

Eighth Air Force . . . to reach its peak in April, 1944" (440), together with plans for the destruction of the very important Rumanian oilfields at Ploesti, and the occupation of the Azores as "essential to the efficient conduct of the anti-U-boat war" (441).

236. At the end of the "TRIDENT" Conference (25 May) the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that a supplementary directive should be issued to COSSAC. This (first) amendment to General Morgan's instructions stated that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had resolved that "forces and equipment" should be "established in the United Kingdom with the object of mounting an operation with target date the 1st May, 1944, to secure a lodgment on the Continent" from which further offensive operations could be developed. The instructions continued:

You will, therefore, plan an operation based on the presence of the following ground forces available for use in the United Kingdom. on the 1st May, 1944:

Assault - 5 Infantry Divisions simultaneously loaded in landing craft.
2 Infantry Divisions -- follow up.
2 Airborne Divisions.

Total - 9 Divisions in the assault.

Build up: 20 Divisions available for movement into lodgment area.

Total - 29 Divisions

A detailed statement of the forces which it is estimated will be available for this operation will be provided separately, and the possibility of adding one French division will be considered at a later date.

The expansion of logistical facilities in the United Kingdom will be undertaken immediately. You should plan for the seizure and development of Continental ports in order that the initial assault and build-up of forces may be augmented and follow up shipments may be made from the United States or elsewhere of additional divisions and supporting units at the rate of 3 to 5 divisions per month. The preparation and constant keeping up to date of plans for an emergency crossing of the Channel in the event of a German collapse will proceed in accordance with the directive already given to you. In addition, you will prepare and submit to the Combined Chiefs of Staff a plan for sending forces to Norway in the event of a German evacuation becoming apparent.

Your outline plan for this operation should be prepared and submitted to the Combined Chiefs of Staff as early as possible and not later than the 1st August, 1943. (442)

General Morgan afterwards noted that this supplementary directive "got us down to brass tacks" (443).

237. The limitations imposed by the "TRIDENT" Conference on the scope of the COSSAC plan for "OVER-LORD" will be apparent. By comparison with the Combined Commanders' appreciation for "SKYSCRAPER" the new planning basis was inadequate. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the earlier appreciation had foundered on the rock of insufficient resources. At Washington the British and American Joint Planning Staffs calculated that a maximum of 4,657 landing ships and craft could be made available in the United Kingdom by 1 Apr 44 for the invasion; of these 3,242 could be provided by the United Kingdom and 1,415 by the United States (444). From these figures came the deduction that only five divisions could participate in the seaborne assault.

238. Yet at this stage of planning the figures for landing craft and shipping likely to be available a year later were really arbitrary estimates. They were, in fact, "based on a number of highly debatable assumptions" such as estimated ship capacities, and "they did not take into account possible loss or damage to craft in the assault or the time required for ships to turn around and come back for the build-up forces" (445).

Throughout the planning period it was generally true that the Americans tended to be more optimistic than the British about the difficulties of the assault and hence more willing to push planning figures upward toward the theoretical maximum. (446)

Moreover, it appears that the "TRIDENT" calculations failed, in large measure, to make provision for the necessary close support craft. This surprising omission afterwards "forced COSSAC to convert some L.C.T's and thus increased the shortage of landing craft" (447).

239. Following the "TRIDENT" Conference the Prime Minister, the C.I.G.S. and other senior British officers held a short series of meetings (29 May - 3 Jun 43) with General Marshall and General Eisenhower in the latter's villa at Algiers. These discussions were mainly devoted to the possibilities of operations following the completion of "HUSKY".

General Eisenhower said that he had had a long talk with Sir Alan Brooke on the subject of the war situation as a whole and that Sir Alan had emphasized that the Russian Army was the only land force that could yield

decisive results. Any Anglo-American force that could be put upon the Continent was merely a drop in the bucket. Sir Alan Brooke had therefore urged that the efforts of our armies must be directed towards diverting German strength from the Russian front in order to enable the Russian Armies to inflict a decisive defeat upon them. He himself (General Eisenhower) thought that, if we had command of the air, an Anglo-American force of, say, fifty divisions would probably be able to hold a force of seventy-five German divisions on the Continent. If it was generally accepted that a second front in Western Europe is unnecessary and that our main object was to divert German strength from the Russian front, the conception of sending seven divisions away from the Mediterranean seemed to him to be somewhat faulty. If we were going to knock out Italy, we ought to do so immediately after 'HUSKY' and with all the means at our disposal. 'HUSKY' would give a good indication of the type of resistance likely to be encountered on the mainland of Italy itself; and, if 'HUSKY' proved to be an easy proposition, we ought to go directly into Italy. This would yield far greater prizes than any attack on islands [i.e. Sardinia or Corsica]. (448)

240. At Algiers Mr. Churchill referred to the preparations for the approaching invasion of North-West Europe.

The Prime Minister said that there was no chance of our putting into Europe an Anglo-American army in any way comparable in size to that of the Russians, who are now holding 218 German divisions on their front. By the 1st May, 1944, we should have an expeditionary force of twenty-nine divisions in the United Kingdom, seven of which would have come from North Africa. Continuing, the Prime Minister said that the United Kingdom must be the assembly-point of the largest force which we could accumulate, and it was necessary to have plans ready to cross the Channel in force at any time in case the Germans were to crack. As General Marshall had frequently pointed out, Northern France was the only theatre in which the vast British Metropolitan Air Force and the United States Air Forces in the United Kingdom could be brought into full play. It was not, in any event, intended that the Anglo-American force in the United Kingdom should continue to accumulate beyond May 1944, and it was our intention to launch a considerable operation which was likely to be accompanied by very heavy fighting and casualties at that time. The Prime Minister emphasized that both the British people and the British Army were anxious to fight across the Channel. (449)

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister left no doubt about his immediate interest in the Italian campaign. He stated that "he very passionately wanted to see Italy out of the war and Rome in our possession" (450).

The Prime Minister stated it would be hard for him to ask the British people to cut their rations again, but he would gladly do so rather than throw away a campaign which had possibilities of great success. He could not endure to see a great army stand idle when they might be engaged in eliminating Italy from the war. Parliament and the people would become impatient if the Army were not active, and he was willing to take almost desperate steps in order to prevent such a calamity. (451)

Meanwhile, work was proceeding in London on the COSSAC plans for the invasion.

THE COSSAC PLANS:

DECEPTION SCHEMES ("STARKEY" AND "HARLEQUIN"),
"OVERLORD" AND "RANKIN"

241. The original directive to General Morgan contained this brief comment on "Staff and Method of Planning":

You will be provided with a small permanent Combined Staff drawn from the British and United States Navies, Armies and Air Forces.
(452)

The present narrative is unable to describe the COSSAC planning organization in detail. General Morgan had, as his deputy, Brigadier-General Ray W. Barker of the Headquarters of European Theatre of Operations, United States Army. This officer had previously served "in close conjunction with the British Combined Commanders on all the various projects in connection with the cross-Channel operation" (453). Under COSSAC and his deputy were "Principal Staff Officers", each assisted by an inter-Service team composed of British and American officers, who were responsible for Intelligence, Naval, Army, Air and Administrative divisions. The long experience of the British authorities in matters of Intelligence was recognized by placing that division under their direction. The organization was designed to promote a close integration of the British and American planning staffs without, however, overlooking the many differences in Staff methods of these nationalities.

242. On the naval side, an arrangement was made whereby the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth (then Admiral Sir Charles Little) had a representative at COSSAC for planning purposes. For part of this period, the representative chosen was Commodore J. Hughes-Hallett.

He had been the Naval Force Commander for the Dieppe Raid and he commanded Force "J", the permanent nucleus of an assault force, both before and after his period of service (May - August 1943) as principal naval staff officer at COSSAC. General Morgan has described Hughes-Hallett as "the sailor whose individual contribution at this period to the ultimate victory was probably greater than any other" (454). As will be seen, he played a prominent part in the development of the great "MULBERRY" project. At the end of July 1943 Rear-Admiral George Creasy became the senior representative of the Royal Navy on the COSSAC staff.

243. In June Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, A.O.C.-in-C. Fighter Command, became responsible for the air aspect of planning. Thereafter, "the COSSAC United States and British air staffs were amalgamated into a single staff" (455).

244. Another series of appointments were of direct concern to First Canadian Army. The circumstances are best described by General Morgan:

A high proportion of the troops forming the expeditionary force were in fact, we knew from the start, to be Canadian. By special arrangement therefore with General Andy McNaughton, a Canadian observer was attached to the COSSAC staff in the person of Major-General Guy Turner*, both these being old friends of mine since the days when I had served with the Canadian Army in France from 1915 to 1917. Further than this, taking advantage of our old friendship, I asked General McNaughton for help in filling certain of the vacancies on the COSSAC Staff. This help was as ever forthcoming in full measure. A secondary consideration that had of course not escaped us was that, whereas even now the supply of thoroughly competent British staff officers was hardly coping with the demand for their services, there was an ever increasing flow of first-class trained Canadian staff officers beginning to come forward. The Canadian Commander promised me the best that Canada could give, and he kept his promise. (456)

These arrangements reflected the closer identification of First Canadian Army with the invasion plan which followed the selection, in July 1943, of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division as one of the formations participating in the assault landings.

Deception Schemes ("STARKEY" and "HARLEQUIN")

245. Before the "TRIDENT" Conference issued the supplementary directive to COSSAC, work had begun in London on the "elaborate camouflage and deception scheme" which was one of Morgan's three main tasks

*Major-General G.R. Turner, previously chief administrative staff officer to General McNaughton.

(supra, para 226). It will be recalled that the object of this scheme ("COCKADE") was to make the enemy believe that a large-scale operation across the Channel would occur in 1943. The plan would include a deceptive amphibious operation with the intention of drawing the Luftwaffe into a disadvantageous air battle. There were, of course, great difficulties inherent in the development of such a scheme. COSSAC has written:

A standard had been set for us by the Dieppe raid of the previous summer. This had involved an effort that had utilized a very high proportion of the resources available in the United Kingdom, and the enemy must have got from it a reasonably simple equation of cause and effect, so to speak. We should obviously have to produce or simulate preparations on a scale greatly exceeding those which had led up to the raid on Dieppe. The effect of this raid on the enemy had been, so far as we were able to make out, describable as local and temporary. [See, supra, para 132] . . .

But by 1943 the resources of almost every kind available in the United Kingdom were very much less than those which had been present at the time of the Dieppe raid. Since then the North African invasion had taken place and had inevitably drained off supplies of all kinds, notably of men, of landing craft and of shipping. There was now only one American division remaining in North-West Europe, few British divisions capable of taking the field and hardly sufficient landing craft to compose one naval assault force and to mount a minimum of commandos. (457)

246. The COSSAC plan for Operation "COCKADE" was approved by the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 23 Jun 43 (458). The plan included three separate operations, each menacing a different portion of the long enemy-held coastline. "WADHAM", "embodying a threat to the Brest Peninsula and designed to persuade the Germans into over-estimating the strength of U.S. forces in the United Kingdom", was to be carried out by the Headquarters of the 5th United States Corps (459); "TINDALL" was "designed to pin German forces in Norway by giving the impression of preparations for a major British operation to take place about mid-November for the capture of the port and airfields at Stavanger" (460). Neither "WADHAM" nor "TINDALL" involved the movement of amphibious forces or aircraft. They depended entirely upon such devices as controlled leakage of information to the enemy, dummy aircraft and gliders, the actual presence of troops (and amphibious exercises) in the mounting areas and, in the case of "TINDALL", naval activity in Scottish waters (461).

247. The third subsidiary operation of the "COCKADE" plan -- and the only one involving actual movement of formations -- was known as "STARKEY". It was aimed at the Pas de Calais, partly because the enemy

had good reason to be particularly sensitive to amphibious operations in that sector, but mainly because of the air aspect. This was "the patch of atmosphere into which we could fly the maximum of our short-range fighters and keep them there for the longest possible period" (462). The military phase of "STARKEY" was exercise "HARLEQUIN" and it took place during the period 20 Aug - 10 Sep 43.

248. "HARLEQUIN", like "SPARTAN", had a special significance in terms of pre-invasion planning. In the first place, this operation was carried out under the direction of the newly-formed Headquarters, 21st Army Group, which "had been created to command the Anglo-Canadian troops of an Allied Expeditionary Force -- the Second British and the First Canadian Armies -- in the invasion of Hitler's Europe" (463). General Paget had taken over command of the new formation on 15 Jul; he was to remain in this appointment until he was succeeded in January 1944 by General Montgomery (464).

249. Another, most important, feature of "HARLEQUIN" was the training it gave both naval and military forces in the administrative aspects of an invasion. As described in the subsequent report by the Air Force Commander:

The Combined Plan included the movement of large Army formations to their concentration areas adjacent to various Ports in the South Eastern counties during the several weeks prior to September 8th, 1943, and the embarkation of M/T vehicles and A.A. personnel in Assault craft, all designed to simulate the mounting of the 'bridgehead' formations of an invading Army; the 'build-up' over the same period of large numbers of Naval Assault craft and Merchant shipping at various anchorages and ports between SOUTHAMPTON and the THAMES ESTUARY for the purposes of loading and transportation of the Army 'bridgehead' and 'follow-up' forces; and finally, on the Culminating Day (D DAY), September 8th, 1943, the sailing of the Naval Assault Force and associated merchant shipping in such a manner as to deceive and convince the enemy that a large scale landing was imminent in the BOULOGNE - LE TOUQUET area, without, however, committing our land forces to an actual assault on the French Coast. (465)

The practice in "moving a great army rapidly through concentration and assembly areas in England to embarkation points, and putting it on board ship" was, in reality, "the rehearsal for the vast operations of June, 1944" (466).

250. Both the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division and the 5th Canadian Armoured Division participated in the movement to the Portsmouth and Southampton areas. There was a strong element of realism in all arrangements.

The troops had of course been told that their exercise HARLEQUIN was in fact an exercise. This seemed right enough. They had had so many exercises before of much the same character. But was this exercise quite the same as all the others? Did it not have just that little something the others hadn't had? It was repeated that this was an exercise. You can tell a man the truth, but you can't make him believe it. (467)

The preparation of unit "loading tables", the issue of "48 hour rations", and the increased emphasis on security precautions led many officers and men to believe what COSSAC wanted the enemy to believe -- namely, that this was "the real thing".

251. In spite of the elaborate preparations for "STARKEY" the enemy's reaction to the manoeuvres was decidedly disappointing. Although the Pas de Calais thundered with Allied fighter aircraft on 8 Sep the Luftwaffe refused to accept the challenge. The Air Force Commander afterwards attributed the failure of this aspect of the operation to these reasons:

- (i) Whilst it was evident that the enemy appreciated that an amphibious operation was taking place, he was at no time deceived into thinking that a serious invasion landing was intended.
- (ii) Under these circumstances he decided it was impolitic for him to engage our Fighters over the BOULOGNE area or over the NAVAL ASSAULT CONVOY for the following reasons:
 - (a) If he did so, he stood to gain nothing in face of our Fighter superiority. (A lesson he probably learned from "DIEPPE").
 - (b) He wished to conserve his Fighter forces to meet the constant threat of attack by FORTRESSES . . .
 - (c) The enemy had already reinforced his Fighters in the BEAUVAIS and LILLE areas by some 60 Aircraft and, during the morning of D. DAY he had sent down additional aircraft from HOLLAND to patrol BELGIUM. It is clear, however, from the way these Fighters were handled that these measures were mainly precautionary, and that the enemy was not going to allow his Fighters to be drawn away in any strength from their main defensive positions, thus exposing himself to the risk of unopposed air attack on GERMANY itself. (468)

252. Although "STARKEY" failed in its primary object of bringing on a large-scale air battle, the operation had certain beneficial results. In his Overture to Overlord, General Morgan suggests that the scheme helped to deceive the enemy about the direction of the later Allied assault across the Channel (469). From the point of view of the Allied Air Forces, "STARKEY" also helped to solve many problems in connection with communications, tactics, bombing, reconnaissance and liaison with military headquarters (470). On the military and naval sides, as already indicated, the great value of the subsidiary operation, "HARLEQUIN", lay in the training it provided for the essential administrative and organizational aspects of "OVERLORD". Two other important lessons were outlined in a letter which C.-in-C. 21 A.Gp afterwards addressed to A.O.C.-in-C. Fighter Command:

The first is the necessity for a correct appreciation of the time factor in the planning and execution of a large-scale combined operation. The Outline Plan was not issued until 26th June, 1943, -- i.e., 11 weeks before D Day. It would have been impossible in this time to have planned in full detail a combined operation, including the assault and subsequent operations on the other side.

Secondly, the importance of producing a complete security and deception plan before the start of executive planning was clearly demonstrated, as was the necessity for setting up suitable executive machinery under the direction of the responsible Commanders for controlling all aspects of security and deception. (471)

It should also be noted that the planning of "FORTITUDE", the cover plan for "OVERLORD", was afterwards influenced by the experience derived from "STARKEY". (Infra, para 420).

"OVERLORD"

253. The second main task of COSSAC -- and, by far, the most important one -- was the preparation of a plan for "OVERLORD". Work on this plan commenced at the beginning of June 1943; it was completed in the relatively short period of six weeks and was submitted to the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 15 Jul. General Morgan has stressed two aspects of the planning:

First and foremost emphasis must again be laid upon the fact that the so-called COSSAC plan was not by any means entirely original work. The majority of ingredients had already by 1943 been painstakingly evolved as the result of immense labour on the part of a large number of people who had from time to time been charged with the duty of anticipating and preparing for that which in many quarters seemed so utterly

logical and even inevitable, that one day the war would have to be carried into Germany from the West. Secondly, it must be borne in mind throughout that the Supreme Allied Commander on whose shoulders would rest full and ultimate responsibility for the whole affair was not appointed until December of 1943 and did not in fact take up the reins of office until the second half of January of 1944. (472)

A third factor, of the highest importance, was the limitation imposed on the scope of the plan by the supplementary directive issued at the "TRIDENT" Conference.

254. It was realized that, if the operation was to succeed, the following requirements had to be met:

- (a) The initial assault must take place within the range of effective fighter cover by aircraft operating from ENGLAND.
- (b) There must be sufficient airfields or readily developed airfield sites to provide bases for our tactical air forces on the Continent.
- (c) There must be adequate ports and sheltered waters to supply and maintain about thirty divisions from the UK.
- (d) There must be sufficient space with controlling terrain features to enable our forces to secure the lodgment area and to facilitate future operations for the capture of the deep-water ports required to accommodate the landing of large forces from the US. (473)

255. The COSSAC staff quickly decided that "there were not a great number of alternatives to be considered for the making of the main effort . . . in fact these seemed to whittle themselves down to two only, direction Pas de Calais or direction western Normandy" (474). Accordingly, General Morgan instructed his staff to prepare comparative studies of these two sectors.

256. A detailed appreciation of the Pas de Calais sector (attached, as Appendix "C", to the COSSAC plan) came to the conclusion that it was "an unsuitable area in which to attempt our initial lodgment on the Continent" (475). This was true although the area offered many obvious advantages:

Its proximity to our coasts ensures the maximum air cover from aircraft operating under the most favourable conditions. The short sea routes would provide a rapid turn round

of craft and shipping and would greatly lighten the burden of naval escort and protection. In addition, the short distance would make for ease and efficiency of signal communications, and would facilitate the maintenance of supplies . . .

Moreover, the area offers possibilities of strategic development in the form of a thrust South-Eastwards, across the enemy lines of communication to occupied FRANCE. (476)

257. Unfortunately, the enemy was well aware of the possibilities of the Pas de Calais: he had studied that sector three years previously in connection with "SEA LION", his plan for the invasion of southern England. Consequently, the COSSAC appreciation recognized that the Pas de Calais was "the most strongly defended area of the FRENCH coast; and the pivot of the GERMAN coastal defence system" (477). Here, the enemy probably had two coastal divisions with excellent road and railway communications for the rapid build-up of his forces. Here, also, he had concentrated his formidable defences -- "barbed wire, elements 'C', concrete walls, minefields, anti-tank ditches, etc" -- all covered by the fire of numerous and powerful batteries (478). These considerations led the COSSAC planners to believe that "the practical capacity of the beaches in the early stages" could not exceed, at most, "50 per cent of the theoretical capacity"; and that the assault force could not, therefore, comprise more than one division (479). Against this relatively puny effort the enemy would be able to bring up overwhelming reserves. Moreover, there was the further great difficulty that the Pas de Calais did not offer sufficient port capacity to maintain an invading force. The COSSAC appreciation stated:

While these conditions might be somewhat modified by factors which cannot be accurately assessed -- the effect of intensive air bombardment, the action of resistance groups, or that improvisation in maintenance organization which the prospect of an early and decisive battle might justify -- the cumulative weight of evidence shows that, under conditions as known at present, the operation is militarily unsound. (480)

Nevertheless, with an eye to a future cover plan for the invasion, the planners added that their conclusions were presented "without prejudice to the importance of the Pas de Calais area as an objective for feints and diversions" (481).

258. The study of the Pas de Calais showed that the shortest way across the English Channel would not be the easiest way. The alternative, the Caen - Cotentin sector, had certain advantages without many of the limitations of the northern coast. General Morgan later observed: "As things stood in June of 1943 there was no comparison between the low standard of

preparedness for defence in Normandy and the masses of concrete still being poured in the Pas de Calais" (482). Of the beaches finally selected for the assault he added:

I think it is fair to say that we had always been disposed to favour the Normandy landing if only for the fact that so much of the ground-work already done before our time had been done in connection with projects for a variety of landings to the Southward, in the Cotentin-Dieppe region, rather than to the south-eastward. But there were other outstanding advantages. First, the shape of the coast. The weather records for years past were searched, and it was hard to find a case in which summer had seen heavy weather from any point of the compass other than between south and west. The Norman beaches are completely sheltered from this quarter, whereas beaches further east are not. In the event, of course, we lost that part of the bet completely when that north-easterly gale blew up just after D-day in 1944. But our original bet was still a good one. (483)

259. COSSAC considered that the "OVERLORD" landings could take place over beaches in either the Caen or the Cotentin sectors. He was, however, opposed to a simultaneous attack in both areas: "It would entail dividing our limited forces by the low-lying marshy ground and intricate river system at the neck of the Cotentin Peninsula; thus exposing them to defeat in detail" (484). This decision was one of the most important features of the COSSAC plan. The "TRIDENT" allotment of only five divisions for the sea-borne assault meant that General Morgan was unable to expand the frontage of the attack so as to include the beaches in the Eastern Cotentin. These had been considered vital by the Combined Commanders. (Supra, para 201). It was later necessary to increase the available resources and to alter the COSSAC plan so as to include these same beaches in the target area. Here, it may be noted that the alteration was made after, and not before, the Supreme Commander was named for "OVERLORD". Although in the summer of 1943 General Morgan undoubtedly deprecated the limitations on his planning, he was bound by his directives and could not argue the matter on the basis afterwards adopted by the Supreme Commander.

260. On the assumption that the choice lay between the Cotentin and the Caen beaches, COSSAC favoured the latter. His appreciation nevertheless suggested the many favourable possibilities of an operation against the Cotentin, which offered the great prize of Cherbourg. The key to the Cotentin was the Lessay - Carentan area, at the base of the peninsula, which was only 15 miles wide and which could be flooded. The capture of this vital area by an airborne force would "disrupt the enemy's line of

communication on the Peninsula" and would "delay the rate of reinforcement of his mobile reserves" (485). Later, the necessity of securing control of the Carentan area was clearly recognized.

261. The best beaches in the Cotentin Peninsula were those on the eastern coast, where some 16,000 yards of fine sand lay sheltered from the prevailing westerly wind. Unfortunately, the exits from these beaches were unsatisfactory and would hamper any rapid large-scale penetration of the hinterland. This was a critical matter in view of General Morgan's maxim: "If the invasion battle takes place on the beach one is already defeated" (486). Moreover, COSSAC estimated that an assault over these beaches with two divisions would require the support of an additional division, landing under less favourable conditions, on the western beaches of the peninsula. These operations would necessitate the reduction or neutralization of the enemy's defences in the Grandcamp area and on the Island of Alderney, as well as the employment of an airborne force in the Lessay - Carentan area. However, the principal objection to the Cotentin lay in the problems of the period following the assault.

The limitations on the size of our forces and resources are such that the hazards of the assault should be undertaken only to gain a decision. In assaulting the Peninsula, we undertake an operation, which even if successful, does not dispose our forces in a position to gain a decision that will allow the accomplishment of the second and most important phase of the object, since the size of the Peninsula will not permit the operational employment of more than eight to ten divisions. If it is possible to emerge from the Peninsula, we will meet the enemy with only part of the forces available to us. If the force landed is unable to emerge from the Peninsula; then a second seaborne assault will be required which will be reduced in strength by the amount already contained, and which will have to assault beaches already reinforced by the enemy reserves. (487)

262. With the elimination of the Pas de Calais and the Cotentin Peninsula as target areas for the main assault -- and with the appreciation that a subsidiary operation could not be directed against the Cotentin because of inadequate resources -- COSSAC was driven to consider the Caen sector. The possibilities of this sector as a "lodgment area" were summarized in a "Digest of Operation OVERLORD" which formed part of the COSSAC plan:

The CAEN sector is weakly held; the defences are relatively light and the beaches are of high capacity and sheltered from the prevailing winds. Inland the terrain is suitable for airfield development and for the consolidation

of the initial bridgehead; and much of it is unfavourable for counter-attacks by panzer divisions. Maximum enemy air opposition can only be brought to bear at the expense of the enemy air defence screen covering the approaches to GERMANY; and the limited number of enemy airfields within range of the CAEN area facilitates local neutralization of the German fighter force. The sector suffers from the disadvantage that considerable effort will be required to provide adequate air support to our assault forces and some time must elapse before the capture of a major port.

After a landing in the CAEN sector it would be necessary to seize either the SEINE group of ports or the BRITTANY group of ports. To seize the SEINE ports would entail forcing a crossing of the SEINE, which is likely to require greater forces than we can build up through the CAEN beaches and the port of CHERBOURG. It should, however, be possible to seize the BRITTANY ports between CHERBOURG and NANTES and on them build up sufficient forces for our final advance Eastwards.

Provided that the necessary air situation can first be achieved, the chances of a successful attack and of rapid subsequent development are so much greater in this sector than in any other that it is considered that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

In the light of these factors, it is considered that our initial landing on the Continent should be effected in the CAEN area, with a view to the eventual seizure of a lodgment area comprising the CHERBOURG-BRITTANY group of ports (from CHERBOURG to NANTES). (488)

263. The plan recommended three simultaneous seaborne assaults: one, by an American division, would be made over the "Western Beaches" between St. Laurent-sur-Mer and Colleville-sur-Mer; the other two would be carried out by British and Canadian divisions over the "Eastern Beaches" between St. Come-de Fresné and Bernières-sur-Mer.* A British airborne division would be employed against the Caen area. In spite of the scarcity of landing craft and shipping, the COSSAC staff were confident that "within fourteen days of the assault we should have landed some eighteen divisions and should have in use in France some fourteen airfields from which thirty or more fighter squadrons would be able to operate" (489).

264. The importance of capturing Caen, and the roles of airborne troops and commandos, have been described by General Morgan:

*The 3rd Canadian Infantry Division made its D Day assaults at Courseulles-sur-Mer, Bernières-sur-Mer and St. Aubin-sur-Mer.

Above and beyond everything it was evident from the first moment that the objective of supreme importance was the town of Caen with its command of communications. Here seemed one of those very rare occasions when one could with justification refer to the situation or position having a 'key'. With Caen, the key, firmly in our grasp the puzzle seemed to resolve itself with a tenable logic. We judged the importance of Caen to be such that the bulk of the available airborne troops, whatever that might turn out to be, should be allotted to assist in its capture. To commandos would fall the task of silencing flanking enemy batteries, as they had done so magnificently at Dieppe, that could bear on the landing beaches from eastward and they and small airborne units would be detailed to the capture of important defiles on the main routes leading into or out of the area defined. (490)

265. The preceding paragraphs contain the essence of the COSSAC plan. Certain aspects of that plan deserve further comment. It may be noted that the Caen sector was thought to be "weakly held" with "relatively light" defences. While this estimate reflected the best available Intelligence during the summer of 1943, it could not be accepted as a completely reliable guide to the enemy's intentions in the future. Yet this was a gamble which the COSSAC planners were forced to take. In point of fact, the German defences in the invasion area were "considerably strengthened" by Field-Marshal Rommel after he took command of Army Group "B" in February 1944 (491). A more controversial aspect of the plan was the emphasis on the early capture of "a major port" -- what General Morgan later described as "our preoccupation with the reasonably early capture of Cherbourg" (492). This line of thought persisted in spite of the impetus given to the development of beach maintenance by the "TORCH" landings and, later, by the Sicilian assault ("HUSKY"). Another solution to the problem of supplying and maintaining large formations was to be found in the great artificial harbours known as "Mulberries". However, when the COSSAC plan was prepared the "Mulberries" were, in General Morgan's words, "still but a gleam in the eye of their progenitors" (493).

266. COSSAC's inability to include the eastern beaches of the Cotentin Peninsula in the frontage of the assault was a direct result of the supplementary directive issued to General Morgan by the "TRIDENT" Conference. However, it should be noted that COSSAC repeatedly emphasized the need for greater resources with which to mount "OVERLORD". Early in August he expressed the view that "the numbers [of landing ships and craft] should be increased to give him some more flexibility". He added the significant comment that "if craft for a further assault division could be found, he would stage an assault against the east coast of the

Cotentin Peninsula . . ." (494). Subsequently, the Supreme Commander brought higher authority to bear on this vital problem with the result that the invasion front was ultimately extended to include the Cotentin beaches. General Eisenhower wrote:

. . . in justice to General Morgan it must be understood that he was charged with making the best plan possible out of the means specifically allocated by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, whereas a commander was in position to insist upon greater means, even at the expense of time. My decision to broaden the attack was earnestly supported by General Morgan. (495)

267. The COSSAC view of the broad course of operations after the assault was a great drive to seize "the CHERBOURG - BRITTANY group of ports". In subsequent planning the early capture of Cherbourg remained a prominent feature. Interest in the Brittany region gradually declined, although General Eisenhower noted that "early planning placed a very great importance on the ports in that area" (496). An appreciation, prepared by Headquarters 21st Army Group within a month of D Day, proposed "the seizure of the QUIBERON BAY area and its development to permit the landing of appreciable quantities of troops, vehicles and stores" as "a solution to the problem raised by the difficulty of crossing the Loire or of penetrating to the tip of the BRITTANY Peninsula" (497). However, the same appreciation also suggested that, if the enemy weakened his eastern flank, "a strong attack should be launched towards the Seine" with the aim of "securing the Seine ports as early as possible" (498). As the Battle of Normandy afterwards developed it was the Seine ports -- and, beyond them, the great shipping facilities of Antwerp -- which proved of the highest significance in maintaining the Allied advance. (The opening of these ports was to be one of the outstanding achievements of First Canadian Army.) Thus, the course of events represented a further significant change in the COSSAC appreciation. It will also be apparent that, on this fundamental matter, the actual operations in the field followed the Combined Commanders' plan more closely than General Morgan's appreciation. (See, supra, para 203).

268. The COSSAC plan made only tentative suggestions for the timing of "OVERLORD":

The question of whether the assault should take place in daylight or darkness was not definitely decided though it was pointed out that the Navy required daylight in order to control the operations of a large fleet and in order to direct effective fire support. This requirement, the planners added, was likely to be decisive, even though, from the Army's standpoint, an approach to the shore by night would be desirable to help preserve surprise up to the last moment.

It was noted that the initial landing should take place about three hours before high water in order that a good-sized force might be landed on the first tide. Calculations to tie in weather, tide, and hours of daylight would be made only in later planning, when the optimum conditions for H-hour [the moment when the first landing craft were to touch down] were finally settled. (499)

269. In still another important matter, the preparation of cover and diversionary plans for "OVERLORD", the COSSAC appreciation did little more than outline two proposals. One of these was a feint in the direction of the Pas de Calais, timed to begin about 14 days before the real operation. "It was to follow the general lines of the 1943 operation pointed at the same area ['STARKEY'] and would include an actual expedition using some of the small craft which were unsuitable for the main assault" (500). This scheme was afterwards developed, with certain modifications, as part of the cover plan for "OVERLORD". Incidentally, when Headquarters 21st Army Group reviewed the COSSAC plan (under the code name "OVERLORD ONE"), the following was one of the methods suggested for maintaining the threat to the Pas de Calais:

First Canadian Army (as the build-up Army for 'OVERLORD ONE') to be given the task of planning and preparing an operation for the capture of ANTWERP in the event of partial enemy disintegration. It is not intended that this should be a bogus plan; it might actually be put into operation if disintegration occurred before, or during the very early stages of 'OVERLORD ONE'. For the purpose of the cover scheme First Canadian Army should, if possible, make no use of ports South of the THAMES. All preliminary administrative arrangements for this operation should be put into effect concurrently with those for 'OVERLORD ONE'; the Canadian Army concentration areas for 'OVERLORD ONE' should be selected so as to conform with the requirements of the ANTWERP operation. 49 Division which will not be used in the initial assault in 'OVERLORD ONE', might possibly be allotted to First Canadian Army as the assault division for the ANTWERP operation. (501)

During April 1944 the Headquarters of the 2nd Canadian Corps, together with many Corps Troops and the 2nd Canadian Division, moved into the Dover area in order to support the threat to the Pas de Calais. The success of the deception was afterwards apparent when the enemy delayed moving his Fifteenth Army south across the Seine until it was too late to influence the Battle of Normandy.

270. The second diversionary plan involved a threat against the southern coast of France by Allied formations in the Mediterranean. "This was to start with a threat before the Normandy landings, but preparations would be made for an actual landing if German forces were withdrawn from southern France to meet the OVERLORD attack" (502). The operation, successively known as "ANVIL" and "DRAGOON", was later planned to coincide with "OVERLORD". However, the lack of adequate resources with which to mount this operation, in addition to "OVERLORD", was to lead to a protracted controversy between the British and American leaders. Even after "ANVIL" was finally approved, in March 1944, the shortage of landing craft imposed ten weeks' delay on the execution of the plan. (See, infra, paras 410 ff)

271. In spite of its great limitations the COSSAC appreciation for "OVERLORD" provided the essential framework for the final invasion plan. Although fundamental alterations were afterwards made -- chiefly by way of enlarging the design -- the intensive work of General Morgan and his staff was indispensable to the completed structure. The COSSAC appreciation has been described as "a plan for planning, not a plan for action" (503). But it is important to recall the two great limitations on the full development of the plan: the absence of a Supreme Allied Commander, who could give authoritative decisions on controversial aspects of the plan, and the lack of adequate resources resulting from the supplementary directive issued by the "TRIDENT" Conference. Both factors had a profound influence on the evolution of the COSSAC plan and both factors explain the serious deficiencies later discovered in the plan.

"RANKIN"

272. In addition to preparing the "OVERLORD" plan and an elaborate deception scheme COSSAC was responsible for planning "a return to the Continent in the event of German disintegration" with whatever forces might be available. This plan, called "RANKIN", may now be briefly considered for the light which it throws on the basic strategy behind OVERLORD and post-OVERLORD planning (504).

273. The COSSAC appreciation for "RANKIN" was not submitted to the Chiefs of Staff until 13 Aug 43. Because of the great difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory definition of "German disintegration", and because of uncertainty over the Allied resources which might be available at any given time, the planners faced unusual problems. In General Morgan's words "the whole thing became a considerable nightmare" (505).

274. Nevertheless, it was apparent that a fundamental distinction could be drawn between "RANKIN" and the other plans prepared by COSSAC. "This basic

difference was due to the fact that whereas in these operations the initiative would lie in our hands, the signal for undertaking operation 'RANKIN' would come from the enemy" (506). Beyond this distinction the political ramifications of "RANKIN" were a further complication. There was no clear, co-ordinated directive from the Allied Governments to settle important matters connected with the occupation of Germany and the liberation of enemy-held countries. On the political side the Western Allies had scarcely got beyond accepting the controversial doctrine of "Unconditional Surrender" proclaimed by President Roosevelt at the Casablanca Conference (507).

275. In the end COSSAC decided that three solutions were necessary.

'RANKIN' Case A visualized the situation in which the enemy, while maintaining his existing front from the Pyrenees to the North Cape unbroken, had been forced to thin out this line to such an extent that we could contemplate breaking into it with forces very much less than those deemed requisite to mount an invasion against determined and highly organized opposition. 'RANKIN' Case B was designed to cope with a situation in which the enemy might be forced, owing to circumstances brought about elsewhere on his several fronts, to economize in north-west Europe by withdrawing voluntarily from certain portions of his line while maintaining the bulk of it intact. He might for instance decide to evacuate a portion of France or of Norway while standing firm along the Channel Coast and in the Low Countries. 'RANKIN' Case C dealt with the possibility of a complete collapse of Nazi power on the lines of the swift surrender of November, 1918. (508)

276.. COSSAC was able to dismiss Case "A" without much difficulty. The available resources were still so limited that there was no possibility of launching even a small force against the Continent before the end of 1943.

From January, 1944, onward we reckoned that it should be possible to undertake an assault against weak opposition to secure a strictly limited objective for permanent occupation. From March, 1944, onward our situation would improve rapidly and we should then be in a position to contemplate the seizure of the Cotentin Peninsula, provided always that we should then command the resources to reduce Cherbourg within forty-eight hours. Diversionary operations would probably be desirable simultaneously in the Pas de Calais and in Southern France, which ought both by then to be within our capabilities. (509)

Thus, Case "A" "indicated a modification of OVERLORD to secure the Cotentin peninsula" if a favourable situation developed during the spring of 1944 (510).

277. Case "B" presented a more complicated problem. If the enemy withdrew his forces from a portion of France or Norway he might create a situation in which political considerations would overrule sound strategy. Great pressure would be generated for immediate Allied action to succour the freed populations in the evacuated areas; but such action, if premature, or if directed against less important objectives, might well delay and even cripple "OVERLORD". General Morgan has graphically described the influence of earlier experience:

One remembered the episode on the Western Front in the Winter of 1916-17 when this same German picked what was for us the worst possible moment and then skipped back to his Hindenburg Line leaving us heirs to a wilderness of devastation studded with booby traps over which we had painfully to creep through snow, ice and mud. The German memory might be equally good and he might well be contemplating doing it on us again in the same manner but on a much larger scale. (511)

The solution suggested by COSSAC was to have brigade groups (or regimental combat teams, the American equivalent) in readiness for action at short notice against such objectives as Bordeaux, Nantes, Brest and Marseilles. A brigade group would also be earmarked for northern Norway, and a full division for southern Norway, to cope with a German evacuation of those areas. The intention was to avoid a commitment which might embarrass the preparations for "OVERLORD". In COSSAC's words: "We catered, in fact, for little more than the reconnaissance phase" (512).

278. There remained "RANKIN" Case "C" which was summarized as "victory without an invasion" (513). In these circumstances it was certain that military policy would be subject to political considerations. Nevertheless, the COSSAC planners realized that certain tasks would inevitably fall to the occupying forces:

First would be that of seizing and holding securely key points in the German system of war economy . . . Then there would be the matter of disarming the German armed forces . . . We must also consider the disarmament of Germany as a whole, preparation, at any rate, for the destruction of everything comprehended in the useful phrase 'war potential'. Then there was the question of maintaining some semblance of order in the country, and here at once arose the spectre of the displaced masses . . . (514)

All of these problems, and many more, afterwards became military responsibilities when Germany was defeated and operation "ECLIPSE" (the occupation of Germany) succeeded "OVERLORD". For, in the words of General Morgan, "we had begun to get to grips with the problems of 'Civil Affairs', the active service fore-runner of Military Government and the Control Commissions, problems of refugees and Displaced Persons, of disarmament and of post-hostilities business generally" (515).

279. It is beyond the scope of the present narrative to describe in detail the plan for Case "C". Briefly, that plan proposed a division of enemy-occupied Europe into three spheres: the British authorities were to be responsible for North-West Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark and the Channel Islands; the United States would supervise Southern Germany and France, and Russia (with which Power there was no liaison on these matters) would be left with Eastern Germany -- less Berlin, which was to be "an international zone garrisoned by forces of all three Allies" (516). It is interesting to note that, within the British sphere, First Canadian Army was to be responsible for:

Rhineland Province
Province of Hesse Nassau (including portions
of Hess and Brunswick)
Province of Westphalia (517)

The COSSAC plan also contained an analysis of "areas of strategic importance":

... The best use of our limited land forces lies in the speedy occupation in adequate force of the Jutland Peninsula, the adjacent great ports of Bremen, Hamburg and Kiel, and the large towns in the valleys of the Ruhr and the Rhine. It is considered that the forces required for occupation of these areas would amount to seven divisions for Denmark and North-West Germany, six divisions for the Ruhr; eleven divisions for the valley of the Rhine; making a total in all of twenty-four divisions. (518)

280. The "RANKIN" plans reflected the misplaced optimism of a period which really began with the victories at El Alamein and Stalingrad and did not end until the spring of 1944. It will be recalled that, as far back as November 1942, the C.I.G.S. had struck "a note of high optimism" in an interview with General McNaughton: "Germany might crack in the early spring -- possibly in the summer -- certainly in the fall of 1943" (*supra*, para 149). Later, at the Casablanca Conference, General Brooke had reiterated his feeling that "the precarious internal situation of Germany might make it possible to achieve a final victory in the European theatre before the end of 1943"

(supra, para 169). To a large extent, these expectations were fed by the growing Allied offensive against Germany in the air. However, Marshal of the R.A.F. Sir Arthur Harris has pointed out that, until 1944, his Bomber Command lacked the strength to carry the strategic offensive against Germany into a decisive phase (519). The great battles following the landings in Normandy were to reveal how ill-conceived was the optimistic attitude of the summer of 1943.

281. Although the "RANKIN" plans had diminishing significance after the beginning of 1944, they throw additional light on the bases of planning during the summer of 1943. It has been suggested that these studies show that "the Allied timetable for the war in western Europe was actually much more dependent on Allied preparations than on the state of the enemy" (520). The "RANKIN" proposals received the general approval of the Allied leaders at their next great conference, held at Quebec during August 1943.

THE "QUADRANT" CONFERENCE AND THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

282. The COSSAC plans were officially endorsed at the first Quebec ("QUADRANT") Conference (14-24 Aug 43) of Mr. Churchill, Mr. Roosevelt and their advisers.* Canadian participation in the meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff had been discussed before the conference; "but the general attitude of the American and British Chiefs of Staff was that they should not participate" (521). At this time fortune smiled on Allied operations in all theatres. "Quebec was unique among all the conferences up to that time in one vital respect: at last the Chiefs of the Naval Staffs could report that victory was being won in the war against the U-boats . . . the tide had at last turned in the Battle of the Atlantic" (522). Following the successful conclusion of the North African campaign in May, the Allies had invaded Sicily (operation "HUSKY") on 10 Jul.**

Before the sessions in Quebec were concluded, Sicily had been conquered, Mussolini had fallen and Italy was practically out of the war as a belligerent. The Russian summer offensive pushed the Germans back to the Dneiper River.

*The "QUADRANT" Conference continued at Washington (3-11 Sep 43).

**The influence of the "HUSKY" landings on "OVERLORD" planning is discussed, infra, paras 305 ff.

The Japanese were expelled from their foothold on American territory in the Aleutian Islands. The parallel operations . . . in the Pacific proceeded slowly, but with substantial success. Even in China, where victories were few in Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's long struggle, the Japanese sustained a serious defeat in the Yangtze River Valley. (523)

However, operations for the recovery of Burma remained a grave problem for the Allied leaders -- particularly as regards the allocation of available landing craft. For, in the words of General Marshall, "the United States and Great Britain had insufficient landing vessels even to give assurance of the success to the operations planned for the Mediterranean and Western Europe" (524). And these operations had naturally been given priority over the Far Eastern requirements.

283. The American representatives approached the conference with old misgivings over the British view of future strategy. Before he left Washington President Roosevelt received a remarkable letter from Mr. Stimson, the Secretary of War, in which the latter severely criticized what he believed to be the British attitude towards a cross-Channel invasion:

The shadows of Passchendaele and Dunkerque still hang too heavily over the imagination of these leaders . . . Though they have rendered lip service to the operation, their hearts are not in it . . . the British theory . . . is that Germany can be beaten by a series of attritions in northern Italy, in the eastern Mediterranean, in Greece, in the Balkans, in Rumania and other satellite countries . . . (525)

The President was reported to have stated: "He was for going no further into Italy than Rome and then for the purpose of establishing bases. He was for setting up as rapidly as possible a larger force in Great Britain for the purpose of ROUNDHAMMER [Mr. Stimson's code name for 'OVERLORD'] . . ." (526). The American Chiefs of Staff feared a repetition of the experiences of 1942, "with another reversed decision in favour of a diversionary 'eccentric operation' in the Mediterranean area against the soft underbelly" (527).

284. The conflict of British and American opinions over the future of the Italian campaign was renewed at one of the first "QUADRANT" meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (15 Aug). General Brooke stated that "the British Chiefs of Staff were in entire agreement that 'OVERLORD' should constitute the major offensive for 1944 and that Italian operations should be planned with this conception as a background"; but he added:

The plan for 'OVERLORD' was based on three main conditions being created in order to give it reasonable prospect of success. Firstly, reduction in German fighter strength; secondly, German strength in France and the Low Countries and her ability to reinforce during the first two months must be kept at specified limits; and thirdly, the problem of beach maintenance must be solved. He believed that the 'OVERLORD' plan envisaged too rapid a rate of advance and too small a margin of superiority, bearing in our mind our experience in fighting German forces. It was essential, therefore, to insure that the Germans had available to them the minimum possible number of divisions in France and that their rate of reinforcement should be as slow as possible.

Operations in Italy, therefore, must have as their main object the creation of a situation favourable to a successful 'OVERLORD'. This could be achieved by holding German reserves and by reducing German fighter strength by bombing fighter factories in Southern Germany from Italian aerodromes.

He considered, therefore, that the statement in the United States Chiefs of Staff memorandum [C.C.S. 303, para 4b (3)] that as between 'OVERLORD' and operations in the Mediterranean, when there is a shortage of resources, 'OVERLORD' will have an overriding priority, was too binding. Sufficient forces must be used in Italy in order to make 'OVERLORD' a possibility. (528)

The C.I.G.S. suggested that, if possible, the Allied advance up the Italian mainland should be carried as far as the north-western plains in order to seize airfields in the Milan-Turin area.

Some 20 divisions might be required to hold the neck of Italy which might entail retaining three of the seven divisions earmarked for 'OVERLORD'. If the Milan-Turin area were taken, then all seven might be required, but a decision should be deferred until it could be seen what forces were required to attain the desired result, i.e., the production of the situation requisite for a successful 'OVERLORD'. (529)

285. The United States Chiefs of Staff stoutly resisted what appeared to be an attempted variation of the agreement previously reached at the "TRIDENT" Conference. Admiral King "did not believe that the achievement of the necessary conditions was dependent solely on operations in Italy"; he suggested that "many other factors, such as, operations in Russia, the result of those already taking place in Sicily, and the air offensive from the United Kingdom" might produce the required situation (530).

General Marshall said that it seemed to him that the essence of the problem was whether or not the required conditions for a successful 'OVERLORD' could only be made possible by an increase in the strength in the Mediterranean. Only by giving an operation overriding priority could success be insured. 'TORCH' was a perfect example of this concept. He agreed that if resistance was weak we should seize as much of Italy as possible. It would be better if we, and not the Germans, held the northern airfields, though almost as much could be achieved from the Florence area. On the other hand, unless a decision were taken to remove the seven divisions from the Mediterranean, and unless overriding priority was given to 'OVERLORD', he believed that 'OVERLORD' would become only a subsidiary operation. A delay in the decision would have serious repercussions on our ability to build up for 'OVERLORD' and any exchange of troops, as had been suggested, would absorb shipping and complicate logistic considerations of supply as far back as the Mississippi River. Recently in North Africa an additional unexpected requirement for 60,000 service troops had arisen. This requirement had been met, but with very serious results for planned expansion and movement to other theatres. Not only would the 'OVERLORD' build-up be hampered, but operations in the Pacific would also suffer.

If 'OVERLORD' was not given overriding priority, then in his opinion the operation was doomed and our whole strategic concept would have to be recast and the United States forces in Britain might well be reduced to the reinforced army corps necessary for an opportunist cross-Channel operation. (531)

286. Mr. Churchill restated the British argument at the first plenary meeting (19 Aug) of the Conference. He made it clear that implementation of the "OVERLORD" plan depended on "certain conditions being fulfilled regarding relative strengths":

One of these was that there should not be more than 12 mobile German divisions in Northern France at the time the operation was mounted, and that the Germans should not be capable of a build-up of more than 15 divisions in the succeeding 2 months. If the German strength proved to be considerably greater than this, the plan should be subject to revision by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. (532)

Again, at a later meeting,

the Prime Minister stated that he wished it definitely understood that British acceptance of the planning for Operation 'OVERLORD' included the proviso that the operation could only be carried out in the event that certain conditions regarding German strength were met. These included the number of German divisions to be in France and a definite superiority over the German fighter force at the time of the initial assault. Further, that if it developed that the German ground or air fighter strength proved to be greater than that upon which success of the plan was premised, the question as to whether or not the operation should be launched would be subject to review by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. In this connection he suggested that the United Nations have a 'second string to their bow' in the form of a prepared plan to undertake Operation 'JUPITER'. He did not in any way wish to imply that he was not wholeheartedly in favour of 'OVERLORD', but, at the same time, he wished to emphasize that its launching was dependent upon certain conditions which would give it a reasonable chance for success. (533)

287.
writer,

As afterwards described by an American

Churchill advanced his usual and always powerful warnings of the appalling casualties that might be suffered. He pointed again and again to the map of France, showing the tremendous logistical advantages enjoyed by the Germans, the quantity of supply lines running east and west, the roads and railroads built by the French in their own defensive plan to supply and reinforce the Belgian frontier and the Maginot Line from the Channel ports. However, the Air Force now had achieved the answer to this: the concentrated, unrelenting bombing of all German lines of communication which would disrupt the system of supply and restrict facility of manoeuvre. The combined bombing offensive was given the code name 'Operation POINTBLANK', and the Italian part of it was called 'Operation STRANGLE'. (534)

This growing offensive in the air was, in fact, the preliminary bombardment for "OVERLORD". At Quebec the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that "the maximum reinforcement of 'POINTBLANK', particularly over the period of intense combat with the German Fighter Air Force immediately ahead," was "a subject of the most critical importance" (535). As will be seen, the offensive reached its climax during the spring of 1944 as the main Allied method of crippling the enemy's efforts to forestall the invasion.

288. In spite of the British reservations already mentioned, the "QUADRANT" Conference approved the COSSAC plan for the invasion and reaffirmed the priority of North-West Europe over the Mediterranean

theatre. The relevant extract from the proceedings (as approved by the President and Prime Minister) is as follows:

Operation 'OVERLORD'.

- (a) This operation will be the primary United States-British ground and air effort against the Axis in Europe. (Target date the 1st May, 1944.) After securing adequate Channel ports, exploitation will be directed towards securing areas that will facilitate both ground and air operations against the enemy. Following the establishment of strong Allied forces in France, operations designed to strike at the heart of Germany and to destroy her military forces will be undertaken.
- (b) There will be a balanced ground and air force build-up for 'OVERLORD', and continuous planning for and maintenance of those forces available in the United Kingdom in readiness to take advantage of any situation permitting an opportunistic cross-Channel move into France.
- (c) As between Operation 'OVERLORD' and operations in the Mediterranean, where there is a shortage of resources, available resources will be distributed and employed with the main object of ensuring the success of 'OVERLORD'. Operations in the Mediterranean Theatre will be carried out with the forces allotted at 'TRI-DENT', except in so far as these may be varied by decision of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

We have approved the outline plan of General Morgan for Operation 'OVERLORD' and have authorized him to proceed with the detailed planning and with full preparations. (536)

289. It may be noted that the possibility of moving seven experienced divisions from the Mediterranean to the United Kingdom was again discussed at the plenary meeting of 23 Aug. Mr. Churchill "agreed that at this time the decision to return the seven divisions to England was firm, but that it was subject to review by the Combined Chiefs of Staff if the strategic situation seemed to make such review advisable". (537)

The Prime Minister said that if it becomes necessary to make an interchange of divisions between England and the Mediterranean, it might be done without prejudice to the move of the seven divisions by exchanging others. For example, it might be necessary to send out a second Canadian division to complete a Canadian Corps and bring home a British division in its place. (538)

Even before the "QUADRANT" Conference, the Canadian authorities had been considering the desirability of building up their military commitment in the Mediterranean to the strength of a full corps. (The circumstances attending these deliberations have been described in Hist Sec (C.M.H.Q.) Report No. 182, paras 189 ff.) It was this growing pressure from Ottawa, intended to gain battle experience for more Canadian formations -- rather than the balancing of overall Allied strength in the Mediterranean and the United Kingdom -- which ultimately led to the despatch of the Headquarters of the 1st Canadian Corps and the 5th Canadian Armoured Division to Italy in October-November 1943. However, in the final analysis, the transfer of these additional formations to the Mediterranean did produce the situation suggested by Mr. Churchill at Quebec (539).

290. The problem of finding sufficient shipping and landing craft for the operation still dominated other aspects of "OVERLORD". When Mr. Churchill enquired whether the frontage of the assault could be enlarged, so as to include the eastern coast of the Cotentin Peninsula, General Marshall replied that "present plans would not provide for such an operation, but that if more landing craft could be made available there was a possibility that this landing would be included in the initial assault" (540). The availability of these essential craft was the critical factor. General Morgan has described the situation which confronted the Allied leaders at Quebec:

It was calculated that in May, 1944, our actual receipts of landing craft fit and ready for action would fall far short even of the small total of the paper credits we had received from the Chiefs of Staff. The calculated deficiency in two key categories would amount, we estimated, to 7 large infantry landing craft (L.C.I.'s) and no less than 164 tank landing craft (L.C.T.'s) . . . This deficiency would mean a loss of some 1,500 men and 1,500 tanks and other vehicles in the early stages of the assault. And it was worse than that. A new crisis had appeared in providing British crews for British landing craft. In June we had calculated a requirement for as many as 9,000 additional men for this service. There were no men who were not already allocated well in advance to one vital service or another. (541)

Desperate expedients provided both the craft and the crews during succeeding months: the measures necessary to supply the assault craft will be discussed in a later section (*infra*, paras 406 ff); the crews were obtained by "the reorganization of the British Marine Division into a number of additional Marine Commandos and into Landing Craft Crews" (542).

291. In spite of these limitations General Morgan was authorized to commence detailed planning on the basis of his appreciation. By a subsequent amendment to his directive COSSAC was advised that:

Your existing directive and supplementary directive confine your responsibility to planning alone and reserve to the Supreme Commander the duty of executing the operations ordered in these directives. Owing to the postponement of the appointment of the Supreme Commander, it will now be necessary to vary your directive . . . Pending the appointment of the Supreme Commander or his deputy, you will be responsible for carrying out the above planning duties of the Supreme Commander and for taking the necessary executive action to implement those plans approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. (543)

292. Although the identity of the Supreme Commander was not officially decided the "QUADRANT" Conference determined his nationality. At Casablanca President Roosevelt had suggested that the invasion should be carried out under British command; but Mr. Churchill had said that, "in his view, the command of operations should, as a general rule, be held by an officer of the nation which furnishes the majority of the forces" (supra, para 189). The Prime Minister afterwards promised the appointment to the C.I.G.S., General Sir Alan Brooke (544). However, with the progress of planning for "OVERLORD", "it had become evident that, whereas in the original force for the securing of the beachhead the British troops would be about equal in strength if not superior to the Americans, in subsequent operations through France and into Germany the American forces would be steadily increased until they outnumbered the British by a ratio of approximately five to one" (545). There is also evidence that, before the "QUADRANT" meetings, President Roosevelt had concluded that it was essential to have an American commander for the invasion (546). After further consideration at Quebec Mr. Churchill agreed to the appointment of an American as Supreme Commander.

293. At this time the Allied leaders (including Mr. Churchill) tacitly assumed that General George C. Marshall would receive the appointment. It later transpired that the heavy responsibilities of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army (in particular those concerning the war in the Pacific and his relationship to Congress) necessitated his retention at Washington. In these circumstances only one other American candidate for the high post could be considered - General Dwight D. Eisenhower, then Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean (547). However, it was not until Christmas Eve of 1943 (following the "SEXTANT" - "EUREKA" Conferences) that his appointment as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, was officially announced.

294. Although the Supreme Commander was not named at the Quebec Conference two important steps were taken to co-ordinate the Allied plans for the invasion. On 20 Aug the Combined Chiefs of Staff selected Admiral Sir Charles Little (Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth) and Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory (Air Officer

Commanding-in-Chief, Fighter Command) as the Naval and Air Force commanders for "OVERLORD" (548). Later (25 Oct) Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay succeeded Admiral Little as the Allied Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force. Due to differing British and American views on command and control, the directive to the Air Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Air Force, was long delayed. Not until 16 Nov was a directive issued by COSSAC officially advising Air Marshal Leigh-Mallory of his appointment and stating that he was "to exercise operational command over the British and American Tactical Air Forces, supporting the invasion of North-West Europe from the United Kingdom" (549).

295. Brief reference may now be made to parallel developments with respect to the command of Allied ground forces. The forging of the military chain of command was complicated by delayed organization of headquarters for the American formations participating in "OVERLORD". Although the headquarters of the 21st Army Group, composed of the Second British and First Canadian Armies, had been set up in July 1943, it was not until the following October that the headquarters of the First United States Army was organized in the United Kingdom under Lt-Gen Omar N. Bradley. The First United States Army Group was also "activated" during October; but it was decided that this formation would not take over command of American troops until "two American armies had become operational on the Continent, that is to say, after the establishment of the initial lodgment area" (550).

296. The difficulties of the military chain of command were not finally settled until COSSAC issued a directive on 29 Nov to the Commander-in-Chief 21st Army Group. The latter was then advised that he would be "jointly responsible with the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief and the Air Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Air Force, for the planning of the operation, and, when so ordered, for its execution until such time as the Supreme Allied Commander allocates an area of responsibility to the Commanding General, First Army Group" (551). Thus, the overall control of Allied ground operations was given to the Commander-in-Chief 21st Army Group -- but was limited to the initial phase of "OVERLORD". It appears that this highly significant directive was never officially confirmed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff (552). Nevertheless, this arrangement remained in effect and, when General Montgomery returned to England in January 1944 to assume command of the 21st Army Group, he simultaneously acquired the greater responsibility of "a de facto ground command for the assault phase" (553).

297. Reverting to the "QUADRANT" Conference, this narrative must mention two proposals for reorientation of Allied strategy considered at Quebec. The first was Mr. Churchill's attempt to revive interest in operation "JUPITER", the full-scale assault upon Norway, which had occupied so much of General McNaughton's attention during the summer of 1942 (supra, paras 93-97). It will be recalled that Mr. Churchill had suggested that the