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H I S T O R I C A L S E C T I O N ( G . S . )  
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30 Jun 52

Canadian Participation in the Operations in North-West Europe, 1944.

Part I: The Assault and Subsequent Operations of 3 Cdn Inf Div  
and 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 6-30 Jun 44.

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R E P O R T N O . 54  
HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)  
ARMY HEADQUARTERS

30 Jun 52

Canadian Participation in the Operations  
in North-West Europe, 1944.

Part I: The Assault and Subsequent Operations of 3 Cdn  
Inf Div and 2 Cdn Arm'd Bde, 6-30 Jun 44

1. C.M.H.Q. Report No. 131 is a preliminary account of the operations of Canadian formations during the campaign in Normandy from the assault on 6 Jun 44 to First Cdn Army's assumption of responsibility for the Caen sector on 31 Jul 44. C.M.H.Q. Report No. 147 is the first of a series of two dealing with the same operations in greater detail and on the basis of a more thorough examination of sources. The period covered is from 6 Jun 44 to 30 Jun 44. The second of the series, Report No. 162, considers operations during July 1944.
2. This Report is similar in scope to C.M.H.Q. Report No. 147. It is strictly an account of operations in June 1944. Its starting point is the plan for Operation "OVERLORD"; it does not attempt to describe fully the planning -- the very lengthy and complicated preliminaries of the operation which have been dealt with in Hist Sec, A.H.Q., Report No. 42, The Preliminary Planning for Operation "OVERLORD": Some Aspects of the Preparations for an Allied Re-entry to North-West Europe, 1940-44. The purpose of this present Report is to expand and 'modernize' Report No. 147 by utilizing the wealth of new material pertaining to operations in North-West Europe which has been written or made available since December 1945. At the same time, certain sections in Report No. 147 which continue to be historically valid -- and there are many -- will be incorporated in this Report where suitable.
3. For Canada and the Canadian Army, the operations in North-West Europe have a special significance. Over a long period, it will be recalled, the Canadian Army Overseas was denied action against the enemy, its role being limited to what might be termed "garrison duty" in the British Isles. Apart from the raid on Dieppe, (19 Aug 42), Canadian military forces in the European theatre had no opportunity for large-scale operations until the despatch of 1 Cdn Div and 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde to the Mediterranean for the attack on Sicily in July 1943. This was followed by the concentration in that theatre of a Canadian Corps of two divisions (1 Cdn Corps, comprising 1

Cdn Inf Div and 5 Cdn Armd Div), which subsequently distinguished itself in operations on the Italian mainland. Even after 1 Cdn Corps was so committed, however, the greater part of the available Canadian force (including H.Q. First Cdn Army, H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 2 Cdn Inf Div, 3 Cdn Inf Div, 4 Cdn Armd Div, and 2 Cdn Armd Bde) still remained in Britain. Not until Operation "OVERLORD" was well underway did the entire Canadian Army Overseas come to grips with the enemy.

4. It is with the actions of the Canadians in Normandy that this Report is primarily concerned. But it would be most inadequate to consider their important but relatively small contribution as divorced from the general course of events, for to ignore the broad pattern would be to miss the significance of the whole great enterprise. The operations here treated can certainly be said to mark the opening of the final phase of the war in Europe. They represent the return of Allied forces to the French mainland from which British armed forces were driven in the summer of 1940.

5. For this reason, the method followed in the preparation of this Report has always been to keep in sight the progress of events generally so as to provide the background against which Canadian participation may be viewed in its proper perspective. Conversely, detailed accounts of the actions of Canadians will serve, where applicable, to illustrate experiences shared by all members of the Allied Expeditionary Force.

#### THE ALLIED PLAN FOR "OVERLORD" AND "NEPTUNE"

6. The gradual reduction in 1942 and 1943 of Germany's farther outposts, both in Russia and the Mediterranean area, and the increased compression of the enemy into a central stronghold -- "Festung Europa" -- brought about a new situation in the war: the opportunity to achieve the "defeat of Germany by means of heavy and concerted assaults upon German-occupied Europe from the United Kingdom, the Mediterranean and Russia" ((HS) 212B2.016 (D1): Second British Army Operation Order No. 1, Operation "NEPTUNE", 21 Apr 44). In 1943 the "fortress" was already beset from the East and South; it still remained to commence operations from the West and so complete the triple series of assaults which should result in its final investment and collapse.

7. Although the requirement was easily stated, i.e., the establishment of a third theatre of operations, its realization was far from simple. The task of penetrating a strongly-defended coastline presented an enormously complicated problem; undue haste in arriving at a solution



might prove disastrous to the whole enterprise. Report No. 42 outlines the differences of opinion held by the Allied leaders regarding the early opening of a 'Second Front'. Briefly these may be summarized as follows: Russia, together with a large segment of public opinion in the Allied countries, demanded constantly that Great Britain and the United States should launch an attack on North-West Europe at the earliest possible moment to force a German withdrawal of 30 to 40 divisions from the Eastern Front and so relieve the hard pressed Russian armies. The United States' leaders appreciated Russia's position and were fearful lest the Russian armies be defeated, or, worse still, that Russia might make a separate peace with Germany. Nevertheless, if the Americans were agreed upon the object to be achieved, counsel as to the method to be employed was not undivided. Many believed that the Russian demands should be met at once if only to the extent of securing a restricted lodgement on the coast of France by an Anglo-American army. But others, despite their impatience, could not ignore Britain's advice to be cautious, especially with her extensive experience in combined operations. Moreover, American commitments in the Pacific and the physical limitations of even American productive power were factors which had to be considered by service as well as diplomatic officials no matter what opinion they held regarding the immediacy of a cross-Channel attack. The United Kingdom, although planning for a return to the continent since Dunkirk, was loath to attempt an invasion of North-West Europe until Anglo-American naval, military and air strength was such as to ensure a successful and decisive blow at the German armies in the West. The experience of Dieppe had made Great Britain more cautious by indicating, among other things, the need to develop new assault techniques and to prepare an overwhelming fire plan. To the island nation the construction and assembling of a great number and variety of assault craft was a very grave problem at a time when all shipping was short and the demands for it were high. Moreover, Prime Minister Churchill believed that the Mediterranean life-line should be completely under Allied control prior to launching an attack on the main bastions of "Festung Europa".

8. Despite the preoccupation of British and American military leaders in the Mediterranean theatre during the latter part of 1942 and 1943, plans were being laid and preparations were underway for the eventual invasion of North-West France. The early detailed planning for such an operation had been carried out by the Joint Planning Staff, Combined Operations Headquarters, and a high-level group known as the "Combined Commanders". Later, planning for the invasion of Europe was centralized in the hands of a British officer, Lieutenant-General F.E. Morgan, C.B., as Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC). A joint British-American planning staff commenced its work, under General Morgan's direction, in April 1943, and an outline plan was produced in July.

This plan (C.O.S. (43)416(0): Operation "OVERLORD", Report and Appreciation, 30 July 43) reduced the possible target areas for the invasion to three: the Pas de Calais, the Caen sector and the Cotentin Peninsula. As a result of the limitations imposed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the "TRIDENT" Conference (See Report No. 42, paras 237 ff), the COSSAC committee chose the Caen sector alone upon which it was proposed to launch a three-division assault. A simultaneous landing in the Cotentin, favored by COSSAC if the resources were available (See Lt-Gen Sir Frederick Morgan, Overture to Overlord (London, 1950), pp 152-3) was ruled out -- mainly because of lack of shipping, but partly because too great a dispersal of forces might lead to defeat in detail. It was this plan for the attack on Caen only which was approved at the Quebec Conference in August 1943.

9. The plan, however, was destined to undergo certain alterations. The possibility of broadening and strengthening the assault had been suggested by Mr. Churchill at the first Quebec Conference. General Eisenhower and General Montgomery relate that when they first saw the plan late in 1943, their immediate reaction was to emphasize the need for a greater force than three divisions to pierce the Atlantic Wall. (Field Marshal Montgomery, Normandy to the Baltic (London, 1946), p. 7; Morgan, op cit, p. 10; General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force, 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945 (Washington, 1946), p. 3) Thus when both men returned to the United Kingdom early in 1944 as Commander-in-Chief of the 21st Army Group and Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, respectively, it was decided to revise the COSSAC plan for "OVERLORD" so as to mount the operation in greater strength and on a wider front. (See Report No. 42, "The Organization of SHAEF and Final Changes in the 'OVERLORD' Plan" for further details on this revision).

10. The revision of the COSSAC plan was discussed at two meetings which the Supreme Commander held with his Commanders-in-Chief at Norfolk House, London, on 21 Jan 44. At these meetings agreement was reached on a Revised Outline Plan which, under the title of the Initial Joint Plan, was issued on 1 Feb 44 as a directive by General Montgomery, K.C.B., D.S.O., to the commanders of First U.S. Army, Second British Army and First Canadian Army so as "to provide a basis for planning by subordinate commanders." The Initial Joint Plan ((HS) 219C1.009(D329): Initial Joint Plan for Operation "NEPTUNE") contains the final plans for the assault and amply repays close study.

11. Before turning to the plan, it is necessary

to explain the use of the two code names bestowed on it. The military operation which was to be launched in Western Europe was known as "OVERLORD". But "OVERLORD" presupposed a gigantic cross-Channel operation involving the successful penetration of the defended coast. This preliminary phase was termed "NEPTUNE". The distinction in terms is explicitly stated in the Naval Report of the Operation: "Operation 'NEPTUNE' was the assault phase of the invasion of North-West Europe" ((HS) 952A.013(D3): Report by the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, Expeditionary Force, on Operation "NEPTUNE", British Admiralty Publication CB04385B). It is likewise to be inferred from the carefully worded 'Intentions' in operations orders.

12. Consideration of the operation may properly commence with the definition of its object given in the Initial Joint Plan:

The object of 'NEPTUNE' is to secure a lodgement on the Continent from which further offensive operations can be developed. It is not an isolated operation, but is part of a large strategic plan designed to bring about the total defeat of Germany by means of heavy and concerted assaults upon German-occupied Europe from the United Kingdom, the Mediterranean and Russia.

13. In the execution of the plan a primary principle was to be followed: equal British and U.S. participation in the initial stages. The whole assault area, between Ouistreham and Varreville in the Bay of the Seine, was divided into a Western and Eastern half, the former being the responsibility of the U.S. forces (commanded by Lt-Gen Omar N. Bradley) and the latter the responsibility of the British (including Canadian) forces (commanded by Lt-Gen M.C. Dempsey, C.B., D.S.O., M.C.). The entire Allied operation was directed by General (later General of the Army) Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S. Army, formerly Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, whose appointment as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, was announced on Christmas Eve, 1943. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, G.C.B., was appointed Deputy Supreme Commander. Under the Supreme Commander, and exercising their command jointly, there were initially three commanders: Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay, K.C.B., K.B.E., M.V.O., Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, Expeditionary Force; General (later Field-Marshal) Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, Commander-in-Chief, 21st Army Group; and Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, K.C.B., D.S.O., Air Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Air Force. General Montgomery's appointment was announced at the time merely as commander of the 21st Army Group; the fact that this included command of all land forces for the assault phase was revealed only after D Day. It may be noted here too that, although initially the operation was to represent an approximate Anglo-American balance, with all military

forces under 21st Army Group, that balance was to shift steadily at a later date towards heavy U.S. preponderance on the Western Front as increasing numbers of American troops poured into Normandy.

14. Inasmuch as "NEPTUNE" represented a combined undertaking by all services under British and American command, it is difficult to isolate for separate consideration the roles to be played by the Navy, Army and Air Force. Nevertheless, these components must be dealt with separately, at least in general terms, if the method of execution is to be clearly understood.

(a) Naval Plan

15. The immense scope of the Navy's share in this vast operation cannot be over-emphasized.

The naval problem that had to be faced can be briefly summarized as first the breaking of the strong initial crust of the coast defences by assault together with the landing of the fighting army formations; and secondly to commence, and continue without a pause for five or six weeks, their reinforcement at as high a rate as possible. The first required the co-ordination of the movement of thousands of ships and landing craft and aircraft and then of their fire power, the second the co-ordination of the activities of hundreds of thousands of men and women of all services, both in the United Kingdom and off the French coast, marshalling, loading, sailing, unloading and returning at least eight ship convoys a day in addition to ten or twelve landing craft groups.

((HS) 002.011 (D26): Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, The Assault Phase of the Normandy Landings (Supplement to the London Gazette), 30 Oct 47, p. 5110)

16. Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay had been appointed Allied Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force, on 25 Oct 43. (Ibid). His "first experience of moving great numbers of troops overseas in the face of the worst that a determined enemy could do was the extrication of the British Expeditionary Force ... from Dunkirk in the dark days of 1940" (Commander Kenneth Edwards, The Royal Navy and Allies (London, 1946), p. 132). Later he participated in the naval planning of the invasion of North Africa and Sicily. No attempt can be made here to expand on the tremendous problems which attended the launching of "what is acknowledged to be the greatest amphibious operation in history" (Ramsay, op cit, p. 5110). Yet some idea of the vast preparations may be imagined when one remembers that the invasion of Normandy involved over 5000 ships and craft,

and demanded the full use, over a long period, "of every shipping berth in the United Kingdom from London, all round the south coast to Milford Haven..." (Edwards, op cit, p. 138). Indeed it was no exaggeration to say "that the requirements of the invasion of Normandy impinged upon the private lives of every man, woman and child in the United Kingdom..." (Commander Kenneth Edwards, Operation Neptune (London, 1946), p. 69).

17. The entire Allied Naval Force was divided into two task forces: Western Task Force, commanded by Rear Admiral A.G. Kirk, U.S.N., which was affiliated to the First U.S. Army; and Eastern Task Force, commanded by Rear Admiral Sir Philip L. Vian, K.B.E., D.S.O. and two bars, R.N. (an officer, who, incidentally, had been associated with Canadian military forces in both the Spitsbergen and Sicilian enterprises), and affiliated to Second British Army. Each task force was in turn divided into Naval Assault Forces, each of which carried one assault division. Thus the U.S. (Western) Task Force was divided into Assault Forces "U" and "O". In addition there was Force "B" which transported the immediate follow-up troops within the First U.S. Army. A similar internal organization of assault and follow-up forces existed in the British (Eastern) Task Force comprising Assault Forces "G", "J" and "S" and Follow-up Force "L".\* (See Appendix "A")

18. The Canadian assault formations of the Second British Army (3 Cdn Inf Div and 2 Cdn Armd Bde) were assigned to the craft of Force "J". Since this force is of special interest to the Canadian historian, some space can be given to a description of its primary functions as outlined by its commander (Commodore J. Hughes-Hallett D.S.O., R.N.), \*\* in a memorandum dated 12 Sep 43.

Force "J" is a Naval Assault Force designed for an eventual lift of one military division at assault scales. It is divided into three Naval Assault Groups, which are known as "J.1",

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\*The outline plan prepared by General Morgan (COSSAC) in July 1943 envisaged an assaulting force of only three divisions; Assault Forces "U" and "O" were added to Admiral Ramsay's command after it was decided to increase the number of assaulting divisions to five early in 1944. Of the original COSSAC plan Admiral Ramsay remarks: "Its soundness was proved later in detailed planning as in no respect were its fundamentals altered, though its scope and range were extended" (Ramsay, op cit, p. 5110).

\*\*Naval commander on Dieppe Raid (19 Aug 42); he was afterwards closely identified with pre-invasion planning and with amphibious training in which the Canadian assault force participated.

"J.2 and "J.3", each of which is intended to carry one military brigade at assault scales. In addition a fourth unit is to be attached to Force "J" which will be known as "J.4". This will be an administrative unit comprising twelve tactically independent Naval units, trained and organized so that each can carry one Commando.

((HS) 239C3. (D17): 3 Cdn Inf Div  
file 3CD/4-3-11, Force "J")

19. Force "J" like the other Naval Assault Forces assembled for "NEPTUNE", comprised, in Mr. Churchill's words, "a mass of wonderful craft of all kinds" (The Times, (London), 3 Aug 44) developed from the experience of previous assault landings.\* These consisted principally of landing ships and craft of various specialized types, ranging in size from the Landing Ship Headquarters, H.M.S. Hilary (an ex-merchant ship converted to serve as Headquarters Ship for the Force and Divisional Commanders), to the diminutive Landing Craft Assault, carried in Landing Ships Infantry and each capable of landing thirty fully equipped soldiers.\*\* But it must be borne in mind that since certain divisions were to launch only one assault brigade, these had a correspondingly smaller number of L.C.A. and support craft. Of the three assault forces of Eastern Task Force, Force "J" was by far the oldest, having been formed 18 months before the assault. By D Day, Force "S" had been in existence for 7 months, and Force "G" only 2½ months. (Report by the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief..., op cit, Vol II, Report by the Naval Commander, Eastern Task Force).

20. The craft and ships which went to make up Force "J" were assembled in the Portsmouth-Southampton area on England's southern coast. When D Day arrived, they would pass over the hundred miles of water separating England from the Bay of the Seine, "a sea route with a major German naval base on either flank - Le Havre to the east and Cherbourg to the west" (Edwards, Operation Neptune, p. 42). On passage through the German mine barrier and along the inner routes to the assault anchorages, Force "J" would be confined to two of ten narrow lanes

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\*A description of the various craft in Force "J" is attached as Appendix "B".

\*\*For specifications and photographs of all types of landing ships and craft see (HS) 952A.013(1): Details of Combined Operations, Landing Craft and Barges, and (HS) 952A.013(D4): Details of Combined Operations, Landing Ships. These are British Admiralty publications C.B. 04305 and C.B. 04304 (June 1944).

cleared by minesweepers proceeding ahead of the assaulting forces. "They would have to move at set times and speeds in rigidly appointed order to exactly defined positions off the coast; and the very immensity of the operation created perils of corresponding magnitude" (Joseph Schull, The Far Distant Ships (Ottawa, 1950), p. 243). Moreover, the danger was not confined to the invasion armada becoming entangled in the German mine-fields, for, aside from over 100 submarines, "the enemy had still available to him, within striking distance of what was to become the cross-Channel highway for Neptune, some 230 vessels" (Ibid, p. 244).

21. The Naval Commander-in-Chief, besides being responsible for the "safe and timely arrival of the assault forces at their beaches," was charged with "the cover of their landings" ((HS, 952A.013(D2): Gunnery Review, Normandy Bombardment Experience, p. 1). For this purpose a great naval striking force was assembled so that "seven battleships, twenty-three cruisers and one hundred and four destroyers, together with monitors, gun-boats and rocket-firing ships would pour their fire upon the concrete emplacements and batteries hidden ... along the [French] coast"\* (Schull, op cit, p. 241). Supporting Force "J", and thus the Canadian assault troops, were the cruisers Belfast and Diadem (Bombarding Force "E") Fleet Class destroyers, Kempenfelt, Venus, Vigilant, Faulkner, Fury, Algonquin, and Sioux; and Hunt Class destroyers La Combattante, Bleasdale, Glaisdale and Stevenstone. (Gunnery Review) In addition there were numerous specialized support craft mounting various armaments designed to give close support to the assaulting troops. (See Appendix "B", Ships and Craft of Force "J") More will be said of these craft below in connection with the assault fire plan.

22. The third responsibility of the Naval Commander-in-Chief was "the support and maintenance and the rapid build-up of our forces ashore" (Ibid). Providing a steady and uninterrupted flow of men, material, ammunition and stores to the beachhead involved a convoy system equal in complexity to that demanded by the assault and follow-up phases. The planning to achieve this object involved the co-ordination of the activities of all three

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\*This figure does not include those ships engaged in protecting the flanks of the cross-Channel route of the invasion fleet against enemy submarine and surface attack, nor those warships engaged in such tasks as convoying the Mulberries to a position off the French coast.

Services for a long time ahead of D Day and for months thereafter. Special organizations were formed to assure the minimum of delay and maximum of efficiency in handling both ships and cargoes. Control of the whole process of build-up was to be exercised by three interrelated bodies:

- (a) Build-up Control Organization ("BUCO"), forming part of 21 Army Group General Staff and Administrative Staff, with a Second Army Staff attached to it. This staff gives the General Staff and Administrative Staff policy and priorities to War Office Movements Staff.
- (b) War Office Movements, who implement the policy and instructions given by "BUCO" insofar as moves, embarkation and loading in the United Kingdom is concerned.
- (c) Turn-Round Control Organization ("TURCO"), which is a Naval organization responsible for the quick turn-round of heavy craft and ships.

(Second Army O.O. No. 1)

23. A naval writer explains two of the above organizations in more simple terms:

Both "BUCO" and "TURCO" were keyed to the same object -- reducing to the minimum, and if possible eradicating, any delay of ships; which is in effect the same thing as economizing of shipping space. But, while "TURCO" dealt with the routing of ships to and from ports where berths were immediately available, the marshalling of the ships into convoys, and clearing unloaded ships from the beachhead area as quickly as possible; "BUCO" dealt with the more involved problems of co-ordinating all available shipping with the needs of the military authorities.

(Edwards, Operation Neptune,  
p. 78)

In brief, the plan was to 'build a bridge to France' via the naval convoy system in order to ensure the successful build-up of the bridgehead.

24. The part played by the Royal Canadian Navy in "NEPTUNE" was a most important one, embracing a share in each of the naval assignments referred to above. (Cf (HS) 122.013 (D1): R.C.N., The Royal Canadian Navy's Part in the Invasion) Force "J" included two Canadian Landing Ships Infantry (Medium) - Prince Henry and Prince David. These ships, with their attached flotillas of Landing Craft Assault (also manned by Canadian personnel) joined the force early in 1944. The Commanding Officer of Prince Henry, Captain V.S. Godfrey, R.C.N., was shortly appointed



Senior Officer of the ten L.S.I. of Assault Group "J.1". Three Canadian Flotillas of Landing Craft Infantry (Large) were likewise assigned to Naval Assault Forces. Of these, two were in Force "J" and one in Force "G". Among the minesweepers charged with the hazardous task of sweeping ten approach lanes through the assault area and forming a safe anchorage in the vicinity of the beaches were sixteen Canadian ships. Covering and support forces included four Canadian Tribal Class destroyers and Canadian escort groups of destroyers, frigates and corvettes. Finally, two Fleet Class destroyers, H.M.C. Ships Algonquin and Sioux, formed part of the bombarding force attached, appropriately, to Force "J". (Ibid)

(b) Army Plan

25. As already mentioned (supra, para 13), the military role in "OVERLORD" was to be carried out by First U.S. Army under Lt-Gen Omar N. Bradley, and by Second British Army under Lt-Gen M.C. Dempsey, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., both initially under the command of 21 Army Group. Each of these armies was to launch its assault on a two-corps front, with a total of five divisions making the opening seaborne attack against the German West Wall. In First U.S. Army, the assault was to be made by VII U.S. Corps with 4 U.S. Inf Div near Varreville, and V U.S. Corps with a composite division (1 and 29 U.S. Inf Divs) near St. Laurent. Second British Army was to carry out its assault between Port-en-Bessin and the River Orne in the following manner: by 30 Corps with 50 (N) Inf Div at Asnelles; and by 1 Corps with 3 Cdn Inf Div at Courseulles and with 3 Brit Inf Div at Ouistreham

26. Besides the American Ranger and British Commando units supporting the assault by the infantry divisions from the sea, strong airborne forces were to be dropped inland on both the American and British flanks. Troops of 82 and 101 U.S. Airborne Divs were to land, by parachute and glider, in the Cotentin Peninsula prior to H Hour (defined as "the time at which the first wave of landing craft should hit the beach" (Initial Joint Plan)) with the task of aiding the amphibious assault and of preventing the movement of enemy reserves into First U.S. Army sector. Men of the 6th British Airborne Division (including 1 Cdn Para Bn) were to begin to land before H Hour along and to the east of the Orne and thus secure the left flank of 1 Corps. Those areas lying between the assault beaches were to be cleared by Commandos and Rangers.

27. Using the method contained in the "Proposed British World-Wide System of Beachmarking", the entire enemy coastline from the eastern side of the Cotentin Peninsula to the mouth of the River Orne was divided into lettered sectors, each having within its limits two or three beaches designated by the colors "Green", "White" and "Red".\* The portion affecting Second British Army, from Port-en-Bessin to Ouistreham, contained sectors "How" to "Roger". The area allotted to each Naval Assault Force consisted of three or more sectors. Each such area was given a code name corresponding to the name of the force: "Gold" for Force "G", (50(N) Inf Div); "Juno" for Force "J", (3 Cdn Inf Div); and "Sword" for Force "S", (3 Brit Inf Div).\*\* An additional area east of the Orne, designated "Band", contained coastal batteries which were to be attacked by Commandos. Within Second Army the particular beach sectors through which the assaulting divisions were to pass were as follows:

JIG and KING sectors - 50 (N) Inf Div  
MIKE and NAN sectors - 3 Cdn Inf Div  
QUEEN sector - 3 Brit Inf Div

28. The tasks of First U.S. Army were set out as follows:

- (a) to capture Cherbourg as quickly as possible
- (b) to develop the Vierville-sur-Mer - Colleville-sur-Mer beachhead southwards towards St. Lô in conformity with the advance of the Second British Army.

(Initial Joint Plan)

General Bradley has given a more graphic picture of these tasks..

After gaining a toe-hold on the Normandy shore, First Army was to knit Omaha and Utah together and make contact with Dempsey on its left. Then while First Army cut the Cotentin peninsula to forestall enemy reinforcement of Cherbourg and thereafter capture that port, the British Second Army was to seize the road centre at Caen on D Day and expand its beachhead towards the flat tablelands beyond that city. The American forces would then pivot on the British position like a windlass in the direction of Paris. As we whipped our line first to the south and then east, we would isolate the Brittany

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\*This system of assault areas is illustrated graphically by the map at Appendix "F".

\*\*Similarly, in the American sector, "Omaha" for Force "O" (4 U.S. Inf Div) and "Utah" for Force "U" (1 U.S. Inf Div).

peninsula with its enemy-garrisoned ports. Third Army would then advance into Brittany to clean up that peninsula.

.....

During our battle for Normandy, the British and Canadian Armies were to decoy the enemy reserves and draw them to their front on the extreme eastern edge of the Allied beachhead. Thus, while Monty taunted the enemy at Caen, we were to make our break on the long roundabout road toward Paris.

(General Omar N. Bradley,  
A Soldier's Story (New  
York, 1951), pp 239-40)

29. Following the assault, the object of the Second Army was "to secure and develop a bridgehead south of the line Caumont-Caen and SE of Caen in order to secure airfield sites and protect the flank of First U.S. Army while the latter captures Cherbourg and the Brittany ports" (Second Army O.O. No. 1). A preliminary outline plan was even more explicit: "There is no intention of carrying out a major advance until the Brittany ports have been captured" ((HS) 215B2.016 (D5): Second British Army Outline Plan, 21 Feb 44). Field Marshal Montgomery has described the plan to secure the lodgement area as follows:

The intention for operation Overlord was to assault, simultaneously, beaches on the Normandy coast immediately north of the Carentan estuary and the River Orne, with the object of securing as a base for further operations a lodgement area which was to include airfield sites, the port of Cherbourg and the ports of Brittany.

.....

Once ashore and firmly established, my plan was to threaten to break out of the initial bridgehead on the eastern flank - that is, in the Caen sector. I intended by means of this threat to draw the main enemy reserves into that sector, to fight them there and keep them there, using the British and Canadian Armies for the purpose. Having got the main enemy reserves committed on the eastern flank, my plan was to make the break-out on the western flank, using for this task the American armies under General Bradley, and to pivot the whole front on Caen. The American break-out thrust was to be delivered southwards down to the Loire and then to be developed eastwards in a wide sweep up to the Seine, about Paris. This movement was designed to cut off all the enemy forces south of the Seine, over which river the bridges were to be destroyed by air action.

(Montgomery, op cit, pp 15-16)

30. The method by which Second British Army was to achieve this object can now be described in greater detail. Operation "NEPTUNE" was to be carried out by Second Army in four major phases by "advancing by bounds from firm base to firm base" (Second Army O.O. No. 1).

31. Phase I, The Assault Launching its assaults through the sectors defined above (para 27), Second Army was to secure on D Day a firm base along the line Bayeux-Caen, in front of which an armoured force could operate with the object of seizing Villers-Bocage and Evreux. On the right, 50 (N) Inf Div\* with 3 Armd Bde, after assaulting the beach defences in the area of Asnelles, was to capture Bayeux and establish a firm position along the line Bayeux - Putot-en-Bessin. 3 Cdn Inf Div, with 2 Cdn Armd Bde under command, attacking the beaches astride the mouth of the River Sculles, was to advance inland and take up a covering position roughly including Putot-en-Bessin and the Carpiquet airfield area. 3 Brit Inf Div, with 27 Armd Bde, was to assault west of Ouistreham and capture Caen. 6 Airborne Div on the left flank was to attack coastal installations east of Ouistreham and secure crossings over the River Orne at Benouville and Ranville. Phase I was to be the responsibility of the assault divisions and their attached troops.

32. Phase II The swift landing of the follow-up troops (carried in Naval Force "L") meant that both 30 Corps and 1 Corps would be greatly increased in strength in readiness to carry out subsequent phases. Thus, within 30 Corps, 7 Armd Div and 49 (WR) Inf Div should soon be available; similarly, in 1 Corps the follow-up force consisted of 51 (H) Inf Div and 4 Armd Bde. In Phase II, then, 30 Corps was to capture Villers-Bocage, an important centre of communications, gaining contact with V U.S. Corps at Caumont. Simultaneously, 1 Corps was to pivot on Caen and maintain contact with 30 Corps. This phase, it was estimated, could not be carried out before D plus 3 or D plus 4.

33. Phase III 30 Corps, continuing its southward advance, was to seize the high ground from Bois du Homme to Mont Pinçon, gaining contact once again with V U.S. Corps in the area immediately south of Forêt l'Evêque. 1 Corps, now pressing south from Caen, was at the same time to secure the high ground north-east of Bretteville-sur-Laize and east of Argences in order to permit the con-

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\*For the purpose of the assault, 50 (N) Div was enlarged so as to comprise four, rather than the normal three, infantry brigades.

struction of airfields south-east of Caen. The advance represented by this phase would be made at the earliest on D plus 7 or D plus 8.

34. Phase IV To complete the capture of the bridgehead, Second Army was to pivot on Argences and advance to secure the high ground St. Pierre d'Entremont-Mont de Cérissi - Condé-sur-Noireau - Falaise, probably between D plus 12 and D plus 17. Contact was to be gained with First U.S. Army at Vire. The grouping for the final phase was uncertain. To what extent it would be possible to employ 8 Corps and 12 Corps would depend upon the rate at which the build-up was implemented. This factor, it was considered, would also control the speed of the advance of the main bodies. But the order contains this further direction:

The depth to which offensive action by armoured mobile forces can take place in advance of main bodies is not limited by considerations of Build Up. Corps will employ these mobile forces with the greatest boldness.

(Ibid)

35. It will be seen, from even cursory consideration of this plan, that the city of Caen assumed very great importance, a fact which the enemy was later quick to appreciate. In straight-line distances, Caen was only 50 miles from the Seine, 120 miles from Paris and 300 miles from the Siegfried Line. Strategically,

The city of Caen was a vital road and rail communication centre through which the main routes from the east and south-east passed. Since the bulk of the enemy mobile reserves was located north of the Seine they would have to approach Normandy from the east and might be expected to converge on Caen.

(Montgomery, op cit, p. 16)

Also, Caen's proximity to airfields and potential airfield sites made its early capture imperative. Finally, its position on the eastern flank of the bridgehead made it, in enemy hands, a formidable bulwark against the breakout especially since favorable open country for exploiting Allied armoured resources lay to the south-east of the city. Thus one finds the possession of Caen described as "vital to the army plan" (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div (Adv), May 1944: Appx 1, R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1). It is perhaps worthy of note that H.Q. 1 Corps envisaged the possibility that 3 Brit Inf Div might not, after all, be able to capture Caen on D Day. Should this occur it seemed likely that a renewed frontal assault would be avoided, and that the city would be "subjected to heavy air bombardment to limit its usefulness to the enemy

and to make its retention a costly business" (1 Brit Corps O.O. No. 1, 5 May 44).

36. Second Army reserves included 1 Airborne Div (nominally in G.H.Q. reserve) and 46 R.M. Commando. The latter was to be loaded and ready to sail on D Day to capture either the Houlgate or Bénerville batteries on the night of D Day plus 1, should the necessity arise. (Second Army O.O. No. 1)

37. The build-up, to which the estimated rate of advance was so closely connected was to be effected by the Ferry Service of ships and craft working to the beaches (Supra, para 22). Altogether, "to carry out the mission of invading Western Europe, there were to be available, by D Day, in the United Kingdom 37 divisions: 23 infantry, 10 armoured and 4 airborne" (Report by the Supreme Commander... op cit, p. 8). Of this number five infantry divisions would be employed in the initial assault from the sea, and three airborne divisions were to land in France some hours prior to the seaborne assault. Following the initial assault, the build-up was to be as rapid as possible.

By the end of D Day it was planned that, including airborne forces, the Allies would have eight divisions ashore together with Commandos, Ranger battalions and some fourteen tank regiments. By D plus 6 the total forces would rise to some thirteen divisions, exclusive of airborne formations, with five British armoured brigades and a proportionate number of American tank units. Between twenty-three and twenty-four basic divisions were due in Normandy by D plus 20.

(Despatch submitted by Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein to the Secretary of State for War... (London, 1946), p. 19)

38. The full extent of the Canadian Army's participation in "OVERLORD" can be outlined here. One of the three assault divisions of Second Army was 3 Cdn Inf Div, commanded by Maj-Gen R.F.L. Keller, C.B.E., which formed part of 1 British Corps, under Lt-Gen J.T. Crocker, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. Under its command, and becoming almost an integral part of the division, was another Canadian formation, 2 Cdn Armd Bde, commanded by Brigadier R.A. Wyman, C.B.E., D.S.O., E.D. The Canadian Army was to be represented in still another aspect of the assault, 1 Cdn Para Bn, as part of 6 Airborne Div, was to assist in that formation's operations east of the Orne. (See Hist Sec, G.H.Q., Report No. 26, The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion in France, 6 Jun - 6 Sep 1944)

39. Until the capture of the bridgehead should be complete, it was planned that First Cdn Army (which was commanded by Lt-Gen (later General) H.D.G. Crerar, C.B., D.S.O., and which was eventually to include 2 Cdn Inf Div, 3 Cdn Inf Div and 4 Cdn Armd Div, as well as important non-Canadian elements) should remain in the United Kingdom. At that time, i.e., not before D plus 17, First Cdn Army was to commence its concentration within the bridgehead. Thereafter, to quote its operation order, its role would be:

- (1) Having concentrated, to assume responsibility for the left-hand sector of the br head.
- (2) Then, to prepare to adv East.
- (3) And in all circumstances, to be prepared to defend the left-hand sector of the br head against the possible development of hy and determined counter attacks.

((HS) 215C1.016 (D10): First  
Cdn Army O.O. No. 1, 23 May 44)

(c) Air Plan

40. By the nature of the forces and equipment at their disposal, the Army, and to a lesser extent, the Navy, were compelled to plan for Operation "OVERLORD" in terms of moving a vast body of men and strength of fire-power from a non-effective, concentrated and static position to one where the men and fire-power would combine to breach Hitler's Atlantic Wall. The Allied Air Forces, however, had no great concentration of men and aircraft in the United Kingdom condemned to a static role until D Day to unleash their destructive force. Indeed, the air plan for "OVERLORD" was in reality no more than an intensification and reorientation of the air attacks against 'Festung Europa' which had been in progress since the dark days of the 'Battle of Britain'.

41. The whole programme of air operations in "OVERLORD" should be thought of as falling into three broad categories -- that of the R.A.F. Bomber Command and the U.S. Eighth Air Force, Coastal Command, and the Allied Expeditionary Air Force. During the preliminary period of operations the strategic bombing of German-held Europe by Bomber Command of the R.A.F. and the U.S. Eighth Air Force was emphasized, with tactical air forces of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force giving the heavy bombers every assistance. In the preparatory period of operations, during which the air forces were more directly concerned with the invading forces, the tables were turned and priority was given to the tactical bombing of 'Festung Europa' by the Allied Expeditionary Air Force with some assistance of the heavy bombers. Thus, months before D Day,

... in late 1943 and early 1944, the medium and light bomber forces of the Allied Expeditionary Air Forces continued to lend support to Operation "Pointblank" ... the name given to the combined bomber plan of the strategical bombing forces which had as its aims, first, the reduction of the fighter forces of the G.A.F., second, the general reduction in the war potential of Germany, and third, the weakening of the will of the German people to continue the struggle.

((HS) 002.011(D10): Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, Air Operations by the Allied Expeditionary Air Forces in N.W. Europe from November 15th, 1943 to September 30th, 1944 (Fourth Supplement to The London Gazette), 2 Jan 47, p. 38). See also Ch 21, ("Pointblank") in U.S.A. Air Historical Group, The Army Air Forces in World War II (Chicago, 1949), vol II

It is not possible here to dwell upon the success of the strategic bomber forces at this point, but when in the spring of 1944 Operation "POINTBLANK" had lost its priority to the more direct air requirements of Operation "OVERLORD", (ibid) it was apparent that

...the strategic bombers, both R.A.F. and American, had already done one service to the Army which was of incalculable importance in preparing the way for the invasion. Solely as a result of Allied bombing by day and night the German air force which had been used with exceptional efficiency to blast a path across Europe for the German armies, was now incapable of offensive action and hopelessly unbalanced.

(Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Arthur Harris, Bomber Offensive (London, 1947), p. 193)

42. On 14 Apr 44, in addition to the Allied Expeditionary Air Force (commanded by Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, and composed of the Royal Air Force Second Tactical Air Force, the United States Ninth Air Force, and the forces of the Air Defence of Great Britain), General Eisenhower was given operational command



of the Strategic Air Forces\* (i.e., the Royal Air Force Bomber Command and the United States Eighth Air Force) (Leigh-Mallory, op cit, p. 38). It was intended that this move would expedite the completion of the tasks assigned to the Allied Air Forces by the Overall Air Plan. These tasks were:

- (a) To attain and maintain an air situation whereby the German Air Force was rendered incapable of effective interference with Allied operations.
- (b) To provide continuous reconnaissance of the enemy's dispositions and movements.
- (c) To disrupt enemy communications and channels of reinforcements and supply.
- (d) To support the landing and subsequent advance of the Allied armies.
- (e) To deliver offensive strikes against enemy naval forces.
- (f) To provide air lift for airborne forces.

(Ibid, p. 40)

43. During the preparatory period, Coastal Command of the Royal Air Force was employed in carrying out Task (e) of the Overall Air Plan. It was planned that Coastal Command, with some assistance from Bomber Command, should concentrate on clearing the English Channel and its approaches of U-boats, E-boats and enemy destroyers. Further, Coastal Command would provide air cover for Channel and Atlantic convoys, aircraft for Fleet Reconnaissance duties, and cover and close escort to Allied Assault Convoys when those convoys put out to sea. ((HS) 002.011 (D27): Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas, Liberation of Europe (Operation "Overlord"), Operation of Coastal Command, Royal Air Force, From May to August, 1944 (Second Supplement to The London Gazette), 30 Oct 47).

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\*General Eisenhower comments on this as follows: "The Strategic Air Forces after this date were to attack German military, industrial, and economic targets in an order of priority established within the Theatre and approved by the Combined Chiefs. Additionally, they were to be available to me upon call for direct support of land and naval operations when needed. This was a role for which they had not been normally used, but the Salerno campaign had afforded convincing evidence of their effectiveness for the purpose" (Report by the Supreme Commander..., op cit, p. 14).

44. During the assault, and following the identical principle observed in both Navy and Army groupings, the tasks given to the Allied Expeditionary Air Force were to be undertaken in equal degree by the Air Forces of both nations. In effect this came to mean that Western Task Force and First U.S. Army were to be supported by IX U.S. Air Force, while Eastern Task Force and Second Army would receive the support of 83 Composite Group of Second Tactical Air Force, R.A.F. (See Appendix "A"). The tasks included in the air plan of operations during the assaults are listed as follows:

- (a) To protect the cross-channel movement of the assault forces against enemy air attack, and to assist the Allied naval forces to protect the assault craft and shipping from enemy naval forces.
- (b) To prepare the way for the assault by neutralizing the coast and beach defences.
- (c) To protect the landing beaches and the shipping concentrations from enemy air attack.
- (d) To dislocate enemy communications and control during the assault.

(Leigh-Mallory, op cit, p. 41)

45. As to the strength of the enemy air force which might be thrown against the Allied invasion forces, Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory expressed the general consensus of opinion among the Allied leaders prior to the invasion when he stated at a later period: "I was confident that the German Air Force would constitute no serious threat to our operations on land, sea or in the air" (Ibid, p. 40). On 29 May 44, the Air Ministry estimated that the maximum scale of air attack by the German Air Force against the bridgehead would be between 250 and 300 sorties for one night, or 160 to 180 sorties three or four nights a week. ((HS) 969 (D21): Air Ministry estimate of "G.A.F. Scale of Attack against the U.K. before and during 'Overlord'", 29 May 44). This estimate is an indication of the effectiveness of the strategical operations of the Allied Air Forces before D Day. A further assessment of the success attending these operations will be given below.

46. Details of the air effort as it more closely affects the ground troops will be considered later in the discussion of the combined fire plan. Direct support was to be of three categories: armed reconnaissance, attacks on pre-selected targets submitted in advance, and immediate support in response to requests made during the operation.

47. In air operations, as in those of the sea and land forces, the Canadian contribution was on a wide

scale. R.C.A.F. squadrons formed part of Coastal Command and thus joined in attacks on enemy surface and underwater vessels. Moreover,

Fourteen heavy bomber squadrons, comprising No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Group, and one squadron operating with the Pathfinder Force were the R.C.A.F.'s contribution to Bomber Command. In Second Tactical Air Force R.C.A.F. units comprised half of No. 83 Group that operated on the continent in support of the British Second Army. There were nine day fighter squadrons constituting a third wing, and three fighter reconnaissance squadrons in a fourth wing.

(The R.C.A.F. Overseas, The Sixth Year (Toronto, 1949), pp 4-5)

The above **includes** only those men and aircraft of the R.C.A.F. overseas most directly concerned with the invasion plan.

48. To complete this survey of the plan it is necessary to describe briefly certain other essential aspects which cannot properly be listed under the heading of any one service.

(d) Port and Harbour Facilities

49. The Allied commanders knew that the enemy realized the vital necessity of capturing a port in order to maintain and build up any invading forces, and that consequently the enemy would do everything in his power to deny them the use of a port ((HS) 202A21.014(D2): "Appreciation of the Possible Developments of Operations to Secure a Lodgement Area: Operation "Overlord", 18 May 44). Indeed,

The basic factor in determining where the initial assault was to be made lay in the requirement that the lodgement area would contain sufficient port facilities to maintain a force of some 26 to 30 divisions and enable that force to be augmented by follow up shipments from the United States or elsewhere of additional divisions and supporting units at the rate of three to five divisions per month.

(Report by the Supreme Commander...,  
op cit, p. 1)

The required port facilities were to be supplied by the capture of Cherbourg and the Brittany ports. (Supra, paras 28 and 29) Yet, despite the plan to strengthen the assaulting forces and to widen the area to be attacked to include the base of the Cotentin Peninsula, it was estimated that Cherbourg and the Brittany ports would not

be in Allied hands until D plus 30 to D plus 40, and might conceivably take much longer. In the interval, therefore, it was obvious that the discharge of vital stores had to be made over open beaches, supplemented by off-loading through such minor ports as Courseulles and Port-en-Bessin, for there was no harbour of consequence within the immediate assault area. Here was a consideration of utmost importance, inasmuch as inclement weather could prejudice the success of the whole operation.

50. To overcome this difficulty a unique project was conceived involving the construction of two artificial harbours (Mulberries) and five shelters for small craft (Gooseberries) at the beaches themselves. The construction of the prefabricated ports especially, one in the U.S. sector at St. Laurent (Mulberry "A"), and one in the British sector at Arromanches (Mulberry "B"), was declared to be an essential part of the plan. (For further details of the conception, construction and planned employment of the prefabricated ports and harbours, see the section on "The 'MULBERRY' Project" in A.H.Q. Report No. 42).

(e) Deception and Diversionary Plans

51. Despite the most thorough security precautions it was impossible to conceal from the enemy the tremendous and complex operations which were underway in the United Kingdom in preparation for the cross-Channel attack. Nevertheless, it was possible to keep the enemy guessing as to the direction, strength and time of the attack, and a Cover Plan was prepared with those objectives in mind. The over-all Cover Plan was named Plan "FORTITUDE". The part of the plan which affected the Canadian troops in the United Kingdom was named Operation "FORTITUDE (SOUTH)". The story on which "FORTITUDE (SOUTH)" was based fell naturally into two phases, pre-D Day and post-D Day. These phases were described as follows:

Phase (I)

The main Allied assault is to be made against the Pas de Calais area.

In the first place, the notional date for the operation will be D Day plus 45. There will come a time, however, when as D Day approaches our preparations will indicate the imminence of the assault, and when the enemy will realize the approx date of our attack. When it is estimated that this period has been reached, the imminence of an attack will be confirmed by special means, but the area of the attack will remain the Pas de Calais area.

Phase (II)

"NEPTUNE" is a preliminary and diversionary operation, designed to draw German reserves away from the Pas de Calais and Belgium. Once the main

German reserves have been committed to the "NEPTUNE" battle, the main Allied attack against the Pas de Calais will take place.

The enemy will be induced to believe for as long as possible after "NEPTUNE" D Day that the main threat to the Pas de Calais is still to be carried out.

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. First Cdn Army, May 1944: Appx "L", "Operation 'OVERLORD', Cover and Diversionary Plans")

52. The story of the first phase was that the Supreme Commander had under command two Army Groups, the 21st Army Group and the First United States' Army Group "which consists of the First Canadian Army with under command 2 Canadian and VIII US Corps, and the Third United States Army with under command XX Corps and XII Corps" (Ibid). The story located the First United States Army Group in the East and Southeast of England, and associated with it the Ninth United States Air Force located in the South and Southeast of England.

53. The story of the second phase suggested that the First United States Army Group and a proportion of its associated Air Force was ready to attack the Pas de Calais and waited only for the moment when the enemy reserves had been drawn from that area by the "NEPTUNE" attack before launching its own assault\* (Ibid).

54. Each of the three services of the Allied forces was involved in carrying out certain phases of the Cover Plan. The British and American Tactical Air Forces had to be especially careful not to indicate the proposed assault area by means of their pattern of bombing enemy defences, and "... the only way of doing this was by the wildly extravagant method of bombing at least two coastal

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\*The enemy was to be kept guessing in Norway also by Plan "FORTITUDE (NORTH)". In April and May (1944) a threat to Norway was established by a notional force in the Clyde area, using joint wireless traffic and special means.

"This appears to have persuaded the enemy not only to retain forces in Norway, but actually to reinforce them..." (Report by the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief..., op cit, Vol 1, p. 109)

batteries or defences elsewhere for every one that was attacked on the invasion coast of Normandy" (Harris, op cit, p. 205. See also (HS) 202A21.014 (D7): Op "OVERLORD" Pre D Day Bombing of Railway Targets). Caution also had to be exercised in regard to the air force plan to disrupt all road and rail lines entering the "NEPTUNE" district. Thus, in order not to bring notice to this front, "attention was paid in the preparatory phase principally to the bridges over the Seine, with some others over the Oise, Meuse and the Albert Canal, leaving to the assault phase the task of attacking bridges south of Paris to Orleans and west along the Loire" (Leigh-Mallory, op cit, p. 45).

55. During both phases the Air Forces were to use such physical means of deceiving the enemy as possible without interfering with the actual "NEPTUNE" operation. Thus arrangements were made to have fighter and bomber craft put on a considerable show of activity both at the airdromes and in the air first as if training for the invasion, and then, after D Day, as if preparing to mount another attack on the Pas de Calais.

56. The Allied naval forces were equally involved in confusing the enemy as to when and where the invasion would take place. Admiral Ramsay has described part of the Naval Cover Plan as follows:

Because the power of manoeuvre at sea was so limited the need for keeping the enemy uncertain as to our precise objectives was paramount. Characteristic wireless traffic accompanying training and movements of assault forces had to be controlled

Other measures included the berthing of dummy landing craft in Dover and Nore Commands before D Day and the parking of 'Phoenix' and 'Whale' Units\* at Selsey and Dungeness. Arrangements were also made with the Admiralty for the large number of commercial ships that were destined for the Thames and ships for loading to sail in later "Neptune" convoys to wait in Scottish ports until the operation began. Thus the concentration of shipping automatically

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\*'Phoenix' and 'Whale' Units were components of the artificial (Mulberry) harbours. These Units were in turn subjected to security measures. "A number of disguises were produced, such as the decking of the 'Phoenixes', placing railway lines along the decks, erecting batteries of dummy guns upon them and finally erecting elaborate wireless masts and aerials to indicate that they were some form of defence against the anticipated V-1 weapons" ((HS) 952.083 (D1): Rear Admiral H. Hickling and Brigadier I.L.H. Mackillop, The Story of the Mulberries, p. 8).