th Division's operations was obtainable … and there were only scattered official records of the two airborne divisions. The gap in … the airborne division was largely filled by voluminous material gathered in interviews by Col. S.L.A. Marshall in the field shortly after the action. Supplementary data on the 9th and 4th Divisions were gathered by the author in the field, and … by its historian, Lt. Col. William T. Gayle. No interviews were held in the 90th Division, and in the 79th Division a first-hand account of one regiment's action was not obtained until 1947. The paucity of material on these two division was keenly felt because of the inadequacy of their official records. ***iv***
>
> Despite prolonged research and care … the information is not complete … (so) readers who have additional or corrective information are urged to send it directly to the Historical Division …

[9] The authors are the Army Historical Division, 1947 as part of the "American Forces in Action" series, 20 September 1945.

"The maps were prepared in the Cartographic Section of the Historical Division … Photographs were selected … (from) Army Signal Corps, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, Acme News Pictures, The Associated Press, and *Life.*" **V**

Map XIII – Enemy Reinforcements 6 to 9 June *(Omaha Beachhead)*



(These comments are fascinating introspection into the challenge of writing "official" war histories and a credit to the efforts of researchers and authors. An obvious comment concerns the efforts of other WWII historians who lacked the facilities, access and information that Major Ruppenthal enjoyed!)

1. **<u>Launching the Invasion and Terrain.</u>** I am ashore with Colonel Simmons and General Roosevelt, advancing steadily (0940). ... Everything is going OK (1025) ... Defense is not stubborn (2400)." Thus did Col. James A. Van Fleet report the progress of his 8th Infantry to his commander, Maj Gen Barton of the 4th Division, on D Day, 6 June 1944. "Everything is moving along very nicely." To Maj Gen Collins, VII Corps, these assured at least a foothold was secured on the Cotentin Peninsula and with less difficulty than had been feared.

> … Hard fighting in the Cotentin Peninsula had preceded the seaborne landings, as two airborne divisions, the 82d and 101st, had been dropped into the beachhead area several miles inland beginning at about H minus 5 hours. Their mission was to seize crossings or destroy bridges over the Merderet and Douve Rivers and secure vital exits of causeways leading inland … (for) the 4th Division. The … success of the UTAH assault was largely dependent on the success of their operation.

UTAH was not part of the original invasion. Then planners saw a Cotentin assault north of the "Carentan estuary" would speed capturing Cherbourg -- the second priority. **1** The Supreme Commander pushed the issue in January as essential and resources were found with planes to land 2-2/3^{rds} airborne divisions (two parachute, 2/3rds glider). **2** After gaining their air and beachheads the forces were to attack north to capture Cherbourg. VII Corps had the mission.

2. **<u>Tactical Aspects of the Terrain.</u>** The Douve River and its tributary, the Merderet, drained the peninsula to the south before turning north to the sea, flows south and southeast, and then turns toward the sea. **(Map I*).*** The lowlands south of the river mouth were tillable due to an old lock and dam system that kept sea water from flooding during high tides. The Germans reversed the process to flood vast areas of the lowlands at a lock and dam at la Barquette, just north of the principal town of

Carentan. The second effect was to canalize all traffic to the raised highways through the lowlands. These extended to a vast swampland across much of the base of the peninsula known as the Prairies Marécageuses. Simply put, the intentional German flooding meant one small bridge at Insigny was the only connecting link between Omaha and Utah beaches. The bad news was good news since the swamps of the Marécageuses also hindered German access to reinforce defend the peninsula. In addition to the bride(s) control of the la Barquette locks permitted the possessor to raise or lower huge tracts of flooded lands. Critical areas were: (1) the Carentan-la Barquette area control of the water levels in the marsh on the Douve and Merderet rivers, (2) the dry ground between St. Lô-d'Ourville and St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont for dry ground access up the west shore of the peninsula and (3) the flooded area at the mouth of the Douve River and Quinéville, which not only restricted the exploitation by canalizing any advance from the beachhead, but also facilitated the enemy's defense of the area.

The airborne forces were to capture causeway exists off UTAH and all the flooded area between Ste. Mère-Eglise and Carentan. **3** *UTAH* Beach, straight east of Ste. Mère-Eglise was smooth, with a low gradient. The beach was backed by a masonry sea wall 4 to 8 feet high at the landing points. Sand was piled against the sea wall face ramping over the top. Gaps in the wall allowed four causeways from the mainland across a vast flooded zone onto the beach island. Defending the causeways was the easier better solution for German defenders. ,

3. Enemy Defenses. On the beaches were low water obstacles of all types. Defenses had pillboxes, tank turrets, "Tobruk Pits," trenches, and bomb shelters, **4** but were sparse compared to OMAHA. Inland were a few artillery batteries, the worst **5** Crisbecq and St. Martin-de-Varreville with guns in concrete forts. Here two divisions, the 243rd and the 709th, defended. They were raised from "static" to "limited employment" forces. The Germans relied upon: (1) rigid beach defenses; (2) reinforcing the *709th* with the *243rd*; (3) some counterattacks and (4) a large counterattack with armor by D +2. The *91st ID* recently arrived to strengthen **6** the east half Carentan to Valognes. The three divisions were *LXXXIV Corps,* which was a surprise for the U.S. 4th ID that upset VII Corps plans.

4. The Allies Use Enemy Defenses for Defenses against the Enemy. An obvious fact not noted in the historians was the devilish trick of the Allies to use German defenses against the Germans. They created a huge moat around their defended "castle" which the Allies used as their own defensive moat! Viewing the "VI Corps Front" map one sees how Germans flooded the base of the Cotentin Peninsula canalizing attacks north onto the coast strip of poor ground. By landing on the southeast corner of the Cotentin just above the inundations, the Allies shoved across the Cotentin base with their left flank saved by the huge, artificial *Prairies Marécageuses* swamp. Brilliant strategy that forced the Germans to rely upon poor west coast roads. Here, Germans "out-smarted themselves"!

Remote Controlled Bomb

5. The VII Corps Plan. VII Corps would cut the base and attack north to capture Cherbourg. Original D-Day plans were changed when **7** the *91st Division* arrived to double German Cotentin forces. Rapid sea reinforcement was jet to keep Germans from blowing the Carentan locks sealing off the east peninsula to keep the two corps

from meeting in low land outflow area. **8** Gen Bradley put Ridgway and Taylors' 82nd and 101st divisions under Gen Collins, the VII Corps commander. *(Note: Bradley was little involved in D-Day plans)*.

Late changes kept both divisions east of the north south Merderet River. The 82nd AID would attack hit west 27 miles to the Cotentin west coast severing the peninsula. Due to hedgerows, it would drop east and west of the Douve River – a known invitation for "defeat in detail." **9** It gave the enemy the west one-half of the Cotentin as a reinforcement avenue, but there was no solution. The 82nd first had to hole Ste. Mère-Eglise and two bridges on the Merderet River. The 101st AID filled the space between the town the 4th ID at UTAH by grabbing the four causeway exit roads from the beach west toward St. Mere Eglise. The 101st would go south for Carentan while the 4th, 90tg and 9th ID's cut the peninsula and went north after the Cherbourg port. The 4th ID was on D-Day; 90th ID on D+1; and the 9th on D+4 with the 79th later at D+8. Two hours after UTAH, 4th Cavalry hit St. Marcouf Island north of the beaches. **10-11**

Air forces intensely bombed rails and air bases attempt to camouflage the invasion site by making more attacks north of the Seine on the Pas de Calais. Midnight 5 June RAF bomber struck invasion batteries, especially Crisbecq and St. Martin-de-Varreville. As troops approached, Ninth AF mediums bombed UTAH batteries and invasion air defense over the assault armada. The planes circled above "on-call" from land forces. TF 125 had bomb and a support crafts of a battleship, 5 cruisers, 8 destroyers, and 3 subchasers. At H-40 minutes the naval guns fired on German batteries as 33 landing craft carried rocket launchers and artillery to support assault waves neared shore.

6. <u>Preparing and Mounting the Operation.</u> It all began at the Assault Training Center, Wollacombe, for practice of assaulting strong points and demolition training. Adding airborne created "realistic" practices at Slapton Sands for marshalling, embarking, and assaulting. Utah was TIGER (27-28 April 1944) and FABIUS (4 May 1944). The author asserts troops became assault "specialists", which seems a bit of a stretch. It began the second week of May as troops moved to sausage-shaped marshalling areas in south England locked into security areas – no exceptions; to be briefed and "waterproofed" vehicles with "grease" and long air intake and exhaust attachments. On 1 and 2 June **12** soldiers marched or rode to their "lock down" bases. Navy Task Force U, Rear Adm. Moon was Western Naval Task Force under Adm Kirk under Royal Navy Adm Ramsay, commander of Allied Naval Expeditionary Forces. Task Force U worked due to great cooperation between Gen Collins and Adm Moon.[10] It had 865 vessels or craft in 12 convoys from nine sortie points all complicated by the one-day D-Day postponement. OMAHA. And UTAH forces loaded 3 June (a day earlier) to spend an extra day at sea crisscrossing to "kill" time.

Unloading was 12.7 miles off UTAH where sweeps cleared boat lanes through mines marking channels with red and green lighted dan buoys. At 0229 the Command Ship *Bayfield* anchored furthest out as others took station nearer to shore. LCT's, LST's and Rhino ferries waited for troops from transports *Barnet* and *Bayfield* for UNCLE RED Beach; the *Dickman* and *Empire Gauntlet* troops for TARE GREEN. H Hour was 0630. **13**

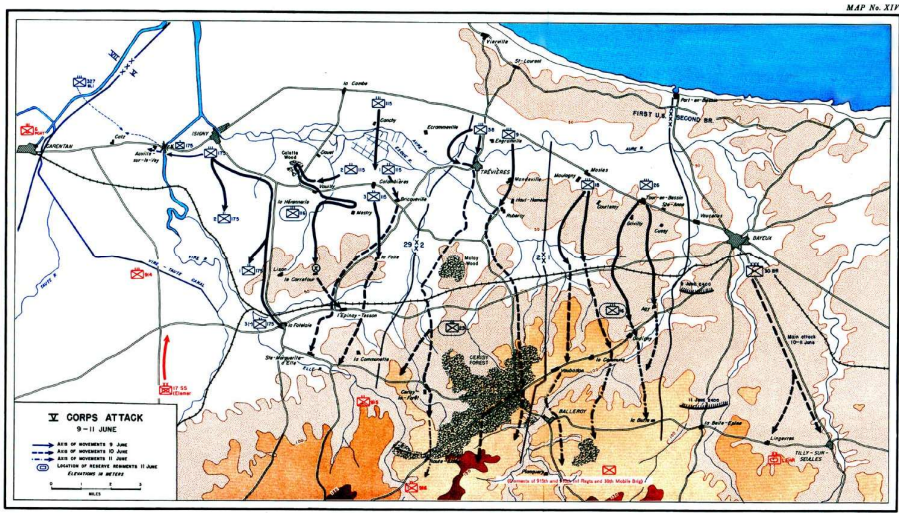
[10] It also succeeded due to the unexpected paucity of German resistance. UTAH was as surprisingly underdefended as OMAHA was surprisingly over-defended. UTAH, however, did not have a surprise division comparable to finding the *352nd Infantry Division* in full force and fury at Omaha.

G. Chapter 8: The Invasion is Launched from the Ports; Cross-Channel Attack, Gordon A. Harrison: xyza May to July 1944

(Note: The 1945 and 1947 *American Forces in Action Series* for *Omaha* and *Utah* were first summarized above. This *Cross-Channel Attack* by Gordon Harrison is the true "official" history).

1. <u>The Sixth of June: *The Invasion Is Launched*.</u> The complicated effort to organize and equip assault units began in April when troops moved to concentration areas for special equipment, waterproof vehicles and shed noncombat elements. Next came marshaling areas at embarkation sites for final supplies, briefing and boatloads formed. Force U (VII Corps, 4th ID) was marshaled in Tor Bay area and Plymouth; Force O (1st ID) near Dorchester; and Force B (29th ID) Plymouth and Falmouth. The two follow-ups. 9th ID and 2nd AD were near Southampton. About 54,000 men ran debarking sites with 4,500 new army cooks and 3,800 trucks of Southern Base Section. This **269** marshalling and launching such huge forces saw efforts by thousands somehow "come together" for "outloading". Marshalling went on until December when U.S. forces arrived direct from the U.S.

Map XIV – VI Corps' Attack: 8 – 11 June *(Omaha Beachhead)*

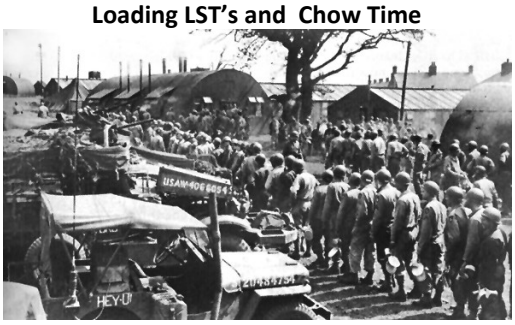


Assault soldiers trained in TIGER (Force U – VII Corps) in April, FABIUS (Force O - the 1st Division), Force B (29th Division). The loss of 700 men and two LST's to a German E-boat attack left zero LST reserves. Meanwhile, soldiers waited, frustrated at keeping secrets, although troops were not briefed until the last week in May and valuable information did not leak out because troops were locked up in barbed wire, no leaves and no mail sent. Some 2,000 Counterintelligence men guarded; camps were "locked down". Camouflage discipline enforced to avoid GAF bombing. **270-271**
Forces U, O and B loaded 30 May to 1 June at 18 ports divided in 12 convoys for moving cross-Channel.

2. <u>Operation OVERLORD was ready.</u> On 29 May meteorologist, RAF Group Captain Stagg predicted early June weather. Eisenhower cabled Marshall 3 June: "We have almost an even chance of having pretty fair conditions . . . " Marked deterioration was coming on Saturday and by D-Day 5 June it was stormy with low clouds with an unpredictable front that delayed the invasion seven hours! Forces O and U sailed anyway. At 0430 Sunday morning meeting had better seas but clouds halted air forces, so Eisenhower postponed 24 hours as he felt air supremacy vital. The invasion fleet backtracked. Sunday night, 4 June 2130 another Southwick House meeting had Group Captain Stag seeing a marked change as rain would clear to last until Tuesday morning with winds of 25-31 **272** knots or moderate. *<u>(For non-sailors, those are small craft warning type winds!)</u>*. Bombing Monday night and Tuesday was

possible, but clouds on Tuesday. The cloud base would allow air spotting of naval fire. The weather was barely tolerable. Adm Ramsay announced they had one-half hour to decide, but if the forces ordered for a D-Day Tuesday, 6 June were again recalled it would cancel the invasion until later in June.

Eisenhower could not delay to 19 June. Air Marshal Leigh-Mallory was skeptical; Tedder said it was "chancy" for bombers. **273** Eisenhower: "We have a great force of fighter-bombers," he said, and turning to Gen Montgomery he said: "I would say-Go!". At 2145 Eisenhower said: "I'm quite positive we must give the order...I don't like it, but there it is...I don't see how we can possibly do anything else." The invasion launched in choppy Channel waters as 5,000 ships and craft, the largest fleet ever assembled, held courses! Eisenhower just made the last of a long series of decisions lasting 3 ½ years. All just had to wait!



Loading LST's and Chow Time

> "The war leaders, the high commanders, the planners … had done what they could to ensure that the men … should have the greatest possible chance of success … The nearer H Hour approached, the more heavily and exclusively the responsibility for the invasion settled on the lower commanders.
>
> In the narrative to follow, the great names drop out. Even Eisenhower and Montgomery appear but seldom. In their place will be the corps and division commanders, the colonels, the lieutenants, and the privates. For the few will be substituted the many, as the battlefield … becomes a confused and disparate fact - a maze of unrelated orchards and strange roads, hedgerows, villages, streams and woods …
>
> One may say of almost any successful operation that it carried out the plan … Normandy assault was perhaps as thoroughly planned as any battle in the history of war. Nevertheless, the fighting men went in trained to improvise battlefield solutions … to outflank an enemy holed **274** up … The fighting in these terms proceeded … according to the trial and error of battle. It is to the narrative of this testing that we now turn.

(Hopefully, the reader comprehends the feelings of tension, excitement and relief that long last the Allies were striking back one day short of two years and seven months after Pearl Harbor!)

The Germans in France had no direct knowledge of the invasion. They lacked air reconnaissance, while naval patrols were canceled due to weather. On 1 and 2 June German agents heard BBC (radio) signals for the Resistance to stand by for orders for sabotage plans. On 5 June *OB WEST* and *Fifteenth Army* got "B" messages of an invasion in 48 hours – when paratroop planes took off. *Fifteenth Army* was on highest alert, but not *Army Group B,* Rommel was on convalescent leave at home. The authors state by 10 pm in Berlin there few actions the Germans could have taken. **275** The Navy concluded the invasion needed winds at Force 3 or below (24 knots) which was exceeded on 5 June. Here the Allied capture of German weather stations in the North Atlantic paid huge dividends as the Germans lacked data to predict a day of calmer weather. "Lulled into a sense of security by the weather and … that the Allies

had not yet completed essential preparatory bombardment … Admiral Krancke received reports … without alarm. Notice of the BBC affair was faithfully transcribed in his war diary for 6 June together with his assurances that nothing was likely to happen … " **276-277**

H. Chapter 6: Pre-Operation D-Day Normandy; Craven and Cate Army Air Forces in WWII, Vol III xyza

Air Reconnaissance before the Invasion (Chapter 6). Air reconnaissance units were especially busy. AEAF supervised reconnaissance to coordinate air efforts of 21 Army Group, naval forces and SHAEF as USSTAF reconn planes worked with AEAF for complete air coverage. Understrength, the Allied air forces had gained were somewhat understrength in photographic and tactical reconnaissance aircraft but by the spring of 1944 they had much experience and good methods. As D-day approached, tactical reconnaissance missions took an**179** especially urgent character. Ninth AF and Second TAF flew at 8 missions daily in hazardous weather north of the Seine to surveil trains, targets, troop movements, bridge and rail repairs. Ninth AF made 400 flights three weeks before D-Day to photographically map of Normandy and Pas-de-Calais from 3,500 feet. Ninth AF and Second TAF had photos of the beaches from wave-top heights, so commanders knew the offshore views. Reconn planes photographed yard of beach and areas behind including low-altitude photographs with two missions flown elsewhere for everyone over Normandy. The 10th Photo Reconn Group, Ninth Air Force. Flew 11 dangerous missions to locate underwater obstacles and beach barricades flying just 15' above the waves. They showed which were timber, steel and concrete, how explosives were fixed, densities and anchoring. One pilot was lost in these "Dicing" missions. ***180***

Plans worked well in confusing the enemy where on the west French Coast the invasion would be so German forces were concentrated in the *Fifteenth Army* area north of the Seine. *(Comment: Some of the enemy error arose from its own wishful thinking the attacks would be north of the Seine where it was most prepared to defend!)* Even so, the Allies successfully spread-out pre-invasion air missions in a manner that did not displace German predispositions towards the *Pas-de-Calais* area. The Germans were "wrong footed" per Gen Spaatz. While the "air forces could hardly claim full credit for this achievement", in "the transportation campaign, the airfield attacks, the neutralization of the Atlantic Wall, reconnaissance, and the steady blows at Germany's industrial vitals the Anglo-American air forces did more than facilitate the historic invasion of 6 June 1944. They made it possible." ***181***

I. *CHAPTER 13: D-Day Normandy Looking Ahead to the Continent: The Corps of Engineers: War Against Germany;* Omaha Landing Army Technical Services Histories xyza

"PROCO" in England were Projects for Continental Operations which were intended to allow ASF time to procure major items of machinery and specialized equipment to have at New York Port of Embarkation. The system required detailed numbers, intended use, tonnage estimates, and justification. The PROCO system produced some successes but also ran afoul of realities and practices in the theater.

1. **Engineer PROCO Projects.** The process started three months before OVERLORD was approved. Gen Moore objected to trying to plan engineer tasks without knowing the maximum size of the assault force and of the total forces by D+90, number of ports, airfields, and bases, **277** and areas to be

occupied in 1944 – all reasonable but with no answers! "Could not be" did not lessen the "but should be" answered" need. Gen Lee estimated many major PROCO projects on 24 June as:

1. American forces ashore at D +30 would be 480,000 and 985,000 by D plus 90.
2. Two one-hundred-mile-long lines of communications by D+90, 200 miles by D+240.
3. By D+240 four major and minor ports would be operating…

With this minimal information and assuming a 1 May D-Day engineers wanted 75% of first 90-day needs in the U.K. before January 1944. By late September 1944, they needed 1,136,713 long tons (150 shiploads). The engineers failed to compute items to be purchased in England. In Washington, engineer PROCO projects had a "tortuous path." **278**

1 The adjutant general went to the director of plans and operations who ran the project.
2 Director of plans sent them to the Logistics Group, Operations Division to decide if necessary.
3 ASF planners sent the studies to the War Department to decide if they were necessary.
4 Office Chief Engineers edited the bill of materials based on availability.
5 Army Service Forces sent them to Requirements to meet worldwide plans for each item.
6 Then to the Operations Plans Division Logistics Branch, OPD, for approval.
7 Finally, to the G-4, War Department General Staff, for concurrence.
8 Approval meant engineers in the UK could requisition Class IV items from the U.S.

A process of exhaustion where only the most critical survived! Then came the "pipeline" problem of goods in constant motion but taking months to "get there". By March 1944, it was 4 months from the order to delivery in Europe. A "one year supply" was actually 1-1/3rd years of supply. It made sense, except the war ended in 11 months! By May 1945 (the final month) 246,521 long tons (of engineer supplies) were overdue. **279** The engineer solution was to design standard projects with bills of materials adjusted to local conditions. **280**

In June 1943 a "new wrinkle" arose when secrecy forbade engineers knowing where the invasion would be! It was over-the-top; the location was finally disclosed. The Italian experience was assisted engineer planning for rehabilitating European ports as Naples, Italy became the "standard of destruction to expect". **281** On 12 August 1943, the ASF received an exhaustive PROCO study of construction material and equipment to reopen Cherbourg.[11] Engineers wisely used lineal feet of pier to tons unloaded to compute unloading needs. Knowing planned tonnage, they "ball parked" port sizes for "master lists and general requirements". Added problems were: 1) silted French harbors; 2) facilities demolished; 3) obstructions clogging piers; 4) special explosives - shallow draft repair ships; and 6) uniform units of repair for locks. Repair units were devised as: one mile of railroad track, one mile of pipeline or 1,000 square feet of warehouses. There were 41 contingency plans for German demolition repairs.

2. Lines of Communications. Italy was a valuable "incubator". Plans estimated rails destroyed as **282** 25% main line tracks and 50% for yards and sidings, port rails were 75%; and 30 miles in 50% of the cases. Rail bridges in 30 miles of ports 100%; all others 50%. But the severe destruction was below such draconian levels. Thousands of aerial photos gave estimates of railroad bridging and engineers had a comprehensive understanding of European rails. Using Italy, engineers computed road net and repair

[11] Naples was not captured until 1 October 1943.

factors for construction estimates. Germans would not damage road surfaces but focus upon bridges. The Army Bailey bridge was marvelous for many uses, but the 35-ton limit meant it could not handle the new, vastly improved Pershing Tank at 46 tons. **283**

Ship-to-shore pipelines gave fuel long before the ports opened using an offshore anchorage and "to shore" pipeline. The extensive canals and locks in France were studied, but repairs postponed until France since materials and expertise were in France. Utility estimates were for the French public, since military forces were self-contained. Planners found per capita data on and electric setting minimum standards to provide. **284** The PROCO system was problematic, but the best possible given lack of current information. Yet, civilian needs were "considered and planned." But PROCO effort faltered on supplies when "the projects 'proved to be a poor device for obtaining supply action.'"

3. Responsibility for Civilian Labor. By early 1944 plans were to use civilian labor via Combined Military Procurement Control for local procurement and labor via a theater purchasing agent. Engineers needed civilians, but lacked plans, experience and competence in civilian pay, etc. SHAEFE set standards for pay. **285** Organized or not it worked. "Static" workers were in one location responsible for their quarters and food. Mobile workers received sustenance and housing from the military. Both began under contracts as "unskilled" until the proved otherwise. Base sections were set a: Ste. Mere-Eglise, Longueville, Carentan, Bricquebec, Cherbourg, Isigny, and UTAH Beach.

4. Refinements in OVERLORD's Operation. Tactical command had three phases: 1) US First Army and British Second Army; 2) then 21 Army Group had tactical control; and 3) then was U.S. First Army control. There was a fourth (and fifth) phase. Per COSSAC, a new "quasi-service" or Headquarters, Advance Section, or ADSEC, arose under **286** Col Plank, an engineer officer for the Eastern Base Section. The ADSEC engineer was Col Itschner "attached" to First Army responsible for supply until COMMZ arrived. Forward Echelon was also an extension of Gen Lee's SOS organization. The last phase saw "the entire SOS moved across the Channel … as FECOMZ" after Gen Bradley drew a rear boundary.

Per the author, it was a disaster in implementation. Two personality traits competed: 1) no general wants to relinquish control of his supply; and 2) Gen JCH Lee, SOS commander, "wanted all of the power and prestige that he could obtain." One may recall this was the same Gen Lee who worked miracles in the U.S. building both Army training and air bases. The move of SOS to the Continent and its disruption of logistics is mentioned but differed until a later section. First Army issued its plans in February 1944. FECOMZ issued its on 30 April 1944. The detail was enormous. The ADSEC engineer plan outweighed all other technical services combined. Two thick volumes of Normandy port data and rebuilding alone were larger than all others. Engineer Gen Moore was forced by SOS to plan phase lines, troop counts, and engineer needs for the next one year! While outlandish it's in demands, the process required planning, which was the goal! **287-288**

5. Training. Engineers needed a great deal of training. Camouflage units did not know about equipment. Service regiments learned about mines, booby traps and Bailey bridges. Engineers lacked training in minefields and repairing roads. Drivers and mechanics of dump truck were untrained. Port construction and repair men had to learn metric methods. Only mapmakers were actually well-trained. Theoretically, the troops received 8 hours of training per week. Because it was "training' for the future was the lowest priority at the time and **289** deficient in many respects. In March 1944 ETOSUA suddenly recommend a month of training suddenly with 12 to 15 hours days! Troops "practiced night operations plus much effort went to retraining in basic training concepts." Every subject was available such as mines, booby traps, demolitions and Bailey bridges. **290** A port construction center in Wales taught

building V-type trestles, Baileys, and tubular scaffolding. Isle of Wight had marine pipeline training and a 5 to7 week course for railroad bridging. **291** Essentially, everyone went to some schools held everywhere in the U.K. **292**

The "well-known Assault Training Center" opened in 1943. It concluded Germans could not man the "Wall" with more than one platoon per 2,000-2,500 yards (one mile). Unfortunately, it only allowed two months of pre-invasion unit training and full-scale exercises. It diminished its importance, meaning a "last-minute" rush to training the first waves!

6. Maps for the Invasion. **293** Invasion maps were a minor matter until one realizes the lack of "copy machine" technology at the time. After Dunkirk the British Army began the "Benson project" as RAF planes painstakingly recorded the French coast for maps[12]. **294**-**295** The effort to produce maps was stupendous. A division commander needed a map of his area only five miles wide with all contours and elevations. Yet, adding 80 divisions plus 100's of miles to Germany with "hand-made" maps, the scope of the effort was not appreciated nor the dangerous efforts of pilots who photographed almost every square foot of Northwest Europe. Such was the world before satellites and GPS! **296 – 298**

J. *CHAPTER 14: Preparing for the D-Day Landings: Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany*. xyza

1. **Omaha Beach.** The waters off OMAHA had normal waves; the six-fathom line (6 feet/fathom or 36 feet) ran close-in for ships. **299** The 18 feet tidal range yielded gave a deadly 300-yard flats at low tide and high tide ran afoul of German beach obstacles. The assault objective of V Corps' 1st and 29th IDs was the smaller OMAHA Beach, a gentle, 7,000-yard curve of sand with an 8' bank of coarse shingle rocks marking high tide. Shingle offered some cover but barred vehicles. Some 200 yards from the shingle were "grass-covered bluffs rose dramatically 100 to 170 feet."[13] A pre-war bathing resort was not thickly populated except for four farm settlements. Through one was a gravel secondary road ran to the beach, turned east by a twelve-foot timber and masonry seawall to Les Moulins, a small sea village at St. Laurent. Back to St. Laurent and in draw from Colleville roads were cart tracks or sand paths. Bathing cabanas and summer cottages were west of Les Moulins had been razed for beach defenses. OMAHA Beach was cut into eight landing zones. From its far west end to the Vierville draw was Charlie Beach the Rangers. Next from the west (right) were Dog and Easy. Dog Green, 970 yards long, Dog White, 700 yards, and Dog Red, 480 yards from the Vierville to Moulins draw. Easy Green began for 830 yards east. Easy Red, 1,850 yards draw to Colleville, and Fox Red, 3,015 yards at the far beach left. **300**

The 29th ID had Dog Green, Dog White, Dog Red, and Easy Green led by four companies of the 741st TB. The 16th Regiment, 1st ID had Easy Red and Fox Green. Assault units were to push through draws in three hours to capture land to the south of Aure River on D-day. **301** The Germans concluded the Allies would attack at high tide for a short charge to the dry shore and so littered the tidal flat with obstacles to snag landing craft beginning 250 yards out from the shingle were Element (Belgian gates) blocked passage. Festooned with mines they covered both ends but center. Behind were rows of single upright or slightly canted steel stakes, V-shaped channeled rails to tear out boat bottoms and every third one had a Teller mine atop. The Germans also set and mined three-legged log structures. Closest to high

[12] Discussion of map-making problems and disagreements are omitted.

[13] As mentioned elsewhere, OMAHA beach bluffs were not as dramatic as portrayed in the histories. They were not massive.

tide were hedgehogs of 3 or 4 steel channel rails welded or bolted in the center to as impaling spokes. The beach was not mined, since sea water made them ineffective.

There were 12-gun emplacements on the banks to fire on the beach with pillboxes at exits with artillery and rifle pits interspersed. Ten feet dep by 30 feet wide ditches spanned the draw entrances. One pillbox on an outward embankment could shoot along the beach to Les Moulins. Between the shingle and bluffs was concertina barbed wire with buried Schu and Teller mines. From the bluffs various explosives could be fired[14] **302**

NEPTUNE had parachute and glider assaults behind UTAH Beach. The 82nd AID Airborne would drop on the Merderet River two miles west of Ste. Mere-Eglise, and the 101st (AID) Airborne Division in the area south of the town early on D-day before the 4th Infantry Division landed at UTAH. Glider trains would bring in reinforcements and heavier weapons to consolidate a perimeter enclosing a section of the Carentan-Cherbourg highway and at least the inland portions of the causeways that would serve as beach exits. Despite the serious German firepower, the Allies worried most about obstacles. Early 1944 photos showed a proliferation of these, and the Allies grew alarmed.

Lack of high ground made the German defenses at UTAH less imposing where defenses relied upon inundated lowlands behind the beach to channel an attack along roads Two German divisions, the *709th Infantry* (with east Europeans), and the 243rd *Infantry* built resistance points and placed the obstacles. Concrete pillboxes, some with tank turrets, swept the beaches. The villages at the edges of UTAH were fortified. The Germans had Goliath, a miniature, radio-controlled tank loaded with explosives. **303** The *91st* Division arrived with tanks to add defense depth between Carentan and Valognes, but beach defenders were hemmed in by their own flooding.

> "Despite the serious German … firepower … NEPTUNE planners … worried most about obstacles. In early 1944 as aerial photographs … showed a proliferation … the Allies grew more and more alarmed … Eisenhower … (felt they were) the "worst problems … "

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2. **<u>Beach Obstacle Teams.</u>** The Army built an Underwater Obstacle Training Center at Fort Pierce, Florida. The Navy had to train all forces. They invented obstacle clearance devices which were a waste since there <u>no obstacles in Normandy until January 1944 when it was too late.</u> **304** Obstacles at OMAHA were built in March 1944. A "hunch" obstacles were mined was confirmed when an errant bomb exploded some. Gen Bradley ordered a solution that became a combination of Army combat engineers and 16 Navy NCDU's (Navy Combat Demolition Units) each of 5 enlisted and 1 officer. These Ft. Pierce Navy graduates went to the ETO in October 1943 to train others at Slapton Sands. All 16 Navy units there by March. On 1 April 1944, V Corps released a plan to breach obstacles with engineer groups. **305** Gen Gerow was upset to find no Army plans for obstacles as Ft. Pierce trained engineers did not arrive until mid-April. The Army did not "invent" assault vehicles like the "Hobart Funnies", particularly "dozer tanks". The Army build some "armor" bulldozers. Gerow put Gen Kean in charge who said it was "far too late." Gerow sent two engineer companies, four tankdozers and six NCDUs to train at Woolacombe on 12 April when planning to remove the new obstacles began 15 April.

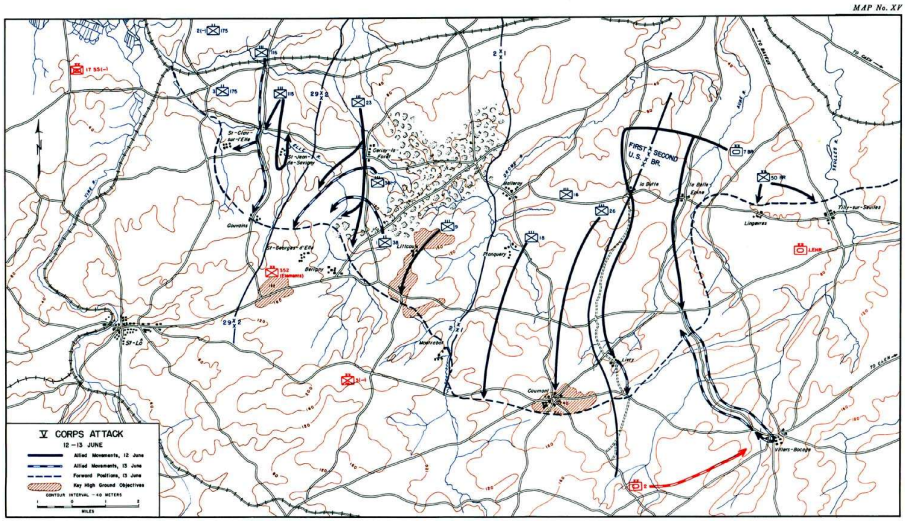
Obstacles forced a low tide attack over three hundred yards of open sand to reach shale cover. This dictated D-Day on 5, 6, or 7 June for dawn low tides. It obviated the Apex boats- luckily since they did not arrive in time. Explosives had to be tied on each obstacle. Men were totally exposed to enemy fire.

[14] The description of UTAH beach defenses is omitted since they were an immaterial factor.

Gaps 50 yards wide would be blown with two lanes for each beach. Combined Army-Navy teams of about 40 men had the task. Pulling rubber rafts laden with explosives made it a suicide mission. **306** Each assault team had a tankdozer and boats carried 1,000 pounds of explosives making them lucrative targets for German gunners. Standard engineer explosives were used.

These daredevil units had 1,050 souls at Omaha. On 27 April, the units went to Woolacombe to train, but it was essentially learning to maneuver in surf. On officer, Lt Hagensen, invented a method for the Belgian gate obstacles. **307** His "Hagensen packs" were small, sausage-like waterproof canvas with two pounds plastic Composition C-2 explosive with a hook and cord to attach to the girders to knock the gates flat over. "Ten thousand Hagensen packs-with canvas bags sewn by sailmakers in … an eleventh-hour roundup of gear and equipment". OMAHA obstacle teams had 28 tons of explosives, 75 miles of primacord, tankdozers and D-8 armored dozers, gap markers, towing cables, and others cobbled up in just 10 days. There was also little time for training.

Map XV – V Corps' Attack: 12 – 13 June (*Omaha Beachhead)*

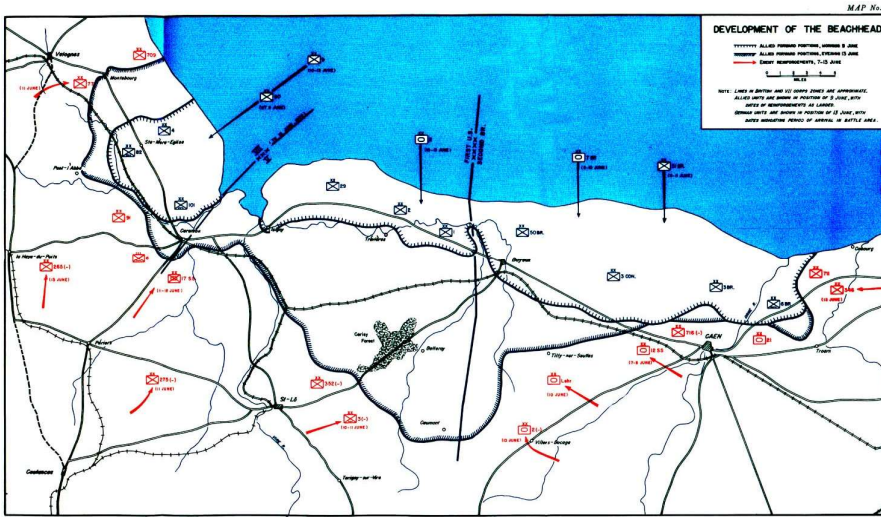


3. The Engineer Special Brigades. By this date Army engineer special brigades were exclusively shore units since the Navy when the navy took their shore boats. Basic shore cargo brigades had three engineer combat battalions, a DUKW battalion, and various quartermaster troops with cranes, dozers, graders tractors, and six-ton trailers. **308** The 1st Engineer Special Brigade, with 20,000 men in Sicily, moved to England and expanded to 15,000 troops by D-day. The plan was to used battalion beach groups of an engineer combat battalion augmented. Each engineer battalion beach group supported a regimental combat team. **309** Omaha was soon greatly expanded when the artificial port was built. This required a new port group which, as an indication of the effort had 8,000 men in four port battalions, five DUKW companies, three quartermaster service companies, three quartermaster truck companies, an ordnance medium automotive maintenance company, and a utility detachment.

4. Assault Training and Rehearsal. The Slapton Sands exercises have been discussed whereby troops learned and practiced assault techniques but, as important, the engineer battalions trained in actually unloading cargo, setting up beach infrastructure and manning distribution centers. Virtually all WWII histories ignore this aspect of war. At 1,000 tons per day per division, that equal 60 of the new 53' semi-trailers per division per division per day plus another 60 trailers for all of the supporting troops. **Ten divisions ashore, required unloading 1,200 trailers per day!** Hopefully, this helps to comprehend.

Turning to combat engineers, the 5th and 6th Engineer Special Brigades received amphibious training on the Atlantic coast at Fort Pierce, Florida at the Navy's Amphibious Training Base. But many units, notably quartermasters. Beyond that, the engineer combat battalions required additional training in mine work, Bailey bridge construction, road maintenance, and demolitions at the Swansea center and then training in landing operations at Oxwich Beach. The first major exercises of assault troops and shore engineers were in January 1944 at Slapton Sands. In these cases, assault troops engaged in an amphibious assault from one part of England to another but went through the entire drill of gathering at embarkation ports, lock downs, shakedowns, attack briefings, loading onto ships and assault vessels and attacking the beach. The first DUCK I, involved l0,000 troops of the 29th ID to give shore engineer training. This was followed by exercises, DUCK II and III in February to train other elements of the 29th and the 1st Engineer Special Brigade. One should note that the other two assault divisions, the 1st and 4th ID had fought through Africa and/or Italy to gain significant amphibious training! **310**

Map XVI – Development of the Beaches – June 1944 *(Omaha Beachhead)*



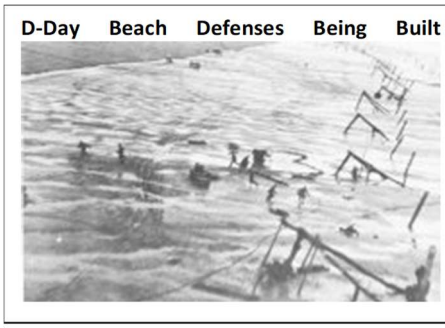
Exercise Fox with 17,000 OMAHA troops was held at Slapton Sands 9-10 March. This exercise had been delayed to final planning for OVERLORD and suffered from late and hurried preparations and inexperience. The best that could be said was "both the engineers and the assault troops learned better **311** use of DUKWs and more efficient waterproofing of vehicles! It ended with two great invasion rehearsals: TIGER and FABIUS. TIGER was for UTAH landings with 25,000 men of the 4th Infantry and airborne troops. TIGER lasted nine days (22-30 April) with the first six given over to marshaling. Landings in the Slapton Sands area were to begin at 0630 on 28 April.

At 0130 eight LSTs were attacked off Portland by enemy craft (German E-boats) whose torpedoes sank two LSTs and badly damaged a third. The Germans machine-gunned the decks and men in the water. LST-531, with 1,026 soldiers and sailors aboard, had only 290 survivors. **Total casualties were 749 killed and more than 300 wounded**. As "fickled" Army decisions go, Col Caffey who had led the 1st Engineer Special Brigade in the Sicily landings was demoted. FABIUS consisted of six exercises carried out for the OMAHA and British forces. **312**

5. <u>Marshaling the Invasion Force.</u> Engineers of Western Base Section and Southern Base Section were responsible for "marshalling", "loading" and "embarking" the Normandy assault forces out of nine major marshaling and embarkation areas. The task was immense and done with the utmost secrecy. Thousands and thousands of soldiers marched to southern England ports in broad daylight, yet the Germans had no knowledge. There were no parades or speeches, no flags! Massive marshalling areas were built into which soldiers in tents were locked inside wire fences guarded with dogs with no letters, no phones, no "sneak outs" at dark. British girlfriends were not told. One day the base near the town was "empty". Engineers built huge port encampments. **313** At wharfs and piers "hards" (concrete

driveways into the water) where LST, LSD, etc. had loading ramps lowered for "drive on" traffic. Assault craft did not need much dockage, just concrete ramps. There were large encampments holding up to 9,000 men and many smaller "sausage-style camps- 14 each held 230 men. These gave great dispersal and camouflage. Not mentioned was the horrific fear the *Luftwaffe* would bomb camps causing enormous casualties; perhaps destroying the invasion. Once forces were loaded on ships, they then had a "fighting chance". **314** That the Germans never knew such huge forces were moving to the embarkation ports reflects well on military security – especially for the British.

Providing accommodations was not the problem that providing service personnel became. Early February 1944 Gen Lee estimated a need for 15,000 field force troops plus 46,000 SOS troops from other areas. **ETOUSA permitted an entire armored division to be cannibalized to provide housekeeping troops with, 4,500 becoming instant, but still unqualified, cooks!**



Here soldiers learned of D-Day Plans. Suddenly thousands of men knew intimate D-Day plans. "The men received instruction in briefing tents containing models of the Normandy beaches, maps, overprints, charts, aerial photographs, and mosaics." Here is where the history of the Normandy Invasion, particularly OMAHA Beach "breaks down". Amazingly, all of the three-dimensional models, maps, overlays and descriptions of German positions, which were essentially wrong, disappeared! Extensive research has uncovered not one copy of one 3-D model, map or outline presentation. They all disappeared – hundreds of them! We do not know if the briefings wrongly described the fortifications or simply the level of expertise of the German defenders.

Anecdotal evidence suggests the major intelligence error was not knowing the *352nd Division* – complete division was manning OMAHA fortifications --- And that these were in ADDITION TO, not in lieu of, the static divisions known to be defending the area. Thus, one regiment of the 29th ID and one of the 1st ID attacked one regiment of poor-quality static troops plus two first-class German infantry regiments. The assaulting force was not twice the size of the defending force but was most likely it was smaller!

The 5th Engineer Special Brigade had the 7,000-yard stretch of beach fronting the Vierville-Colleville area. It would operate all shore installations in Easy, Fox, and George to the left. The 6th Engineer Special Brigade had those in sectors Charlie, Dog, and Easy to the right. Upon landing, special brigade engineers took charge from divisional engineers to develop and expand roadways and exits in the beach maintenance area to be done **315** by D plus 3. OMAHA had three phases: 1) the assault phase under company control, 2) the initial "dump phase" (storage sites) under battalion beach groups, and beach maintenance dump phase under brigade control. Here then is an interesting final comment and admission:

In the briefings before D-day … (soldiers) received intelligence information concerning enemy forces, the progressive development of enemy defenses, detailed geographic and hydrographic studies, reports on local resources, and a model of the beach and adjacent areas. Defense overprints provided detailed information about gun positions, minefields, beach obstacles, roadblocks, and antitank **316** ditches. An Admiralty Tide Chart … was valuable … **(**but) the overprints of land defenses and underwater obstacles provided with these charts arrived too late … the land defense overprint … was distributed after D-day. In addition, enemy defense information was not as recent as it might have been.

(Comment: The favorite, eternal military term for this is "S.N.A.F.U." (Situation Normal, All "F'ed" Up!)

Bulldozers and Engineer Supplies

7. Embarkation. Each unit had an assigned number of spaces; the total was 4,188 men and 327 vehicles, including attached non-engineer units. Most assault demolition teams were jammed aboard 100-foot LCTs, each already carrying two tanks, a tankdozer, gear, and packs of explosives in addition to its own crew. At the transport area, the teams were to transfer to fifty-foot LCMs for the run to the beach.

Before midnight of 3 June the engineers were aboard their ships. D-day was to be 5 June. At dawn, after a rough night at sea, the vessels were ordered to turn back. D-day had been postponed. At dawn next morning the order went out for **317** for 6 June.

K. Pre-Operation PLANNING and ASSAULT OPERATIONS; *Navy Heritage Command U.S. Naval Admin WWII*[15] xyza

1. Developments During May.

[15] **www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/o/operation-neptune-invasion-normandy.htm**

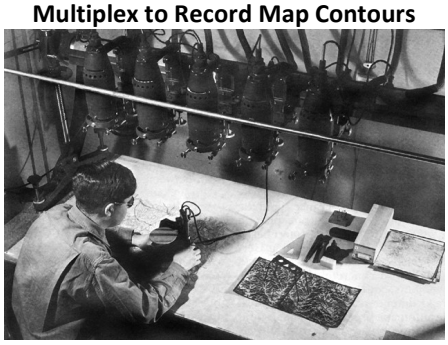
a. ***The Naval Assault Forces During May 1944***. In April and May 21st Army Group and ANCXF (Navy) had headquarters on Portsdown Hill, Portsmouth. "Naval Commanders Western Task Force U" NCWTF O and "…Eastern Task Force" (NCETF) U were at Portsmouth and Plymouth. British SWORD forces (Portsmouth) GOLD (Southampton) and JUNO (Isle of Wight). The vast concentration of vessels strained port capacity. Large war vessels were pushed further out to wings as west England, Scotland and of North Ireland. **381** Fierce German reactions were expected – but nothing! Even after Force U was hit during TIGER on 28 April. Germans were ignorant they sunk LST 507 and 531 and H.M.C.S. *Athabaskan*.[16] 382 E and R-boats from Cherbourg and Le Havre increased as subs laid mines that were all detected. 383

The Assault on Slapton Sands, April 1944!

b. ***Promulgation of Operating Orders During May 1944.*** ANCXF orders were over 700 "legal size" pages, but captains easily found their orders and part in the whole. ANCXF said it was necessary where "thousands of ships were to move in congested waters … (with) inadequate port facilities …" Thus, all had complete plans for everybody! 384 "Of course, no sooner were these printed, when 'a vast flood of amendments and changes were proposed'" 385 To curb this, all orders "were frozen as of 0900 on 12 May …"

Adm Ramsey had to commandeer all sea-going tugs under Admiralty Law to get enough to haul the beasts to Normandy. The "point made is the complexity of garnering so many independently minded people into making final decisions on their D-Day intentions four whole weeks before the time for action."

Multiplex to Record Map Contours



c. *Security Problems and Command Measures May 1944*. When ON's and orders were issued on 24 April 1944 they were sealed. The day before they were opened, SCAEF impounded all private correspondence, prohibited phones and all were "sealed" on their ships to be briefed. Press correspondents disappearing for the invasion was handled by hauling them into a security briefing on 22 May as 80 disappeared. When it happened before D-Day, no one noticed. But there were breaches occurred. On 31 May, Bay of Biscay charts were given to tugboat captains. The cure was issued higher TOP SECRET Charts for Boulogne area! **386** Then came the 22 May London Daily Telegraph cross word puzzle containing NEPTUNE code words. In the end, the Germans were never aware of OVERLORD.387

d. ***Other Navy Challenges.*** Army Air Force was not cooperative. Its first program of 12 May refused to give convoy air security. Then came corridors with no naval fire for planes. The Army wanted an aircraft carrier to take its Piper spotter planes to France, the Navy declined! 388 They flew over on their own.

[16] *Exercise Tiger: Disaster at Slapton S*ands, *Convoy T4 in Lyme Bay,* Naval History and Heritage Command, //www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/world-war-ii/1944/exercise-tiger.html.

In April and May MULBERRY breakwater barriers were behind, tugs lacking. Finished ones were sunk in the Thames River to hide them, which revealed numerous design errors that were fixed in time. 389

e. ***Visits of Important Personages.*** In May 1944 came VIP tours of Churchill; most Dominions, 390 the King, First Lord Admiralty, First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet, etc. 391

2. POSTPONEMENT OF D-DAY.

a. ***D-Day Designated as Forces Move***. The D-Day acte was not important until April 944 when the Germans began blocking the beaches with obstacles. This changed all so 1 May came aver decision for a low tide dawn landing which suddenly confined D-Day to **very few days.** Adm Ramsay set: a) five different H-hours for each force, but the first time were June 5 and 6. D-Day was 5 June at 2330 hours. At 2330 hours on 25 May recipients 392 opened orders without a date stated. On 28 May ANCXF set the start time at 0610. Nothing but postponements followed. Weather meetings began on 2 June. First convoys left Scotland on 31 May with 54 CORNCOB block ships to be sunk. 393 Port congestion meant careful timing. Loading and assembly were rehearsed. All craft were overloaded. The Germans did not interfere. On 1 June 1944, Adm Sir Ramsay took command of "NEPTUNE" Forces.

b. ***Weather Intervenes.*** Weather became the prime concern. June 2 was not good, but the first warships sailed and two midget (2-man) submarines, *X 23* and 394 *X 20* sailed for the beaches. Weather worsened with gusts to Force 5 (22 mph). Commanders met at 0430 and at 2130. Deterioration was predicted for 5 June. Ships put to sea in force 6 winds. It was postponed one day. Convoys and CORCOABs reversed courses 395 at sea. Eisenhower met at 0415 hours, 4th June as others returned to anchor. The two midget submarines waited.

Force U	0630
Force O	0630
Forces G and S	0725
Force J, right sector	0735
Force J, left sector	0745

c. ***The Supreme Commander's Dilemma: 6 June Fixed As D-Day***. All met at 2115 hours 4th of June, weather was horrible, but supposed to improve for 396 morning of June 6th of June. Force 15 winds were 17-21 knots with moderate waves. Eisenhower truly lacked options and ordered "Go". Adm Ramsay wrote out his "List of Concerns":

a.	Naval and Military forces had been assembled with all material available.
b.	Naval orders issued "in utmost detail", except AAF intentions only signaled after ships sailed.
c.	Assault ships - craft were loading, at every available berth from the Thames to Bristol.,
d.	No serious interference with preparations had been affected by the enemy.
e.	Air Force reported successful attacks on Radar Stations.
f.	The enemy was imperfectly aware of ships assembling or that invasion preparations advanced.
g.	AAF reports successful attacks (especially Radar) of naval interest, and these continue.
H	No signs enemy knows point of attack selected, but focus is on the Bay of the Seine (good news).
I	Major difficulties are due to the magnitude of the operation and strained resources.
J	Concerns are weather, tug shortage, unfinished AAF plans, supplies, MULBERRIES and PHOENIX.
	"Chief problem was weather on D-Day as unsettled conditions occur" 397 -398 -399

3. The Assault Movement of NEPTUNE Forces.

a. Neptune Assault and Cargo Movements. NEPTUNE forces put out the morning June 5th and by night "the vast concourse of ships and craft were proceeding … with the appointed program … toward the Beaches of Normandy."

EBP 1 and ECT 2 were U.S. and U.K. follow-up convoys with more forces and supplies for D plus 1.
"G". Carried the British 50th ID from Southampton and the Western Solent.
"J". Carried the 3rd Canadian division and some British from Southampton and Portsmouth, 400
"S". Held the 3rd British Division from Portsmouth, Newhaven and Shoreham.
"B". U.S. follow up force had the remainders of the 1st and 29th ID s loaded at Falmouth and Plymouth.
"L". British 22nd Armor Brig U": Carried VII U.S. Army Corps (4th ID) from Torquay, Brixham, Dartmouth and Plymouth.
"O". Carried V U.S. Army Corps (1st ID and 29th ID) and U.S. Rangers from Portland

Convoys were 12 or 5 knots. The "slows" left first. 401 402 403-404 Convoys waited to be led to their anchor points off the beaches. No special navigation was needed as lanes were marked with buoys. 405 Before D-Day the allies had laid underwater sonic buoys at the mouth of each channel. 406 Most convoys carried locating equipment and British shore radar watched meanderings. *For countries still using "vacuum tubes" it was very "high tech" equipment.*

b. The Assault Forces Reach the Beaches in NEPTUNE Assault. The most complex invasion in history "proceeded basically according to schedule … without serious deviation." Some mistakes had boats in wrong lanes. 407 The tail of the very long Convoy 0.2 first was pushed east out of the channel and then west out of the channel. They forced Convoy U 2 into the wrong channel slowing convoy O.1.

Brief mention was made of the two mini-subs off the landing beaches. They were towed and powered across the Channel the night of 2-3 June on station by 4 June to mark the channels. The morning of 6 June they performed their tasks and did so with visual accuracy. It is believed they also sent out homing signals. 408 Using a radar of their location they were able to exactly spot offshore anchor points for navy ships. They then steered ships accurately to their intended anchor points. Control vessels held craft off the beaches for the right time and correct approach course. Off Utah the two vessels were "casualties", so U forces landed 1,000 to 1,500 yards (less than one mile) south. Conversely, beach obstacles and defenses were less in the new area. 409

(Comment: The history suggests a compelling passion for every one of the hundreds of ships to be precisely arrayed off the beaches as the maps showed before June 6!)

4. DEFENSIVE MEASURES -- NEPTUNE OPERATION

a. ENEMY NAVAL DISPOSITIONS, 1944 – NEPTUNE Operations. The Allies had 5,000 vulnerable to enemy vessels at sea with nine divisions in 75 convoys -- "enormous armada. It presented to enemy air and naval forces a very profitable target. Germany had 4 battleships and 6 cruisers. 37 destroyers, 83 torpedo boats, 200 U-Boats and another 215 miscellaneous small war vessels. 410 **Planners assumed the Germans would throw their entire navy at the invasion armada beginning mid-Channel** to which the Allies sealed both Channel ends, patrolled, escorted and swept ships, mines and airplanes. 411

b. MINELAYING (OPERATION MAPLE). Operation MAPLE entailed mining waters from Norway through France to force German craft away from land artillery into narrow mined areas by ships and planes to 412 include the narrow Straits of Dover northeast entrance of the English Channel and wide southwest

end of the Channel to the Atlantic. It was imperative against E-boat and submarines especially keeping the latter from the Channel to protect the greatest mass of ships ever at anchor in open waters. The north effort took from April to 6 June entailing 6,850 mines to include 1,800 air sorties. "These operations … (gave a) general immunity from surface and U-Boat attack … A considerable number of casualties were inflicted on the enemy … Minefields in the vicinity of Ushant and off the Brittany coast … (drove) U-Boats into open water … (to) be dealt with by allied anti-submarine forces. The special operation in the Kiel Canal … (caused) a complete dislocation … (In) casualties, only one Motor Torpedo Boat and 19 minelaying aircraft. 413- 14 -415

c. Countering the German Kriegsmarine from the North Sea to English Channel. The major, but distant naval threat was Germany's fleet in Norwegian and Baltic Waters. The British Home Fleet at Scapa Flow was adequate. **When the German navy ships did not react the 416 "Home Fleet remained in Scapa Flow – much to the displeasure of the U.S. Navy."** The danger then was U-boats south into the Channel. The RN had three escort carriers and six escort groups, but little activity had four groups return home. 417 C-in-C Plymouth had to "seal off" the wide south Channel ("western approaches") with a "CORK" of 12 destroyers and four MTB (Motor Torpedo Boar) flotillas 418 of 37 craft (with 3 U.S.N. P.T. boats). CORK laid mine fields off Brittany to force U-Boats out of fighter cover. 419

D-Day eve German destroyers "were brought to action in the early hours of June 9, when four of them departed Brest." The 10th Destroyer Squadron Intercepted 20 miles northwest of the Ilde de Bas sinking one, drove one ashore, and damaged a third. This and a fourth went to Brest. It ended the German threat. Anti-U-Boat operations succeeded because the German refused to expend their subs. They could not 420 breach the Dover Straits gun barrier or the southwestern Approaches block. (*Although not "officially" stated, most thought once the Allies a "foot in the door" in France, the war was over.)* 421

d. Patrols Along the Convoy Flanks with Naval Cover. A nearly impenetrable screen corked both Channel ends. Dover was so narrow it had 100% radar. The south end had radar was 60 miles offshore. German Channel forces were a slim: 1- destroyer, 4- torpedo boats, 17 - E-Boats, 5 - R-Boats, 4 - minesweepers, 18 - light gun. 58 - trawlers, and 109 patrol and harbor defense craft. Short in power. Beside the Royal Navy, 22 the U.S. Navy more than doubled the Allied English Channel forces. 423-424

e. Allied Naval Screens and Escorts. Task forces commanders created "naval screens" peeling off a certain number of vessels from each group of ground force ships arrived at landing beaches. Each had task forces protecting ships off the beaches. 425-426 On D-Day a Le Havre torpedo boat sank the Norwegian destroyer Svenner and then came 12-night attacks driven off or causing no damage. 427 The larger area had two destroyer squadrons of 60 patrol and P.T. boats in picket lines. 428-429 Enemy penetration were seen on destroyer radar at 10,000 yards and fired upon as picket ships intercepted. It worked. 430-431 Unlike the Pacific, Germany's lack of a surface ships favored the Allies in ETO war. 432

f. Minesweeping. The greatest danger were mines since the Germans refused to squander their submarines in an "all-out fight to the finish". It mad boring minesweeping the most important. Ten channels into Normandy plus off-beach area (10 to 12 miles offshore) were kept free. A big D-Day morning issue was simultaneously sweeping and bombarding. Fortunately, the 6 inch (155-mm) enemy beach guns **could not penetrate big gun ships' armor. Plus, German gunners had no training against war ships. Their only peril lay in the mines.**[17] 433-34-35-436

[17] Consequently, events related to gun defenses are not included.

