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Directorate of History
National Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0K2

July 1986

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REPORT NO. 147

HISTORICAL SECTION

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: DHD 3-3

by Ove for DHist NDHQ

Date: NOV 26 1986

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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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.

1. Report No. 131 was 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. The present report 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 to 30 Jun 44. The second of the series will consider operations during July 1944.
2. This report is strictly an account of operations. Its starting-point is the plan for Operation "OVERLORD"; it does not attempt fully to describe the planning, -- the very lengthy and complicated preliminaries of the operation, which will be dealt with in their Canadian aspects in a subsequent separate report.
3. For Canada and the Canadian Army these operations have a special significance. Over a long period, it will be recalled, the main Canadian field army 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) (cf. Reports Nos. 100, 101, 108, 109, 116, 128 and 130) Canadian overseas military forces had no opportunity for large-scale operations until the despatch of 1 Cdn Inf Div to the Mediterranean for the attack on Sicily in July 1943 (cf. Reports Nos. 126, 127 and 135). This was followed by the concentration in that theatre of a two-division Canadian Corps (1 Cdn Corps, comprising 1 Cdn Inf Div and 5 Cdn Armd Div), which subsequently distinguished itself in operations on the Italian mainland (cf. Reports Nos. 121 and 129). 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 and 4 Cdn Armd Div) still remained in Britain. Only with the commencement of Operation "OVERLORD" on 6 Jun 44 did the Canadian Army Overseas come fully to grips with the enemy.
4. It is of course 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 mainland of Western Europe, from which the British Armies were driven in the early summer of 1940.
5. For this reason, the method followed in the preparation of this report has been always 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 1942-43 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". (Hist Sec file AEF/Second Brit Army/C/I: Second Army Operation Order No. 1, 21 Apr 44.) The "fortress" was in 1943 already beset from the East and South; it still remained to commence operations from the West and thus to complete the triple series of assaults which should result in its final investment and collapse.

7. But if the requirement was simply stated, i.e., the establishment of a third theatre of operations, its realization was far from simple. The first requisite was invasion of the continent. The task of penetrating a heavily defended coastline presented an enormously complicated problem; undue haste in arriving at a solution might have proved disastrous to the whole enterprise. There were indeed vigorous calls from certain eager but ill-informed groups for the early opening of a "second front". These cries had to be ignored. What might have resulted from a premature attempt at invasion the DIEPPE operation served to indicate. Admiral Ramsay considered that the task involved "probably the largest and most complicated operation ever undertaken" (Operation "NEPTUNE", Naval Operation Orders, Introduction, copy in Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.)

8. There is abundant evidence that the main pattern of invasion had taken shape early in 1943, and that the many problems it posed were already clearly visualized. A memorandum issued by G.H.Q. Home Forces in May 1943 -- Tactical Problems of an Invasion of North-West Europe -- seems to have been specifically designed to set the background for training and planning for an assault landing on the Continent. (Copy in First Cdn Army file 8-1-1/Ops, in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.) The basic principle to be followed was summed up as follows:

3. Thus, from our point of view as invaders, success ... is dependent on speed; speed in overcoming opposition to the initial landing, and speed in getting ashore a follow-up and build-up force superior to anything the enemy can bring against it. The first real pause we can contemplate is when we have ashore a force sufficiently powerful to meet anything the enemy can bring to bear, and have behind it adequate airfields, an adequate and secure L of C, and sufficient room to develop our strength further.

(Ibid.)

9. The same memorandum defines three terms which were destined to become a familiar part of the vocabulary of invasion:

"Assault" formations or forces are those which begin to land on the first tide of the seaborne assault.

"Follow-up" formations are those which are landed after assault formations, and to which is made a complete allocation of shipping and craft, independent of that used by the assault formations.

"Build-up" formations are those landed after follow-up formations. For them there can be no complete pre-allocation of shipping and craft.

(Ibid.)

10. 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 on the Operation: "Operation 'NEPTUNE' was the assault phase of the invasion of North-West Europe (Operation 'OVERLORD')." (C.B. 04385A, Report by A.N.C.X.F.) It is likewise to be inferred from the carefully worded 'intentions' in operation orders.

11. The early planning for the operation was supervised in LONDON by a British Officer, Lieut.-General F.E. Morgan, C.B., as Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander (C.O.S.S.A.C.). The 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 (O), Operation "OVERLORD", Report and Appreciation, 30 Jul 43), considered three possible target areas for invasion: the PAS DE CALAIS, the CAEN sector, and the COTENTIN Peninsula. After weighing all factors, the C.O.S.S.A.C. committee chose the CAEN sector alone, through which it was proposed to launch a three-division assault. A simultaneous landing in the COTENTIN was ruled out as constituting too great a dispersal of forces and leading to possible "defeat in detail". (Ibid.) It was this plan which was approved at the QUEBEC Conference in August 1943.

12. But it was destined to undergo certain alterations, the circumstances of which are recounted by Admiral Ramsay:

...General Montgomery arrived in LONDON on 3rd January, 1944, and was not slow in stating his objections to the NEPTUNE plan as it then stood. In brief, these were that the assaults were not being made on a wide enough front, or with a sufficiency of force, and that it was necessary to extend them, both to introduce a greater number of formations on D day and also to accelerate the capture of CHERBOURG....

(C.B. 04385A, Report by A.N.C.X.F.)

13. Thus it was that the assault phase was expanded to a five-divisional front, to include the COTENTIN Peninsula. The final results of this extension of scope, which did not alter the essential detailed planning of the C.O.S.S.A.C. Committee, may be found in the Initial Joint Plan dated 1 Feb 44. This document (less certain appendices) is reproduced in First U.S. Army Report of Operations, 20 Oct 43 - 1 Aug 44, Book II (Hist Sec file AEF/First U.S. Army/C/F.) The Initial Joint Plan contains a statement of the final plans for "NEPTUNE" as carried out, and amply repays close study. Its purpose was "to provide a basis for planning by subordinate commanders." When this plan had in turn been approved, it was issued as a directive by General Montgomery to the commanders of First U.S. Army, Second British Army, and First Cdn Army. (First U.S. Army Report of Operations.) 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.

(Ibid., Initial Joint Plan.)

14. It should be added, in passing, that preparations for the administrative side of "OVERLORD-NEPTUNE" antedated operational planning by almost a year. A skeleton staff had been engaged in administrative planning (known as "ROUND-UP") for a major cross-channel operation since May 1942. (C.B. 04385A, Report by A.N.X.C.F.)

15. The insistence on speed, both in the assault and subsequent phases, as set forth in the Home Forces Memorandum (para 8 above), is reflected in the developed, final plans for "OVERLORD". This factor of speed tended to reduce the actual assault to a single phase within a continuous landing operation, for the first landings were to be followed without delay by the discharge of further military formations and stores. This process was to continue through several weeks in order both that the Expeditionary Force could be maintained, and that its rate of reinforcement could match that of the enemy. (Operation "NEPTUNE", Naval Operation Orders, Part 13, hereafter referred to as ON 13, etc.)

16. A more specific statement of the intention of Operation "NEPTUNE" is given in Naval Operation Orders:

(a) to assault on a five divisional front in landing ships and landing craft between OUISTREHAM and VARREVILLE in the BAY OF THE SEINE,

(b) to land follow-up formations from landing ships and landing craft on the second tide of D day,

(c) on D plus 1 to land from landing ships the remainder of the follow-up formations landing on D day plus other formations from M.T. ships, and thereafter to build-up our forces at the average rate of one and one-third divisions a day,

(d) initial objectives are the towns of CAEN, BAYEUX, ISIGNY and CARENTAN, and air fields in the vicinity, and the port of CHERBOURG,

(e) thereafter our forces will advance on BRITTANY with the object of the capture of the BRITTANY ports southwards to NANTES inclusive. This will complete the capture of the lodgement area and is likely to extend until D plus 30 to D plus 40,

(ON 1.)

This intention so clearly incorporates the terms of the Home Forces Memorandum cited above that it can almost be regarded as a re-statement, with the addition of detailed reference to the actual objectives, chronology and size of the force decided upon.

17. 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, over both sea and land, was divided into a Western and an Eastern half, the former being the responsibility of the U.S. forces of all three services, and the latter the responsibility of British (including Canadian) forces. The only exception to this principle obtained in the case of the High Command, first, of the entire "NEPTUNE" operation, and secondly, of the three services. (See Appendix "A".) The whole Allied operation was directed by General (now 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 was appointed Deputy Supreme Commander. Under the Supreme Commander, and exercising their command jointly, there were to be initially three commanders: Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay, Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, Expeditionary Force; General (later Field Marshal) Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, Commander-in-Chief, 21 Army Group; and Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, Air Commander-in-Chief, Allied Expeditionary Air Force. General Montgomery's appointment was announced at the time merely as commander of the British Army Group; the fact that this included command of all land forces was revealed only after D Day. It may be noted here too that although initially the operation was to represent an exact Anglo-American balance, with all military forces under 21 Army Group, that balance was to shift steadily at a later date towards U.S. preponderance on the Western Front, as increasing numbers of American troops entered the field.

18. Inasmuch as "NEPTUNE" represented a combined undertaking by all services of both nations, it is difficult to isolate for separate consideration the parts to be played by Navy, Army and Air Force. Nevertheless, these components must be dealt with individually, at least in general terms, if the method of execution is to be clearly understood.

(a) Naval Plan

19. The immense scope of the Navy's share in this vast operation cannot be over-emphasized. The naval object in "NEPTUNE" was defined as "the safe and timely arrival of the assault forces at their beaches, the cover of their landings, and subsequently the support and maintenance and the rapid build-up of our forces ashore." (ON 1.) No attempt can be made here to expand the manifold means by which this object was to be achieved, beyond describing those aspects which elucidate the story of the Canadian participation in the operation. For this reason it is necessary to dwell principally on the naval provisions for the assault phase - "the safe and timely arrival of the assault forces at their beaches."

20. 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 First U.S. Army; and Eastern Task Force, commanded by Rear Admiral Sir P.L. Vian, 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 in turn was composed of Naval Assault Forces, corresponding in all to the five assault divisions.

Thus Eastern Task Force comprised forces "G", "J" and "S", each of which carried one assault division. In addition there was Force "L", which transported the immediate follow-up troops within Second British Army. The Canadian assault formations of Second Army (3 Cdn Inf Div and 2 Cdn Armd Bde) were embarked in the craft of Force "J". A similar internal organization of assault and follow-up forces existed within the U.S. (Western) Task Force (Assault Forces "U" and "O", and Follow-Up Force "B"). (See Appendix "A".)

21. Since Force "J" is of special interest to the Canadian historian, some space can be given to its organization and operational role. A memorandum dated 12 Sep 43, issued by its commander, gives an adequate description of its primary function:

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", "J.2" and "J.3", each of which is intended to carry one military brigade at assault scales....
(3 Cdn Div file 3 CD 4-3-4-11, in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.)

Force "J", like the other Naval Assault Forces assembled for "NEPTUNE", comprised "a mass of wonderful craft of all kinds", (1) 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 capable each of landing thirty fully equipped soldiers. (2) (ON 22.) A table showing the composition of Force "J", together with a brief description of its component craft, is attached at Appendix "B". This organization may be taken as typical of the five Naval Assault Forces in Operation "NEPTUNE". But it must be borne in mind that since certain divisions were to launch only one assault brigade, the number of L.C.A. and support craft is correspondingly smaller in their respective forces. Of the three assault forces of Eastern Task 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. (C.B. 04385B, Naval Commander, Eastern Task Force.)

22. If the Naval Assault Forces and their escort vessels were responsible for the "safe and timely arrival" of the assaulting troops, the cover of their landings on the other hand was to be provided by an impressive array of bombarding ships, including six battleships, two monitors

(1) Mr Churchill in the House of Commons, 2 Aug 44
(The Times, 3 Aug 44).

(2) For specifications and photographs of all types of landing ships and craft, see C.B. 04304, Details of Combined Operations Landing Craft and Barges, and C.B. 04305, Details of Combined Operations Landing Ships. (copies in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.)

and numerous cruisers and destroyers. Attached to Force "J", and thus in support of 3 Cdn Inf Div, were the cruisers "Belfast" and "Diadem" (Bombarding Force "E"), (3) Fleet Class destroyers "Kempenfelt", "Venus", "Vigilant", "Faulknor", "Fury", "Algonquin", and "Sioux", and Hunt Class destroyers "La Combattante", "Bleasdale", "Glaisdale" and "Stevenstone". (C.B. 3148 (Feb 45); Gunnery Review, Normandy Bombardment Experience, copy in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.) 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.

23. The third naval object -- the rapid build-up -- involved a convoy programme equal in complexity to that demanded by the assault and follow-up phases. An inter-service organization known as "TURCO" (Turn-Round Control Organization) was set up to assist in the extensive ferrying movement of ships and craft. (ON 13.)

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. The Royal Canadian Navy's Part in the Invasion of Northern France, Narrative by R.C.N. Historical Section, copy in Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.) 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 in April 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 (para 20 above), the military role in "OVERLORD" was to be carried out by First U.S. Army, under Lieut.-General Omar Bradley, and Second British Army, under Lieut.-General M.C. Dempsey, C.F., 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, a total of five divisions making the opening attack against the beaches. 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

(3) Main armament of these cruisers is as follows:
"Belfast" - twelve 6-inch guns; "Diadem" - eight 5.2-inch guns. (Jane's Fighting Ships, 1943-4.)

by 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. For the objectives to be secured on D Day see Appendix "F".

26. Strong airborne forces were entrusted with the task of preventing enemy interference on the flanks of the assault. Troops of 82 and 101 U.S. Airborne Divs were to be landed and dropped from gliders and aircraft in the COTENTIN Peninsula prior to H Hour with the task of aiding the amphibious assault and of preventing the movement of enemy reserves into First U.S. Army sector. 6 British Airborne Div (including 1 Cdn Para Bn) was to begin to land before H Hour along 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. Following 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 in turn comprising two or three beaches, designated by the colours, "Green", "White", and "Red". The portion affecting Second Army, from PORT-EN-BESSIN to OUISTREHAM, contained sectors HOW to ROGER. (Second Army O.O. No. 1) The area allotted to each Naval Assault Force, consisting of three or more such beach sectors, 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). (4) An additional area East of the ORNE was designated "Band"; commandos were expected to attack coastal batteries in this area. (ON 1.) Within Second Army the particular beach sectors through which the assaults were to pass the following:

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

This system of assault areas, together with the principal naval and military boundaries; is illustrated graphically by the map at Appendix "F".

28. The tasks of First U.S. Army were:

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

(Initial Joint Plan.)

29. Following the assault, the object of 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 to protect the flank of First U S Army while the

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

latter captures CHERBOURG and the BRITTANY ports". (Second Army O.O. No. 1.) A preliminary outline plan is even more explicit: "There is no intention of carrying out a major advance until the BRITTANY ports have been captured." (Hist Sec file AEF/Second Brit Army/C/I: Second British Army Outline Plan, 21 Feb 44.) The conclusion of this phase would complete the capture of the lodgement area; thereafter the main aim of the Allied Armies would be "to capture PARIS and ... to clear the enemy from Southern FRANCE!" (ON 1.)

30. The method by which this object was to be achieved 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 EVRECY. On the right, 50 (Northumbrian) Inf Div (5), with 8 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 SEULLES, 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.

32. Phase II. Phase I was to be the responsibility of the assault divisions and their attached troops. 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 (West Riding) Inf Div would soon be available; similarly, in 1 Corps the follow-up force consisted of 51 (Highland) 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 PINCON, gaining contact once again with V U.S. Corps in the area immediately South of FORET L'EVEQUE. 1 Corps, now pressing South from CAEN, was at the same time to secure the high ground Northeast of BRETTEVILLE-SUR-LAIZE and East of ARGENCES in order to permit the construction of airfields Southeast 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 PIERRE D'ENTREMONT.

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

MONT DE CERISE - CONDE-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, an importance which the enemy was as quick as ourselves to appreciate. It was, first, a vital centre of communications and a focal point of the road network. Secondly, its port facilities were highly desirable. Thirdly, its 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 our breaking out. Thus we find the possession of CAEN described as "vital to the army plan" (War Diary, H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div (Adv), May 1944: Appx 1, R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div, Operation Order No. 1). It is perhaps worthy of note that 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 Corps Operation Order 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 BENERVILLE batteries on the night of D/D 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, which it will be recalled was the responsibility of the organization called "TURCO" (para 23 above). Control of the whole process of build-up, however, was to be exercised by not one but 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. Its function was to give General Staff and Administrative Staff Policies to War Office Movements Staff.
- (b) War Office Movements, who were to implement the policy and instructions given by "BUCO" insofar as moves, embarkation and loading in the United Kingdom were concerned.

(c) Turn-Round Control Organization ("TURCO"), the body responsible for the quick turn-round of shipping (Second Army O.O. No. 1.)

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 Major-General R.F.L. Keller, C.B.E., which formed part of 1 British Corps, under Lieut.-General 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 Division, was to assist in that formation's operations East of the ORNE.

39. Until the capture of the bridgehead should be complete, it was planned that First Cdn Army (which was commanded by Lieut.-General (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 E'ST.
- (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.

(Hist Sec file AEF/First Cdn Army/C/I: First Cdn Army Operation Order No. 1, 23 May 44.)

In what fashion this intention was to be altered by circumstances we shall see.

(c) Air Force Plan

40. The whole programme of air operations in "OVERLORD" fell into three categories -- those of Bomber Command and VIII U.S. Air Force, Coastal Command, and the Allied Expeditionary Air Force. Prior to the operation the lion's share was allotted to the British and American Bomber Commands. The nature of these preparatory air attacks was defined in April 1944 as follows:

The entire resources of the RAF and USAAF in the United Kingdom are now engaged in a continuous offensive against the continent designed to cripple the Luftwaffe, to disrupt the communications system on which reinforcement of the assault area must depend, and by disorganisation, to promote the loss of war potential and of morale.

Shortly before D Day attacks will be directed, in accordance with the latest intelligence and over a wide covering area, against the enemy's command and control centres and his troops concentrations.

(Second Army O.O. No. 1.)

41. As to the strength of the enemy air force which this offensive was designed ultimately to cripple, it was estimated a month prior to the operation that the total of first-line German aircraft on the Western front on D Day would number about 1,515. Of this total the maximum close support force available for operations in the "NEPTUNE" area was expected to consist of not more than 590 aircraft. (Appreciation of 8 May 44, ON 11, Amendment No. 3.) A more precise statement of the scale of the attacks against the Luftwaffe was given by the Initial Joint Plan, which estimated that the original enemy air effort against the "NEPTUNE" area "might be maintained up to D plus 2 before starting to fall off, declining to 58% by D plus 5", which on this basis of calculation leaves an effective total of some 342 German aircraft. (Initial Joint Plan.) A brief assessment of the success of these strategical operations will be found below under discussion of the assault.

42. 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".) A general statement of these tasks, as listed in a subsequent report, may be quoted here:

- (a) to protect the assembling of, and 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 neutralising the coast and beach defences;
- (c) to carry and land the airborne forces in the required areas;
- (d) to protect the landing beaches from enemy air attacks;
- (e) to reduce the enemy's ability to mount an early effective counter-attack.

(Allied Expeditionary Air Force, Report on Air Operations Prior to and in Support of Operation "NEPTUNE", copy in custody of R.C.A.F. Operations Record Officer, A.E.A.F.)

43. Details of the air effort as it more closely affects the ground troops will be considered below 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.

44. In air operations, as in those of the sea and land forces, the Canadian contribution was to be 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. In Bomber Command, 6 Group, composed entirely of R.C.A.F.

squadrons of Halifax and Lancaster bombers, shared in the mounting offensive which prepared the way for invasion. Lastly, 83 Composite Group, affiliated to Second Army, was of predominantly R.C.A.F. composition, 15 of its 29 squadrons of Spitfire and Typhoon fighters being Canadian. (These figures take no account of Air O.P. squadrons.) (Second Tactical Air Force, Order of Battle as at 2200 hrs, 2 Jun, R.C.A.F. Operations Record Officer, A.E.A.F.)

45. 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

46. It was a recognized feature of the enemy's defensive policy that he was convinced that the Allies must effect the early capture of a port in order to maintain themselves. (Cf. Tactical Problems of an Invasion of North-West Europe.) And indeed the 'intention' of Operation "NEPTUNE" included the condition that the "lodgement area must contain sufficient port facilities to maintain a force of 26 to 30 divisions and to enable this force to be augmented by follow-up formations at the rate of from 3 to 5 divisions a month." (ON 1.) These facilities, clearly, were to be supplied by the capture of CHERBOURG and the Brittany ports. But this latter process was estimated as "likely to extend until D plus 30 to D plus 40", and might conceivably take much longer. In the interval, therefore, it would appear that the discharge of vital stores must 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.

47. 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". Naval Operation Orders added that "the Expeditionary Force can have no real security until these ports are working". (Ibid.)

(e) Deception Plans

48. An elaborate "cover plan", known as "FORTITUDE SOUTH", was evolved, the object of which was twofold: (i) to conceal the general state of preparedness of the invasion force so as to indicate a later target date for the operation; (ii) subsequently "an appropriate display of strength in the south-east, together with concealment in the west and south", to point to a threat to the PAS DE CALAIS. (Ibid.) The latter threat was given realism by the presence, among other troops, of 2 Cdn Corps, which moved to the DOVER area; and it was to be continued even after the launching of the operation. (See in this connection Operation "OVERLORD", Cover and Diversionary Plans, Admiralty, Military Section.)

49. Supplementary deceptive measures were to be taken by all services. Small naval diversions supported by air sorties (but not involving the landing of troops) were to simulate threats against several areas of the enemy coastline, among them the PAS DE CALAIS. (ON 3.) Army camouflage detachments planned the construction of "protective decoys to attract bombing" (dummy beach layouts) to operate by night only. (Second Army O.O. No. 1.)

(f) D Day and H Hour (6)

50. June having been selected as the month in which Operation "NEPTUNE" should take place, a target date of 31 May was set as the time by which all preparations were to be complete. (Initial Joint Plan.) During June there were, however, only two periods each of five days' duration in which tidal and lunar conditions were such as to permit the launching. These were from 2 to 6 Jun inclusive and from 17 to 21 Jun inclusive. Quiet weather was required for the initial passage and assaults, and absence of fog was necessary to enable air operations to be undertaken. Inasmuch as meteorological forecasts could not be relied on for more than 48 hours ahead, it was therefore manifestly impossible to assign in advance a firm date to D Day. (ON 1.) Loading of assault forces was at first planned on the assumption that D Day would be the earliest possible, namely 2 Jun. (Operation "NEPTUNE", Eastern Task Force, Naval Operation Orders, Part 4, hereafter abbreviated as ONEAST 4, etc.) Postponement could, of course, be made either from day to day or until the next suitable tidal and lunar period.

51. A further complication was introduced by the fact that H Hour varied from day to day within the two five-day periods. The explanation of this peculiar circumstance is clearly stated in Naval Operation Orders:

H hour will be related both to morning civil twilight and to the time of local High Water. Thus, if a postponement is necessary, H hour will alter. H hour on the first suitable day will be about 40 minutes after morning civil twilight and approximately 3 hours before High Water. This will allow minimum period of 30 minutes good daylight for observed bombardment before H hour....

(ON 1.)

The bold decision to make H Hour by daylight rather than by night (reversing the practice of previous assaults) allowed not only observed bombardment, but early clearance of beach obstacles. Moreover, it gave much greater assurance that troops would be landed at the exact spots designated for them.

52. Subsequently, however, owing to the fact that times of high water varied widely on different beaches, the direction of flow of the incoming tide being from West to East, the decision was taken to select five separate H Hours on any given D Day. (C.B. 04385A, Report by A.N.X.C.F.) For Force "J" and 3 Cdn Inf Div, a still more perplexing difficulty arose. This situation is best described in the

(6) D Day was defined as the day on which the assaults were to be carried out. H Hour was to be the time at which the first wave of landing craft should hit the beach. (ON 1.)

in the words of the Commodore commanding Force "J":

...Last-minute intelligence...indicated that outlying rocks off NAN Sector dried 5 ft. instead of 3 ft. H Hour on this sector had therefore to be about 30 minutes later than originally intended, so as to ensure that craft cleared these rocks, and a reduced margin of safety was accepted between the beaching point and the obstacles.

To effect this and to avoid too big an interval between the H Hours of the two neighbouring Assault Groups, the H Hour on MIKE Sector (J.1) was planned 10 minutes late and that on NAN Sector (J.2) 20 minutes late on the remainder of Eastern Task Force....

(C.B. 04385B, Report by Naval Commander, Force "J".)

53. On 8 May, the momentous decision was taken to select 5 Jun as D Day, with postponement acceptable to 6 and 7 Jun. (C.B. 04385A.)

PREPARATIONS BY 3RD CANADIAN INFANTRY DIVISION

(a) The Earlier Training of 3 Cdn Inf Div and its Inclusion in 1 British Corps

54. The inclusion of 3 Cdn Inf Div in the assault phase of "OVERLORD" had been decided nearly a year before the operation. An early forecast of its coming operational role is to be found in a letter from Lieut.-General A.G.L. McNaughton, G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, to the Commander, 1 Cdn Corps. This letter, which is dated 3 Jul 43, reads in part as follows:

1. The 3 Cdn Div has been selected for assault training with a view to taking part in the assault in Operation 'Overlord'. The plan for this operation will not be available for some months....It is intended that 1 Cdn Corps will be responsible for the training and operations of the 3 Cdn Div...

(First Cdn Army file 82-4-2/Trg, in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.)

55. Thus it was that 1 Cdn Corps provided the guidance for the assault training of the division through its preliminary phases. At the same time the evolution which its training was to follow was set forth in a memorandum -- Combined Ops Trg, 3 Cdn Inf Div -- issued to that formation by H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps on 8 Jul 43. (First Cdn Army file 82-4-2/Trg.) The training programme was to be divided into four stages. It will be sufficient here to describe these stages briefly and to indicate approximately the time-table followed.

56. The first stage, preliminary training, was to be carried out under the arrangements of the divisional commander, Major-General R.F.L. Keller. It involved, first, a study of the principles of combined operations, and secondly, practice in embarkation and disembarkation (making use of "mock-up" craft), scaling obstacles, clearance of minefields and similar training. This was done through July and early

August 1943 "in South England, wherever the bns or regts were quartered". (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/D: Maj.-Gen. Keller to Hist Offr, 3 Cdn Inf Div.)

57. In addition, staffs of divisional and brigade headquarters were engaged during August on a preliminary planning exercise, known as "DIPPER", the theme of which was "an assault landing to secure the Port of DIEPPE for use as a base port for subsequent ops". (Combined Ops Trg, 3 Cdn Inf Div.) Exercise "DIPPER", which made use of the air photos, the relief model and the intelligence data available as a result of the previous year's raid, represents the first practice at planning in combined operations by the staffs of the division. It contains too a significant indication of the method eventually to be employed in the divisional assault, for it calls for an initial attack by two brigades (7 Cdn Inf Bde on the right and 8 Cdn Inf Bde on the left) with 9 Cdn Inf Bde in reserve. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, August 1943: Appx 28, Exercise "DIPPER", 3 Cdn Inf Div Operation Order No. 1, 28 Aug 43.) This grouping was to be followed invariably throughout the months of planning and training which lay ahead. Its fire plan, moreover, shows in embryo those methods which culminated in "OVERLORD", for it includes not only the employment of warships and small naval support craft but also self-propelled field artillery firing from the sea. (Ibid.) Mention should be made, too, of the Combined Operations Study Period held by 1 Cdn Corps, 26-31 Jul 43, which had likewise considered "a suitable plan for an assault landing and attack" on DIEPPE. General Crerar's views on fire support in the assault are contained in his remarks made at the conclusion of the study period. (Summing Up by Comd 1 Cdn Corps, copy appended to Report No. 128.)

58. The second stage, basic training, was designed to bring the troops to grips with the actual mechanics of assault landings. To this end, training by brigade groups was carried out during August and September at the Combined Training Centres at INVERARAY and CASTLE TOWARD. The opportunity thus to become acquainted with "the peculiarities of combined ops" was not restricted to the infantry; gunners, sappers and service personnel of the divisional troops also underwent training in their own functions. This stage was "basic training" only in the sense that it was carried out "without practice in the fire fight or ref to particular enemy defs". (Combined Ops Trg, 3 Cdn Inf Div.)

59. Stage 3, assault training by brigade groups, was characterized by increased realism. It was carried out in the PORTSMOUTH area in conjunction with Force "J", and at times made use of actual fire support. While 8 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes were still completing Stage 2 in Scotland, 7 Cdn Inf Bde had already begun its first training with the Naval Assault Force early in September. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, September 1943.)

60. The first significant manifestation of the swift development of the assault technique was Exercise "PIRATE", held at STUDLAND BAY, 16-21 Oct. Although its central theme was an assault by only one brigade group, yet its broad scope far surpassed even divisional resources. Planning was done by a special staff detached from main divisional headquarters, as was to be the case in "OVERLORD" itself. The fire plan comprehended the combined effort of naval, army and air arms, subject to certain safety restrictions. The assault phase was carried out by 7 Cdn Inf Bde Group. The second phase,

the build-up, was to be undertaken by the remainder of the division and its attached troops. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, September 1943: Appx 23, 3 Cdn Inf Div Operation Order No. 1, 30 Sep 43.) "PIRATE" must be considered as the pattern in miniature after which all later assault exercises were fashioned.

61. It might appear at first that the aims of "PIRATE" were over-ambitious. In view of its surprisingly early date, it is hardly to be wondered at that it did not, in practice, fully realize the numerous objects which had been set for it. These are detailed in the divisional report on the exercise:

- (a) To exercise the forces of all three services in their functions during a major combined operation.
- (b) To exercise the embarkation and the "Turn Round Control Organization" within the SOLENT group of ports.
- (c) To exercise a brigade group in the assault on a heavily defended beach.
- (d) To exercise the Army and RAF in the rapid construction and occupation of an Airfield.

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, November 1943: Appx 1, 3 Cdn Inf Div Report on Exercise "PIRATE", 31 Oct 43.)

Owing to the intervention of bad weather the Turn Round Control and Build-Up Phase had to be cancelled entirely.

62. Nevertheless its limitations do not detract from the essential importance of "PIRATE" in the evolution of a practicable assault plan. It must have demonstrated too how much more intensive study and arduous training were still required. As a result of the exercise several fundamental methods were held to be vindicated. The G.O.C., 3 Cdn Inf Div, considered that the "Combined Fire Plan of RN, RAF and Army proved itself to be workable and feasible subject of course to further training based on the detailed lessons learned." Another conclusion was that the "firing of Artillery from craft is practical for carrying out an area shoot." (Ibid.) The ultimate significance of "PIRATE" was that it tested for the first time the lessons of DIEPPE. On 7 Jun 44 General Crerar stated that from the experience of DIEPPE "emerged the technique and tactics first demonstrated by the 3 Cdn Inf Div in "PIRATE" exercise last October, and that this technique and these tactics were those adopted for the vast combined operation which took place yesterday." (Report No. 128: Appx "B", Introduction to Briefing of Officers, H.Q. First Cdn Army.)

63. No single exercise could be expected to solve all problems. "PIRATE" was followed, therefore, by a succession of similar schemes which it is not within the scope of this report to enumerate in detail. A double exercise, "VIDI" and "PUSH", was designed to speed up and simplify planning, especially the allotment of shipping space; to practise 8 Cdn Inf Bde Group in an assault; and to practise 9 Cdn Inf Bde Group and 27 Cdn Armd Regt in their now accepted reserve role. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, October 1943: Appx 31,

Instructions, Exercises "VIDI" and "PUSH", 31 Oct 43.) The exercise was mounted on 3 Dec 43; once again bad weather intervened and the R.A.F. could not take part. Of the lesser exercises of this period, it is sufficient to cite "OZONE" (29 to 30 Jan 44) as an example of the thoroughness with which the plan was being worked out. It was described as "a medical exercise to test the efficacy of various sea sickness remedies to be utilized by tps on sea voyages prior to an assault ldg". (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 29 Jan 44.) It is a little disappointing to find that in the opinion of the divisional medical authorities the exercise was "not conclusive". (W.D., A.D.M.S., 3 Cdn Inf Div, 31 Jan 44.)

64. During this third stage of training 3 Cdn Inf Div had been under the command successively of three higher formations. In October, the impending embarkation of H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps for the Mediterranean theatre deprived the division of its guidance. As an interim measure 3 Cdn Inf Div was placed directly under the command of First Cdn Army on 13 Oct, while at the same time 2 Cdn Armd Bde came under the command of the division. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1943: Appx 18A, Message 05, G First Cdn Army to G 1 Cdn Corps, 13 Oct 43.) A month later, 3 Cdn Inf Div (which now included 2 Cdn Armd Bde) was placed under new direction, if not as yet command. This change was communicated to the G.O.C., 3 Cdn Inf Div, by General McNaughton on 12 Nov 43:

1. Owing to the departure of HQ 1 Cdn Corps and for the necessity of co-ordinating the trg and operational planning for op OVERLORD, it has been agreed that operational direction and the trg related thereto for op OVERLORD will be entrusted to the Comd 1 Brit Corps.
2. In accordance with this decision, 3 Cdn Inf Div as now constituted will be associated with 1 Brit Corps for operational direction and trg related thereto for the purpose of op OVERLORD only from 1 Dec 43 until released by orders of Senior Combatant Officer Overseas. 3 Cdn Div will remain under comd First Cdn Army for all other purposes....

(Copy in First Cdn Army file 82-4-2/Trg.)

65. The period of 'association' lasted until 30 Jan 44, on which date 3 Cdn Inf Div was placed under the actual command of 1 British Corps for further training, operational planning, and eventually operations themselves. (C.M.H.Q. file 3/Op Old/1/1: Letter, Lieut.-General K. Stuart, A/G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, to G.O.C., 3 Cdn Inf Div, 30 Jan 44.)

(b) Divisional Planning and Final Exercises

66. The final stage, collective assault training, was carried out concurrently with later exercises on the brigade group level. It may be said to begin about 30 Jan 44, for it was at this time that detailed planning was entered upon by the division. The relationship between these "collective" exercises and the final divisional plan for "OVERLORD" is very close. The exercises were, that is, to be rehearsals, "carried out on the landing tables of the operation, and to include, if possible, the actual over-heads taking part in the operation." (First Cdn Army file 82-4-2/Trg: Directive, B.G.S., 1 Brit Corps, to 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Dec 43.)

67. Except for calculations of requirements of craft and shipping space, no planning on the divisional level for the actual assault was undertaken prior to January 1944. Until that time few of the divisional staffs had had any acquaintance with the facts of time and place -- facts which henceforth were to be shrouded by the code word "NEPTUNE". From 30 Jan to 24 Feb 44 the planning staff of H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div was quartered in Ashley Gardens, LONDON, to conceive a detailed divisional plan. On 1 Feb 44 the members of the staff were given an outline appreciation of the operation, together with intelligence summaries and maps. The G.O.C. and the A.A. & Q.M.G. held daily conferences and each branch commenced to develop its plan. (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div (Planning Staff), 30 Jan - 24 Feb 44.) Security became a major problem; planning instructions emphasized the need for caution, even remarking of a certain member of Parliament that "the m/n MP at present occupies a Flat in this area and is said to be causing considerable trouble by asking questions in the House with reference to this Planning Headquarters." (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div /B/I: Planning Instructions, H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 19 Jan 44.) As a further security measure this activity was to be described to the curious as Exercise "GLITTER", in which "some elements" of divisional headquarters were taking part.

68. Planning on the brigade level, known as Exercise "GOLD", began after a week's postponement at H.M.S. "Vectis", COWES, Isle of Wight, on 6 Mar, lasting until 21 Apr. Each brigade headquarters sent there its planning staff, retaining only a skeleton headquarters on the mainland. After a preliminary discussion, the brigade commanders submitted to the G.O.C. on 9 Mar an outline plan, on the basis of which detailed arrangements could then be made. (W.Ds., H.Q. 7, 8 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes, 9 Mar 44.) On 13 Mar infantry battalion commanders were called in to be informed of their respective brigade group plans. (Ibid., 13 Mar.)

69. The collective exercises which were to be based on this planning consumed what little time remained to the now heavily overtaxed staffs. One of these reflects the urgent necessity for efficient communications. Exercise "SODAMINT" (24 Feb) was designed "to exercise communications and staffs of Force "J", 3rd Canadian Infantry Division and Royal Air Force in a divisional assault". (First Cdn Army file 80-2-22/Trg: Exercise "SODAMINT", Naval Operation Order No. 1, 15 Feb 44.) The appearance of new problems and the need to find solutions to them frequently circumvented the aim of the planners to mount a full-scale rehearsal. Exercise "TROUSERS" exemplifies some of the difficulties experienced. Prominent amongst them was that of the fire plan. Thus it was that "TROUSERS", "originally scheduled to be a full-scale rehearsal of the planning on Exercise "GOLD"... changed to a full scale fire sp with skeleton HQ down to and incl coys or equivalent, participating". (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde (Adv), 21 Mar 44.) "TROUSERS", as finally formulated, was intended to exercise Force "J" in the passage, approach and assault landing and to exercise the divisional signal communications and fire support in the assault. It was held at SLAPTON SANDS, Devon, on 12 Apr. There was evidently some uncertainty as to its value:

The criticisms...are so conflicting that it is impossible to discover whether the exercise was a success or not. We are of the opinion that the arty sp was satisfactory

(W.D., H.Q. R.C.A. (Adv), 3 Cdn Inf Div, 12 Apr 44.)

70. It is possible to detect in these huge schemes, of which "TROUSERS" is only one example, a note of disappointment that all did not function as planned. The tone of confidence which pervades the comments on earlier exercises seems largely to have been lost. By May 1944 there remained time for one more full-scale rehearsal -- without fire support. This was Exercise "FABIUS III", (7) held at BRACKLESHAM BAY on 4 May 44. Its general theme, intention and method, and even the topography of the locale selected, show clearly that it was "based on "OVERLORD"" (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 21 Apr 44.) But "FABIUS III", like its predecessors, was destined to have its shortcomings. One factor in particular once again prevented a full practice being mounted -- the weather. There was something prophetic in this recurrent deterioration of the elements, as if to warn against the expectation of ideal conditions in the operation itself. Initially, "FABIUS" was postponed twenty-four hours, "la mer étant trop agitée" (W.D., R. de Chaud, 2 May 44). Even when the exercise was finally held on 4 May, increasingly heavy seas soon caused the naval authorities to call a halt to off-loading. (W.D., Hist Offr, 3 Cdn Inf Div, 4 May 44.) Its chief value was that it revealed minor defects in the concentration and marshalling system, and provided practice for the Beach Groups. (Hist Sec file AEF/First Cdn Army/O/F: Highlights of Administration, First Cdn Army.) "OVERLORD" was to prove that this exercise made final loading a smoother process.

(c) 2 Cdn Armd Bde

71. For nearly eight months prior to the operation, 2 Cdn Armd Bde worked closely with 3 Cdn Inf Div, of which it had become temporarily a part. Its planning programme followed the same pattern as those of the divisional infantry brigades. In February 1944 Brig. N.A. Gianelli (later succeeded as brigade commander by Brig. R.A. Wyman, D.S.O., E.D.) attended Exercise "GLITTER" in LONDON. (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 2-22 Feb 44.) During March and April a brigade planning staff took part in Exercise "GOLD" on the Isle of Wight, which as we have seen was devoted to planning on the brigade level. (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde (Adv), 1 Mar - 20 Apr 44.)

72. Intensive amphibious training was carried out by the armoured regiments in conjunction with their respective infantry brigades. They participated, for example, in Exercises "TROUSERS" and "FABIUS III". But this training was limited by the shortage of special equipment required. In January the headquarters diarist had been able to speak of the "ten Sherman tanks which at the moment are the entire Sherman strength of the brigade". (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 23 Jan 44.) Nor did the situation improve rapidly, as is clear from the following excerpt from a brigade report:

For trg the bde was equipped with RAMS (radial) and VALENTINES (diesel). Op AFVs were an assortment of Sherman III (diesel) and Sherman V (Chrysler). It was intended to complete the changeover by the end of Apr. The changeover was not in fact completed until the end of May. Moreover the majority of tks received were far from up to date in essential

(7) "FABIUS III" was only one part of a grand final rehearsal. Other assault forces employed the numbers "I", "II" and "IV". (C.B. 04385A.)

modifications. It was only thanks to trojan work by unit fitters and bde RCEME personnel, that the regts were able to go into battle with more or less "battle-worthy" tks.

(Hist Sec file AEF/2 Cdn Armd Bde/C/F: 2 Cdn Armd Bde, Operation "OVERLORD", The Assault on the Beaches of Normandy, 2 Jul 44, here after referred to as 2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".)

73. The requirements of the assault phase necessitated complete reorganization of 6 and 10 Cdn Armd Regts (under the command, respectively, of 7 and 8 Cdn Inf Bdes). Two squadrons in each regiment were equipped with D.D. or swimming tanks (Sherman V Duplex Drive amphibious tanks), the third squadron retaining its normal Shermans, including five Sherman Vc (17-pounder). The D.D. tanks were fitted with flotation equipment; this consisted principally of a collapsible canvas screen inflated by compressed air, and twin propellers to provide driving power. (C.M.H.Q. file 55/530/9/4 (S.D. 4): D.R.A.C.'s Monthly Liaison Letter No. 25.) 27 Cdn Armd Regt, under command of 9 Cdn Inf Pde, comprised three normally constituted squadrons, but with only four Sherman Vc per squadron. (Ibid.) So secret was the nature of the D.D. tanks that troops were warned, even on exercises, to refer to them only as "leading flight", or "first wave". (W.D., S.D. & G. Highrs, April 1944: Appx 27, Directive from H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 19 Jan 44.)

THE PLAN OF THE ASSAULT BY 3RD CANADIAN
INFANTRY DIVISION

Si tu veux être heureux,
Vas entre Caen et Bayeux.

(Norman Proverb)

74. Certain details of the plan of 3 Cdn Inf Div have already emerged in the preceding remarks. By developing the plan further, it is intended not only to illustrate the method of assault by Canadian forces, but to shed light as well on the means employed by all assault divisions, especially those of Second Army. In like manner, the topography and enemy defences described may be taken as typical of the problems to be solved throughout the "NEPTUNE area.

75. The source of most of the voluminous body of intelligence available to planning staffs was the Theatre Intelligence Section (T.I.S.). Originally formed under G.H.Q. Home Forces, to study intelligence in Western Europe, T.I.S. came in time under the command of S.H.A.E.F. Its many pertinent findings were published at first in weekly, and later in daily, publications, together with reference maps. (C.B. 04385A, Report by A.N.C.X.F.) A representative selection of these publications is to be found in the files of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q. (File SHAEF/L/F.)

(a) Intelligence: Topography

76. The general area to be assaulted by 3 Cdn Inf Div lay within the agricultural plain of CAEN. Specifically it

consisted of two regions: the PAYS DE BESSIN, (8) a marshy clay plain West of the River SEULLES, the general outline of which can be traced by the incidence of the suffix "EN-BESSIN" in place-names; and the CAMPAGNE DE CAEN, a region of limestone East of the SEULLES. The character of this level countryside is quite distinct from the Norman BOCAGE to the West and South.

77. The beach sectors allotted to 3 Cdn Inf Div have already been identified as MIKE and NAN. (See para 27 above.) These sectors lay on either side of the Western breakwater at the mouth of the River SEULLES. MIKE Sector, on the West, was 2100 yards in length and contained two beaches, Green and Red. NAN Sector, being longer (5600 yards), comprised three beaches, Green, White and Red (cf. map at Appendix "G"). Exact map references of sectors and beaches are given in Appendix "A", R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.

78. The character of the coastline across the divisional front is summarized in one of the series of illustrated Landmark Data Sheets used by the planning staffs. (W.D., I C. Scot R., June 1944: Appx "A".) The sheet in question (LM/4250/7E/5) describes the entire stretch of coast as shown on the map of 1/50,000 scale (G.S.G.S. 4250, sheet 7E/5, CREULLY):

Approaching the stretch of coast from the sea at the east, or left, is the village of LION-SUR-MER.... From this village a coastline of low cliffs backed by cultivated land extends west-north-west past the villages of PETIT ENFER... and LANGRUNE-SUR-MER... to the larger seaside resort of ST. AUBIN-SUR-MER..., $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles west-north-west of LION-SUR-MER. From ST. AUBIN-SUR-MER to BERNIERES-SUR-MER..., a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the coast is low and sandy, dotted by numerous villas and summer houses. The low, flat coastline continues west for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the small port of COURSEULLES-SUR-MER..., readily distinguishable by the basins for small shipping, and the broad meandering mouth of the LA SEULLES River. From BERNIERES-SUR-MER to COURSEULLES-SUR-MER short groynes extend into the sea from the sandy beach.

.....

The coast continues westward without change in the low sandy shoreline. $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of COURSEULLES-SUR-MER the hamlet of LA RIVIERE is marked by a lighthouse and wireless mast....

(Ibid.)

Inland, the countryside presented "an unbroken expanse of open, rolling, cultivated land". (R.C.A. 3 Cdn Inf Div, O.O. No. 1, Int Summary.) In this agricultural setting the main villages were REVIERS, DOUVRES LA DELIVRANDE and LA DELIVRANDE, each of not more than 500 souls. In addition there were "numerous small villages and hamlets surrounded by orchards and trees, some by stone walls". (Ibid.)

(8) "Bessin" is a Norman word referring to a Roman governmental district around BAYEUX. (Information from the French Embassy, LONDON.) Cf. also B.R. 503, France, Vol. 1, Naval Intelligence Division, 1942.

79. Despite its natural simplicity and lack of pronounced configuration, however, the area presented certain serious problems, chiefly affecting ease of movement. To begin with, there were only two existing exits from MIKE Sector beaches, and each of these would require widening and surfacing before it could be used by vehicles. And although NAN Sector could show nine potential exits for vehicles, nearly all of them demanded surfacing or demolition of obstacles. Offshore, moreover, NAN Sector was marked by scattered rocky outcroppings and sand flats (LES ILES DE BERNIERES) which rendered the approach dangerous, except near high water (cf. para 52 above). A sea-wall of 6 to 10 feet in height existed along most of NAN Sector. MIKE Sector was more open, and the beach was backed by sand dunes. Additional exits could, of course, eventually be made from the flanking sectors, LOVE and OBOE. Immediately behind the beaches there was extensive inundation, in the form of soft, marshy ground which had not been drained. This made cross-country movement unsuitable for tracked vehicles.

80. The road system generally, however, was satisfactory. There was a main lateral road along the coast across the entire divisional front from LA RIVIERE to LUC-SUR-MER. A second lateral road joined CREULLY and LA DELIVRANDE, about two miles inland. The main inland routes, which were hard-surfaced, ran from COURSEULLES and LANGRUNE to CAEN, with numerous secondary roads connecting all villages. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1, Int Summary.)

81. The divisional intelligence summaries contain a quite remarkable volume of information gathered from various sources. Included are detailed analyses of tidal properties, beach gradients, river depths and crossings, railway systems, etc., all set down with uncanny accuracy and completeness. Careful study of this material, supplemented by reference to photographs (cf. Landmark Data Sheet cited above), provided the troops with an almost intimate knowledge of the ground they were to traverse. Even the physical appearance of the coastline became familiar, so that the word of caution in one order seems superfluous:

NOTE: From sea level on the approach, BERNIERES, ST AUBIN and LANGRUNE all appear very similar and have the same distinguishing feature -- a church spire.

(R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1, Int Summary.)

(b) Intelligence: Enemy Dispositions and Defences

82. The enemy formations immediately concerned in the "NEPTUNE" area were those of Seventh German Army. Armoured and mobile formations likely to be involved at an early date were located farther inland. German defensive policy took the shape of disposing static divisions along the coast, each covering a fairly wide frontage. These troops, and the fortifications they manned, formed the "Atlantic Wall". Behind this screen the enemy placed his armoured reserve, which was to be employed in an immediate counter-attack role. For an excellent analysis of the enemy's plans to defeat invasion, see First Cdn Army Int Report No. 1, 1 June 44. (W.D., G.S., Intr, H.Q. First Cdn Army, June 1944: Appx 1.)

83. The entire front allotted to Second Army was held by 716 Infantry Division, with headquarters in CAEN. This was a static formation not distinguished by heroic tradition.

It had been stationed in France as part of the force of occupation until 17 Jul 41, at which time it was assigned to coast defence duty "an der französischen Kanal- und Atlantikküste". (Notes by Historical Officer, 3 Cdn Inf Div, from 716 Div Orders found at COLOMBY-SUR-THAON, August 1944.) The following description of the division is taken from the intelligence summary issued with 3 Cdn Inf Div Operation Order for "OVERLORD":

This division, like others in the 700 series, is a low category division of two regiments of infantry and one regiment of artillery (two field and one medium battery). All personnel are trained in coast defence although the better trained have been transferred to field divisions. The remainder consists of young soldiers, men of older classes unfit for service on the Eastern front and men who have been wounded and are only slightly disabled. In comparison with a first class field infantry division its fighting value has been assessed as 40% in a static role and 15% in a counter-attack. The division should be up to strength in personnel (13,000) and equipment, and is probably overstrength as it has been reported that non-German soldiers, Russians, Mongols, etc have been seen in the divisional area....

(3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1, Int Summary)

This was the division, then, which was to oppose the British and Canadian landings in Lower Normandy. Its two infantry regiments were disposed as follows: 726 Grenadier Regiment in the BAYEUX area; and 736 Grenadier Regiment between ARROMANCHES and the River ORNE. The latter regiment, with which I Corps was to be concerned, was thought to hold its front with two battalions forward on the coast and one in reserve in the CAEN - BIEVILLE area (Ibid.) East of the ORNE the coastal sector was held by 711 Inf Div (of Fifteenth Army).

84. But if 716 Inf Div was not counted a formidable opponent, the mobile reserves which would inevitably be rushed to the battle-field gave cause for greater concern. Amongst those listed as "available for counter-attack on the beachhead" were two armoured formations with a background of battle experience. The first of these was 21 Panzer Division, commanded by Generalleutnant Edgar Feuchtinger. The division had been virtually destroyed in Tunisia and later reformed with young, well-trained troops. (Ibid.) Stationed near FALAISE, 21 Pz Div was considered to be able to make the first German counter-attack against the Allies. (First U.S. Army Report of Operations.) The second was 12 S.S. Panzer Division (Hitler Jugend), composed of former Hitler Youth of what, in another context, would be tender years, but with officers and N.C.Os. who had seen active service. 12 S.S. Pz Div was located farther East, near the SEINE, so as to be able to deal with a landing on either side of that river. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

85. "Juno" area at first showed few beach obstacles. But in March 1944 a noticeable increase in their number gave rise to uneasiness. This rapid multiplication was thought, however, to represent not so much the enemy's awareness of the target area as part of a general defensive programme ordered by Field Marshal Rommel, that officer's recent inspection having resulted "in his very severe condemnation of existing defs". (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 7 Mar.) Offshore obstacles were of three principal types - "herissons" (or hedgehogs), Element "C", and timber stakes. The disposition

of these devices along the beaches is shown on Trace "R" appended to 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1. The obstacles completely covered both MIKE and NAN Sectors except for a gap of about 400 yards on the Eastern end of NAN. The extent of the enemy's heightened preparedness is evident in the description of the "herissons" which follows:

Extending across the whole of MIKE and NAN Sectors, hedgehog defences have been erected from 80 to 250 yards from the coast. These obstacles consist of three 6 inch angle irons, approximately 6 feet 6 inches long joined at their centres with gusset plates to form a double tripod.... Individual obstacles are placed 12 - 15 feet apart with 25-30 yards between rows.... All obstacles are below high water mark. From the location and distribution of these obstacles it seems that they are intended to be anti-craft rather than anti-vehicle.

(Ibid.)

86. The second category -- Element "C"--consisted of steel anti-tank barriers of gate-like appearance, made to serve as anti-craft obstacles. These were of the Belgian or De Cointet type and were disposed liberally across the divisional front. Descriptions, detailed drawings and photographs of Element "C" are to be found in 1 Corps Martian Digest No. 3 and Photographic Supplement No. 3 (a). (Copy in W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 4.)

87. The third type of offshore obstacle consisted simply of wooden stakes, approximately 10 feet high and spaced 60 feet apart, set in rows West of COURSEULLES and in front of BERNIERES. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1, Int Summary.) A proportion of these had mines (75-millimetre shells) attached to them. There was also a series of timber ramps placed across a portion of MIKE Beach. (Ibid., Trace "R".)

88. A clear conception of the appearance of the beach with these various obstructions in position can be gained by reference to the several series of oblique air photographs taken prior to the operation. Some of these are appended to the War Diary of H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde for June 1944 (Appx 1).

89. The beach defences are best described in the words of the Intelligence summary:

The coast is held by a system of linear defences arranged in strongpoints. A Company area consists of several strongpoints occupied by either one section, two sections or in some cases one whole platoon.

Each battalion has three companies forward with support weapons sub-allotted down to sections, there is therefore probably no battalion reserve. Each strongpoint may however be expected to have an immediate reserve within the position.

Defences consist mainly of pillboxes and open machine gun positions with open emplacements for 75 mm guns reinforcing the stronger positions. Strongpoints are usually set astride exits to cover the beaches with enfilade fire. In addition it can be assumed that each platoon will have a 2 inch (50 mm) mortar, and that a total of six 3 inch (81 mm)

mortars per battalion will be shared out to particular strongpoints.... Each strongpoint is surrounded by a protective minefield and wire as well as the minefields and wire on the beaches.

(3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1, Int Summary.)

The order also contains an analysis of nine strongpoints which, directly or indirectly, could affect the divisional area. Of these, the most formidable were located at COURSEULLES (on either side of the river mouth), at BERNIERES and at ST. AUBIN. (Ibid.)

90. During the three months prior to "OVERLORD", the enemy commenced work on a system of dugout positions 2,000 - 3,000 yards inland. These were thought to contain heavy mortars and machine guns. The Radar Stations near DOUVRES LA DELIVRANDE were prepared for all-round defence. The airfield immediately South of CARPIQUET showed strong perimeter defences, consisting principally of anti-aircraft gun positions. (Ibid.)

91. Enemy artillery which could be brought to bear on the divisional area was of three categories: (i) heavy and medium coastal guns, (ii) field artillery of 716 Inf Div and heavier independent artillery, (iii) infantry guns on the coast. No coastal artillery of the first category was to be found within the actual divisional boundaries, but batteries of 155-millimetre guns, notably those at OUISTREHAM and HOULGATE, might be expected to cover the beaches. Batteries of field and medium artillery, however, were located in the area near VER-SUR-MER, MONT FLEURY, BENY-SUR-MER and TAILLEVILLE; of these, the battery at BENY-SUR-MER was most important, since it lay almost in the centre of the divisional sector. It was believed to consist of four 105-millimetre guns, but later examination showed them to be of smaller calibre. Gun positions and headquarters were defended by a perimeter of infantry positions, wire and minefields. Infantry defences on the coast included 75-millimetre guns in casemates and open emplacements. (Ibid.; R.C.A. 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1, Int Summary.)

(c) Administrative Intelligence

92. Under this heading were listed such material resources as water supply and electric power facilities in the CAEN area. As to the attitude of the civilian population of Lower Normandy, one summary (evidently quoting a higher source) has this to say:

The greater part of the population look forward to liberation by the Allies. Those patriots who are already in the Resistance Movement in collaboration with the Allies will at the time of invasion carry out to the best of their ability specific military tasks allotted to them.

The comparatively few who have so far committed themselves in collaboration with the GERMANS may be expected to aid the enemy in maintaining order in the rear, and to withdraw with him in an endeavour to avoid falling into Allied hands.

Many middle class industrialists and administrative and police officials, who have been

forced into a certain measure of collaboration with the GERMANS in order to keep their jobs, will do everything possible to help the Allies in order to prove their good faith.

The remainder, that is to say the great majority of the population, will do its best to impede the GERMAN resistance. This effort is more likely to take the form of strikes and petty sabotage than of armed resistance. It will probably be at its peak in the first few days after it is known that the invasion has started. After this, if our advance is slow, repression will tend to diminish it.

(W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, May 1944: Appx 10, 8 Cdn Inf Bde Operation Order No. 13, 18 May 44.)

It is a tribute to Allied Intelligence that this sober and reasonable appreciation proved to be a quite accurate prediction.

93. Finally, the intelligence summaries of certain services gave information of particular interest to the branch concerned. Thus, divisional engineers devoted much more space to the description of rivers in the area, citing such data as limits of tidal influence and salinity, speed of currents, etc. (W.D., H.Q. R.C.E., 3 Cdn Inf Div, June 1944: Appx 4, R.C.E., 3 Cdn Inf Div Operation Order No. 1, 14 May.) Signals supplied information concerning existing signal exchanges, and P.T.T. line and cable construction. (W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs, May 1944: Appx 10, 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs Operation Order No. 1, 14 May.)

(d) Intention

94. The logical starting point for consideration of the divisional assault plan is 3 Cdn Inf Div Operation Order No. 1, "OVERLORD". But this document alone, by its very inclusiveness and breadth of coverage, cannot suffice to set forth adequately the method of execution. Reference will therefore be made to brigade group and battalion operation orders. In due course, likewise, the description of the fire plan will be based largely on the information contained in the operation order of H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div.

95. Although the Army plan (cf. paras 31 to 34 above) detailed the four phases of the operation which were to culminate in the capture of the bridgehead area, the plan of 3 Cdn Inf Div extended only as far as Phase I of the Army operation. It dealt, thus, only with the objectives to be gained on D Day. Beyond that point, of course, it was possible only to speak of the role of main bodies of corps: the disposition of component formations would depend largely on circumstance, and could not be exactly foreseen. Only against the contingency that serious enemy resistance might fail to develop on D Day was a further penetration visualized and planned for in advance.

96. The intention, so simply stated, says merely:

3 Cdn Inf Div and attached troops will assault through MIKE and NAN Sectors and seize a covering position on the general line railway PUTOT-EN-BESSIN 9071 to road and railway crossing 995682.

(3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

This represents the task allotted to 3 Cdn Inf Div in the intention of Second Army to "secure on D Day a firm base along the line BAYEUX - CAEN".

97. The term "3 Cdn Inf Div and attached troops" embraced a very large force. It included not only the division itself and the troops under its immediate command, e.g., 2 Cdn Armd Bde, but a host of "Corps, Army and external overheads" embarking and landing as part of the divisional assault group. The division's order of battle, as it existed for the assault phase, is attached at Appendix "C". Certain other units and detachments (A.S.S.U. Tentacles, Contact Detachments, etc.) are not shown on the order of battle of the division, but only on those of the brigade groups to which they were attached. The same is true of additional naval and air force detachments. With the addition, however, of these various externals "in support and under command for landing only", 3 Cdn Inf Div retained its normal organization of three brigade groups, to which correspond the three Naval Assault Groups of Force "J" (see para 21 above). Thus, 7 Cdn Inf Assault Bde Group was embarked in Assault Group J.1 (or G.J.1); 8 Cdn Inf Assault Bde Group in G.J.2; and 9 Cdn Inf Bde Group in G.J.3. Each Naval Assault Group was commanded by a Captain, R.N.

98. Since shipping space was at a premium and since so much of it had to be given over to the necessary externals, 3 Cdn Inf Div was pruned to "assault scales". This meant, first, that its total of vehicles had to be stringently cut, and secondly, that certain units had to be excluded altogether from the assault phase. 7 Cdn Recce Regt, which was assigned no task in the assault, was thus not represented except by small parties in a special role (Beach Group and contact detachments). Those units included, moreover, were to land at a greatly reduced scale, leaving their residue of personnel and vehicles to follow at intervals as shipping traffic permitted. This process of bringing units gradually up to strength, which was called "phasing in", is detailed at Appendix "G" of 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.

(e) Method

99. The assault was envisaged as being executed in four phases. These will first be considered with reference to the ground which they were to include. (See Appendix "G".)

100. Phase I was to consist of the assault and the capture of the beachhead objective known by the code word "YEW", the assault itself being made on a two-brigade front through MIKE and NAN Sectors. "YEW", as will be seen from the map at Appendix "G", was merely a shallow foothold enclosing the towns of VAUX, GRAYE-SUR-MER, COURSEULLES, BERNIERES and ST. AUBIN.

101. In Phase II, the right assaulting brigade group was then to secure crossings over the River SEULLES and establish itself on the Southern bank Southeast of CREULLY. At the same time the left brigade had the important task of establishing a firm base on the high ground BASLY-ANGUERNY-AMISY in order to integrate the advance of both 3 Cdn and 3 Brit Inf Divs landing on widely separated beaches. (1 Corps O.O. No. 1.) This intermediate objective was called "ELM".

102. For Phase III, the reserve brigade having landed was to advance as swiftly as possible, with the support of armour, to secure the area AUBHIE -- ARDENNE -- CARFIQUET, while the right assaulting brigade moved forward in conformity

with it to seize and hold its final objective PUTOT-EN-BESSIN -- BRETEVILLE-L'ORQUEUILLEUSE -- NORREY-EN-BESSIN. (Ibid.) This would see the division by the evening of D Day on the objective "OAK", i.e., astride the BAYEUX--CAEN road, the extremities of which were to be in the hands of 50 (N) Inf Div and 3 Brit Inf Div. Second Army's firm base would thus be achieved.

103. The final phase, planned for D plus 1, was to consist simply of reorganization on the final objective "OAK". These phases can now be dealt with in greater detail, with specific reference to infantry objectives.

104. Phase I. The grouping for the assault phase was as follows: 7 Cdn Inf Assault Bde Group on the right; 8 Cdn Inf Assault Bde Group on the left; and 9 Cdn Inf Bde Group in reserve.

105. 7 Cdn Inf Bde. The tasks allotted to 7 Cdn Inf Bde were the following:

- (i) Assault astride the mouth of the River SEULLES
- (ii) Mop up the coastal region from exclusive LA RIVIERE ... to inclusive COURSEULLES-SUR-MER
- (iii) Seize the beachhead objective YEW.

(3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

These tasks were to be carried out by two battalions. On the right R. Wpg Rif were to assault through MIKE Sector with three companies (including one of 1 C. Scot R. under command). One company was to capture VAUX and enemy positions on the right; one company was to capture LA VALETTE and GRAYE-SUR-MER; and the third was to "overwhelm and mop up" the beach defence area West of the COURSEULLES breakwater. The battalion's reserve companies were to advance beyond "YEW" to seize and hold STE. CROIX-SUR-MER and BANVILLE. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, June 1944: Appx 5, R. Wpg Rif Op Memorandum No. 1, 24 May.) On the left Regina Rif were to assault through NAN Green Beach and commence to clear COURSEULLES, a reserve company passing through to capture REVIERS. (W.D., Regina Rif, May 1944: Appx 10, Regina Rif Operation Order No. 1, 24 May.)

106. 8 Cdn Inf Bde. 8 Cdn Inf Bde's tasks can be summarized as follows:

- (i) Assault through NAN Sector.
- (ii) Mop up coastal area from exclusive COURSEULLES-SUR-MER to inclusive ST AUBIN-SUR-MER.
- (iii) Seize the beachhead objective (YEW)

(3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

Here again the assault was to be made on a two-battalion front. On the right Q.O.R. of C. were to land with two companies through NAN White Beach and overcome the beach defences between COURSEULLES and BERNIERES. The reserve companies, landing somewhat later, were to clear BERNIERES and the beachhead area within the battalion sector. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., May 1944: Appx 12, Q.O.R. of C. Operation Order No. 7, 22 May.) N. Shore R. was to attack on the left

through NAN Red Beach with two companies forward. The battalion was then to overcome the beach defences between BERNIERES and ST AUBIN and mop up ST AUBIN itself. A reserve company was to press on beyond "YEW" and capture TAILLEVILLE. (W.D., N. Shore R., May 1944: Appx 3, N. Shore R. Operation Order No. 1, 23 May.) 48 R.M. Commando (of 4 S.S. Bde) was to land on NAN Red Beach immediately behind N. Shore R., turn left and capture LANGRUNE-SUR-MER. (8 Cdn Inf Bde Operation Order No. 1, 18 May.) In summary, then, an essential feature of Phase I was the seizure by reserve companies of the four intermediate positions, STE. CROIX, BANVILLE, REVIERS and TAILLEVILLE. This extension of the immediate beachhead was to pave the way for Phase II.

107. Phase II. The divisional object in Phase II was to secure crossings over the first main river obstacle -- the River SEULLES -- and to seize the high ground selected as the intermediate objective "ELM".

108. 7 Cdn Inf Bde. The crossings over the SEULLES were to be gained by R. Wpg Rif and 1 C. Scot R. in the area of CREULLY, following which these units were to consolidate South of the river. Meanwhile, Regina Rif were to complete their clearance of COUPSEULLES block by block and proceed via REVIERS to seize the dominating ground Northeast of LE FRESNE-CAMILLY. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde (Adv), 6 Mar - 30 May 44: Appx 17, 7 Cdn Inf Bde Operation Order No. 1, 18 May.)

109. 8 Cdn Inf Bde. When R. de Chaud had been landed through BERNIERES, it was to proceed at once to capture BENY-SUR-MER and the battery positions near it. The battalion would then continue Southwards to capture BASLY and establish a firm base on the high ground West of COLOMBY-SUR-THAON. When this had been effected, Q.O.R. of C. were to advance through R. de Chaud and seize the village of ANISY and the high ground to the North of it. N. Shore R., meanwhile, with the assistance of "X" Troop of 30 Assault Unit, Royal Marines, was to seize intact the radar installations West of DOUVRES. Later, when R. de Chaud had completed its task, N. Shore R. was to reorganize on the spur Northeast of ANGUERNY. (8 Cdn Inf Bde O.O. No. 1.) This would complete the capture of the divisional intermediate objective "ELM". It represented the final objective for 8 Cdn Inf Bde, and in the ANGUERNY area a brigade fortress was to be formed, in rear of which 9 Cdn Inf Bde would probably assemble prior to advancing to the divisional objective.

110. Phase III. The final objective lay astride the BAYEUX - CAEN road on either side of the river MUE, which crosses it at LA VILLENEUVE. Its capture was to be the task of 7 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes, the latter having been moved into position for this next phase.

111. 7 Cdn Inf Bde. Prior to a general advance by the brigade, 1 C. Scot R., with the support of an armoured squadron, was first to secure an intermediate position on the high ground to the West of CAMILLY. R. Wpg Rif and Regina Rif were then to advance and capture the final objectives, respectively PUTOT-EN-BESSIN and NORREY-EN-BESSIN, while at the same time 1 C. Scot R. took up a position at SECQUEVILLE-EN-BESSIN. (7 Cdn Inf Bde O.O. No. 1.)

112. 9 Cdn Inf Bde. Some recapitulation is required in order to clarify the role of 9 Cdn Inf Bde which was, essentially, the capture of the Eastern half of the divisional final objective. In view of the uncertainty attached to the success of the assaulting brigades, two separate plans were conceived for the commitment of the reserve formation. These

will be briefly summarized.

113. Plan "A". During Phase I, 9 Cdn Inf Bde was to be landed through NAN Sector behind 8 Cdn Inf Bde, the precise time being left to the discretion of the G.O.C. While Phase II was in progress, the brigade was to assemble in the vicinity of BENY-SUR-MER, again behind 8 Cdn Inf Bde. For its part in Phase III, 9 Cdn Inf Bde was to move forward with the support of armour "at greatest possible speed", Nth N.S. Highrs leading. The route to be followed led through BASLY, VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS, BURON, AUTHIE and FRANQUEVILLE to the airfield of CARPIQUET, which was the ultimate objective. (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, May 1944: Appx 3, 9 Cdn Inf Bde Operation Order No. 1, 18 May.)

114. Plan "B". In the event of 8 Cdn Inf Bde being held up, or of the beaches near BERNIERES being unsuitable for landing, 9 Cdn Inf Bde was, alternatively, to go ashore through MIKE Sector behind 7 Cdn Inf Bde. Assembly would then take place South of BANVILLE. The route forward to the final objective from this area was not selected in advance. (Ibid.)

115. 8 Cdn Inf Bde. During the Phase III, 8 Cdn Inf Bde was required merely to organize its position against possible enemy counter-attacks. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

116. Phase IV. All three infantry brigades were to adjust their battalion dispositions to meet possible counter-attacks. In 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 1 C. Scot R. was to strengthen the brigade fortress by moving South beyond SECQUEVILLE-EN-BESSIN. 8 Cdn Inf Bde was expected to be relieved in the ANGUERNY area by 153 Inf Bde of 51 (H) Inf Div (follow-up). In that case it was planned that the former would move almost due West to a position behind 7 Cdn Inf Bde in the general area CAINET - CAMILLY - SECQUEVILLE-EN-BESSIN - CULLY. There it was to consolidate the area "against possible enemy armoured attack with special consideration to the approaches from the SOUTH and SW on the divisional right flank". (Ibid.) A counter-attack force composed of units of 2 Cdn Arm'd Bde was to take up a central position on the feature between the rivers CHIROMME and MUE. (Ibid.)

117. The foregoing remarks represent only the bare skeleton of the infantry assault and the advance to the final objective. Little mention has been made of the tasks assigned to the other members of the assault team, upon whose skill much would depend. To attempt to describe these tasks concurrently with the four phases of the operation outlined above would be inevitably to lose the continuity of the plan. They must therefore be dealt with separately.

(f) Naval Assault Force "J"

118. So important was the naval share in the approach to the beaches that command even of the military formations embarked in the assault groups was to be exercised by Naval Force Commanders, until such time as the Army should be "firmly established ashore". (ONL) In large measure the success of Phase I depended upon the navigational ability of the craft commanders, for the history of combined operations contains numerous instances of troops being landed at the

wrong beaches. The experience of 1 Cdn Inf Div in the assault on Sicily is a case in point: several battalions found themselves incorrectly landed, fortunately not in the face of heavy opposition. (Report No. 127.) Such incidents served to reinforce the argument for a daylight assault. On this matter the military requirements in "OVERLORD" were most exacting: battalion operation orders even gave six-figure co-ordinates in specifying landing points. Yet the possibility of error remained. Accordingly the following direction appeared in Naval Orders: "Landing craft are to press on regardless of loss or of the fact that they may find themselves opposite the wrong beach". (ONEAST 7.) Orders to commanding officers of landing craft contained this advice: "Do not worry too much about how you are to get out again, the first and primary object is to get in and land your load without drowning the vehicles". (Force "J" Naval Operation Order, 19 May 44, Admiralty, Military Section.)

(g) Commandos

119. Elements of 4 S.S. Bde, comprising 41, 46, 47 and 48 Royal Marine Commandos, were to perform certain special tasks in co-operation with 3 Cdn Inf Div. Between the assault areas of 3 Cdn Inf Div and 3 Brit Inf Div (PETER and OBOE sectors), a line of cliffs made landings impossible; the resort towns of LANGRUNE, PETIT-ENFER, LUC-SUR-MER and LION-SUR-MER would therefore have to be cleared by commandos working in from either flank. During Phase I, 38 R.M. Commando was to land behind N. Shore R. and capture LANGRUNE (see para 106). There it would join with 41 R.M. Commando landing under orders of 3 Brit Inf Div. In Phase II, these two units were charged with capturing the villages of LA DELIVRANDE and DOUVRES LA DELIVRANDE. (N. Shore R. O.O. No. 1.) Finally, to permit 7 Cdn Inf Bde to proceed with Phase III, 4 S.S. Bde, less 46 and 47 Commandos, was to relieve the bridge guards at the crossings over the SEULLES from CREULLY to REVIERS. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) The task of 30 Assault Unit, R.M., operating with 8 Cdn Inf Bde, has been mentioned above (para 109).

(h) Armour

120. Amidst all the diverse machinery of amphibious operations there is perhaps nothing which more arouses the imagination than the special equipment of the armoured regiments in support of the assaulting infantry. Hardly a hint of what this support was to be is discernible in the stated intention of 2 Cdn Armd Bde to "sp 3 Cdn Inf Div onto the Div final objective OAK and ... be prepared to adv on afternoon of D Day to secure the high ground at EVRECY" (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 20 Apr - 31 May 44: Appx 8, 2 Cdn Armd Bde Operation Order No. 1, 23 May.) The latter half of this intention has reference, of course, to the possible failure of the enemy to muster effective opposition.

121. During Phases I and II, 2 Cdn Armd Bde was to be decentralized. 6, 10 and 27 Cdn Armd Regts would operate under the command of 7, 8 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes respectively, with brigade headquarters under the command of 9 Cdn Inf Bde for landing only. In Phase III, 10 Cdn Armd Regt and two squadrons of 6 Cdn Armd Regt were to be concentrated in reserve to protect the divisional right flank; 27 Cdn Armd Regt and the third squadron of 6 Cdn Armd Regt were to remain under the command of 9 and 7 Cdn Inf Bdes to support the advance to the final objective. Finally, in Phase IV, when 8 Cdn Inf Bde had assumed responsibility for the right flank, 2 Cdn Armd Bde was to be concentrated, as noted above (para 116), in divisional reserve as a counter-attack force.

122. The organization of 6 and 10 Cdn Armd Regts each into two squadrons of D.D. tanks and one squadron of normal Shermans has been referred to previously (para 73). This arrangement was designed to give close support to each assaulting battalion at the crucial moment of landing. Reserve battalions, making an unopposed landing, would be supported ashore by "normal" squadrons. For a detailed description of the manner in which it was proposed to operate the amphibious tanks, reference should be made to the memorandum, Drill for Launching and Run-in of DDs, issued by 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 13 Apr 44. (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 20 Apr - 31 May 44: Appx 11.) Launching was to take place at 5000 yards from the beach under cover of smoke laid by L.C.G. (L), touchdown being made at H minus 5 minutes. D.D. tanks were thus to form the first wave of the assault, going in five minutes before the leading flight of landing craft hit the beach. (See diagram at Appendix "H".) Although it was considered improbable that the operation would be mounted if seas were rough, it was nonetheless entertained as a possibility that the launching of D.D. tanks might have to be cancelled altogether. (Ibid.) 6 and 10 Cdn Armd Regts were each in addition to supply two Sherman tanks Vc to be employed as "concrete-busters" in the assault. These would be borne in L.C.T. (C.B.) (see Ships and Craft of Force "J", Appendix "B") and would disembark so as to deliver observed fire from their 17-pounder guns against emplacements. (R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) Concrete-busters would revert to regimental command on completion of their tasks. (2 Cdn Armd Bde O.O. No. 1.)

123. If enemy opposition failed to materialize on D Day, 2 Cdn Armd Bde, plus a force composed of one infantry battalion and supporting arms, was to strike forward and seize the high ground near EVRECY. (Ibid.)

124. "C" Squadron, Inns of Court Regt, consisting of armoured cars, and a party of Royal Engineers, was ordered to land shortly after H Hour on MIKE Sector. The definition of its task may be quoted from the divisional order:

...This force is to push forward as soon as coastal defences have been overcome, and is to destroy all bridges over the River ORNE from inclusive road bridge 937471 to inclusive rail bridge 002621. This force is to impose maximum delay on the enemy.

(3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

Destruction of these bridges would prevent the enemy crossing the ORNE below THURY-HARCOURT. The role given to this detachment, together with 2 Cdn Armd Bde's projected advance to EVRECY, may be taken as fulfilling Second Army's injunction concerning the bold use of armoured mobile forces operating in advance of main bodies (cf. para 34 above).

125. One troop of "B" squadron, 22 Dragoons, (Flail tanks) was to land under the command of 5 Assault Regt, R.E., to prepare safe lanes through the minefields on the beaches. During Phases II and III the Flails would continue with this task but under command of 102 Beach Sub-Area. Finally, in Phase IV, they would pass under the command of 2 Cdn Armd Bde to move with that formation to the area reserved for the counter-attack force. (2 Cdn Armd Bde O.O. No. 1.)

(1) Machine Gun Battalion

126. The heavier support weapons (medium machine guns and 4.2-inch heavy mortars) of C.H. of O. (M.G.) were not suitable for employment in the assault phase. Generally speaking, these weapons, sub-allotted to battalions, were to assist in the capture of the final objective. (Operation Orders, 7, 8 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes.)

(j) Engineers

127. Because of the multitude of tasks confronting the sappers, engineer resources were considerably swelled in excess of divisional strength. These tasks, which had all to be co-ordinated by the C.R.E., 3 Cdn Inf Div, included clearance of obstacles, opening of beach exits, development of beaches and Beach Maintenance Areas, clearance and maintenance of inland routes, bridging, laying of defensive mine-fields and establishment of water points. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) In addition to the normal engineer complement of 6, 16 and 18 Cdn Fd Coys and 3 Cdn Fd Pk Coy, there were also under command the following: 5 Cdn Fd Coy; a detachment of 5 Assault Regt, R.E. (26 and 80 Assault Squadrons); 262 Fd Coy, R.E.; a detachment of 19 Fd Coy, R.E.; and engineer elements of 102 Beach Sub-Area. (R.C.E., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) It is impossible to set forth fully the function of each engineer group, for the allotment of tasks was exceedingly complicated. Only a general statement of the division of labour is necessary.

128. 5 Cdn Fd Coy, in support of 7 and 8 Cdn Inf Bdes, was charged with clearing four gaps through the underwater obstacles by H plus 75 minutes, using bulldozers and explosives. These gaps, distributed across the divisional front, were to vary in width from 600 yards on MIKE Green Beach to 200 yards on NAN Green. On each brigade front a Naval Landing Craft Obstacle Clearance Unit (L.C.O.C.U.) was to assist in the removal of underwater obstructions. (Ibid.; 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) Two sapper assault teams, composed each of one platoon from 6 and 16 Cdn Fd Coys, were to be placed under the command of the assaulting brigades to assist the battalions in clearing beach defences. (R.C.E., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

129. Each brigade front was to be provided with four beach exits. Lanes were to be cleared and marked across the beach and exits breached through to the first inland lateral. This work was to be undertaken by personnel of 5 Assault Regt, R.E., using Assault Vehicles, Royal Engineers (A.V.R.E.) assisted by the Flails of 22 Dgns. (Ibid.) A preparatory measure was of course the blasting of lanes by L.C.A. (H.R.). Engineers of 102 Beach Sub-Area had as their task the development of the beaches and Beach Maintenance Areas. This included the construction of a twenty-foot lateral along the beach, the improvement and maintenance of the exits, and the conversion of the railway line between COURSEULLES and BERNIERES into a road suitable for traffic. (Ibid.) Road clearance was the responsibility of the divisional engineers and involved the normal removal of mines, road blocks, etc. (Ibid.) Particular importance attached to the construction of Class 40 bridges over the River SEULLES at PONT DE REVIERS and COLOMBIERS-SUR-SEULLES. These crossing places, it will be recalled, were to be secured by 7 Cdn Inf Bde. The bridges were to be completed by H plus 7 hours and H plus 11 hours respectively. (Ibid.)

(k) Administration

130. A complete and detailed description of the multifarious provisions for maintenance and supply is set forth in 3 Cdn Inf Div Adm Plan, which contains thirty sections devoted to such topics as Maintenance, Transportation, Provost Services, Burials and Graves Registration, and Discipline. (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/O/I.) During the early days of the operation, it was planned that there should be three successive maintenance periods, as shown below:

(a) Assault Maintenance (D to D plus 1)

3 Cdn Inf Div will control maintenance through Beach Stores Dumps, Div Administrative Area and the Beach Maintenance Area established by 102 Beach Sub Area.

(b) Beach Maintenance (D plus 1 to D plus 4)

Headquarters 1 Corps will control maintenance, utilizing Beach Maintenance Areas formed by 102 Beach Sub Area.

(c) Line of Communication Terminal Maintenance (D plus 5 onwards)

Headquarters Second Army Troops controls Beach Maintenance Areas which are merged to form No. 1 Line of Communication Terminal.

The Co-ordination and organization of all beaches will be the responsibility of HQ 11 Line of Communication exercised through Beach Sub Areas.

(Ibid.)

131. Some conception of the scale of maintenance requirements can be formed from the numbers of troops and vehicles scheduled to be landed. It was estimated that provision would have to be made on D Day for 21,382 men, 2,374 vehicles and 858 motorcycles. By D plus 1 these figures would have been increased correspondingly to 23,711, 2,665 and 931. (Ibid.)

132. Individual rations to be carried were the following:

- (a) 1 Emergency ration
- (b) 1 x 24 hour ration "A" } Personnel landing D Day
- 1 x 24 hour ration } ONLY
- (c) 2 x 24 hour rations - personnel landing D plus 1 and subsequently.
- (d) 20 cigarettes
- (e) 1 Tommy Cooker complete and 6 hexamine refills.
- (f) 1 Water Sterilising Outfit.

(Ibid.)

133. A fuller account of the administrative aspects of "OVERLORD" is given below, under the assault.

(1) Intercommunication

134. Signals instructions for the assault present a bewildering complexity of wireless frequencies, code signs and diagrams. When it is considered that communications had to be maintained under constantly changing conditions, this multiplicity of technical detail is not to be wondered at. To ensure adequate passage of information, alternative channels had to be devised. In addition to the wireless system for the seaborne artillery, divisional signals had to provide for communications throughout the following stages of the battle:

- (1) A.V.R.E., D.D. tanks and assault companies landed.
- (2) Battalion headquarters ashore and brigade and divisional headquarters afloat.
- (3) Assault brigade headquarters landed, reserve brigade and divisional headquarters afloat.
- (4) Divisional headquarters ashore. (3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs O.O. No. 1.)

135. Beach Signal Sections of 102 Beach Sub-area were required to establish a Main Beach Signal Station (M.B.S.S.) on each sector; these would initially serve as headquarters for brigade staffs on first landing. Advanced Beach Signal Stations (A.B.S.S.) were also to be set up on MIKE Red, NAN Green, NAN White and NAN Red Beaches. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

(m) The Fire Plan

136. Discussion of the fire plan has been reserved until the last, because of its peculiar importance in the assault. Before embarking, however, on the exposition of this topic, it is appropriate to turn back briefly to that operation which had also involved an assault landing on the French channel coast. The costly but invaluable experience gained at DIEPPE almost two years prior to "OVERLORD" was closely studied and the lessons learned from that experience carefully formulated. (Cf. The DIEPPE Raid, Combined Report, C.B. 04244, October 1942, copy in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.)

137. Not the least of these lessons, although it is not included in the Combined Report, must have been the knowledge that much time must elapse before the invasion could take place. "I believe", said Lieut.-General Crerar with reference to DIEPPE, "that when this war is examined in proper perspective it will be seen that the sobering influence of that operation on existing Allied strategical conceptions, with the enforced realization by the Allied Governments of the lengthy and tremendous preparations necessary before invasion could be attempted, was a Canadian contribution of the greatest significance to final victory". (Introduction to Briefing of Officers, H.Q. First Cdn Army, 7 Jun 44, copy appended to Report No. 128.) General Crerar's remarks on that same occasion shed light on another aspect of the assault -- the relative value of tactical surprise:

Until the evidence of DIEPPE proved otherwise, it had been the opinion in highest command and staff circles in this country that an assault against a heavily defended coast could be carried out on the basis of securing tactical surprise, and without dependence on overwhelming fire support, in the critical phases of closing the beaches and overrunning the beach defences.

(Ibid.)

138. If tactical surprise were not to be the basis of the plan, it followed that a daylight assault, supported by heavy and accurate observed bombardment, was preferable to one made under cover of darkness. The first lesson of DIEPPE, therefore, was the need for "overwhelming fire support ... during the initial stages of the attack". The report defined the methods by which this must be provided:

...by heavy and medium Naval bombardment, by air action, by special vessels or craft working close inshore, and by using the fire power of the assaulting troops while still sea-borne.

(C.B. 04244.)

139. The immediate source of the "OVERLORD" fire plan is the Graham Report, "Fire Support of Seaborne Landings Against a Heavily Defended Coast" (C.O.S. (43) 770 (0)), which had considered the problem of distributing a sufficient weight of high explosive over the area to be assaulted. (Cf. C.B. 04385A, Report by A.N.C.X.F.) Our concern here is not so much with that principle as with the means employed to produce an adequate volume of fire. Examination of the fire plan conceived for "OVERLORD" reveals close parallels with the DIEPPE recommendations. The huge scale of support to be furnished by heavy and medium naval bombardment has already been outlined (para 22 above); at DIEPPE naval fire had been limited to "a short bombardment carried out by destroyers". (C.B. 04244.) Air support, which at DIEPPE had proved "adequate to cover the operation" and had included no preliminary bombing, was expanded for "OVERLORD" to comprehend attacks by heavy and medium bombers as well as by fighter bombers, so that the total effect of the air assault should extend far beyond the target area proper.

140. The numerous strange craft making up the Naval Assault Forces may be said to have had their genesis in the recommendation for support delivered by "special vessels or craft working close inshore". This support was to be given during the "vital minutes while troops are disembarking, cutting or blasting their way through wire, clearing beach mines and finding routes over obstacles", for at that very time they would be least able to support themselves. (Ibid.)

141. We come finally to the suggested use of "the fire power of the assaulting troops while still sea-borne". This, the DIEPPE report goes on to say, might be further developed by the employment of "self-propelled mobile artillery provided that it is put ashore immediately". (Ibid.) But it does not seem to envisage that such artillery might be fired even while still at sea. This was a later development, growing out of the original recommendation for sea-borne military fire-power. Assault divisions in Operation "OVERLORD" were

accordingly equipped with "Priests" - U.S. 105-millimetre self-propelled guns (M.7). Owing to the fact that 3 Cdn Inf Div was to make its attack on a two-brigade front, it was deemed advisable to strengthen its artillery component by the addition of a fourth field regiment, thus giving each assaulting brigade the support of two regiments. The additional unit first selected was 8 Cdn Fd Regt, but on its departure to the Mediterranean with 1 Cdn Corps it was replaced, in October 1943, by 19 Cdn Fd Regt. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. First Cdn Army, October 1943: Appx 20, Message 067, G First Cdn Army to 2 Cdn Corps, 18 Oct 43.)

142. Turning now to the divisional fire plan, it may be observed first that its most remarkable feature was the very high degree of co-ordination it achieved by combining the efforts of Navy, Army and Air Force. The importance of such exercises as "PIRATE" in arriving at this co-ordination has been mentioned above (para 62). The intention of the fire plan, broadly, was threefold: (a) to provide "drenching" fire against beach defences from all weapons; (b) to destroy enemy batteries by naval fire and air bombing; (c) to attack inland targets by air action. The schedule which this programme was to follow is tabled at Appx "O" of R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1. This document is in fact invaluable to an appreciation of the divisional fire plan.

143. (i) Navy. The bombarding ships of Eastern Task Force associated with Force "J" are listed above (para 22). In addition, Fleet Class destroyers were to bombard the flanking beaches commencing at H minus 40 minutes, while at the same time Hunt Class destroyers engaged MIKE and NAN Sectors. Cruisers, directed by air spotting sorties, were to engage the VER-SUR-MER and BENY-SUR-MER batteries. After H Hour certain of these ships would become available on call to the Forward Officers Bombardment accompanying the assaulting troops. (ONEAST 8; R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

144. The tasks of the naval support craft require only to be summarized. Descriptions of each type are included in the table, Ships and Craft of Force "J", at Appendix "B". L.C.G. (L), disposed on the flanks of assaulting battalions, were required to close to 1000 yards and open fire with their 4.7-inch guns on targets of opportunity. L.C.T. (R.), approaching the beach in two waves, were to fire their patterns of rockets just prior to touchdown on the strongpoints at COURSEULLES, BERNIERES and ST. AUBIN. (R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) The A.V.R.E. teams, touching down at H Hour, were to be accompanied on the run-in by L.C.A. (H.R.), which would fire when within range so as to create blast lanes through the mines and wire at the eight points where it was intended that exits should be constructed (cf. para 129). (Ibid.)

145. (ii) Army. The expanded divisional artillery was divided into two groups for the assault phase: 12 Cdn Fd Regt Artillery Group, supporting 7 Cdn Inf Bde, and composed of 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts and one battery of 2 R.M.A.S. Regt (Centaur); and 14 Cdn Fd Regt Artillery Group, in support of 8 Cdn Inf Bde, and comprising 14 and 19 Cdn Fd Regts and the second R.M.A.S. battery. (Ibid.)

146. Two batteries of 2 Royal Marine Armoured Support Regiment, equipped with Centaur tanks mounting 95-millimetre guns, were to be borne in L.C.T. (A.) and L.C.T. (H.E.). Beaching at H Hour, they were to deploy on land in order to support troops coming ashore. (Ibid.) The role of L.C.T. (C.B.) has been described previously (para 122).

147. The "drill" evolved for the employment of seaborne artillery is fully described as to its technical detail in a memorandum issued by H.Q. R.C.A.: The Use of SP Artillery in Support of a Beach Assault. (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/RCA/B/F.) But a clearer conception of the procedure can perhaps be gained from the following excerpt from an account given to the Historical Officer, 3 Cdn Inf Div:

There were several curious difficulties attached to the use of the artillery at sea. The craft had to be under way at the time of firing, since they were not sufficiently steady while merely standing off. No switches could be put on the guns. The only way therefore that they could be kept on line was to direct the craft on the target and maintain them on their course. Thus, from the time that the guns came within range and opened fire they were closing on the beach at 5 knots per hour. This made necessary a steadily decreasing elevation on the guns. The rate of close on the beach had to be calculated constantly in order to keep the fire where it was wanted, "just where the grass starts to grow on the beach". This was done by the Regimental Fire Control Officers operating radar apparatus in navigational motor launches.

For the SP artillery the schedule of fire support was as follows. Range clocks were started at 15,000 yards; ranging with smoke began at 10,000 yards and fire for effect at 9000 yards. This latter had to be timed so as to commence at H minus 30 minutes. From then until H plus 5 minutes (i.e., at a range of 2000 yards, having covered 1000 yards per 5 minutes) each gun fired 3 rounds in every 200 yards. The total HE expenditure at H plus 5 minutes was thus 105 rounds per gun.

At this point, the LCTs, now 2000 yards offshore, did not continue on their course in order to touch down and offload the guns, for the beach was not yet ready to receive them. Instead they turned off to a flank to a waiting position.... On landing they deployed and went into action as quickly as possible.

(Hist Sec File AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/RCA/C/D:
Artillery Communications in Operation "OVERLORD",
account given by Maj. H.S. Patterson, R.C. Sigs,
to Hist Offr, 3 Cdn Inf Div.)

To complete this picture it is necessary to envisage 24 L.C.T. approaching shore, each craft carrying four guns (one troop). The total volume of fire from these 96 guns would equal 10,080 rounds. The fall of shot was to be observed and controlled by Forward Observation Officers travelling in L.C.S.(M) far in advance of the assault waves. (Ibid.) Artillery reconnaissance parties accompanied infantry battalion headquarters, so as to select suitable gun positions ashore.

148. Each regiment was to bring down a concentration on one of the four principal strongpoints in "Juno" sector, i.e., those at COURSEULLES (on either side of the breakwater), at BERNIERES and at ST. AUBIN, ending just as the leading infantry touched down. (R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) These four regimental concentrations were thus designed to complement the fire delivered against the same targets by L.C.T. (R.). But it must be emphasized that their effect was to be neutralizing, not destructive. Neither sufficient weight nor accuracy to achieve penetration of concrete defences could be expected of field artillery afloat.

149. Although Exercise "PIRATE" (cf. para 62) had demonstrated the feasibility of firing S.P. artillery from sea, subsequently a series of unexpected difficulties in the actual mechanics of the problem was found to be critical. One of the many collective exercises of the final stage of training was, therefore, made to serve as a final test of its practicability. All references to Exercise "SAVVY" (12 Feb) make it clear that the whole case for seaborne artillery would stand or fall on its merits. (W.Ds., H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div, and H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1944.) As carried out, "SAVVY" consisted of an assault by 8 Cdn Inf Bde with fire support. It was attended by many high-ranking officers, including General Montgomery himself. The divisional artillery staff, which had suspended detailed planning until its conclusion, noted with relief that the exercise was considered "a great success". (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div, 14 Feb.) S.P. artillery would continue to be included in the assault phase.

150. (iii) Air Force. The targets allotted to the Air Forces fitted perfectly into this programme. Prior to D Day heavy day bombing of beach defences was to be carried out, first priority being given to the strongpoints at COURSEULLES and BERNIERES, those at ST. AUBIN and LANGRUNE receiving second priority. On D Day itself the following attacks were to be made:

H minus 30 to H minus 15 minutes, light bombing on beaches of MIKE and NAN Sectors.

H minus 15 to H Hour, heavy bombing on beaches of LOVE and OBOE Sectors.

(R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

The counter-battery role consisted of medium or fighter-bomber attacks against the BENY-SUR-MER, VER-SUR-MER and MONT FLEURY batteries, timed so as to follow on the naval bombardment of those positions. (Ibid.) Attacks on inland targets -- the special province of the air arm -- were to include the bombing of H.Q. 716 Div in CAEN, the city itself, TAILLEVILLE and the CARPIQUET airfield defences. These were to be carried out during D Day. (Ibid.)

151. (iv) Anti-Aircraft. Anti-aircraft protection for ships and craft was to be given by L.C.F. and L.B.F. Two anti-aircraft assault groups ("O" and "P"), comprising several British anti-aircraft batteries, a searchlight troop, a smoke company and four L.B.F., were entrusted with the protection of the beachhead area. The divisional light anti-aircraft regiment was to supply one battery to cover the crossings of the River SEULLES. (R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) Very careful instructions were issued concerning

anti-aircraft fire; the engagement of friendly aircraft by our own troops having been an unfortunate feature of the DIEPPE raid. (C.B. 04244, The DIEPPE Raid; 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) As an extra precaution a special system of distinctive markings on certain types of Allied aircraft was devised to come into force on D Day, these markings consisting of black and white stripes painted on wing surfaces and fuselages. (ON 11.)

152. (v) Anti-Tank. The advance to the final objective was to be supported by two anti-tank sub-units: a battery of 62 A. Tk Regt, R.A., in support of 7 Cdn Inf Bde, and 105 Cdn (Composite) A. Tk Bty of 3 Cdn A. Tk Regt, in support of 9 Cdn Inf Bde. At the conclusion of Phase III they were to be withdrawn to the divisional mobile reserve. During the consolidation phase, anti-tank weapons were to be deployed so as to guard against enemy armoured thrusts against the flanks of the division. (R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

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153. In summing up, it may be found useful to examine diagrammatically the order in which the leading assault groups of 3 Cdn Inf Div were to approach the beach.

H minus 5	D.D. Tanks
H Hour	Centaur, A.V.R.E. and R.E. bulldozers
H plus 5	Infantry Assault Coys
H plus 20	Infantry Reserve Coys
H plus 45	Reserve Battalions

The disposition of the essential elements of an assault brigade group is shown in perspective on the diagram at Appendix "H".

THE ASSAULT

(a) Briefing

154. The beginning of May found 3 Cdn Inf Div and its attached troops quartered in the SOUTHAMPTON-PORTSMOUTH area. The first definite sign of approaching action was the G.O.C's briefing (9) of commanders, commanding officers and staff officers on 15 May at divisional headquarters in CRANBURY HOUSE, Hampshire. (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div, 15 May 44.) This was followed by similar conferences held by brigade commanders.

155. But for the great majority of the division the plan, down to its most minute detail, existed in a vacuum, divorced from identifiable localities. Briefing of sub-unit personnel was done from "bogus" maps, i.e., maps with false place-names and co-ordinates. CAEN, for example, was known as "POLAND", COURSEULLES as "ALBA", and so on. (See 7 Cdn Inf Bde Operation Order No. 1.) Bogus map sheets of 1:25,000 scale were issued, complete with tinted contours and an overprint of enemy defences; certain battalion operation orders even went so far as to make use only of false names. (Cf., for example, W.D., S.D. & G. Highrs, May 1944: Appx 7, S.D. & G. Highrs O.O. No. 1, 26 May, and bogus maps.)

156. The last weeks prior to the invasion were trying. It was not that it was a period of inactivity: battalion briefing began about 26 May and continued almost until the end of the month; personal kit had to be ruthlessly stripped; vehicles were waterproofed; and endless items of new equipment - assault helmets, battle jerkins, light motorcycles - were adopted. Distinguished visitors inspected the division; these included His Majesty King George VI (25 Apr), and General Eisenhower (13 May). An amusing sidelight on the feeling of the troops at the succession of visits, both official and unofficial, is supplied by the War Diary of H.Q. R.C.A.:

We are starting to feel like birds in a cage.
Everyone seems to want to look at us.
(W.D., H.Q. R.C.A. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 19 May.)

157. Even before final briefing began, it became evident to everyone that the actual operation was not far off. Camps were sealed and communication with the outside world ceased. Only the possibility of postponement was dreaded. "At long last", observed one diarist, "this looks like the real thing". (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 31 May.)

(b) Loading and Assembly

158. The tedious and complicated process of marshalling by serials into craft loads (universally termed "the sausage machine") began on 30 May. In their marshalling areas, all troops received French currency, and were presented with more of the paraphernalia of assault - lifebelts, sea-sickness tablets and even vomit bags, (the last a seeming aspersion on the efficacy of the tablets). Loading was started two days later, at SOUTHAMPTON and STOKES BAY, with vehicles and guns being embarked over the specially prepared concrete "hards". By 3 Jun most of the assaulting troops were

(9) "The term "Briefing" implies the issue of orders and instructions to units and individuals for the implementation of the plan in the theatre of operations." (Second Army O.O. No. 1.)

on board their craft, where they proceeded at once to relax. Much of the tension felt prior to embarkation had now passed. This is partly to be explained by the cheerful hospitality of the ships' crews, with whom a spirit of close comradeship had been developed during months of training. More important, however, was the knowledge that this was at last the very threshold of action. A tribute to the Canadians at this moment was paid by Commodore G.N. Oliver, C.B., D.S.O., commanding Force "J", in these words:

During embarkation and prior to sailing the high spirits of the soldiers of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division were outstanding; their enthusiasm infused itself throughout the Force.

(C.B. 04385B, Report by Naval Commander, Force "J".)

159. The rifle companies of the battalions of 7 and 8 Cdn Inf Bdes were embarked in 15 L.S.I., each with its complement of L.C.A. at the davits. Two companies of reserve battalions found themselves quartered in Canadian ships: "A" Company of R. de Chaud in H.M.C.S. "Prince David", and "B" Company of 1 C. Scot R. in H.M.C.S. "Prince Henry", both L.S.I.(M.). For this reason the latter sub-unit was accounted by the rest of its battalion as "the luckiest of the serials". (W.Ds., R. de Chaud and 1 C. Scot R., 2 Jun.) Headquarters of the four assaulting battalions were established in L.C.H. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.) The rifle companies of the reserve brigade were, on the other hand, boarded on ten L.C.I.(L.) of the 262nd Flotilla, R.C.N. (R.C.N.'s. Part in the Invasion.) These latter craft would in time beach themselves, since they were not to participate in the assault phase. Formation and unit priority vehicles, i.e., those essential to the conduct of the battle ashore, were loaded in L.C.T. The first of these were to disembark at H plus 80 minutes. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

160. Throughout the force certain larger vessels were specially fitted out as headquarters, both naval and military. Chief among these was H.M.S. "Hilary", the flag ship of the Commodore commanding Force "J". She carried also H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div (reduced) and the Commander, 1 Brit Corps and his staff. It will be recalled that "Hilary" had served as headquarters ship to 1 Cdn Inf Div in the Sicilian operation (cf. Report No. 126). Each brigade commander and his naval equivalent, the Senior Officer Assault Group (S.O.A.G.), were accommodated in an Assault Group Headquarters Ship - the frigate H.M.S. "Lawford" for 7 Cdn Inf Bde (J.1), and H.M.S. "Waveney" for 8 Cdn Inf Bde (J.2). H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde (J.3) was set up in an L.S.I. (H), H.M.S. "Royal Ulsterman". Alternate headquarters ships (stand-by ships) were named as a precautionary measure. In the event of "Hilary" being put out of action, for example, command was to be exercised from "Royal Ulsterman". (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1.)

161. The two assault regiments of 2 Cdn Armd Bde - 6 and 10 Cdn Armd Regts - were borne mostly in L.C.T. 27 Cdn Armd Regt was carried in L.C.T. and L.S.T. Brigade Headquarters was split for the passage, each portion travelling on a L.S.T. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD", cited above.)

162. A word here as to loading and assembling generally may help to clarify the movements of the invasion fleets. All along the Southern English coast, in the order corresponding to their objectives across the Channel, the assault forces were preparing to sail. From West to East, these loading points were:

Force "U": TORQUAY, BRIXHAM, DARTMOUTH, PLYMOUTH EAST
Force "O": PORTLAND and WEYMOUTH
Force "G": SOUTHAMPTON
Force "J": SOUTHAMPTON and PORTSMOUTH
Force "S": PORTSMOUTH, NEWHAVEN, SHOREHAM.

The follow-up forces were embarked on the flanks of this huge area -- those of Force "B" at FALMOUTH and PLYMOUTH WEST, and those of Force "L" at TILBURY and FELIXSTOWE. The first build-up forces were to be loaded and assembled in the BRISTOL CHANNEL and the THAMES. MULBERRY concrete units were collected in anchorages clear of the other forces on the South coast. Most of the heavy units of the bombarding forces were assembled at ports on the West coast. (ON 4.) Routes to be followed by all outward-bound groups, convoys and other units from D minus 1 to D plus 3 are clearly illustrated by the series of "Mickey Mouse Diagrams" in Naval Orders. (ON 20.)

(c) The Selection of D Day

163. As time wore on, it became evident that the May heat-wave was at an end and that unfavourable weather threatened. On 3 Jun General Eisenhower took the decision to set the operation in motion despite a continued deterioration of outlook. But by the next day, "with weather charts typical of December rather than June," it was obvious that conditions on 5 Jun (previously selected as D Day) would be quite unacceptable; accordingly a postponement of 24 hours was ordered, and the units of the force were recalled. (C.B. 04385A, Report by A.N.X.C.F.) The Supreme Commander could hardly have been faced with a more delicate situation: to mount the operation irrevocably in spite of unsuitable conditions might lead to disaster; on the other hand there were many advantages to be gained by the earliest possible launching. Not the least of these was security, for the longer the huge armada lay assembled, the slighter the chance of even tactical surprise being achieved. Added to this was the fact that after 7 Jun, tidal conditions would not permit the operation being mounted for nearly two weeks. The prospect of this long delay, with troops already embarked, must have been a frightening one. And although no one could foresee it, that "next suitable period" was to be marked by a gale of severe proportions. Admiral Ramsay, in his report to the Supreme Commander, was later to remark: "The problems arising out of a postponement of 12 to 14 days to the next suitable period are too appalling even to contemplate." (Ibid.) Fortunately no further postponement was ordered: 6 Jun was to be D Day.

(d) The Passage and Opening Bombardment

164. The final executive order to sail was received by Force "J" at 0445 hours on 5 Jun. (C.B. 04385B, Report by Naval Commander, Force "J".) During the day, which it was now possible to describe as D minus 1, sealed parcels of maps were broken open and final briefing began. Bogus names and co-ordinates were exchanged for genuine ones. Troops spent their remaining time cleaning weapons and priming grenades. Then, following the customary procedure on such occasions, messages were read to the troops from the Supreme Commander, from General Montgomery and from General Crerar.

165. The Canadian Army Commander's words made pertinent reference to the operation which at this moment inevitably came to the minds of the assault troops -- the DIEPPE raid. His message closed with a significant prophecy.

It is not possible for me to speak to each one of you, but by means of this personal message, I want all ranks of the Canadian Army to know what is in my mind, as the hour approaches when we go forward into battle.

I have complete confidence in our ability to meet the tests which lie ahead. We are excellently trained and equipped. The quality of both senior and junior leadership is of the highest. As Canadians, we inherit military characteristics which were feared by the enemy in the last Great War. They will be still more feared before this war terminates.

The Canadian formations in the assault landing will have a vital part to play. The plans, the preparations, the methods and the technique, which will be employed, are based on knowledge and experience, bought and paid for by 2 Canadian Division at DIEPPE. The contribution of that hazardous operation cannot be over-estimated. It will prove to have been the essential prelude to our forthcoming and final success.

We enter into this decisive phase of the war with full faith in our cause, with calm confidence in our abilities and with grim determination to finish quickly and unmistakably this job we came overseas to do.

As in 1918, the Canadians, in Italy and in North West Europe, will hit the enemy again and again, until at some not distant time, the converging Allied Armies link together and we will be rejoined, in Victory, with our comrades of 1 Canadian Corps.

(H.D.G. Crerar) Lt-Gen.

(W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 1.)

166. The troops, accustomed as they were to the sight of a multitude of vessels, were nevertheless astonished at the endless expanse of ships, each with its nodding silver balloon, and much comfort was drawn from this formidable array. As one diarist observed, "the concentration of shipping in Southampton and the Solent has to be seen to be believed." (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Jun.) Yet this concentration represented but two-fifths of the assault forces (Forces "G" and "J").

167. One important factor gave additional cause for cheerfulness. The Luftwaffe had failed to appear, either during the loading period, or even now when the vulnerable forces lay assembled and ready to sail. It was evident that the crippling of the German air force had been no idle boast, but was an undisputable fact.

168. Early in the afternoon, the convoys commenced to weigh anchor and slip out of their harbours towards SPITHEAD GATE. Among the first was "Royal Ulsterman" and her attendant L.C.I. (L.). The departure has been described by a diarist:

...There were no bands or cheering crowds to give us a send off on the biggest military operation in history. A few dock workers silently waved good-bye. Friends called farewell and bon voyage from one craft to another. A few craft blew their whistles and up on the bridge Sagan the piper played "The Road to the Isles". The 9th "Highland" Bde was on its way.

...There were craft of every type imaginable. There were blunt nosed LCTs butting their way along, small LCIs riding the crests like corks, big channel packets with their LCAs lashed to their sides and proud cruisers running hither and yon in search of an enemy who would dare to poke his head out of the water. In the distance big "battle wagons" lent an air of confidence and security to the scene.

(W.D., H.L.I. of C., 5 Jun.)

169. It was evening when the L.S.I. of the assaulting brigades sailed. Because of their superior speed, they were permitted to leave later than the slower L.C.T., which had sailed in mid-afternoon and would be overtaken in the approach channels. The L.S.I. groups were each formed into two divisions escorted by destroyers. Parallel, in line ahead, they proceeded along the swept approach channels 7 and 8, which were marked at intervals by tossing buoys. (ON 7; R.C.N's. Part in the Invasion.) By evening H.M.S. "Hilary" was also under way; she was to be escorted during the sea passage by H.M.C.S. "Algonquin".

170. Conditions in the channel were not such as to inspire confidence. The sky was overcast, the wind blew in strong gusts, and waves of five to six feet gave landing craft a rough passage. The ponderous L.S.T. following the assault groups rolled heavily in the seas, their loads of vehicles straining at the chains which anchored them to the decks. Many men, even naval personnel, were ill, and sea-sickness pills provided little relief. To those who were not so affected, it seemed incredible that the operation could take place. Yet the meteorological forecast had revealed improved conditions for the early hours of 6 Jun. On that basis, "OVERLORD" was to commence.

171. The following comment on the passage is drawn from the Allied Naval Commander's report, which is a model of clarity and conciseness:

There was an air of unreality during the passage of the assault forces across the CHANNEL curiously similar to that on D-1 in HUSKY as our forces approached SICILY. The achievement of strategical surprise was always hoped for in NEPTUNE but was by no means certain, whereas that of tactical surprise had always seemed extremely unlikely. As our forces approached the FRENCH coast without a murmur from the enemy or from their own radio, the realisation that once again almost complete tactical surprise had been achieved slowly dawned....

(C.B. 04385A, Report by A.N.X.C.F.)

Force "J" was able to report the remarkable fact that no offensive action by enemy aircraft or surface vessels was encountered throughout the passage. (C.B. 04385B.)

172. Shortly after 0500 hours^{13.1} on the morning of 6 Jun the warships of Eastern Task Force took up their

bombarding positions. At approximately 0530 hours their guns opened fire on targets ashore. Slowly the ships of Force "J" approached their positions. As early as 0435 hours those aboard "Hilary" could distinguish fires on land caused by bombing. (Ibid.) At 0558 hours the headquarters ship dropped anchor; by this time distinctive landmarks on the shore could be easily recognized. Gun flashes were now visible from the coast, but as yet no fire appeared to be directed against the "Juno" area. (Ibid.)

173. But all was not well everywhere throughout the force. Already the heavy sea had caused four groups of Force "J" to enter the wrong swept channels leading to the beaches; one of these errant groups consisted of the L.C.T. bearing the A.V.R.E. of 7 Cdn Inf Bde Group. It was clear that time would inevitably be lost in making to the proper channel. (Ibid.) This lamentable circumstance was to have an effect on H Hour. The agreed times set for the assaulting brigades on 6 Jun were 0735 hours for 7 Cdn Inf Bde, and 0745 hours for 8 Cdn Inf Bde, ten minutes and twenty minutes late, respectively, on the H Hour for the neighbouring assaults. (Cf. para 52 above.) But the tardiness of certain groups caused both Assault Group Captains to defer H Hour a further ten minutes. It was thus decided that the times of H Hour should be 0745 hours for 7 Cdn Inf Bde, and 0755 hours for 8 Cdn Inf Bde. (Ibid.; see also W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, June 1944: Appx "Q", Message Log, 6 Jun, Serials 10 and 15.) It was not a happy situation, for it meant that the swiftly rising tide, aggravated by heavy seas, would render the obstacles inaccessible all the sooner.

174. But the L.S.I. groups, fortunately, arrived punctually at their lowering positions, 6½ miles from shore, and no time was lost in lowering and forming up the L.C.A. (C.B.04385B.) At 0634 hours the divisional wireless silence was broken and the first of a constant stream of urgent messages commenced to flow to and from the operations room, (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Jun, serial 2.) Naval bombardment continued. The cruiser "Diadem" had opened fire on the BENY-SUR-MER battery at 0552 hours with air observation. The same battery was re-engaged at 0725 hours to cover touchdown and finally at 0905 hours, the total expenditure amounting to 223 rounds. Subsequent examination of the battery position was to show no evidence of a direct hit, but the effectiveness of the fire as neutralization could not be doubted. Rear Admiral Vian was later able to declare that the "main batteries opposing Force "J" were effectively neutralised during the assault and subsequently captured before they could interfere with ships or craft." (C.B. 04385B, Reports by Naval Commanders, Eastern Task Force, and Force "J".)

175. It was still too early to perceive much tangible evidence of the bombing programme. Fires had been observed inland, and at 0715 hours bombers were heard passing overhead (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 8, Message Log, 6 Jun), but the results of the bombing of the beaches were still in doubt. Certainly the weather seemed to augur ill for its effectiveness.

(e) Phase I

176. (i) The Assault by 7 Cdn Inf Bde. On the right, opposite MIKE Sector, 7 Cdn Inf Bde was able to report most of its group intact; the only really serious omission was the A.V.R.E. group, which as we have seen (para 173) would inevitably be late. Otherwise, all seemed in order; the

L.C.A. groups were formed up and ready; the L.C.T. bearing the D.D. tanks had arrived. Only the weather remained unruly. (10) Still unmolested by enemy fire, the infantry companies in L.C.A. commenced their six-mile voyage to the beach. At 0715 hours they heard the close support bombardment roar into life as S.P. artillery, L.C.G. (L.) and L.C.T. (R.) let loose their fire against the beach strongpoints. (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun.) A Forward Observation Officer of 12 Cdn Fd Regt Artillery Group reported the first fall of shot to be effective (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Jun, serial 14), but smoke soon obscured further observation. It had been decided not to launch the D.D. tanks because of the roughness of the waves, but instead to beach their L.C.T. at H Hour. But the Deputy Senior Officer Assault Group (D.S.O.A.G.) in charge of the L.C.T. of G.J.1 reversed his decision when within about 2500 yards of the beach, and ordered the two D.D. squadrons of 6 Cdn Armd Regt to swim ashore. On the run-in seven tanks were sunk by enemy action, and one was run down by a rocket craft. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 6 Jun.) The remainder reached shore, the first arriving twenty minutes before the leading infantry. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, June 1944: Appx "K", Report by 2 Cdn Armd Bde, DD Tks in the Assault; see also Message Logs, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, and H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde; C.B. 04385 B.) Their presence ashore proved invaluable to the infantrymen, as both assault battalion commanders testified.

177. The precise time of touchdown in each battalion group is uncertain, hardly a circumstance to be wondered at. One authority has it that the first infantry were ashore at 0810 hrs, twenty minutes late on the deferred time. (C.B. 04385B.) Reports by participants do not all support this timing. In general, it may be said that assault companies, although a few minutes late, made their landfall with striking precision. R. Wpg Rif reported that their three forward companies landed "all within seven minutes of one another", a remarkable achievement considering sea conditions. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun.) On the extreme right flank, "C" Company of 1 C. Scot R., under the command of R. Wpg Rif, disembarked at the junction of MIKE and LOVE Sectors "in about three feet of water just short of the beach obstacles". (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., June 1944: Appx 2, "C" Coy Diary.) Opposition was negligible, and these troops soon discovered that their first objective - a pill-box - had already been demolished by naval gunfire. This was, incidentally, one of the few acknowledgements of the effectiveness of supporting fire. The remainder of R. Wpg Rif Assault Group encountered much more serious opposition to the West of the COURSEULLES breakwater (MIKE Green). "B" Company's L.C.A. were engaged while about 700 yards from shore and disembarkation had to be done under fire; in consequence heavy casualties were sustained by this sub-unit. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, June 1944: Appx 6, "B" Coy Diary.) The strongpoint in this area consisted of three casemates and twelve machine gun emplacements which seemed not to have suffered from the immense volume of fire which had been brought to bear on the beaches. This circumstance left to the infantry and tanks the grim prospect of clearing it by direct assault, as proved to be necessary with all four major strongpoints. In the course of the battle the company was reduced to its commander and 26 other tanks. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun.)

(10) Weather conditions off the beaches immediately before H Hour were described as:

Wind - Westnorthwest, force 4.
Sea - moderate, waves 3-4 feet.
Sky - fair to cloudy with cloud increasing.
(C.B. 04385A.)

178. While this fighting was going on, the D.D. tanks of "A" Squadron, which were "deflated", remained to seaward of the obstacles and fired from this position. The squadron commander told of one enemy group surrendering in their fortifications, because of their dismay at seeing tanks already in action. Unfortunately it is not possible to discover the exact location of this incident. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, June 1944: Appx 5, Report on D.D. Tks by "A" Sqn.)

179. On NAN Green Beach, the two assaulting companies of Regina Rif made their run-in without enemy interference. The code word "Brandy", reported by "A" Company at 0809 hours, signified that that company had made its touchdown. (W.D., Regina Rif, June 1944: Appx 3, Message Log, 6 Jun.) "B" Company landed a few minutes later. "A" Company's task, the clearance of the strongpoint at the Northwest corner of COURSEULLES, soon developed into a fierce infantry battle; the strongpoint was intact, even though a concrete-buster had made direct hits on its principal emplacement. (Hist Sec file AEF/7 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D: Memorandum of Interview with Lt.-Col. F.M. Matheson.) Ultimately a left flanking attack succeeded in penetrating its defences.

180. The first A.V.R.E. had touched down at 0815 and 0821 hours on MIKE Sector and NAN Green Beach, respectively (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun); this meant added close support for the infantry and the commencement of obstacle clearance. Shortly afterwards a succession of reports told of the arrival of reserve companies. "C" Company of Regina Rif was ashore at 0835 hours, and those of R. Wpg Rif slightly later. Portions of battalion headquarters of the latter found the beaches and dunes under heavy fire and were pinned there for two hours. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun.) Leaving the still active beach defences to the assault companies, the battalion's reserve sub-units scrambled over the banks and set out for their objectives inland -- STE. CROIX-SUR-MER and BANVILLE. By 1030 hours they had arrived in these villages, overcoming scattered resistance en route. The tanks of 6 Cdn Armd Regt were skilfully employed to assist in the capture of STE. CROIX. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, Serial 122; W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun.)

181. The attack by Regina Rif against COURSEULLES was now taking shape. The town had been sub-divided into twelve blocks, to be cleared in order by designated companies, assisted by a squadron of armour. In the words of the commanding officer, "nearly every foot of the town was known long before it was ever entered." Block 1 contained the formidable strongpoint engaged by "A" Company. While this clearance was in progress, "D" Company was to be passed through to capture REVIERS. But on the run-in several of that company's L.C.A. struck and detonated mines. On reaching shore the survivors were found to number only 49, but these few nonetheless assembled and proceeded towards REVIERS as planned. The leading elements reached the town at about 1100 hours; by 1215 hours it was reported by "C" Company, which had followed "D" from COURSEULLES, that the bridges in REVIERS were secured. (Lt.-Col. Matheson, as cited above; W.D., Regina Rif, 6 Jun.)

182. The balance of the reserve battalion, 1 C. Scot R., found opposition still alive as its three companies approached the shore. Mortar fire greeted "A" and "B" Companies on the beach, and both had to remain there until exits could be prepared through R. Wpg Rif's area. Just

beyond the dunes, a tank had sunk far into an exposed patch of soft clay and troops were clambering over it. Later, chespalings was flung across it to form a "primitive but usable exit". (Hist Sec file AEF/7 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D: Memorandum of Interview with Brig. H.W. Foster.) Assembling in LA VALETTE, 1 C. Scot R. then followed the leading companies of R. Wpg Rif through STE. CROIX and BANVILLE, finding once again that enemy parties remained behind to hinder the advance. (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 6 Jun.)

183. Although a false conception of the battle may result, it is perhaps advisable to pause and consider now the general progress of events in the Western part of the Canadian sector. Reduction of the beach defences took fully two hours (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun), and the beach-head objective "YEW" was secured only by about H plus 4 hours. (Brig. Foster, as above.) But it must not be forgotten that by this time infantry and armoured groups were already far inland and that substantial progress had been made towards the next objective. More serious even than enemy resistance was the difficulty of clearing obstacles and breaching exits. Owing to rough seas and the lateness of A.V.R.E. and sapper teams generally, the rising tide soon cancelled further removal of offshore obstructions. On land, the preparation of exits was found unexpectedly slow and arduous, especially on MIKE Sector; everywhere snipers harried the sappers striving desperately to clear routes to link with the first lateral. Until that work was done, the beach was "crowded with milling men, tks and recce cars of the Inns of Court Sqn, unable to proceed further inland." (Ibid.) By 0900 hours no exits had as yet been opened on MIKE beaches or on NAN Green. Armoured support was thus for a time denied to the leading infantry beyond the beaches. Only at 1112 hours was it reported that one exit was working with difficulty on MIKE Sector; this was later developed into a satisfactory route. (C.B. 04385B.)

184. Everywhere, it was clear, progress was considerably slower than planned. But the situation was not unfavourable and normal conditions of command were quickly being established. The M.B.S.S. was reported in operation at 0935 hours. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Jun, serial 78.) The brigade commander therefore landed, and by 1215 hours brigade headquarters was independently set up in a farmyard near GRAYE-SUR-MER. It was now purely a land battle for 7 Cdn Inf Bde.

185. The Assault by 8 Cdn Inf Bde. In many ways, the experiences of the left assaulting brigade duplicated those of its right-hand neighbour. Shortly before H Hour (now set at 0755 hours) Group J.2 was ready to go into action. The L.C.T. bearing 19 Cdn Fd Regt had earlier been carried off their proper course, but had made to their appointed station on time. (Hist Sec file AEF/8 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D: Memorandum of Interview with Brigadier K.G. Blackader, M.C., E.D.) The A.V.R.E. craft were also present. In the unavoidable confusion of launching, one reserve company of Q.O.R. of C. did not receive word of the postponement until almost too late, "when they were beginning to think they would be assaulting the beach." Luckily, the company was recalled in time. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 6 Jun.)

186. At 0725 hours the L.C.G. (L.) opened fire on the beach defences. They were joined by the S.P. artillery after a slight delay in transmission of orders. BERNIERES and ST. AUBIN were seen to be receiving a "terrific pounding" although the mean points of impact appeared to be somewhat

beyond the immediate coast defences. At 0749 hours the rocket craft fired their salvoes, the effect by this time being quite invisible. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun.) The L.C.A. of the leading infantry were now approaching landfall without opposition; to one observer they looked "like schools of water bugs". (W.D., 19 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun.) The first A.V.R.E. touched down at 0805 hours. (C.B. 04385B.) The D.D. tanks of 10 Cdn Armd Regt, which were landed "dry-shed", as earlier agreed, were in consequence put ashore behind the leading infantry.

187. The forward companies of Q.O.R. of C. disembarked on NAN White Beach in front of BERNIERES, about 15 minutes behind schedule. Mines blew up certain craft ~~on~~ the approach but fortunately caused only few casualties. "A" Company, landing on the right on the open beaches between COURSEULLES and BERNIERES, soon made its way to the railway line; "B" Company, charged with the reduction of the strongpoint at BERNIERES, found it untouched. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 6 Jun.) After suffering heavy casualties, the company outflanked the strongpoint, whose occupants surrendered; the reserve companies were soon ashore and consolidating on the Southern edge of BERNIERES, which had been quickly cleared. (Hist Sec file AEF/8 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D: Interview with Major J.N. Gordon, Q.O.R. of C.)

188. To the East, the assault companies of N. Shore R. were similarly engaged, having landed on NAN Red somewhat earlier (0810 hours). This battalion's "B" Company engaged the ST. AUBIN strongpoint. The action, as related by the company commander to the division's Historical Officer, is typical of such fighting along the "Juno" beaches, although it continued somewhat longer here than elsewhere. (Hist Sec file AEF/8 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D: Memorandum of Interview with Major R.E. Forbes, N. Shore R.) The first tanks to arrive were shortly knocked out by the anti-tank gun in the emplacement. Later, a "dustbin" fired by an A.V.R.E. was successful in cracking the concrete and after 45 minutes the strongpoint was contained and its fire against the beach stopped. But not until evening did its last defenders finally give in. Meanwhile, the reserve companies had landed, cleared the remainder of ST. AUBIN and reached TAILLEVILLE. (Ibid.)

189. The reserve battalion, R. de Chaud, came ashore about 0850 hours and proceeded to its assembly area in the woods South of BERNIERES. From here, the advance towards BENY-SUR-MER was begun. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun.)

190. A survey of 8 Cdn Inf Bde's assault shows that this formation overcame its first difficulties rather more quickly. The immediate beachhead was considered to have been secured about H plus 2 hours, considerably earlier than was the case on the Western sector. (Brigadier K.G. Blackader, as cited above.) Shellfire was undoubtedly less severe but mortars proved troublesome. Exits were more readily established: the sea-wall on NAN White (BERNIERES) had been bridged at 0850 hours. By 1040 hours two exits had been opened on NAN Red and three on NAN White, a decidedly more favourable situation than that obtaining on the beaches to the West, where flooded ground proved a serious hindrance. (C.B. 04385B.) There were other contributing factors to this success: the A.V.R.E. had arrived in better time and had been able to lend their support to the infantry; the D.D. tanks, although late, had landed almost intact and without confusion, and had thus given more co-ordinated aid. Even

before gaps were prepared, a squadron of tanks had crossed a mined area so as to enter ST. AUBIN and assist in its clearance. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD", cited above.)

191. An especially unlucky landing was experienced on this sector by 48 R.M. Commando. Even before touching down on NAN Red beach in six L.C.I.(S.) at H plus 45 minutes, these troops were engaged by machine gun and mortar fire from the beach defenders, who chose at this moment to return to life. They had previously been subdued by the neutralizing fire from sea. The Commando therefore suffered heavy casualties before reaching its objective, LANGRUNE. (R.M. Commandos in Normandy, copy in custody of Historical Section, Offices of the Cabinet.)

192. Despite setbacks and delays, the divisional beach-heads by 1300 hours on 6 Jun had taken shape as visualized and, except for timing, satisfaction could be felt that the assault had been executed substantially as written. The G.O.C. left H.M.S. "Hilary" with some of his staff to go ashore on NAN Sector at 1145 hours; the remainder, under the G.S.O. 1, followed about two hours later. The first divisional headquarters ashore was set up in an orchard in BERNIERES. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Jun.)

(f) Phase II, The Intermediate Objective.

193. Perhaps, the most striking demonstration that the operation had become a land battle was the arrival of the ubiquitous field artillery. The eagerness of the gunners to be landed was earlier thwarted by the congested state of the beaches. On MIKE Red, 12 Cdn Fd Regt, disembarking from six L.C.T. about 0900 hours, was unable for the time being to proceed further; with commendable resourcefulness the regiment promptly prepared for action on the beach itself, in some instances engaging the enemy over open sights. (W.D., 13 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun; Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/R.C.A./C/D: Memorandum of Interview with Lt-Col. R.H. Webb.) 13 Cdn Fd Regt, landing somewhat later, established a battery position South of COURSEULLES. About 1800 hours both field regiments, supporting 7 Cdn Inf Bde, occupied their designated gun positions between STE. CROIX and BANVILLE (Gun Area "MARY"). (W.Ds., 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts, 6 Jun.)

194. In 8 Cdn Inf Bde's sector, 19 Cdn Fd Regt commenced its disembarkation at 0910 hours and had a bettery in action between BERNIERES and ST. AUBIN some 20 minutes later. One troop lost three S.P. equipments in a fire which spread when one gun was hit; another was delayed in landing until 1500 hours, its L.C.T. being damaged. By 2050 hours the regiment was deployed south of BERNIERES (Gun Area "JANE"). (W.D., 19 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun.) 14 Cdn Fd Regt likewise suffered loss in the early stages of its career ashore. Its first guns were being landed at 0925 hours, but the regiment was not clear of the beach until an hour later. By 1130 hours, when it took up its first position in the fields West of BERNIERES, only 18 of its 24 guns were in action: three were entangled in a traffic jam and three more had been destroyed by direct hits from an 88-millimetre gun on emerging from the cover of the town. (W.D., 14 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun.) During Phase II, the regiment moved forward by batteries, giving continuous support and sorting its guns into their respective troops, until at 2030 hours Gun Area "JANE" was occupied. (Ibid.)

195. The misfortunes experienced by the two last-named regiments will serve to illustrate the relative character of the battle in Phase II. If 8 Cdn Inf Bde had been more fortunate in the assault phase, it was now to encounter serious delay in advancing to its objective "ELM". This circumstance was to have far-reaching consequences affecting both the success of 9 Cdn Inf Bde and, by extension, the division's attainment of the final covering position. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, on the other hand, pressed forward quickly during Phase II. The enemy's rear areas were overwhelmed by our infantry, and the tanks of 6 Cdn Armd Regt, once clear of the coastal inundation, found his staff cars and light vehicles easy targets.

196. (i) 7 Cdn Inf Bde, Beyond BANVILLE, R. Wpg Rif discovered resistance to be lighter; the bridge at TIERCEVILLE (915808) was captured intact and by 1700 hours the battalion was consolidated South of CREULLY (9179 - 9279). The first reinforcements arrived during the evening and were posted to "B" Company which had been so badly depleted on the beach. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun.)

197. Having followed R. Wpg Rif to STE.CROIX and BANVILLE, 1 C. Scot R. moved on swiftly to seize the bridges at COLOMBIERS-SUR-SEULLES and PONT DE REVIERS, finding much evidence of the enemy's disorderly withdrawal. By 1830 hours the unit had positioned itself in the area South of LES PLANCHES, beyond the river. Later that evening a new battalion area was occupied in the vicinity of PIERREPONT, CAINET and LE FRESNE-CAMILLY. It will be seen from this that 1 C. Scot R. was actually in advance of the area planned for it. (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 6 Jun.)

198. Regina Rif, pressing on from REVIERS, were no less successful. During the afternoon, while street-fighting was still in progress in COURSEULLES, LE FRESNE-CAMILLY and FONTAINE-HENRY were cleared. At 2100 hours the unit was directed to move to a new position on the high ground Northwest of LE FRESNE. This was carried out in darkness, not without some confusion, and was complete by 0300 hours, 7 Jun. "A" Company, previously left to guard the bridges at REVIERS, was reinforced and withdrawn into the battalion area during the night. (Lt.-Col. Matheson, as above; W.D., Regina Rif, 6 Jun.)

199. In Phase II, armoured support by 6 Cdn Armd Regt had been of great value, one squadron having been placed in support of each battalion. But this support was not given without cost, for mines and 88-millimetre guns had exacted a heavy toll. By evening it was found that only four tanks of "B" Squadron were still operational; "A" Squadron was slightly better off with nine. The C.O. therefore decided to form these thirteen remaining tanks into a composite squadron. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 6 Jun.) But on the other hand the collapse of co-ordinated enemy resistance beyond the immediate beachhead was indicated by the fact that during D Day two troops of tanks had actually penetrated as far South as BRETTEVILLE-L'ORGUEILLEUSE before withdrawing, thus reaching the final objective, if only briefly. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".)

200. The intermediate objective "ELM" was firmly held by 7 Cdn Inf Bde by the evening of D Day. Brigade headquarters moved forward to COLOMBIERS-SUR-SEULLES. There was an added source of satisfaction in the fact that the vital bridges over the River SEULLES were all intact and safely in our hands.

201. (ii) 8 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes. On the Eastern sector, 8 Cdn Inf Bde, endeavouring to break out of its beachhead, met a serious check to its right flank. By 1025 hours R. de Chaud was assembled with its squadron of tanks in support, and the S.P. artillery was now ashore. But to move out from the cover of BERNIERES to the open plain to the South meant coming under machine gun and 88-millimetre fire; the latter had already demolished several S.P. equipments (cf. para 194). Armour and infantry were held up for nearly two hours until artillery and medium machine guns could silence the opposition. Then the infantry was gradually infiltrated up the road from BERNIERES towards BENY-SUR-MER. On the left flank progress had been at first much swifter, and a company of N. Shore R. had approached TAILLEVILLE during Phase I. It was first entered at 1352 hours. But by mid-afternoon it had still not been cleared, and its early capture was becoming increasingly problematical. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 1, Message Log, 6 Jun.)

202. In order to clarify the situation in this sector of the divisional beachhead, it will be expedient to consider here the introduction of the reserve brigade group, which had been circling about the anchorage since early morning. The course of events during Phase I did not warrant a decision to alter the original intention to land the reserve formation through NAN Sector (Plan "A"). Accordingly, at 1051 hours H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde (aboard "Royal Ulsterman") received the signal, "Katnip now", which was the executive order to land. (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 3, Message Log, 6 Jun.) But even on 8 Cdn Inf Bde's sector congestion was such as to make it impossible to spread the brigade group over both NAN Red and NAN White Beaches as planned, and all units had to land over the latter alone. This very naturally created a delay and meant that only one route (from BERNIERES to BENY) could be taken forward to the assembly area. At 1140 hours the L.C.I. (L.) carrying the rifle companies touched down, but in some cases troops were not disembarked at once because of the confusion on the beach. Offshore obstacles were still in position and landings were made even more difficult by the presence of so many wrecked landing craft. But with very few casualties the entire brigade group (including its armoured regiment) was moved across the beach into BERNIERES, which was found to be still occupied by the troops of 8 Cdn Inf Bde. Just South of the town the battalions formed up and waited until the advance of R. de Chaud should make it possible for them to occupy their assembly area around BENY-SUR-MER. (W.Ds., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, and infantry battalions.)

203. At 1435 hours the G.O.C. held the first Orders Group at his headquarters in BERNIERES. It was attended by the commanders of 8 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes and 2 Cdn Armd Bde and dealt exclusively with the confused situation in the left sector. It was confirmed that N. Shore R. was experiencing difficulty in clearing TAILLEVILLE. No change of plan was ordered: 8 Cdn Inf Bde was still to capture BENY-SUR-MER, after which 9 Cdn Inf Bde could be passed through on its axis towards CARIQUET. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div., 6 Jun.)

204. The time at which BENY was captured is not recorded, neither the battalion nor brigade diaries offering precise information. Communications between brigade and R. de Chaud were faulty, but it appears that the latter cleared the town about 1530 hours. (Message Log and W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun.) Forward companies reported themselves in BASLY at 1710 hours. (Ibid.) A squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt by-

passed BASLY in order to converge on the high ground at COLOMBY-SUR-THAON. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) Q.O.R. of C. at the same time were striking forward towards ANGUERNY; after overcoming resistance in the town they established themselves on the high ground between ANGUERNY and ANISY, where their position was quite isolated until their right and rear were secured by the arrival of R. de Chaud in LA MARE and COLOMBY-SUR-THAON. The two units remained in their respective areas for the night. (W.Ds., Q.O.R. of C. and R. de Chaud, 6 Jun.)

205. By evening it was apparent that the difficulties met by N. Shore R. would prevent consolidation of the brigade fortress on the objective "ELM". Two troops of tanks had already been despatched to assist this unit. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) The defenders of TAILLEVILLE were well dug in and provided with an extensive system of tunnels which gave excellent opportunities to snipers. At 2010 hours the town was finally reported clear and the battalion was ordered to remain and reorganize there. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, serial 242; W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun.)

206. The capture of BENY, in addition to opening the way for 8 Cdn Inf Bde, had made it possible for 9 Cdn Inf Bde to commence its assembly. At 1605 hours, therefore, Nth N.S. Highrs led off from BERNIERES, arriving at BENY at 1645 hours. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 6 Jun.) By 1915 hours, S.D. & G. Highrs and H.L.I. of C. were also in position. The village and its vicinity were crowded with troops of two brigades, including their headquarters, and enemy mortar fire did not make the enforced halt there more pleasant. At 1820 hours Nth N.S. Highrs commenced their Southward advance, leading 9 Cdn Inf Bde towards the final objective. (W.Ds., Nth N.S. Highrs, S.D. & G. Highrs, and H.L.I. of C., 6 Jun.)

207. The entire brigade group had been specially equipped and trained for rapid movement. Three companies of Nth N.S. Highrs (the advanced guard) were carried on the tanks of 27 Cdn Armd Regt, with the fourth travelling in unit transport. In each of the other two battalions, three companies rode on bicycles (airborne pattern), the fourth again being borne in other vehicles. (Hist Sec file AEF/9 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D; Memorandum of Interview with Brigadier D.G. Cunningham, D.S.O.) The vanguard of Nth N.S. Highrs was grouped as follows. In front, the reconnaissance troop of 27 Cdn Armd Regt provided a screen of Stuart tanks. This was followed by the infantry carrier platoon, each section carrying one platoon of "C" Company. Next came a platoon of medium machine guns ("C" Company, C.H. of O.), a troop of M.10s (3 Cdn A.Tk Regt), two assault sections of pioneers and four battalion 6-pounders. Behind the vanguard rode the main advanced guard mounted on Sherman tanks: "A" Company on the right, "B" Company on the left and "D" Company bringing up the rear. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 6 Jun.) Behind the advanced guard again were S.D. & G Highrs and H.L.I. of C.

208. The vanguard passed the start point (BASLY) and met no serious opposition until it reached VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS. By nightfall, however, it was still engaged in clearing three machine gun positions there. Inasmuch as the main advanced guard had likewise become involved in fighting in COLOMBY-SUR-THAON (by-passed by the leading elements), it was decided that no further advance should be made on D Day. Nth N.S. Highrs were therefore ordered to

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* In view of the resultant delay in the expansion of the bridgehead & effect on operations against AEN, the decision takes on a considerable significance. As the circumstances & details require further investigation. Similarly with causes for delay on right sector. EH

consolidate for the night astride the main road to CAEN, around the crossroads 007757. (Ibid.) S.D. & G. Highrs and H.L.I. of C. were also directed to remain in BENEY, from which they had not yet set forth. (W.Ds., S.D. & G. Highrs and H.L.I. of C., 6 Jun.)

209. At last light on 6 Jun the divisional situation was as follows: the line "ELM" (the intermediate objective) had been reached, though it was not yet fully consolidated on the left: There, however, the reserve brigade had already made some progress towards the final objective. If the next day did not bring a counter-attack in force the division could still be expected to press forward to secure its ultimate covering position. Already the first follow-up troops were entering the divisional area; on D Day itself 153 Inf Bde (of 51 (H) Inf Div) had been landed and moved South to occupy the area STE. CROIX - BANVILLE - COLOMBIERS. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 51 (H) Inf Div.) Similarly, on either flank, 50 (N) Inf Div and 3 (Brit) Inf Div had not succeeded in accomplishing their allotted tasks on D Day. At night-fall the former was within a mile of the BAYEUX - CAEN road (at ESQUAY-SUR-SEULLES and COULOMBS) but BAYEUX itself had not yet been taken. On the left, in 3 Brit Inf Div's area, forward troops of 185 Inf Bde had reached BIEVILLE, about three miles Northeast of CAEN. (Information from Historical Section, Offices of the Cabinet.)

210. As expected, most of the enemy troops encountered during the day were members of 736 Grenadier Regiment of 716 Inf Div. The night 6/7 Jun did not bring the looked-for counter-attack which the exhausted soldiers were "ready, not eager, to repulse". (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 7 Jun.) There were, however, active enemy patrols, some of which were able to penetrate company and battalion areas, but all such efforts were driven back. The enemy had been slow in reacting, and his main armoured reserve had not yet reached the battle area. But it was known that 12 S.S.Pz Div was now on the march and might soon arrive in force. (21 Army Group Int Summary No. 124, 6 Jun.)

(g) Phase III, 7 Jun

211. (1) 7 Cdn Inf Bde on the Final Objective.

At 0130 hours, 7 Jun, the commander of 7 Cdn Inf Bde held an Orders Group at his headquarters. The advance was to be resumed at 0600 hours, led by R. Wpg Rif and Regina Rif, with 1 C. Scot R. remaining temporarily in position to provide a firm base. The depleted state of 6 Cdn Armd Regt and its consequent regrouping into two squadrons necessarily altered the plans for armoured support during Phase III (cf. para 111 above). At 0500 hours the tank commander informed the brigadier that "C" Squadron would be available in two hours' time. The other (composite) squadron required refuelling and would be ready only somewhat later. But as luck would have it, no tanks were required during the final advance, for groups of snipers constituted almost the sole opposition. At 0855 hours, when it had become evident that no effective resistance was being offered, all three infantry battalions were directed "to go flat out for their final objectives." (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 7 Jun.)

212. R. Wpg Rif commenced to move forward on the right flank at 0615 hours, encountering only scattered and ineffective resistance. At 1150 hours their leading troops, proceeding astride the axis LANTHEUIL-LE GRAND VEY-PUTOT-EN-BESSIN, were just short of the line "OAK", (11) and by 1205 hours the whole battalion had entered PUTOT. (Ibid.) The advanced guard, which had lost its way, was the last to arrive. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 7 Jun.)

213. Regina Rif, advancing in two columns on either side of the River CHIROMME, set forth at 0715 hours. At 1030 hours "C" Company, proceeding by road through CAMILLY and BRAY, entered BRETTEVILLE-L'ORGUEILLEUSE and found it clear of enemy; the company then pushed forward across the BAYEUX-CAEN railway line to NORREY-EN-BESSIN. "B" Company, at the head of the second column, followed a route through THAON, CAIRON and ROTS, where the advance was more heavily contested than on the right. The remaining companies on arriving took up positions in and near BRETTEVILLE, one sub-unit guarding the railway bridge over the River MUE (947703). (Lt.-Col. Matheson; W.D., Regina Rif, 7 Jun.) So swift was their progress that "C" Squadron of 6 Cdn Armd Regt, having completed its refuelling, was unable to find the battalion; and the composite squadron was despatched instead, arriving just in time to share in the unopposed entry into BRETTEVILLE. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 7 Jun.)

214. When these two units were well on their way, 1 C. Scot R. was ordered to advance at 0850 hours. (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., June 1944: Appx 3, Message Log, 7 Jun.) At 1225 hours, the brigade's capture of the objective "OAK" was brought to completion by the arrival of this battalion in the area between SECQUEVILLE-EN-BESSIN and LA BERGERIE FARM. Battalion headquarters was established in a farmhouse at SECQUEVILLE by 1250 hours (923745.) (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde; W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 7 Jun.) During this advance, one company had operated independently on the left flank. (Ibid.; Appx 23, "B" Coy Diary.) It may be observed that the course of action taken by 1 C. Scot R. (as confirmed by the Orders Group of the night 6/7 Jun) does not agree with the original intention whereby that battalion should first secure an intermediate position on the high ground West of CAMILLY "prior to a general advance by the brigade" (cf. para 111). In the absence of information on this point it is to be assumed that three factors dictated alteration of the plan: (a) the lack of firm opposition, (b) the already advanced location of the battalion on D Day and (c) the reduced scale of available armour, which made it impossible to allot a squadron in support of a preliminary attack.

215. (11) 9 Cdn Inf Bde. In the Eastern sector, the night 6/7 Jun was marked by minor patrol actions, rather more vigorous than those experienced by 7 Cdn Inf Bde. Such

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- (11) An entry at 1020 hours in the Brigade Message Log ("Wpgs on OAK") is not substantiated by other evidence. (Serial 210, Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 7 Jun.) References to this report in divisional documents are merely repetitions. (W.D., and Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 7 Jun, Serial 18.) The brigade commander, however, credited R. Wpg Rif with being the first unit to reach its final objective. (Brigadier Foster, as above.)

enemy efforts were particularly strong in the rear, where small groups found themselves cut off and attempted to fight their way through 8 Cdn Inf Bde's area. At 2130 hours, 6 Jun, a prisoner taken in ANGUERNY was identified as a member of 21 Pz Div, and a warning was promptly issued to be on the alert for enemy tanks. (Message Log, H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 6-7 Jun.) A whole platoon of R. de Chaud was taken prisoner when attacked at about 0200 hours by a company of infantry mounted on half-tracks. But 716 Div could boast of no mobile infantry, which again suggests the presence of elements of an armoured formation. (W.D., R. de Chaud, 7 Jun.) There were also disturbances on the front of Nth N.S. Highrs at approximately the same time. Prisoners taken in these skirmishes were discovered to be Panzer Grenadiers (infantry component of an armoured division). (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 7 Jun.) In the morning, Q.O.R. of C. identified a prisoner as belonging to 192 Panzer Grenadier Regiment of 21 Pz Div. (Message Log, H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 7 Jun.) It is clear, then, that elements of that formation were located as far North as the ANGUERNY area, where they had been enveloped by the initial stages of our advance, although no enemy armour had yet been encountered. This is confirmed by the identifications made on 6 Jun by 3 Brit Inf Div and 6 Airborne Div, which had come in contact with 125 Pz Grenadier Regiment East of the ORNE, and 192 Pz Grenadier Regiment West of the ORNE. (Hist Sec file AEF/First Cdn Army/C/H: Operations Log, First Cdn Army, 6 Jun.)

216. The warning order to prepare to resume the advance was received by Nth N.S. Highrs at 0645 hours. One hour later the battalion was on the march, adopting the same tactical order as used on the previous day. Just at this time "several enemy gliders" were seen to land South of BASLY (9978). (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 7 Jun.) Oddly enough, it is not possible to determine what these "gliders" actually were; references to them appear in various message logs but no further explanation is offered. (12)

217. For reasons which will become apparent, the experiences of the advanced guard on 7 Jun were not at first fully known. The contemporary accounts appearing in the War Diaries of Nth N.S. Highrs and 27 Cdn Armd Regt supplied a framework on which a fuller report could be formed. The first effort to piece together a connected narrative was made in June 1944 by the Historical Officer, 3 Cdn Inf Div, in two interviews with regimental officers. (Hist Sec file AEF/9 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D: Memorandum of Interviews with Captain (A/Major) A.J. Wilson, and Captain (A/Major) E.S. Gray.) These collated the facts as known by two participants who had seen quite different phases of the action; they were then verified by other officers, among them the second in command. Subsequently, the escape of the vanguard commander (who had been taken prisoner in the engagement) made it possible to augment the body of evidence. (Hist Sec file AEF/9 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D: Account of the Experiences of Major J.D. Learment.) From these sources, supplemented by later

(12)

An oblique reference appears in a brigade log: "2 Armd Bde confirms report gliders landed... and have dealt with same." (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 7 Jun, serial 179.) It is possible that the rumour arose from an earlier report of a Spitfire crashing near 1 C. Scot R. at 995775. (Ibid., serial 168.) In any event, the likelihood of enemy gliders being used can be ruled out. It is interesting to speculate on how they were dealt with; the War Diary of 2 Cdn Armd Bde does not refer to the matter.

intelligence revelations, emerged the complete story.

218. The initial stage of the advance of Nth N.S. Highrs was characterized by only light opposition. "A" Company on the right flank successfully cleared enemy from the woods near LES BUISSONS. The vanguard soon met firmer resistance near the same area, and was successful in knocking out an 88-millimetre gun, three half-tracks, and an astonishing contrivance - a 16-barrelled mortar mounted on a half-track (Reihenwerfer). (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 7 Jun.) But by 0930 hours LES BUISSONS was virtually cleared and the advance continued. The vanguard proceeded along the axis to enter BURON, destroying another 88-millimetre gun at its outskirts by a direct hit from a tank gun. Mortar fire from ST. CONTEST on the left was now proving troublesome, but BURON was in our hands at 1150 hours. (Ibid.)

219. While "C" Company was searching the town, "B" Company arrived with its Sherman squadron and commenced to advance on AUTHIE. Before very long the tanks deployed around the crossroads (987718) in order to engage targets in AUTHIE, the infantry company remaining in BURON. "C" Company was soon under way again and two platoons in carriers passed through "B" Company along the axis and after a sharp skirmish were successful in taking AUTHIE. They then proceeded to dig in South of the town. Mortaring and shelling of AUTHIE were growing to such intensity that neutralizing fire on ST. CONTEST was urgently requested. But the field artillery was now out of range (BURON being its extreme limit) and communications were too faulty to produce early cruiser fire. By this time, "A" Company, passing through the Western side of BURON, was also nearing AUTHIE. Owing to the heavy fire on the village, the platoons dismounted from their tanks around the same crossroads (987718) while the tanks proceeded ahead alone. (Capt Wilson and Capt Gray, as above.)

220. It was considered impossible to advance beyond AUTHIE, for the open ground between it and BURON was under devastating fire. The sudden stiffening of enemy opposition had produced a serious situation, the whole advanced guard being isolated on its flanks and rear. It was therefore decided to withdraw the elements of the vanguard from AUTHIE, which it was seen might soon become untenable, and form a battalion fortress on the rising ground to the North of the village. "A" Company on the right accordingly dug in near the road (985718). "B" Company, which was directed to join it on the left, found itself unable to leave BURON, owing to the severity of the fire. The two platoons of "C" Company meanwhile prepared to evacuate AUTHIE. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 7 Jun; Capt Wilson and Capt Gray, as cited above.)

221. It was now about 1400 hours. Before "C" Company could make its withdrawal, that which had been feared at last occurred. Enemy tanks and infantry suddenly appeared from the direction of Cussy and ARDENNE and proceeded to launch a strong counter-attack on AUTHIE. This abrupt turn of events forced the vanguard to make a stand in the village itself. In the course of the ensuing battle the two platoons of "C" Company suffered severe casualties. Major Learment, the vanguard commander, who had not reached AUTHIE, returned to BURON to discuss with the commanding officer the question of rescuing the troops of "A" and "C" Companies in and near AUTHIE. (Major Learment; Capt Wilson and Capt Gray, both as cited above.) But the force despatched to relieve them came under such heavy fire South of BURON that it could not accomplish its object and was therefore instructed to withdraw to a position behind that village. (Ibid.)

222. Meanwhile, as enemy tanks broke through and around AUTHIE, all available Shermans were rushed to meet them. Thus developed the first armoured engagement of the operation; it was fought savagely with heavy losses to both sides. In AUTHIE itself the situation deteriorated rapidly and the Canadian troops there were overrun, only a few escaping. (Capt. Wilson and Capt. Gray, as above.)

223. Between BURON and AUTHIE, the bulk of "A" Company, which had remained in position, was likewise overcome and most of its personnel captured. (Ibid.) Then, after two hours of continuous shelling and mortaring, BURON itself was attacked about 1830 hours. In spite of the very heavy fire brought to bear on them, two waves of German infantry followed by tanks pressed forward with determination, at last penetrating the forward positions near the town and assailing the defenders with bayonets. When word was brought of this situation a swift counter-attack by Sherman tanks, supported by artillery fire, succeeded in driving the enemy from BURON back to AUTHIE, thus extricating the survivors of "D" Company. But as in AUTHIE many of our troops defending the position had been made prisoners. (Ibid.; W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 7 Jun.) (The experiences undergone by captured officers and men at the hands of enemy are described in the memorandum cited above: Account by Major J. D. Learment.)

224. BURON was once more in our hands, but to hold it for long was clearly impossible, with all rifle companies far below strength. Accordingly, the battalion was ordered to withdraw into the brigade fortress on the high ground at LES BUISSONS. This was completed by approximately 2145 hours. (W.D., H.L.I. of C., June 1944: Appx 9, Message Log, 7 Jun.)

225. The remaining two battalions of the brigade had spent an anxious day, continuously receiving messages telling of bitter fighting, while unable themselves to advance and participate in it. When the first enemy armoured counter-attack took shape early in the afternoon, S.D. & G. Highrs, who had reached LES BUISSONS, proceeded to consolidate there. (W.D., S.D. & G. Highrs, 7 Jun.) By mid-afternoon, H.L.I. of C. had moved up to VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS. (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 7 Jun.) As German armour swept North of BURON, LES BUISSONS became a forward locality and S.D. & G. Highrs were able to add to the heavy fire directed against the attackers. The sight of the first withdrawals into their lines impressed them as "a bloody mess indeed". (W.D., S.D. & G. Highrs, 7 Jun.) Amazed, they witnessed our armoured counter-attack on BURON and braced themselves for what must have seemed the inevitable onslaught against their own perimeter. But it did not come. (13) At 2205 hours, noted the unit diarist, "the firing seems to be dying down now". (Ibid.)

226. The advanced guard group, caught off balance by a forceful counter-attack before it could consolidate and offer co-ordinated resistance, had suffered severe loss. Of the

(13)

The War Diary of brigade headquarters tells of a further enemy attack being launched from BURON and repelled by S.D. & G. Highrs; a similar statement reappears in an account by the G.S.O. 1 (Liaison). (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 7 Jun; Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/F: Assault of 3rd Cdn Inf Div.) It is, however, quite certain that such an attack did not take place, for it could not have escaped notice of the three units in VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS whose diaries fail to mention it. (W.Ds., Nth N.S. Highrs, S.D. & G. Highrs and 27 Cdn Armd Regt, 7 Jun.)

twenty rifle company officers of Nth N.S. Highrs only eight remained, and 232 other ranks were killed, wounded or missing. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 7 Jun.) 27 Cdn Armd Regt sustained 63 casualties, caused mostly by 88-millimetre guns. (W.D., 27 Cdn Armd Regt, 7 Jun.) But the wisdom of allotting an entire armoured regiment to the leading battalion had been amply demonstrated: the same enemy counter-attack might have inflicted more terrible loss and reached critical proportions had only a small force been available to meet it. As matters stood, the enemy had not got off lightly: the Canadian armoured regiment claimed to have destroyed 41 of his tanks alone, for a loss of 15 of its own. (Ibid.) (It may be noted here that the enemy tank losses are given as 31 in the brigade War Diary (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 8 Jun); this figure is also implied in a later statement that "the score was about 2 to 1 in favour of the 27 Cdn Armd Regt". (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".)) Large numbers of German infantry had been run down by our tanks, especially in the counter-attack on BURON. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 7 Jun.) These tanks had ranged over a considerable area during the day: "C" Squadron had reached the outskirts of ST. CONTEST in order to engage approaching enemy armour, and "A" Squadron had even penetrated to the edge of FRANQUEVILLE, in sight of CARPIQUET airfield. (W.D., 27 Cdn Armd Regt, June 1944: Appx 3, Personal Accounts of Participants, and trace of movements of 27 Cdn Armd Regt.)

227. This first counter-blow was delivered by elements of 12 S.S. Pz Div which had rapidly proceeded to the battle area to join 21 Pz Div. The latter, as we have seen, had already been present. The significance of the engagement is seen in the high fighting quality of the enemy troops employed, a fact which serves to foreshadow the shape of the next phase of the campaign. It reflected the Germans' extreme sensitivity concerning their right sector, their recognition of the CAEN area as the vital pivot of their defence, and their determination to resist any penetration of it with every means at their command. Hence, it is not to be wondered at that 9 Cdn Inf Bde's thrust, breaking into the arc of jealously guarded territory centred on CAEN, sustained so heavy a blow. Over a month was to pass before Canadian troops again entered AUTHIE.

228. The despicable treatment accorded to the Canadian prisoners was found to be characteristic of 12 S.S. Pz Div, which throughout the Normandy campaign was to present "a consistent pattern of brutality and ruthlessness". In the course of this first battle and immediately thereafter, at least 27 prisoners of war, mostly of Nth N.S. Highrs, were murdered in cold blood by members of the S.S. division. These incidents continued throughout June wherever the formation was engaged, reaching such a peak that, even to the Wehrmacht, 12 S.S. Pz Div became known as the "murder division". (Supplementary Report of the S.H.A.E.F. Court of Inquiry re Shooting of Allied Prisoners of War by 12 S.S. Pz Div (Hitler-Jugend), 7-21 Jun 44, copy in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.) Recruited largely from the ranks of the Hitler Youth Movement, most of its members were 17 or 18 years of age. "Like other Waffen S.S. formations, they had distinctive uniforms, rank and insignia and not only felt themselves to be better soldiers than those of the Wehrmacht, but made that feeling very evident to all." The S.H.A.E.F. Court of Inquiry found the conclusion irresistible that their callous and cowardly acts were ordered or at least sanctioned by senior officers of the division. (Ibid.)

229. (iii) 8 Cdn Inf Bde. D plus 1 found 8 Cdn Inf Bde continuing to quell resistance on the divisional left flank and in the rear of 9 Cdn Inf Bde's advance. Around COLOMBU-SUR-THAON and ANGUERNY, both R. de Chaud and Q.O.R. of C. were engaged during the day in clearing out the snipers who infested

the area. The latter battalion captured at least twelve enemy vehicles in ANGUERNY. (W.Ds., R. de Chaud and Q.O.R. of C., 7 Jun.)

230. By far the heavier task lay with N. Shore R., which had already met difficulty both on the beach and in TAILLEVILLE. It was now required to capture the DOUVRES Radar Station, supported by 19 Cdn Fd Regt and a squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt. This done, the battalion was to join the remainder of its brigade on the objective near ANGUERNY.

231. Setting out from TAILLEVILLE at 0700 hours, the leading troops began to clear an enemy headquarters in the woods Northwest of the Radar Station. This lengthy process resulted in the taking of only four prisoners; later it was learned that many more had escaped only to be rounded up in H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde at BASLY. (W.Ds., N. Shore R., and H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 7 Jun.) A company attack on the main defences of the Radar Station produced little result, and eventually even a battalion effort met with no more success. Like TAILLEVILLE, the position was a labyrinth of tunnels and concrete works and could not be reduced without overwhelming fire support, which was not available. Late in the evening permission was obtained to by-pass it and rejoin the brigade. At 0020 hours, 8 Jun, N. Shore R. had arrived at its allotted area North of ANGUERNY. (Message Log, H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 8 Jun.)

232. The Radar Station was left to be contained by troops of 51 (H) Inf Div. Ten days were to elapse before its reduction. In the Canadian sector, the DOUVRES strongpoint was thus the only one to fulfil its designated task of holding out against the initial assault. The corollary to this determined stand -- the break-through which was to relieve it -- did not come to pass. So far, German defensive policy could be dismissed as a theory based on unjustified optimism.

233. The balance of 10 Cdn Armd Regt was in reserve on 7 Jun, and took up a regimental position on the high ground South of COLOMBY-SUR-THAON, where the squadron operating with N. Shore R. later joined it. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) In the afternoon the commander of 2 Cdn Armd Bde ordered the regiment to stand by ready to move in full strength to reinforce 27 Cdn Armd Regt, should the situation in front of LES BUISSONS deteriorate further. This was not found necessary. (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 7 Jun.)

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234. The news of the fierce fighting in BURON and AUTHIE gave 7 Cdn Inf Bde a warning to be prepared for similar enemy attacks. The battalions were now firmly dug in on ground of their own choosing, with supporting weapons in position. It was apparent that there was a dangerous gap between the two forward brigades in the vicinity of CAIRON, through which the CAEN-CREULLY road passed. About 2100 hours, therefore, 1 C. Scot R. was directed to despatch a company to that area, supported by a squadron of armour and a troop of M. 10s ("Jill" Force). The remainder of 6 Cdn Armd Regt was concentrated at LE BOUT CACHARD (925748) to be prepared "to restore any portion of the Bde fortress". (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 7 Jun.)

235. On the morning of 7 Jun, the still diminutive divisional headquarters had moved up on foot from BERNIERES to BENY-SUR-MER, where the inconsiderateness shown by enemy snipers was much remarked on. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 7 Jun.) At 1805 hours a message from Major-General Keller to

General Crerar informed the Army Commander of the attainment of the final objective (by 7 Cdn Inf Bde), adding, "courage, dash and initiative of the Canadian soldier truly amazing". (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 7 Jun, serial 74.) The disposition of the Canadian assault force at the close of D plus 1 is illustrated by the sketch map at Appendix "I". It should be compared with Appendix "G".

(h) Phase IV, 8-11 Jun.

236. On D plus 2 it was possible to take stock of the divisional situation, to lay plans for a renewed advance, and, in the meantime, to consider how best to prevent enemy penetration. At 1100 hours, 8 Jun, the G.O.C. held an Orders Group at divisional headquarters and informed his officers that both H.Q. 1 Corps and Tactical H.Q. Second Army had landed. 4 S.S. Bde was now under the command of 51 (H) Inf Div, which was responsible for the area DOUVRES-ST. AUBIN-TAILLEVILLE. An assault was soon to be made on the Radar Station, preceded by air attack. (This was later cancelled.) Concern was expressed over reports of enemy tanks appearing on the right flank between 69 Inf Bde and 7 Cdn Inf Bde, but these were believed to be "only recce elements". For the present, 7 and 8 Cdn Inf Bdes were to remain in their positions, the former re-establishing contact with formations on either flank. 9 Cdn Inf Bde was directed to capture BURON with the support of the full divisional artillery. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, June 1944: Appx "A", Div O Gp.)

237. With a view to concentrating the armoured brigade for an advance beyond the final objective, Brigadier Wyman ordered 27 Cdn Armd Regt to move to the vicinity of CAMILLY, and to be relieved in LES BUISSONS by 10 Cdn Armd Regt. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".)

238. (1) The Attacks against 7 Cdn Inf Bde: Having succeeded in halting 9 Cdn Inf Bde, the enemy was now showing signs of preparing to dislodge 7 Cdn Inf Bde from its position astride the CAEN-BAYEUX road. There were persistent reports of enemy tanks in the area; in the afternoon a considerable force of German armour made its appearance far up on the left flank between LASSON and CAIRON. Fortunately at this moment 27 Cdn Armd Regt arrived on the way to its concentration area in company with 15 reinforcement tanks from the Forward Delivery Squadron, and their combined show of strength was sufficient to cause the enemy force to withdraw. (Ibid.)

239. A more serious situation had developed on the right, where R. Wpg Rif bore the brunt of the enemy's attacks. Before first light, enemy patrols were so active as to prevent mine-fields being laid, and tanks could be heard South of the railway. Soon, infantry and a small force of armour attempted to cross the railway into "A" Company's area, supported by artillery and mortars. They were driven back at about 0630 hours by small arms and medium machine gun fire, and a Mark III tank was destroyed by a 6-pounder. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 8 Jun.)

240. But the enemy was not so easily discouraged. PUTOT-EN-BESSIN was found to be full of snipers who made movement increasingly difficult throughout the battalion area. During the whole morning enemy infantry pressed forward and by noon had infiltrated between company areas, so that nearly all positions were under aimed fire. By 1330 hours, "A", "B" and "C" Companies were completely encircled. It was impossible to replenish ammunition, which was by this time dangerously low. Armoured support was requested, but the tanks were involved elsewhere on the brigade perimeter. Under cover of smoke, the three forward companies attempted to make a withdrawal, but did not succeed in extricating most of their

number and many positions were overrun. The survivors reached battalion headquarters just East of PUTOT (908725); and "D" Company, which was nearly intact, established a defensive position there. (Ibid.; see also Hist Sec file AEF/7 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D: Memo of Interview with C.S.M. Belton.) The sequence of events was not easy to reconstruct, but it was later concluded that "A" Company, on the right, had come under sudden attack by a force of enemy tanks and infantry and had been overcome. The enemy had then swept on through "B" Company's position into the village of PUTOT. (Statement of Lt.-Col. J.M. Meldram, in Report of the Court of Inquiry re Shooting of Prisoners of War by German Armed Forces at Chateau d'Audrieu, copy in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.) Artillery was brought down on the village, but did not dislodge the enemy who had by now enveloped even battalion headquarters by fire. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 8 Jun.)

241. By 1830 hours the brigade commander had formed his plan to recapture PUTOT and the road and railway crossing in front of it (895720). The counter-attack was to be launched by 1 C. Scot R. (the detached company returning from "Jill" Force), supported by a platoon of 4.2-inch mortars, a squadron of tanks, 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts and a troop of M. 10s. H Hour was set at 2030 hours. (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 8 Jun.)

242. At 2020 hours the companies of 1 C. Scot R. formed up Southeast of SECQUEVILLE and the counter-attack began on schedule, "D" Company leading. The advance followed the road leading to the railway crossing, which was without cover of any sort. At 2100 hours the leading troops reported their arrival on the objective. (Message Log, 1 C. Scot R., 8 Jun.) At the same time, R. Wpg Rif advised that the artillery concentrations had been very effective. (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 8 Jun.) Not only was the enemy thrown off the objective, but the impetus of the attack carried "A" and "D" Companies well beyond it, across the railway line, from which they later retired. (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 8 Jun.) During the night patrols were sent into PUTOT and found it unoccupied. (Ibid.: Appx 12, Personal Accounts.)

243. This gallant action, which had cost "D" Company heavily, restored the situation on the divisional right flank. PUTOT was in our hands again, and "the Scottish remained there for a week of almost incessant shelling and mortaring". (Brig. Foster, as above.) At dark, 6 Cdn Armd Regt withdrew once more to LE BOUT CACHARD. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 9 Jun.) (14) R. Wpg Rif, who until now had not had time to reorganize their many reinforcements, were placed in reserve near LA BERGERIE FARM, moving on 9 Jun to SECQUEVILLE. During this time, the battalion flank protection group had remained intact near BRONAY (8872), in liaison with 50 (N) Inf Div. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 8-9 Jun.)

244. On the left half of the brigade front, there was equal evidence of growing enemy aggressiveness. Enemy armour had penetrated between LASSON and CAIRON, as described above (para 238). At 1100 hours, "D" Company, Regina Rif, stationed

(14) It is curious that two diaries (6 Cdn Armd Regt and 12 Cdn Fd Regt) show faulty chronology in describing the counter-attack on PUTOT as taking place on 9 Jun, rather than 8 Jun. This is no doubt due to their having been prepared some time after the event.

near the bridge South of LA VILLENEUVE, observed enemy tanks "in considerable strength" 1,000 yards to its front. The same company was withdrawn during the afternoon into the battalion fortress at LA FERME DE CARDONVILLE (919713). (W.D., Regina Rif, 8 Jun.)

245. In the evening, after a day of threats and rumours, the attacks began. At 2150 hours "C" Company in NORREY repulsed an infantry sortie; but this was followed by the appearance of armour, against which artillery fire was requested. (Message Log, Regina Rif, 8 Jun.) From this point on, the story of the night-long battle in BRETTEVILLE is taken from the graphic account given by the battalion commander to the Historical Officer:

The tks came in from the EAST along the CAEN-BAYEUX rd. The carrier pl and the MG pl were caught while digging in. Several carriers were knocked out and their posn overrun. About 2230 hrs, with B, C and D Coys all engaged, some tks continued fwd to BRETTEVILLE to within about 300 yds of Bn HQ. There they remained for 1½ hrs shelling and machine-gunning the town. About 2400 hrs two Panthers (Mk V) entered the town. One came opposite Bn HQ and was struck by a PIAT bomb, fired from behind a low stone wall at 15 yds range, safe from the tk's huge gun. It halted for a moment, started again and after 30 yds was hit again by a second PIAT. It stopped, turned around and headed out of town. A third PIAT hit finished it off so that it slewed around, out of control, running over a necklace of 75 grenades which blew off a track. The crew dismounted and attempted to make off, but were killed by SA fire. During this incident the second Panther had remained further up the rd. Seeing the fate of its companion, it commenced to fire both 75 mm and MG wildly down the street "like a child in a tantrum", doing no damage whatsoever except to set fire to the first Panther....

Altogether 22 Panthers circled about Bn HQ and A Coy posn during the night, and it is hard to picture the confusion which existed. Contact with all but D Coy was lost. Fires and flares lit up the area, and the enemy several times appeared to be convinced that opposition had ceased....

(Lt.-Col. Matheson, as cited above.)

246. The chief point emerging from this engagement was that, even when German tanks had rolled through the defended area, the infantry was firmly withheld. These tactics were to become a rule in the protracted period of defensive warfare which followed. This was not the last of the attacks against Regina Rif; every night saw them renewed in varying strength, but always they were repelled. The battalion area was not easily defended with one company detached to hold NORREY. "This fwd posn was too exposed and Brig Foster more than once suggested it be withdrawn. The bn comd...and the comd of the coy in question protested vigorously, arguing that they would only have to recapture the village later. They were allowed to remain. The town was a ruin and the stench... of German dead added to its unpleasantness." (Brig. Foster, as above.)

247. (ii) Events in the Left Sector: The Capture of VIEUX CAIRON. The plan considered at the Orders Group on 8 Jun (para 236), whereby 9 Cdn Inf Bde was to recapture BURON, did not come to fruition, although on several occasions during the period 8-11 Jun it seemed on the point of being put into effect. The original intention was that H.L.I. of C., still intact and in reserve at VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS, should pass

through the two forward battalions to recover the village. But the scale of the attacks against 7 Cdn Inf Bde, coupled with the growing threats against the LES BUISSONS area, made it necessary to postpone the plan. (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 8 Jun.) It was to be revived at intervals.

248. On 8 Jun, 10 Cdn Armd Regt relieved 27 Cdn Armd Regt at LES BUISSONS, and immediately proceeded to carry out a squadron raid on VIEUX CAIRON, withdrawing into the brigade fortress at its conclusion. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) With this exception, however, 9 Cdn Inf Bde found itself committed during 8 and 9 Jun to a defensive role, while there developed a continuous fire fight, punctuated by strong enemy probings. The weight of the enemy's pressure was borne by S.D. & G. Highrs, who were dug in East of LES BUISSONS; on their right were Nth N.S. Highrs, now operating with two rifle companies. (W.Ds., S.D. & G. Highrs and Nth N. S. Highrs, 8-9 Jun.)

249. Enemy troop concentrations were heavily shelled by artillery and by the cruiser "Belfast". No ground was gained by the enemy, whose infiltration tactics on one occasion made it necessary to bring down artillery fire close to our positions. (Ibid., 9 Jun.) On that same day there arose once again the question of the capture of BURON and GRUCHY by H.L.I. of C., to be followed by a rapid advance to the final objective, which now seemed more remote than ever. But the left flank of the brigade was considered too dangerously exposed to warrant such a move and the decision was later taken to hold (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 9 Jun.)

250. Efforts were already being made to improve the situation on that flank. On the afternoon of 9 Jun, 9 Brit Inf Bde advanced under a heavy artillery barrage against CAMES, intending later to seize GALMANCHE, ST. CONTEST and MALON. (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 1, Confirmatory Notes, 9 Brit Inf Bde.) The attack was made from ANISY, in Q.O.R. of C.'s area. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 9 Jun.) After very severe fighting against troops of 25 S.S. Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the brigade was established by nightfall on its first objective, CAMES, and there it called a halt. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 10 Jun, serial 46.) At noon on the next day, 3 Brit Inf Div reported that enemy dispositions were "now clear"; it appeared that 21 Pz Div held the right flank from LA BIJUDE to HEROUVILLE with 192 Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and that 25 S.S. Panzer Grenadier Regiment held the line from GALMANCHE to ROSEL. (Ibid., serial 80.)

251. During this period patrols investigated enemy positions, especially in BURON and VIEUX CAIRON, and on occasion found both villages empty. (Cf., e.g., W.D., H.L.I. of C., 10-11 Jun.) On 11 Jun a new plan was formed: S.D. & G. Highrs were first to attack and capture VIEUX CAIRON, after which H.L.I. of C. would seize BURON. (Ibid.) The operation began that same afternoon. Skirting LES BUISSONS, S.D. & G. Highrs entered VIEUX CAIRON almost without opposition and consolidated there. (W.D., S.D. & G. Highrs, 11 Jun.) By 1600 hours, H.L.I. of C. was ready to commence its phase, when the order was given "to stay the assault". (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 11 Jun.) The expected attack was not to be launched after all, and BURON still remained in enemy hands. Dispositions of 9 Cdn Inf Bde on 11 Jun were as follows: S.D. & G. Highrs in VIEUX CAIRON; H.L.I. of C. and Nth N.S. Highrs in the area of VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS; and brigade headquarters at COLOMBY-SUR-THAON.

252. (iii) The Armoured Advance Towards CHEUX. As noted above, the seriousness of the enemy threat to 7 Cdn Inf Bde on the final objective was not dissipated with the failure of his first violent efforts to carry the position. Early on 9 Jun, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde reported to divisional headquarters that enemy tanks were "cruising freely" through the forward positions and that "rather a sticky time" was expected. (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 9 Jun.) Deprived of success in BRETTEVILLE, the enemy turned his attention once again to PUTOT, where 1 C. Scot R. and tanks of 27 Cdn Armd Regt were busy throughout the day repelling his sharp counter-attacks. The battalion area became a tank killing-ground, and the high spirits of the defenders are illustrated by such messages as the following: "Scottish reports track clear, situation restored. Send up rum ration." (Ibid.) On the right flank a squadron of 27 Cdn Armd Regt was moved into the area of BRETTEVILLE, where it also engaged enemy armour. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".)

253. Special concern was felt owing to the open left flank of the brigade along the River MUE. 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts, deployed near BRAY (in Gun Area "DOROTHY"), found themselves without infantry on their front, so that the order, "Prepare for tanks", took on urgent meaning. (W.D., 13 Cdn Fd Regt; 8 Jun.) It was reported that enemy tanks and infantry, which had worked their way around to the East of BRETTEVILLE, approached the gun positions and were engaged by small arms fire and even field guns firing over open sights. (Lt.-Col. R.H. Webb, as cited above.) In order to seal this gap, Q.O.R. of C. were placed under the command of 7 Cdn Inf Bde on 9 Jun and moved from ANGUERNY to BRAY, where they would also be available to attack when the occasion arose. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 9 Jun.) Their former location was taken over by N. Shore R., which in turn was relieved North of ANGUERNY by 46 R.M. Commando, now under the command of 8 Cdn Inf Bde. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 9 Jun.)

254. Although the attacks on the right sector continued without cessation, the enemy achieved no success and plans were therefore resumed for offensive action, in which 2 Cdn Armd Bde was to be employed. Tank holdings were now improved as replacement tanks were steadily brought forward. On 10 Jun, Brigadier R.A. Wyman attended a conference at divisional headquarters to discuss a scheme by which 2 Cdn Armd Bde, with Q.O.R. of C. in support, should attack through 7 Cdn Inf Bde to seize the high ground between CHEUX and LE HAUT DU BOSQ, about three miles South of the CAEN-BAYEUX railway. By late evening, in preparation for this advance, 6 Cdn Armd Regt had been concentrated in the area of BRAY and 10 Cdn Armd Regt Northwest of CAIRON. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) Q.O.R. of C. moved from BRAY to NEUF MER. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 10 Jun.) After further study of the problem the armoured brigade commander came to the conclusion that more time was required to carry out preliminary reconnaissance on the front of 7 Cdn Inf Bde, and that the presence of enemy in unknown strength in the MUE Valley constituted too great a hazard to the flank. At a conference with his regimental commanders at 2200 hours, 10 Jun, the new plan was outlined. For the first phase, 46 R.M. Commando and a squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt were to clear the enemy from the MUE Valley on 11 Jun. Then, at first light on 12 Jun, 6 Cdn Armd Regt, with

Q.O.R. of C. under command, and supported by the divisional artillery, was to advance South through LE MESNIL-PATRY and LE HAUT DU BOSQ, swinging left to seize the high ground North of GRAINVILLE-SUR-ODON. The plan was approved and preparations to execute it were begun. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) Air attacks by Typhoons on the CHEUX area were scheduled, but a request for heavy bombers was refused. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 10 Jun, serials 100 and 105; 11 Jun, serials 14 and 53.) On 10 Jun, 30 Corps had already begun its powerful offensive on the axis TILLY-SUR-SEULLES - VILLERS-BOCAGE; it will be seen how this lesser armoured operation was thus designed to be complementary to it.

255. On the morning of 11 Jun, the preparatory mopping-up operations in the river valley had commenced, when word was suddenly received at H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde that the second phase, the advance to GRAINVILLE, must be begun as soon as possible. (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 11 Jun.) This acceleration of timing prevented adequate briefing of the troops who were to participate; as late as 1000 hours, 11 Jun, the diarist of Q.O.R. of C. had noted: "Rumours of an attack to be put in but nothing definite as yet". (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 11 Jun.) With H Hour set at 1300 hours, the brigade Orders Group was held only two hours previous and unit orders in consequence were issued even later. (W.Ds., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, and 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 11 Jun.) The artillery plan, moreover, could not be properly co-ordinated. (Ibid.)

256. It was proposed that "B" Squadron, with "D" Company, Q.O.R. of C., should lead the advance, first seizing LE MESNIL-PATRY so that the River MUE could be crossed at its narrowest point (i.e., Southwest of NORREY). (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 11 Jun; Major J.N. Gordon, as cited above.) A second squadron and another infantry company were then to by-pass CHEUX and seize the high ground to the South of it. Finally a battalion fortress would be formed there and the armour withdrawn. (Hist Sec file AEF/8 Cdn Inf Bde/C/F: Report by I.O., Q.O.R. of C.)

257. The attack was attended by misfortune from the first. The start line selected was the railway South of BRETTEVILLE and at this point the tanks were to be deployed. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) But insufficient knowledge concerning the location of minefields on either side of the road in this area made it necessary to proceed through NORREY-EN-BESSIN in line-ahead formation. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 11 Jun.) The railway line was crossed by the leading squadron at 1437 hours (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 11 Jun); with a company of infantry riding on the tanks, the squadron then passed through NORREY and moved to the West towards LE MESNIL-PATRY, followed by the remainder of the regiment and the second infantry company. The tanks had not gone far across the wheat fields between NORREY and LE MESNIL-PATRY when a very heavy volume of mortar and machine gun cross-fire from concealed enemy positions compelled the infantry to dismount and take cover. Although the tanks proceeded ahead to shoot the enemy out of his slit trenches, "D" Company, Q.O.R. of C., suffered numerous casualties and could not reorganize successfully. "C" Squadron, which was following, moved to the right to give covering fire and a small party of infantry actually reached LE MESNIL-PATRY (or its twin village, LES SAULLETS, the point is not clear), from which it eventually withdrew to NORREY. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 11 Jun.) The enemy's positions could not be easily located, but elements of "B" Squadron moved forward and likewise entered LE MESNIL. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 11 Jun.)

258. At 1615 hours came a report that enemy tanks had been observed in the area of CRISTOT (8770). (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 11 Jun.) But only a little earlier word had been received that CRISTOT was in the hands of 8 Armd Bde, and accordingly the Canadian Shermans were directed to display their recognition signals. It was soon all too evident that the armour in question was hostile and the situation rapidly grew worse as more tanks and anti-tank guns opened fire from ST. MAUVIEU to the South. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) Seeing that the whole regiment was in danger of being outflanked, the commanding officer ordered a withdrawal to the start line, and "A" Squadron was despatched to a position East of BRETTEVILLE to cover the return of the infantry. But the order to withdraw was not received by "B" Squadron, with which contact had been lost, and it continued to fight on. All its officers and all save three N.C.Os. were listed as missing, and only two of its tanks returned. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 11 Jun.) "D" Company of Q.O.R. of C. was found to have suffered 96 casualties, of whom more than half were missing. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 11 Jun.) At the close of this disastrous day, the infantry battalion returned to NEUF MER (*ibid.*) and the armoured regiment laagered at BRAY. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 11 Jun.)

259. Later evidence was to suggest that the ill-fated attack had encountered a strong enemy force directed against 7 Cdn Inf Bde. If so, the enemy effort had certainly been disrupted, and it is significant that the scale of his counter-attacks on the brigade fortress materially diminished after this date. Moreover the operation had served to relieve the pressure against 30 Corps, whose armoured offensive was now in full course. (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD"; see also W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 12 Jun.)

260. The tank strength of 2 Cdn Armd Bde now stood at 99 Shermans. This latest engagement was reliably believed to have resulted in the destruction of 14 enemy tanks, including 10 Panthers. (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 12 Jun.) It might be noted here that the frequent identifications of Tiger tanks (Mark VI) in these early actions were not in the end corroborated; errors in recognition were chiefly attributable to Mark IV tanks being "dressed up" with additional armour. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 12 Jun, serial 77.) Tiger tanks were not encountered in strength until August.

261. Later, as reports began to filter in, it once again became evident that S.S. troops were ruthlessly shooting those soldiers who fell into their hands. A rifleman of "D" Company, Q.O.R. of C., described how after the action the enemy searched the grain fields and shot any Canadians found lying there, whether wounded or not. (Report by I.O., Q.O.R. of C., as cited above.) Similar experiences were related by tank crews who subsequently escaped from imprisonment. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 17 Jun.) After LE MESNIL-PATRY was captured, a burial party was despatched to search the area. At one point five bodies were found lying in a row: all had been wounded and had had their wounds dressed and all had been shot at close quarters through the head. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., June 1944: Appx 75, Report of Burial Party.) To this atrocity, known to have been committed by members of 26 S.S. Panzer Grenadier Regiment, must be added that occurring on 8 Jun at the CHATEAU D'AUDRIEU (864713), in which personnel of R. Wpg Rif, captured at PUTOT-EN-BESSIN, were similarly put to death. (Report of the Court of Inquiry re Shooting of Prisoners of War by German Armed Forces at Chateau D'Audrieu, as cited above.) When the incidents at BURON and AUTHIE are

recalled, it becomes quite obvious that these practices were common throughout the entire 12 S.S. Pz Div.

262. (iv) The Clearance of the MUE Valley. To complete this record of activity in the right sector up to 11 Jun, it is necessary to describe more fully the "mopping-up" operations undertaken by 8 Cdn Inf Bde. These had properly begun as early as D plus 2, when it was found "that the wide front on which the assault was made and the stress which had been laid on advancing inland with all possible speed had prevented a thorough search...being carried out between the various axes of adv". (Brigadier Blackader, as cited above.) The operations in the MUE Valley and adjoining areas fall into two stages: (i) the elimination of snipers within the divisional area as far South as THAON, and (ii) the clearance of the valley beyond THAON, which was to be integrated with the attack on CHEUX described above.

263. The first stage was chiefly the responsibility of R. de Chaud, which on 8 Jun was engaged in clearing the woods about FONTAINE-HENRY. Guided by civilians, the battalion accounted for numerous snipers. It might be observed that it was in this role that the members of 716 Inf Div seemed to excel; unreliable in defence and hopeless in the attack, their snipers nonetheless "very tenaciously and bravely" continued to harass the divisional area when they might have been expected to attempt escape. (Ibid.) On the first day of this "anti-sniper campaign", a party of R. de Chaud was led to a cave sheltering a large body of enemy artillerymen, who had previously captured certain Canadian provost and signal personnel. When their position was besieged, 109 Germans surrendered without fight, acting on the suggestion of a Canadian officer. (For details see W.D., 4 Cdn Pro Coy, June 1944: Appx 4, and W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs, June 1944: Appx 2.) The same activity continued through 9 and 10 Jun, with troops of 51 (H) Inf Div assisting. (W.Ds., G.S., H.Q. 51 (H) Inf Div, and R. de Chaud, 9 Jun.) The diarist of H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde remarked on the efficiency shown by R. de Chaud in this work, saying that it was now "comparatively safe to walk through the village" of COLOMBY-SUR-THAON. (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 10 Jun.)

264. The second stage, which involved clearing the same valley almost as far South as the CAEN-BAYEUX road, was at first designed, as we have seen, to prepare the way for the armoured advance to CHEUX. This task was assigned to 46 R.M. Commando, supported by a squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt. As the clearance of the valley progressed it was planned to move the units of the brigade into position there, so that the enemy, once driven out, could not re-occupy the area. The movement of the brigade was to be carried out in the following manner: R. de Chaud would proceed first to BRAY, and then, following 46 R.M. Commando, would occupy the village of ROTIS (9571); N. Shore R. was to move to the area of CAMILLY, later taking up positions in ROSEL (9673). (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 10 Jun.) Brigade headquarters was to be moved from ANGUERNY to BRAY. The conclusion of the operation would see 8 Cdn Inf Bde in control of the wooded valley which still threatened the security of the divisional area, and a firm l ft flank thus established to permit further advances from 7 Cdn Inf Bde's sector. These movements were begun on the morning of 11 Jun, with R. de Chaud being transported to BRAY in troop-carrying vehicles. (W.D., R. de Chaud, 11 Jun.) At the same time N. Shore R. moved from ANGUERNY to the Western outskirts of CAIRON, the village itself still being in enemy hands. As events fell out, the timing of the CHEUX attack was advanced, so that the two operations proceeded almost simultaneously.

265. The operations in the valley were to be carried out by 46 R.M. Commando in four phases: Phase I, the clearance of the woods from BARBIERE to CAIRON; Phase II, the capture of CAIRON; Phase III, the capture of ROSEL; and Phase IV, the capture of the twin villages of LE HAMEL and ROTS. "A" Squadron, 10 Cdn Armd Regt, was to move along the right flank on the ridge running Southwest from THAON between BRETTEVILLE L'ORGUEILLEUSE and LE HAMEL. (R.M. Commandos in Normandy, as cited above.)

266. Although initially opposition was light, the operation proved to be a slow task. The Commando crossed its start line at 0845 hours, 11 Jun, but had reached CAIRON only by 1145 hours. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 11 Jun.) The advance continued during the afternoon and LASSON and ROSEL were cleared. Serious resistance was encountered in the evening when the force entered LE HAMEL and ROTS, where bitter street fighting took place against S.S. troops. To assist the Royal Marines, Shermans were brought from the high ground into ROTS itself. Panthers had been concealed in the centre of the village and knocked out several of the tanks. The Shermans replied and two Panthers were in turn destroyed, but the attacking force was compelled to withdraw temporarily in the face of stern opposition. (R.M. Commandos in Normandy; 2.Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) 46 R.M. Commando was given the assistance of a company of R. de Chaud, and reported the area clear at 0605 hours, 12 Jun. (Message Log, H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 12 Jun.) But it was not until evening of that day that R. de Chaud occupied LE HAMEL and ROTS without opposition. (W.D., R. de Chaud, 12 Jun.) The fierceness of the fighting in ROTS is reflected in the fact that 122 German dead were later discovered in the town. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 14 Jun, serial 9.) N. Shore R. entered LASSON and ROSEL. (W.D., N. Shore R., 12 Jun.) Q.O.R. of C., now released by 7 Cdn Inf Bde after their unfortunate attack of the previous day, completed the occupation of the new brigade fortress by taking up a position in BRAY. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 12 Jun.) During the night 12/13 Jun, a patrol of R. Wpg Rif entered LA VILLENEUVE (949705), found it unoccupied and remained there until relieved some hours later by a platoon of R. de Chaud. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 13 Jun.)

SURVEY OF THE ASSAULT

267. 11 Jun may be said to mark the end of the first phase of Operation "OVERLORD". Main H.Q., Second Army was now in operation at CREULLY. (W.D., G (Ops), H.Q. Second Army, 12 Jun.) By this date, moreover, the permanence of the Allied bridgehead in NORMANDY had been assured. The day previous, General Montgomery, in a personal message to all the forces under his command, had written:

After four days of fighting, the Allied Armies have secured a good and firm lodgement area on the mainland of France.

.....

British, Canadian and American soldiers, fighting gallantly side by side, have achieved a great success and have placed themselves in a good position from which to exploit this success.

(W.D. of Lt.-Gen. H.D.G. Crerar, G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, June 1944: Appx "G".)

268. On 11 Jun General Keller sent to General Crerar the following message:

From Keller to Crerar. Following letter received by me today from Army Commander. Quote, My dear Keller the first phase of the operations "the gaining of the beachhead is over. You and your division played a major part and I want to tell you how much I admire and appreciate the magnificent work you have all done. A battalion of 3 Canadian Division was the first unit in the Second Army to reach the final objective. That is something which you will always remember with pride. Yours ever Dempsey. Unquote.

(W.D., G.S. (Ops), H.Q. First Cdn Army, June 1944: Appx 55.)

269. By 12 Jun, 3 Cdn Inf Div and 2 Cdn Armd Bde had sustained the weight of the enemy's counter-attacks without losing ground and could now consider themselves firmly established. "NEPTUNE" was over; "OVERLORD" had just begun. Here, then, it is appropriate to reconsider the divisional assault as a whole and to undertake an appreciation of its success. Where possible, this will be done along the lines followed in the exposition of the plan (paras 118 to 152 above), and will necessarily involve a certain amount of recapitulation.

(a) General

270. In keeping with the intention of maintaining a concurrent outline of Allied operations it will be useful here to present a general picture of all the "NEPTUNE" assaults. While the seaborne assault forces moved silently across the Channel, vast air fleets were passing overhead to lay the final preparations for their arrival -- a last blow at coastal batteries by heavy bombers, and the transporting of the airborne divisions.

271. The counter-battery effort, known as Operation "FLASHLAMP", was the culmination of weeks of intensive bombing of gun positions. During the night 5/6 Jun, ten coastal batteries were attacked by 1,136 aircraft "dropping 5,315 tons with such telling effect that with a single exception the batteries offered no serious resistance...." (Bomber Command Quarterly Review, No. 9, Apr-Jun 44, copy in custody of Historical Section, H.Q. R.C.A.F.) The bombing observed from H.M.S. "Hilary" in the early hours of 6 Jun was almost certainly that directed against the MONT FLEURY battery (cf para 172). Canadian airmen played a major role in attacks on three of these ten batteries. R.C.A.F. bomber squadrons of 6 Group despatched the full main force against HOULGATE and MERVILLE-FRANCEVILLE. An additional 25 Lancasters of 6 Group, and part of the Canadian Pathfinder Squadron of 8 Group, shared in the attack on the battery at LONGUES. The total R.C.A.F. participation on the night 5/6 Jun has been summarized as follows:

<u>Target</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>Despatched</u>	<u>A/C</u> <u>Attacking</u>	<u>Tonnage</u> <u>Bombs Dropped</u>
Houlgate	106	102	395
Merville/ Franceville	99	80	315
Longues	41	40	222
TOTALS:	246	222	932

(Hist Sec file AEF/Bomber Command/C/F: R.C.A.F. Operations - June 5th/6th, 1944 and June 6th, 1944.)

272. The airborne operations were launched and executed with despatch, despite considerable dispersion beyond the dropping zones, especially in the British sector East of the ORNE. The important crossings at BENOUVILLE and RANVILLE were secured by mid-day, 6 Jun, and the enemy had been denied interference with the left flank of 1 Corps by the destruction of all bridges from TROARN to VARAVILLE. In the evening of D Day the air-landing brigade of 6 Airborne Div made successful glider landings. (For an account of the fortunes of 6 Airborne Div, and in particular of 1 Cdn Para Bn, see Report No. 139.) Another proof of the achievement of tactical surprise remarked on by Admiral Ramsay is supplied by the declaration of prisoners that the sight of descending parachutists gave them their first and only warning of invasion. Even more remarkable was the enemy's failure to promulgate a general alarm after the airborne landings; many coastal defence troops first realized what was happening when they saw landing craft approaching. (First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 6.)

273. There has perhaps been of late a tendency to underestimate the enormous hazards of Operation "NEPTUNE", because of the very high degree of success it achieved. It should not be imagined, however, that this success was synonymous with the launching of the assaults, and was thus automatically assured. It was made possible only by the confidence which the participants had in the plan and by the determination with which they endeavoured to adhere to it, even in the face of unforeseen developments. All the amphibious assaults were successful, although all were opposed. In the opinion of the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, "the outstanding fact from the naval point of view was that, despite the unfavourable weather, in every main essential the plan was carried out as written". (C.B. 04385A.) The mounting of the assaults involved the employment of more than 5,000 ships and craft, swept into the beaches by over 200 minesweepers. The landings themselves were covered by 800 naval guns of all calibres. (Summary of Naval Reports on Operation "NEPTUNE", copy in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.)

274. In "Utah" area, along the COTENTIN Peninsula, 4 U.S. Inf Div made its landfall about 1,500 yards South of the points intended, a circumstance which had fortunate consequences, for opposition was found to be much lighter here and almost complete surprise was achieved. Contact with the airborne troops was made on the same day and first objectives were speedily consolidated. (First U.S. Army Report of Operations.)

275. In "Omaha" area the picture was not at first so bright. There, V U.S. Corps was strongly and effectively opposed, to the extent that the assaulting troops were virtually pinned to the beaches for about seven hours. (C.B. 04385A.) By midnight, 6/7 Jun, after bitter fighting, these troops had gained control of "a strip approximately 10,000 yards wide straddling the coastal road... with a penetration of 3,000 yards at the deepest point". (First U.S. Army Report of Operations.) This determined show of resistance was attributed by naval authorities partly to "the total failure of the heavy day bombers due to the low cloud base". (C.B. 04835A.) Even so, such vigorous opposition was not characteristic of 716 Inf Div, which had been thought to garrison this sector with 726 Grenadier Regiment. In point of fact, the resistance came from the three regiments of 352 Inf Div, which were disposed immediately behind the landing beaches. It would appear that this division (previously believed to be stationed around ST. LO) had been assigned a coastal defence role in order to bolster the vastly inferior 726 Grenadier Regiment in the GRANDCAMP area. (Ibid.) If such be

the case, the enemy's strategy once again showed itself to be faulty: the division which was intended to crush the beach-head succeeded only in effecting a delay and was itself cancelled out as a potential counter-attack force. By 10 Jun the bridgeheads East and West of the CARENTAN estuary had been linked and continuous advances were being made.

276. In the assault by 50 (N) Inf Div the chief difficulty was the reduction of the LE HAMEL strongpoint. Elements of 352 Inf Div were also met in this sector. (First Cdn Army Int Summaries Nos. 1 and 2.) (An excellent account of the events in "Gold" area is contained in C.O.H.Q. Bulletin Y/36, Operation "NEPTUNE-OVERLORD", The Assault by 50 (N) Division, Nov 44, copy in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.) As was the case generally, progress lagged behind schedule, but BAYEUX fell to this division on D plus 1, and dispositions at dusk on 7 Jun were in the main as planned. (Information from Historical Section, Offices of the Cabinet.)

277. Farther East, closer to CAEN, the enemy's desperate efforts to stop further progress succeeded in forestalling 3 Brit Inf Div from seizing CAEN, a situation comparable to the halt imposed on 9 Cdn Inf Bde. Forward positions held by 3 Brit Inf Div by last light on 7 Jun did not differ materially from those reached on the previous day. In particular, LEBISEY Wood (O571) had proved to be too strongly held.

278. That the assault and build-up forces were never seriously molested by enemy vessels was made possible by the efforts of naval covering forces and Coastal Command, R.A.F. On 9 Jun, two German destroyers were sunk in the Western Approaches of the Channel and "the threat of enemy destroyer action thereby virtually removed". (Summary of Naval Reports on Operation "NEPTUNE", as above.) Coastal Command intensified its offensive patrols against surface vessels and U-boats. During the first four days of the operation these aircraft attacked 25 out of 38 U-boats sighted. Three R.C.A.F. Squadrons participated in these operations, and a Canadian pilot of an R.A.F. Squadron achieved a memorable record by sinking two German submarines in less than half an hour on the early morning of 8 Jun. (The Invasion and Coastal Command, Memorandum by R.C.A.F. Operations Record Officer, Coastal Command, copy in Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.)

(b) The Assault by 3 Cdn Inf Div.

279. Measured in terms of the intention and method of its operation order, the assault by 3 Cdn Inf Div adhered closely to the plan. On the whole, Intelligence had been completely reliable, and the spirit of the assault troops in executing their difficult tasks left nothing to be desired. Perfect enactment of every feature of the plan could not be, and was not expected.

280. The weather takes precedence over all other factors in its influence on the opening phases of the operation. Despite the care with which the plan had been fashioned so as not to be dependent on ideal conditions, it is clear that the marked inclemency prevailing had a deleterious effect. This inclemency, as we have seen, was a major source of anxiety to the Supreme Command, and the operation was eventually launched despite its unfavourable nature. Comments on weather conditions appear in reports by commanders at all levels. The opinion of Brigadier H.W. Foster, commanding 7 Cdn Inf Bde, is typical: "The weather was most unkind and very nearly disastrous to the mounting of the assault." (Brig Foster, as above.)

281. It has already been made clear how heavy seas caused the less seaworthy craft to become lost or to arrive late: this circumstance compelled a last-minute postponement of H Hour, which in turn shortened the interval before high water and deprived engineer groups of the minimum time to complete demolition of obstacles. In consequence, "craft beached among the obstacles instead of short of them, and clearance of the outer obstacles was not practicable until the tide had fallen". (C.B. 04385A, Report by Naval Commander, Force "J".) Thus these obstructions continued to exact a heavy toll.

282. Delays on the beaches, attributable chiefly to weather conditions, very naturally slowed the whole tempo of the advance inland. One brigade commander believed that "the timing as planned had been too fast". (Brig. Foster, as above.) But the insistence on speed was made necessary by the possibility that mobile reserves might be thrown against the division either before it had secured a beachhead in sufficient depth, or while it was on the move and unprepared to ward off attack. The latter eventuality actually occurred on 7 Jun; fortunately only one brigade group was affected by it. By the evening of D Day the operation could be reckoned five to six hours behind schedule (i.e., the approximate time required by the main body of 7 Cdn Inf Bde to advance from "ELM" to "OAK"). It therefore seems hardly possible that the division could have arrived in strength on the final objective by nightfall of D Day unless an earlier start had been made. From every point of view, it would have been infinitely more desirable if the times of touchdown had not had to be deferred. (In this connection it may be noted that the need to postpone H Hour for Group J. 2 on account of offshore rocks on NAN Sector has been called in question by the Commander of Force "J". (C.B. 04385B.))

283. By evening on 7 Jun forward dispositions had already taken the shape (discounting adjustments and minor advances) which they were to retain for some weeks, a fact which invites comparison with the positions planned for Phase III (cf. paras 110-115 above, and Appendices "G" and "I"). Essentially these positions were based on two brigade fortresses -- one centred on BRETTEVILLE-L'ORGUEILLEUSE and one on VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS, the third brigade occupying a position in the left rear on the ANGUERNY-ANISY feature. It will be recalled that the plan had specified that the left forward brigade should be disposed equal with the right, that is, centred on CARPIQUET; on the right and rear positions were occupied as planned. The fact that 9 Cdn Inf Bde was actually some miles short of its objective left open the wooded valley of the MUE, which would otherwise have formed the boundary between the two forward brigades. This subsequently necessitated moving 8 Cdn Inf Bde into a central position between 7 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes to seal off this potential entry in the divisional area. As a result, all three brigades were required to hold the line, which left no reserve formation to provide relief and made impossible a renewed offensive. As planned, the role of 8 Cdn Inf Bde would have been to act as reserve in the right rear (Phase IV, para 116 above). Thus, for a considerable time the role of 3 Cdn Inf Div became purely a defensive one.

(c) Casualties

284. Casualties in the assault had been lighter than anticipated; the total losses of the Canadian force on 6 Jun were in the neighborhood of 950. (Total compiled by the writer from statistics provided by Casualties Section, Records, C.M.H.Q. See Appendix "D".) It had been planned to land on

D Day about 14,460 Canadian troops. (3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 1, Appx "G".) The number landed was actually somewhat less, but in any event casualties were not excessive. An attempt has been made by the Army Operational Research Group to tabulate the casualties actually sustained on the beach itself, as distinct from those occurring inland. It is thus concluded that each infantry assault battalion incurred between 60 to 80 casualties within the immediate coastal area. This estimate is perhaps too low, for in some cases battalions are known to have been more seriously depleted on the beach than these figures would indicate. (A.O.R.G. Report No. 264, Opposition Encountered on the British Beaches in Normandy on D-Day, Part III, copy in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.)

285. It seems to be well established that casualties on each sector varied in direct ratio to the number of enemy mortars in action. His machine guns, on the other hand, although more effective in causing delay, probably did not inflict proportionately as many casualties. (Ibid., Part VI.) This can be accounted for by the fact that machine guns, with their wide sweeping arc of fire, cause troops to go to ground, where they are largely immune from flat-trajectory weapons.

(d) Force "J"

286. Of the Royal Navy it was said that "in every main essential the plan was carried out as written". (C.B.04385A.) The assault as executed by Force "J" was no exception. A brigade commander stated: "A particularly fine job was done by the RH, who, under unfavourable circumstances, made their landings exactly at the right spot, even to the coy level." (Brig. Blackaler, as above.) There were no instances of major inaccuracy on either sector. The navigational difficulties faced by craft commanders are described in a Canadian naval account:

From the LCA's it was impossible to see the beach except from the crests of the waves, but in these fleeting moments the assault personnel got glimpses of land marks that had been made familiar to them by the photographs and diagrams which they had been shown in their briefing.

(R.C.N's. Part in the Invasion.)

287. Because of choppy seas and crowded beaches the L.S.T. could not begin to beach their unwieldy Rhino ferries until 1500 hours, and in some cases these ships had not completely discharged their cargo until the early morning of 7 Jun. (Naval Commander, Force "J", C.B.04385B.) Throughout D Day the anchorage was shelled sporadically and ineffectively, and at night there was a most brilliant display as gunners enthusiastically (if not entirely accurately) opened fire on enemy aircraft.

288. Despite active opposition and the danger of obstacles, casualties to landing craft in Force "J" were not excessively high. These were listed as follows:

Sunk	3 L.C.T. (A.)
Badly Damaged	2 L.C.T. (3)
	7 L.C.T. (4)
	7 L.C.T. (5)
	5 L.C.I. (S.)
	2 L.C.S. (M)
	14 L.C.A.

Damaged or Disabled 18 L.C.T. (4)
8 L.C.T. (5)
2 L.C.I. (8.)
22 L.C.A.

(Ibid.)

Judging from these figures, almost 75% of the L.C.A. escaped damage. (A total of 142 was to be employed.)

(e) Commandos

289. 48 R.M. Commando, reorganizing after its unfortunate landing early on D Day, entered LANGRUNE without difficulty, but had cleared the strongpoint there only by 1500 hours, 7 Jun. To the West, 41 R.M. Commando had experienced similar delay in taking LION-SUR-MER. 46 R.M. Commando had been held in reserve to attack the HOULGATE or BENERVILLE batteries. Since neither harassed our shipping unduly, this commando was landed on D plus 1 to reinforce 4 S.S. Bde. Its first task was the capture of PETIT-ENFER, which it accomplished without loss. The commando then occupied LA DEURANDE and DOUVRES without opposition on 7 and 8 Jun, respectively. 47 R.M. Commando, operating with 50 (N) Inf Div, landed on D Day near LE HAMEL and captured PORT-EN-BESSIN, on the inter-army boundary, late on D plus 1. (R.M. Commandos in Normandy, as cited above.) The operations of 46 R.M. Commando in the LUE Valley have been described above (paras 265-6). "X" Troop, 30 Assault Unit, R.M., landed without loss in the first hour of the assault and joined N. Shore R. It shined in the fighting with the battalion in TAILLEVILLE, again without casualties. The special task of preserving the technical equipment at the Radar Station was not able to be carried out, and the troop spent its remaining time examining the port installations at COURSEULLES and OUISTREHAM. (C.B. 04385A.)

(f) Armour

290. The experiences of the armoured regiments in the operation have been included with those of the infantry to whom they gave support. Here it is appropriate to consider how valuable was that support.

291. Despite a measure of confusion in their launching and beaching, the D.D. tanks were able to arrive ashore as a fighting entity, where their early arrival unquestionably contributed to the enemy's discouragement and downfall. The performance of the tank crews generally was described as "gallant rather than brilliant", improving as the battle developed. (Brig. Foster, as above.) It was the opinion of Lt.-Col. J.M. Meldrum, O.C., R. Wpg Rif, that "A" Squadron, 6 Cdn Armd Regt, "literally made possible the overwhelming of the defences" of MIKE Sector. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, June 1944: Appx 4, Letter from O.C., R. Wpg Rif, to O.C., 6 Cdn Armd Regt.) To this expression of appreciation the Commander of 7 Cdn Inf Bde added the minute, "I heartily agree with these sentiments". (Ibid.) The tanks proved no less valuable farther inland in the villages and open fields, according to infantry commanders. One may conclude that the landing of tanks in the initial stages was entirely justified. (It may be noted that this conclusion seems to conflict with the DIEPPE lessons, which had recommended that tanks be not landed during the beach fighting. (C.B. 04244.) The explanation of this apparent rejection of official doctrine lies in the fact that D.D. tanks, requiring no craft to bring them ashore, formed a series of mobile forts which could contribute to close support at H Hour.)

292. It is hardly necessary to say that 2 Cdn Armd Bde's plan to advance to EVRECY on D Day was not realized. Nor did the special force supplied by "C" Squadron, Inns of Court Regt, which was entrusted with the blowing of the bridges over the ORNE beyond CAEN, meet with success. Landing near COURSEULLES from two L.C.T. (4) at 0830 hours, 6 Jun, the detachment lost seven vehicles on the beach itself from mines and anti-tank weapons. Owing to difficulty with exits, release from the beach was not given until about 1045 hours. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Jun, serial 129.) At 1500 hours the force crossed the River SEULLES, but must have worked well to the right, for it harboured during the night 6/7 Jun at VIENNE-EN-BESSIN, about four miles east of BAYEUX. Setting forth again the next morning, the squadron suffered thirteen casualties when bombed by Thunderbolts; the furthest points reached on D plus 1 were NORREY-EN-BESSIN, BRONAY and DUCY-STE.MARGUERITE, all near the BAYEUX-CAEN railway. (W.D., Inns of Court Regt, 6-7 Jun.)

(g) Machine Gun Battalion

293. Medium machine gun companies were landed from L.S.T. during D Day and by evening had joined their respective infantry battalions on the intermediate objective "ELM". On the following day "C" Company saw stern action with Nth N.S. Highrs in the vicinity of BURON. Two platoons of "D" Company (heavy mortars), also landing on the afternoon of D Day, supported 7 Cdn Inf Bde on its final advance to "OAK". (W.D., C.H. of O. (M.G.), June 1944: Appendices 6-9.)

(h) Engineers

294. Clearance of gaps through offshore obstructions, which was to have been completed by H plus 75 minutes, was set back many hours by the unexpectedly high tide. The engineers of 5 Cdn Fd Coy, with one platoon of 18 Cdn Fd Coy under command, experienced severe difficulty on landing close to H Hour, but succeeded in putting most of their bulldozers ashore. After a brief period of work, further attempts at mass removal of the dense obstacles had to be abandoned until the tide commenced to recede. Gaps totalling 1600 yards in width were cleared on NAN Sector between the first and second tides on D Day; on MIKE Sector two sections continued work until D plus 1, by which time they had cleared 1700 yards. Casualties to these teams had been relatively light. (W.Ds., 5 and 18 Cdn Fd Coys, 6-7 Jun.) The sapper assault teams landing in company with the leading infantry of 7 Cdn Inf Bde sustained casualties both in their craft and on the beach, and were unable to perform their allotted tasks. In view of this, the company commander considered that their inclusion in the assault phase had not been justified. (W.D., 6 Cdn Fd Coy, June 1944: Appx 4.) A similar experience was met on 8 Cdn Inf Bde's sector, where the sapper teams found that little call was made on them in their proper role. (W.D., 16 Cdn Fd Coy, 6 Jun.) The principal task of 18 Cdn Fd Coy on D Day was to have been the construction of Class 40 crossings at PONT DE REVIERS and COLOMBIERS-SUR-SEULLES. To this end, reconnaissance parties went forward with the leading infantry, only to find the existing bridges intact. These were at once checked and classified. 1622 Bridging Platoon, which had landed safely, "felt rather lost and simply sat in Assembly Area". (W.D., 18 Cdn Fd Coy, 6 Jun.)

295. The difficulty of opening potential exits (which in any event were few) considerably delayed the employment of heavy weapons in support of the infantry: many tanks were compelled to remain on the beach for some hours, while badly needed guns and other equipment could not be landed until the beaches were cleared. This fact makes particularly cogent Admiral Ramsay's conclusion "that the rate of landing will always be governed by the availability of exits", which had not perhaps been fully appreciated by military planners. (C.B. 04385A.)

(i) Administration

296. Until such time as higher formations assumed responsibility, maintenance was controlled by the division. Beach stores dumps were quickly accumulated by using amphibious load-carriers (DUKWs) as well as all types of landing craft. (Highlights of Administration, as cited above.) "The proved that planning had been sound as to adm arrangements. Assault scale tpt had been properly loaded to provide the immediate essentials during the early days. No one went short of amm, tools, food or water." (Brig. Blackader, as above.)

297. The provision of ammunition and petrol was the responsibility of the divisional R.C.A.S.C., which for the early stages of the operation had created a number of special departments to meet the abnormal supply situation. (See 3 Cdn Inf Div Adm Plan, as cited above.) A beach dump was established on both MIKE and NAN Sectors and ammunition stored there was available either on call from the infantry or for subsequent removal to the gun areas. Distributed throughout ships and craft of Force "J" were 420 trailers 5-cwt., loaded with petrol, small arms ammunition and mines; these were brought ashore by any available vehicles, and when assembled in a trailer park constituted a mobile store for immediate replenishment. They were towed to forward localities by a "jeep platoon" formed for this purpose. Ammunition dumps were established in "MARY" and "JANE" Gun Areas, the first stocks of infantry ammunition and mines being carried forward on the field artillery "Priests" which occupied these areas. On 8 Jun, the beach dumps closed down and the Divisional Administrative Area proper was formed. (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/R.C.A.S.C./C/D: Memo of Interview with Capt. L.A. Brennan, R.C.A.S.C.) A full description of the work of the divisional Army Service Corps is given in a unit history. (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/R.C.A.S.C./C/F: R.C.A.S.C., 3 Cdn Inf Div, June-July 1944.)

298. The medical services of 3 Cdn Inf Div had under their command three field ambulances and one light field ambulance, four British surgical teams and two British transfusion units. (See Order of Battle at Appendix "C".) To each assault battalion was attached a section of a field ambulance, which landed behind battalion headquarters and followed the unit to the first objective "YEW", nesting casualties on the way. At this point, the ambulance sections rejoined their companies which were then placed in support of the infantry brigades in the normal manner. During the first four days the surgical teams performed "about 220 major operations and handled in all about 1800 casualties." By D plus 2 the evacuation of casualties by sea was operating smoothly, and on 17 Jun evacuation by air was organized from a landing strip at STE. CROIX-SUR-MER. (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/R.C.A.M.C./C/D: Memo of Interview with Colonel M.C. Watson, A.D.M.S., 3 Cdn Inf Div.) A report from 1 Corps

shows that during the first six days of the operation 2,351 casualties were evacuated to the United Kingdom over MIKE and NAN Beaches. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 13 Jun, serial 89.) Many tributes were paid to the work of the R.C.A.M.C. personnel. A brigade commander stated:

The work of the med services was of the very highest standard. Nothing but praise could be given to them, from SBs, MOs to higher levels, for all had done their utmost.

(Brig. Blackader, as above.)

(j) Intercommunication

299. Wireless communications functioned extremely well, from the moment of their breaking silence early on D Day. Some difficulties were encountered on the beach, for snipers took a heavy toll of those carrying wireless sets in the first wave, and the heavier sets in handcarts were found awkward to manhandle. (W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs, June 1944: Appx 17, Report on Operation "OVERLORD".) Artillery wireless communications were highly satisfactory, both on sea and land. The special problems entailed and the means adopted to solve them are treated in two reports: Memo of Interview with Major H.S. Patterson (as cited above), and Report on 3 Cdn Div Arty Comms, Operation "OVERLORD". (W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs, June 1944: Appx 17.)

300. Cable sections, whose work was very hazardous in the first days ashore, used jeeps with 10-cwt. trailers and found them admirable. Lines had constantly to be repaired, owing to their being cut by tracked vehicles and shellfire. (Signals Report on Operation "OVERLORD", as above.) The commander of 8 Cdn Inf Bde reported that lines were laid to all battalions by the night of D Day. (Brig. Blackader, cited above.)

(k) The Fire Plan

301. In endeavouring to estimate the success of the combined fire plan, it must be realized that the moral factor played almost as great a role as the actual destruction caused. This being so, it is more difficult to arrive at a true evaluation. But it is safe to assume that the massed invasion force, moving in relentlessly on the beaches and loosing so great a volume of fire-power, must have seemed irresistible to the little groups of defenders huddled in their concrete enclosures, waiting until the nearest troops should be within range of their puny mortars and guns. With the din of the bombardment ringing in their ears, the confident advice of their superiors -- "Keep them at bay until our Panzers break through to relieve you" -- must have appeared a vain hope indeed. Interrogation of prisoners produced adequate testimony of the power of the fire plan, as the following passage shows:

The results of our preliminary aerial and naval bombardment were most impressive. PW were unanimous in describing its overwhelming and demoralizing effects. In several strongpoints comms were com-

pletely severed and the occupants, who had gone to ground, were totally unaware of what was happening until they emerged to find themselves prisoners. PW used such phrases as "it was absolute hell" and "we had no chance".... The naval bombardment seems to have been especially terrifying.

(Second Army Int Summary No. 7, quoted in First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 7.)

302. In the Canadian sector, there are isolated incidents which show that enemy morale was seriously affected. A company commander of Q.O.R. of C told how a German machine-gun crew ran away when our troops began to scale the seawall before their position. Such enemy soldiers he described as "mere boys" and "very frightened" (Major J.N. Gordon, as cited above.) Others, locked in concrete emplacements, had no such opportunity for flight and in most cases fought it out till the end. It seems probable, however, that the intense initial bombardment momentarily stunned them, for the battle generally took shape when these positions were closely invested and our leading troops had crossed the intervening open stretch of beach. This conclusion is borne out by the experience of 48 R.N. Commando, which was fired on even before landing by the defenders of the ST. AUBIN strongpoint, who had previously allowed N. Shore R. to approach with much less show of resistance (para 191 above).

303. With respect to the performance of seaborne weapons (naval bombardment ships, close support craft and S.P. artillery) there are three principal sources of information: the naval reports on "NEPTUNE" (C.B. 04385 A, B and C); C.B. 3148, Gunnery Review, Normandy Bombardment Experience; and Army Operational Research Group Report No. 264, Opposition Encountered on the British Beaches in Normandy on I-Day.

304. (i) Navy Inasmuch as no very formidable enemy batteries lay within 3 Cdn Inf Div's area, the bombarding force provided was accordingly small. (On the Eastern flank, Bombarding Force "D", in order to deal with coastal batteries on either side of the SEINE estuary, comprised two battleships, five cruisers and one monitor. (C.B. 3148).) In "Juno" area, the achievement of "Diadem" in silencing the battery at BENY-SUR-MER is adequate evidence of the efficiency of naval bombardment (para 174). The crew manning one such gun position retired in great disillusionment to a cave in the vicinity of FONTAINE-HENRY, where their depression was such that they later permitted a few Canadians whom they had captured to take their whole number (109) into custody. This incident has been described above (para 263). But the final proof of the results of naval counter-battery fire is seen in the failure of the coastal defence guns to cause any damage whatsoever to the closely packed shipping.

305. The beach drenching fire undoubtedly achieved its object of neutralizing interference on the run-in, and was said to have been delivered "with clock-like precision". (C.B. 04385B.) The preparatory bombardment was so much admired by one assaulting company that the soldiers stood up in their L.C.A. to watch it. (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., June 1944: Appx 2, "C" Coy Diary.) While its effect was never intended to be totally destructive yet the actual damage caused by this very heavy volume of fire was found to be somewhat disappointing. Poor visibility was undoubtedly a

Commando, opened fire at 10,000 yards on a gun position near LANGRUNE. Both ships ceased fire about 0745 hours, as the first assault wave was approaching shore. (R.C.N's. Part in the Invasion.) Farther west, "Kempenfelt" engaged a three-gun battery near COURSEULLES, but this fire could not be observed. (C.B. 04385B.) The general deployment of destroyers was as follows: on the right, "Venus", "Faulknor", "Fury", "Stevenstone" and "La Combattante", engaging beach sector targets; and similarly, on the left, "Vigilant", "Algonquin", "Sioux", "Bleasdale" and "Glaisdale". (Ibid.)

310. L.C.G.(L.) working on the flanks of the assaulting battalions, opened fire at ranges between 9,000 and 6,000 yards and thereafter continued to engage concrete defences from 1,000 yards until the landing craft had touched down. (C.B. 04385 B.) Their position close inshore gave them better opportunities than destroyers for observed shooting. (C.B. 3148.)

311. L.C.T. (R.) were said to have fired their salvos of rockets "accurately and a little early". (C.B. 04385B.) Short rounds were observed by R. Wpg Rif. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun.) An unfortunate, though spectacular, incident occurred when a Typhoon fighter, swooping in low over BERNIERES, flew into a pattern of rockets and was instantly destroyed. (C.B. 04385 B.)

312. Since enemy aircraft discreetly absented themselves from the assault area, the L.C.F. of Force "J" were not exercised in an anti-aircraft role, and were therefore used to supplement close support fire. (C.B. 04385 B.) One of these craft was observed close inshore firing tracer at the beach. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 6 Jun.) This method of adding to drenching fire by L.C.F. was also practised by Force "G". (C.B. 3148.)

313. The diaries of the armoured regiments make no mention of the performance of L.C.T. (C.B.). One instance is recorded of a concrete-buster engaging a casemate. (Lt.-Col. Matheson, as above.) The commander of Force "J" further reported their fire to be very destructive when used against buildings. (C.B. 04385 B.)

314. The little naval "hedgerows", towed to the beaches in L.C.A. (H.R.), while not properly contributing to drenching fire, may be mentioned here. They too seem to have run foul of heavy seas for it was reported that of nine craft of the first division (G.J.1) only one appeared; the second division arrived intact. (C.B. 04385 B.) This may help to explain the difficulty experienced in opening exits on the right sector.

315. (ii) Army In the weather conditions which prevailed, the Royal Marine Centaurs were hampered by the unseaworthiness of the L.C.T. (A.) and L.C.T. (H.E.). There were some craft casualties (para 288 above) and others arrived late, but the batteries performed their tasks ashore to good effect. (Ibid.) An artillery signaller called for fire from a troop of Centaurs against a block-house on the beach which was holding up Regina Rif. The Royal Marines quickly "eliminated this nuisance". (W.D., 13 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun.) 2 R.M.A.S. Regiment continued to act as field artillery until 20 Jun, by which date 25 of the original 32 Centaur tanks were still in action. (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div, 20 Jun.)

316. The success of the seaborne S.P. artillery in the assault is beyond doubt, and all observers, both naval and military, acknowledged its value. General Keller's comment was:

The SP arty put on the best shoot that they ever did on the four areas pre-selected for them

(Maj.-Gen. Keller, as above.)

more specific was the statement of the commander of 7 Cdn Inf Bde that "the only damage visible from sea was that effected by our SP arty fire" (Brig. Foster, as above.)

317. Curiously enough, the gunners themselves are non-committal in their remarks on the run-in shoot (probably because it had become a drill) and provide almost no detailed information about it. It can be gathered however that no disappointment was felt over the performance, which several diarists perfunctorily described as "very effective" or "most effective". (W.Ds., H.Q. R.C.A., 13 and 19 Cdn Fd Regts, 6 Jun.) Only one diary notes, what was probably common to all, that "the concentration was NOT as tight as had been attained in some training exercises due to the running sea." (W.D., 14 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun.) The infantry unit which this regiment's concentration was designed to support makes particular mention of shells falling in the town of BERNIERES and of the beach being obscured by their smoke. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 6 Jun.) The statement in the diary of H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde that at 0800 hours "for some unknown reason SP arty had switched all fire to ST AUBIN" is not easily explained; according to 14 Cdn Fd Regt, the BERNIERES strongpoint was under fire from H minus 30 to H plus 5, as planned. (W.Ds., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde and 14 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun.) The unavoidable dispersion of shot doubtless gave the impression to some observers that fire was being largely wasted: one diarist speaks of "SP guns afloat firing short as usual." (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun.) Here again it is pertinent to recall that fire for effect was both observed and corrected by Forward Observation Officers in L.C.S. (M.), whose advanced station gave them better opportunity to judge its results.

318. External evidence may be adduced to support the conclusion that S.P. artillery made an important contribution to the fire preparation. In "Gold" area the strongpoint at LE HAMEL offered unexpectedly fierce resistance; this has been attributed not only to the failure of the bombing programme in this area, but also to the fact that the artillery concentration designed to cover it failed altogether to materialize, owing to navigational difficulties. (C.B. 3148.)

319. Finally, it should not be forgotten that these same regiments, in addition to performing the astonishing feat of firing from sea, were able to disembark at an early hour with relatively few casualties and thus afford the infantry normal field artillery support during the initial stages of the land battle. The dual role assigned to field guns stands out as one of the most arresting features of the operation.

320. The ultimate proof of the validity of the DIEPPE lessons is established by the following conclusion: "All reports confirm that the British principle of employing special support craft in the assault is sound." There is moreover a striking reminder of the recommendation for "overwhelming fire support" in the finding of the Gunnery Review that there was "no evidence to show that the fire support provided was excessive". (C.B. 3148.)

321. (iii) Air Force: Only meagre reports are available regarding the outcome of the close support air effort. This much is certain -- that the major beach strongpoints were no more harmed by bombing than by fire from sea. Poor visibility, made worse by smoke and dust, was believed by some to have cancelled entirely the projected bombing attacks on the beach defences. The diarist of H.Q. R.C.A., observing that the naval and artillery bombardment had commenced, added, "We are all wondering what became of the Air Force". (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A., 6 Jun.) Senior officers, acknowledging that the attacks were delivered, commented on their want of accuracy, which they ascribed to low cloud base. Brigadier Foster stated that "the terrific devastation which was to have been caused by hy bombing of the coast defns on either side of the R Seullles did not materialize." (Brig. Foster, as above. Similarly, Brig. Blackader: "On the left bn front (ST AUBIN) neither the RAF hy oboes, the rockets, nor the SP arty actually covered the main strong pt....")

322. Before H Hour, two bombing attacks were made against the beaches. The first of these coincided roughly with the opening naval bombardment at 0530 hours. This is not to be confused with Bomber Command's counter-battery effort, the effects of which were still visible from sea about an hour earlier (cf. paras 172 and 271). It thus appears that the first heavy day bombing of beach defences, originally scheduled to take place "prior to D Day", was made, in the actual event, on D Day itself, simultaneously with the initial naval bombardment. The second attack was launched as part of the combined fire plan covering the approach; it is probable that in this case the bombs were dropped somewhat inland to avoid endangering our own troops, since visual aiming was impossible.

323. That both air attacks were made is attested by several observers. The diary of Group Captain Cleland, Air Representative aboard "Hilary", contains this entry:

...At approximately 0530 hrs ... bombing was seen to be taking place on the beaches. Naval gunfire from Cruisers and Destroyers had by now opened up, and kept up continuous fire until the commencement of bombing by U.S. heavy day bombers at approximately "H" - 30

(Form 540, Air Representative, Force "J", copy in custody of R.C.A.F. Operations Record Officer, A.E.A.F.)

Canadian naval reports confirm this statement. (R.C.N's Part in the Invasion.) The experience of "Algonquin" shows that some bombs found their target area, despite poor visibility; the ship's log complains: "...Air Force is messing up our target again". (Ibid.)

324. There is little information regarding attacks on pre-selected targets by fighter-bombers. H.M.S. "Hilary" received a brief R/T report telling of a successful attack on a three-gun battery near VAUX (942857), and the C.R.A. later confirmed that no further fire was experienced from this position. (C.B. 04385B.) The attack was delivered by 439 Squadron, R.C.A.F. No subsequent requests for air support were made by the G.O.C., 3 Cdn Inf Div, while on board ship, following the initial pre-arranged attack. (Form 540, Air Representative, as above.)

325. In summary, then, the combined fire plan suffered from two disadvantages, neither one inherent in it. The first was that it was impaired by adverse weather. Secondly, it did not equal the destructiveness that had been predicted for it. In order to impart confidence, it is likely that a somewhat exaggerated conception of its power was fostered among the troops; this inevitably produced a sense of disappointment at finding opposition still alive, when from all expectations it ought certainly to have been annihilated.

326. (iv) Anti-Aircraft. The single battery (32 Cdn L.A.A. Battery) of the divisional anti-aircraft regiment which landed on D Day evidently found little opportunity to open fire, for the regiment's War Diary contains no record of engagements during the period 6-11 Jun. At first, the enemy largely confined his air effort to attacks against the beaches and anchorages, only shifting the weight of his bombing inland towards the middle of June. The remainder of the regiment landed on 12 Jun, and was deployed to protect gun areas. (W.D., 4 Cdn L.A.A. Regt, June 1944.)

327. (v) Anti-Tank. 105 (Composite) Cdn A. Tk Bty landed with 9 Cdn Inf Bde Group on D Day and a troop of M.10s accompanied the advanced guard on its march through VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS on 6 and 7 Jun. The balance of the regiment sailed in convoy from the THAMES estuary on 6 Jun, and came under heavy cross-channel shelling in the Straits of DOVER. By 8 Jun, the batteries were ashore and deployed with their respective brigades; 94 Cdn A. Tk Bty suffered numerous casualties in PUTOT-EN-BESSIN and BRETTEVILLE on the same day; 52 Bty was placed in support of 9 Cdn Inf Bde at VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS; and 105 Bty was deployed with 8 Cdn Inf Bde at COLOMBY-SUR-THAON and ANGUERNY. Up to 9 Jun the regiment had had six 6-pounder guns knocked out and three M.10s put out of action. (W.D., 3 Cdn A. Tk Regt, 6-9 Jun.) As is invariably the case when sub-units are dispersed throughout the division, the regiment's War Diary has little to say of the activities of its troops and batteries. For a somewhat lurid account of 6-pounder anti-tank guns in action against Panthers at BRETTEVILLE, reference should be made to the Memorandum of Interview with Sgt. H. Dumas. (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/RCA/C/F.)

(1) Enemy Reaction to the Assault

328. Interrogation of senior enemy commanders has produced a body of evidence which makes it possible not only to present with some authority the German strategic conception of the campaign but also to amplify considerably our knowledge of more local actions.

329. The enemy's preparations against invasion are fully discussed in the C.S.D.I.C. Reports of Interrogations of Field Marshal von Rundstedt, C.-in-C. West, and his Chief of Staff, General Blumentritt. (Hist. Sec file C.S.D.I.C./F: C.-in-C. West and the Allied Invasion Plan, 1943-1944; Notes on German Dispositions in France, Jun 44; and Interrogation of Generalfeldmarschall von Rundstedt.) The "Atlantic Wall" was for the most part notoriously weak, its value being enormously boosted by propaganda. Only that portion of it from the SCHELDT to the SEINE was heavily guarded and fortified. This region, especially the PAS DE CALAIS and the SEINE estuary, was considered by the Germans to be the most likely target area for invasion, as offering the shortest

route to PARIS and, through Belgium, to the RUHR. The Calvados area, on the other hand, was believed comparatively immune, the German Navy claiming that offshore rocks made large-scale landings there impossible. (Notes on German Dispositions; von Rundstedt, as above.) It can thus be seen how aptly the Allied deception plan fostered this mistaken belief by indicating a threat to the PAS DE CALAIS.

330. If, however, the "Atlantic Wall" was far from being an invincible barrier, offering in reality no defence in depth, greater reliance was placed by the enemy on his mobile reserves. (Ibid.) But here again confused conditions of command and the prevailing indecision of the General Staff resulted in too great a dispersal of these forces and an utterly impotent counter-attack policy. Von Rundstedt himself has explained that he was in no way free to place his troops as he saw fit, but that to the smallest detail their disposition was dictated by higher authority, with consequent loss of flexibility. His words may be quoted: "Had I been able to move the armoured 'Divisionen' which I had behind the coast, I am convinced that the invasion would not have succeeded. Always assuming your airforce away." (Ibid.) A fundamental disagreement existed between von Rundstedt and his subordinate, Rommel (commanding Army Group "B"), with respect to the placing of these armoured reserves. The latter advocated placing the bulk of them close to the threatened coastal areas so they could at once enter the battle; von Rundstedt was in favour of concentrating his forces in a central position with a view to employing them in a war of movement, although this plan had the disadvantage of exposing the armour to air attack while on the move. (C.-in-C. West and the Allied Invasion Plan.) The only solution was a compromise.

331. The inevitable result of such discordant policy is illustrated by the extraordinary misuse of 21 Pz Div. This formation was assigned a dual role in Normandy: that of reinforcing the thinly disposed 716 Inf Div, so as to defeat an invasion on the beaches, and also that of providing at the same time a tactical reserve. In an attempt to meet both these requirements, 21 Pz Div was scattered over an area of more than three hundred square miles in extent, from FALAISE almost as far North as the coast. It was thus so thoroughly dispersed that, even before the assault, it was automatically disqualified as a counter-attack force. (Hist Sec file AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/L/F: Special Interrogation Report, Genlt Edgar Feuchtinger, Comd 21 Pz Div.)

332. On D Day, the initial opposition to the assault by 1 Brit Corps was offered, as predicted, by troops of 736 Grenadier Regiment of 716 Inf Div. A captured German map shows that this regiment, contrary to expectations, had placed all three battalions forward on the coast. MIKE and NAN Sectors had been garrisoned by II and III Battalions; I Battalion had been disposed astride the mouth of the ORNE. (W.D., G.S. (Int), H.Q. 21 Army Group, June 1944: 21 Army Group Int Summary No. 130, 12 Jun.) In one day of battle, 716 Inf Div was decimated and did not reappear as a fighting entity. (Feuchtinger, as cited above.)

333. Because the infantry regiments of 21 Pz Div were likewise placed well forward astride the ORNE, in fulfilment of their quasi-reserve role, it was not long on 6 Jun before they too were inextricably involved both with 3 Brit Inf Div and 6 Airborne Div. (Operations Log, First Cdn Army, 6 Jun, as above.) Still later in the day, members of this division were encountered by Canadian troops near ANGUERNY (para 215 above). Hours passed after the first assault, and still no order was received by the German divisional commander, who at last, on his own initiative, ordered an attack against 6 Airborne Div. During the morning this was countermanded and 21 Pz Div was directed to commit its armoured regiment against 3 Brit Inf Div, which was rapidly approaching CAEN. The counter-attack met with little success, although in the evening one battle group was able to penetrate between 3 Cdn Inf Div and 3 Brit Inf Div as far as LION-SUR-MER. This thrust was driven back, and by the close of 6 Jun, 21 Pz Div had lost 25 per cent of its strength in futile attempts to crush the landings. (Feuchtinger as above.) It was not until nightfall that Feuchtinger was advised that the responsibility for defeating the invasion in the CAEN sector was to be entrusted to 1 S.S. Panzer Corps, commanded by Oberstgruppenführer Joseph ("Sepp") Dietrich. This corps was eventually to comprise 21 Pz Div, 12 S.S. Pz Div, Pz Lehr Div and 1 S.S. Pz Div; but for the present only the first two were available for immediate commitment. (Hist Sec file AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/L/F: Special Interrogation Report, Oberstgruppenführer Joseph Dietrich.) While the hard-pressed 21 Pz Div fought to stabilize the deteriorating line before CAEN, 25 S.S. Panzer Regiment of 12 S.S. Pz Div moved forward hurriedly from its location near LAIGLE. (Supplementary Report of S.H.A.E.F. Inquiry, as above.) At a midnight conference between Feuchtinger and Meyer (the commander of 25 S.S. Panzer Grenadier Regiment) it was decided that a combined attack should be made on the following day towards the sea between CAIRON and CAMBES. By mid-day of 7 Jun, before preparations for this venture were complete, Nth N.S. Highrs were pressing on towards AUTHIE with such speed that the enemy could not fully organize his forces. The counter-attack, which was launched with great vigour by 25 S.S. Panzer Grenadier Regiment, supported by a battalion of tanks, succeeded in driving the Canadian troops back from AUTHIE and BURON. Beyond that, as we have seen, it did not go, thus failing to achieve its object -- a break-through to the shoreline. Meyer's explanation, concurred in by Dietrich, was that his forces were brought to a standstill owing to a shortage of petrol. (Hist Sec file AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/L/F: Special Interrogation Report, Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer, Comd 12 S.S. Pz Div.) Feuchtinger, on the other hand, declared that German losses in the attack were so heavy as to make it impossible to go further, and that in any case our anti-tank defences were too strong. (Ibid.; Feuchtinger, as above.)

334. Although the enemy had already introduced a powerful armoured screen in front of CAEN itself, he had as yet been able to bring up only light forces farther West. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, as previously described, had met only negligible opposition on its advance to the final objective on the CAEN - BAYEUX road. On this same day (7 Jun), according to Dietrich, the whole sector from CAIRON as far West as TILLY-SUR-SEULLES was protected only by the reconnaissance battalion of 12 S.S. Pz Div, so that a break-through there might have had far-reaching consequences. (Dietrich, as above.)

335. By 8 Jun the German defensive line in the CAEN sector had been substantially formed. The entire 12 S.S. Pz Div was holding a line from TILLY-SUR-SEULLES approximately to EPRON. On its left, Pz Lehr Div was being committed piecemeal, as its elements reached the battle area. On its right flank, 21 Pz Div dug in, striving desperately to oppose further advances towards CAEN. The remaining formation, 1 S.S. Pz Div, was still not ready for action. (Meyer; and Dietrich, as above.) No concerted offensive action in this sector was undertaken by the enemy during the days immediately following D Day. This state of affairs was to continue unchanged for many weeks.

OPERATIONS DURING THE BALANCE OF JUNE

336. The whole structure of the campaign during June 1944 rests on two opposing factors -- the Allied build-up and the enemy's reinforcement of his troops containing the bridgehead.

(a) The Allied Build-up

337. Inasmuch as adverse weather impeded even the landing of the immediate follow-up troops, it follows that build-up forces were correspondingly delayed. Nevertheless the build-up programme proceeded rapidly, gathering momentum after the initial set-back. For this project over 2000 merchant ships of a total gross tonnage of more than four million tons were employed. (Summary of Naval Reports on Operation "NEPTUNE".)

338. The vast scale of transportation achieved by the Royal Navy was made feasible primarily by the MULBERRIES and GOOSE-BERRIES. The story of the MULBERRIES is well known, and promises indeed to become a legend. They were constructed of 6,000-ton concrete caissons towed across the Channel, and were surely a monument of ingenuity and industry. The British port at ARROMAN-CHES required four and a half miles of these caissons, totalling approximately 550,000 tons in weight. (Mr. A.V. Alexander, presenting the Naval Estimates for 1945, The Times, 8 Mar 45.) Within this steadily expanding artificial harbour, ships and craft unloaded thousands of men and vehicles in complete safety. Elsewhere in the assault area, small shipping was protected by GOOSEBERRIES. In "Juno" area the first "Corncobs" (or block-ships) were planted on 8 Jun. Two days later this shelter, known as GOOSEBERRY No. 4, was completed. It proved to be "an unqualified success" as a protection for ferry craft and a base for maintenance and repair. (C.B. 04385B.) The "Juno" anchorage was further improved by the construction of Naval Landing pontoons. On 9 Jun a 700-foot length of these pontoons was built out near the entrance to COURSEULLES Harbour, and two more such lengths were constructed on the following day. These were used for discharging L.C.T. and for landing troops "dry-shod". (Ibid.) The port of COURSEULLES itself was opened on D plus 2. Through some miracle the antiquated lock gates (dating from 1874) were intact, and after the dredging of the harbour basins it was not long before the port was handling 1000 tons of stores per day. (Ibid.) PORT-EN-BESSIN and QUISTREHAM were similarly put to use.

339. On 19 Jun, a critical situation developed with the sudden advent of a strong Northeasterly gale, blowing into the Bay of the SEINE. Unloading at the beaches virtually ceased. The effects of the storm are sharply reflected in the figures showing overall tonnages landed during this period. From 11,200 tons on 16 Jun (presumably in the British sector) the total

drops to 2,700 tons on 21 Jun. After the gale, recovery was rapid, with tonnages rising to 19,900 tons on 25 Jun. A month later a peak of 28,000 tons was reached. (High-lights of Administration, as cited above.) The U.S. MULBERRY at ST. LAURENT was irreparably smashed by the gale and further construction on it was abandoned. But the British port at ARROMANCHES remained largely intact and continued to give good service throughout the gale. The blockships likewise provided shelter for the hundreds of landing craft which would otherwise have been wrecked on the lee shore. Even so, many were damaged, and the litter on the beach caused the naval officer in charge of "Juno" area to remark that it was "reminiscent of D Day". But the number damaged was not sufficient to cripple the ferry service. (C.B. 04385B.) Moreover, the capture of CHERBOURG in the last week of June gave promise of normal harbour facilities at an early date. The vital problem of maintenance and reinforcement during the crucial first phase had been solved.

340. Admiral Ramsay's conclusions on the success of the build-up may be quoted:

...So far as I know, the position of the Expeditionary Force was never in doubt from D plus 2¹/₂ onwards. The naval view had always been that the build-up plan should be an optimum plan at which we should aim but that its attainment was most improbable....

(C.B. 04385A.)

This opinion, coming from one of the joint commanders-in-chief, is a most important one. It was meant to refute the claim that the Royal Navy had not achieved the fullest possible results in the build-up.

341. By 12 Jun, the build-up of 1 Corps was complete, all of 51 (H) Inf Div having been landed. By 15 Jun (D plus 9) 500,000 men and 77,000 vehicles had been put ashore in France; the millionth man was landed on D plus 28. (Ibid.) The expansion of the air arm on the Continent also showed satisfactory progress: 83 Composite Group was established at CREULLY as early as 10 Jun.

(b) Enemy Build-up

342. Against this picture of increasing Allied striking power must be set the enemy's attempts to contend with the new theatre of operations which had been forced on him. The salient fact emerging from a review of enemy strategy is, that not having succeeded, as he had optimistically intended, in defeating the invasion on the beaches themselves, he thereupon failed to deliver a co-ordinated attack in sufficient force to disrupt any part of the bridgehead. During the period of the gale, when reinforcement and supply were virtually stalled, the enemy was presented with a golden opportunity to mass his Panzers for a powerful blow; under cloudy weather conditions his movements could have been made with a minimum of interference from the air. Had he chosen, or been able, during these few days to launch a full-scale armoured break-through after the pattern of 1940, it is possible that he might have made good his boast of foiling the Allied invasion of "Festung Europa". But the simple truth is that at no time did the enemy make such a concerted effort. The whole character of his reaction to the bridgehead was made clear by his first violent but local attacks against it: he invariably adopted a policy of plugging holes where they appeared and of so committing his armoured reserves "piecemeal" that in the end his only possible role was a defensive one. It is to explain this curious temporizing

attitude that we are concerned here.

343. The inflexibility of operational direction which had so marked an effect on the enemy's first reaction to the assault continued thereafter to hamper his offensive activity against the bridgehead. Von Rundstedt's appreciation was that it was necessary to yield CAEN, and to withdraw to the South in order to form an infantry line behind the ORNE. The Panzer divisions could thus be freed for a heavy attack against the Americans over the more favourable terrain to the West. This proposal was refused. Not an inch of territory was to be given up. (Von Rundstedt; Notes on German Dispositions.) The alternative open to the enemy was therefore to continue to hold the CAEN salient, but to employ infantry, for this purpose so as to release the armoured divisions, which were being mercilessly cut to pieces. But there were difficulties which rendered even this plan impracticable. In the first place, fresh infantry divisions were not made available: still casting frightened glances across the Straits of Dover, the German High Command kept Fifteenth Army intact in the PAS DE CALAIS, "waiting for an invasion which never came." (Dietrich.) Secondly, it was considered that to attempt to relieve the armour within range of our naval guns would be little short of disastrous. (Von Rundstedt.)

344. Thus it was that the enemy was compelled to leave 1 S.S. Pz Corps where it was in the CAEN sector. From the statements made by the German corps and divisional commanders, it is possible to detect their extreme chagrin at finding themselves in so unfavourable a situation. Although constantly on the defensive, they were repeatedly ordered to attack with forces which could not be reinforced and which every day grew still further depleted. (Dietrich; Meyer; and Feuchtinger.)

345. The complete success of the strategic deception plan, as mentioned above, is indicated in the enemy's hesitation to thin his garrison North of the SEINE. Incredible as it may seem, he was obviously induced to believe that the Normandy landings were "a preliminary and diversionary operation, designed to draw German reserves away from the PAS DE CALAIS and BELGIUM." (Operation "OVERLORD", Cover and Diversionary Plans, as cited above.) Here is an instance of deception playing a definite operative role, adequate proof of the inferiority of enemy Intelligence. The success achieved by this plan was largely responsible for victory in Normandy being won against a single army instead of two.

346. Up to D plus 5 no German division was known to have crossed the SEINE to join the battle of the bridgehead. Badly needed infantry divisions, especially, still lingered on the far bank of the SEINE. (21 Army Gp Int Summary No. 129, quoted in First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 6.) The enemy build-up by 13 Jun had fallen below even Allied expectations: instead of the anticipated 22 divisions, only 13 were as yet committed in Normandy. By 1 Jul, 20 divisions were in action as against the 37 previously estimated. (S.H.A.E.F. Int Summary, 19 Aug 44, quoted in First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 53.) Of the looked-for arrivals from the North, the most feared was 1 S.S. Pz Div (Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler); because of its close association with 12 S.S. Pz Div (both forming part of 1 S.S. Pz Corps), it was expected soon to make its appearance. In actual fact, its advanced elements were in action no earlier than 28 Jun. (First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 16.) By the end of June, the enemy, at last sensing his fatal mistake, was thrusting into the field "a galaxy of talent in swift succession" in a frantic effort to halt the growing British offensive. Now indeed he recognized his peril: never before during the war had he

assembled so many S.S. Panzer divisions in so small an area, or to such slight effect. (First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 16.) Out of this strange policy one fact stood clear: CAEN must not fall. To that end, the whole left wing of the Allied force must be immobilized, whatever the cost.

347. Another equally important factor had its influence on the German build-up -- Allied air power. In order to deny to the enemy the possibility of rapid reinforcement, heavy bombers were being systematically employed long before D Day to paralyze the entire railway system from the RHINE Westward to the assault area. So effective was this three-months' offensive that after the landings the enemy was reduced to using at the most six trains a day, as against 48 under normal conditions. The great majority of reserves had to travel by road, a slow and wearing process which almost invariably brought them into battle in a state of fatigue. (Bomber Command Quarterly Review No. 9, as cited above.) Under constant observation and attack from the air, the enemy's infantry divisions, with their inferior scale of transport, found even road journeys a hazardous mode of travel. The SEINE and LOIRE became almost insuperable obstacles after the calculated destruction of their bridges; and communications generally were reduced to a state of chaos. (See, in this connection, von Rundstedt, as above.)

348. By contrast with the might and efficiency of the Allied air arm, the Luftwaffe made but a paltry showing, surpassing even the Wehrmacht in its lack of purpose. On D Day there was no attempted interference until mid-afternoon; and even then enemy air efforts were so slight as to be negligible. During the night 6/7 Jun, approximately 85 enemy aircraft were active over the beaches and shipping lanes, where they were met by a dense volume of concentrated anti-aircraft fire. (A.E.A.F. Report on Air Operations Prior to and in Support of Operation "NEPTUNE", as cited above.) In large part the crippling of the German air force was the achievement once again of British and American heavy bombers. During the week 20 - 26 Feb 44 they had delivered such tremendous blows at enemy plane production that it was never able to recover. These attacks reduced the Luftwaffe to a mere defensive force, deprived of striking power; in a word, the German air force was "out-fought in the air, hammered on its airfields, and smashed in its factories". (Sir Archibald Sinclair, presenting the Air Estimates for 1945, The Times, 7 Mar 45.)

349. Frustrated in his attempts to maintain a battle-worthy air force, the enemy found solace in his "Vergeltungs-waffen"; the first pilotless aircraft were launched against the United Kingdom during the night 12/13 Jun. On 23 Jun, one of these "flying bombs" was observed flying from North to South over 3 Cdn Inf Div's area and was forthwith engaged by gunners of 4 Cdn L.A.A. Regt. "Two hits were scored which caused the engine to miss badly", but the machine continued its course into enemy territory. (W.D., 4 Cdn L.A.A. Regt, June 1944: Appx 7.)

(c) Course of Operations Generally

350. It is against this background that the progress of events during June must be reviewed. Because the enemy had concentrated his principal strength near CAEN, the first Allied gains from the bridgehead were made on its Western extremity. This was, of course, consistent with our strategy, which was directed initially towards the capture of CHERBOURG.

351. By 9 Jun, 29 U.S. Inf Div had taken ISIGNY and 1 U.S. Inf Div was on a line level with 50 (N) Inf Div. Firm contact between V and VII U.S. Corps was established on the following day. As the Allied right wing thus commenced to move forward, 30 Brit Corps struck South on the axis TILLY-SUR-SEULLES -- VILLERS-BOCAGE. With this offensive opened a series of bitter, fluctuating battles during which the towns of TILLY and HOTTOT repeatedly changed hands. It was to assist this operation that 2 Cdn Armd Bde mounted its attack towards GRAINVILLE on 11 Jun. By 19 Jun TILLY was firmly in our hands. Only the day previous had come the cheering news that 9 U.S. Inf Div had cut the CHERBOURG Peninsula and that VII U.S. Corps was already closing on the defences of the city itself.

352. On the Eastern end of the bridgehead the immediate object remained the capture of CAEN. Although the enemy showed no sign of relaxing his hold on it, it became possible, in view of the increasing expansion to the West, to plan to take the city by a pincer movement. General Montgomery's directive of 18 Jun specified that the main weight of this pincer was to be supplied by launching 8 Corps, "strong in armour", through the sector East of the ORNE. (Directive from C.-in-C., 21 Army Group, 18 Jun, copy in custody of Historical Section, C.M.H.Q.) But the subsequent discovery that the enemy was "too strongly posted on our left flank", made it necessary to shift 8 Corps to the right wing and to reduce the scale of the Eastern arm. (*Ibid.*, 19 Jun.) The attack (Operation "EPSOM") began on 26 Jun, between LE MESNIL-PATRY and NORREY-EN-BESSIN in the Canadian sector, and in a short space of time was successful in establishing a bridgehead over the River ODON near GRAINVILLE. The enemy forces fell back on CARPIQUET, closer to CAEN.

353. Elsewhere operations had likewise proceeded satisfactorily: 30 Corps had continued its successful offensive, and U.S. forces had taken CHERBOURG and entirely cleared the peninsula before the end of June. The time seemed ripe for the assault on the CAEN salient. On 28 Jun, therefore, 1 Corps went over to the offensive to open Operation "ABERLOUR". But, after a bad start against strong enemy positions, it was cancelled. Further operations in this region were, moreover, suddenly suspended when on 29 Jun the enemy at last launched an armoured counter-attack against 8 Corps, using the Panzer divisions of 2 S.S. Pz Corps. Based on VILLERS-BOCAGE, it aimed at breaking through to the CAEN - BAYEUX road. For a time it appeared that a critical situation had developed, but it was soon obvious that the German forces were being most ineffectively employed and that the attack had petered out. The month of June came to an end with the British and Canadian troops of 1 Corps once more preparing for a decisive blow against the CAEN "hinge". The enemy's resources had by this time been materially weakened and his efforts to gain the initiative had been without avail.

THE CANADIAN SECTOR, 12 - 30 JUN

(a) The Defensive Role

354. The period now under review was for the most part one of static warfare for 1 Brit Corps. Only when the Western portion of the Allied line had begun to swing Southwards like a huge door on its hinge near CAEN was it necessary, or feasible, to resume offensive activity in the Eastern sector. But if 1 Corps undertook few operations and instead dedicated itself chiefly to a holding role, the initiative nevertheless did not pass to the enemy. This is not to say that offensive operations were not contemplated; in actual fact, as we shall see, intensive planning and preparation went on throughout the period. The atmosphere, so to speak, was decidedly aggressive, and this served to prevent any decline in the morale of the troops.

355. It will be appropriate here to examine the dispositions adopted by 3 Cdn Inf Div in preparation for what appeared to be a static period of uncertain duration. On the right, in the salient where the bridgehead of 3 Cdn Inf Div reached its maximum depth, 7 Cdn Inf Bde held the area PUTOT-EN-BESSIN - NORREY-EN-BESSIN - SECQUEVILLE-EN-BESSIN. The left sector, VIEUX CAIRON - LES BUISSONS - VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS, was still occupied by 9 Cdn Inf Bde. The central sector along the wooded MUE valley was now guarded by 8 Cdn Inf Bde. 154 Inf Bde of 51 (H) Inf Div assumed responsibility for the area BASLY - ANGUERNY, previously held by 8 Cdn Inf Bde; this assured the security of the right sector, which would otherwise have been too thinly held. A substantial armoured reserve was also in existence. On the right, behind 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 2 Cdn Armd Bde was concentrated in a central position based on CAMILLY. (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 11 Jun.) Similarly, on the left, 4 Armd Bde was concentrated around COLOMBY-SUR-THAON. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 12 Jun, serial 30.)

356. By 12 Jun it was considered that the greatest threat to the Corps area lay in the possibility of a mass attack from the enemy's salient North and Northwest of CAEN, which offered the shortest route to the beaches. Such an attack, it was seen, might lead to most serious consequences, for it was over these beaches that the sector East of the River ORNE was supplied, and interference with these channels of maintenance would effectively cut off and render helpless both 6 Airborne Div and the elements of 51 (H) Inf Div in that sector. For this reason the burden of defence rested mainly on 3 Brit Inf Div and 9 Cdn Inf Bde. This fact was made clear by the G.O.C., 3 Brit Inf Div during a visit to the Canadian formation. (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 13 Jun.)

357. Previous to this time, plans for an armoured break-out from 7 Cdn Inf Bde's sector had led to a stripping of supporting weapons from the left sector (a process described by the brigade diarist as "the rape of 9 Cdn Inf Bde"). (Ibid., 12 Jun.) But the switch to a purely defensive role reversed the procedure, and efforts were soon being made to strengthen 9 Cdn Inf Bde at the expense of the other two brigades. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 12 Jun, serial 38.) Most important was the thickening of anti-tank defences: to this end the divisional anti-tank regiment was re-deployed so as to place two of its batteries

at the disposal of 9 Cdn Inf Bde. (W.D., 3 Cdn A. Tk Regt, 12 Jun.) In addition, 46 R.M. Commando, freed from its tasks in the MUE valley, was placed under command. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 12 Jun, serial 52.) with so strong a force assembled (including 4 Armd Bde and 154 Inf Bde) there seemed small cause for concern. Emphasis was laid on holding the German infantry, should a heavy counter-attack develop. It was pointed out that the "masses" of anti-tank guns would deal capably with enemy armour but that if infantry broke through the situation would become critical. (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 13 Jun.)

358. After several days, when no counter-attack had manifested itself, the situation was described by a diarist:

The battle has, in the main, developed into a counter-battery one. Our reinforcements in personnel and equipment have brought us up to strength except for about 35 tanks. We are ready to re-assume the offensive. At present, however, our role is a holding one....

(W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 14 Jun.)

In truth, it had become a counter-battery battle, in which the odds were certainly against the enemy. Seldom if ever did he produce a sustained or weighty artillery concentration, whereas his every observed movement brought down on him an instantaneous and heavy volume of shellfire. A typical instance is recorded of an enemy meal parade, "complete with mess-tins", being made the target of a regimental concentration. (W.D., 14 Cdn Fd Regt, June 1944: Appx 6, 14 Fd Regt Int Sum No. 4, 25 Jun.) One may conclude that the enemy's mode of life in forward areas was not of the most carefree sort. But if artillery concentrations on the grand scale were beyond his sphere, the enemy was able nonetheless to engage in a certain measure of counter-battery fire in an attempt to limit the effectiveness of our guns. The diaries of field regiments contain such entries as this: "At 1500 hrs our daily enemy CB shelling". (W.D., 13 Cdn Fd Regt, 16 Jun.) In addition, enemy harassing fire was directed against air-landing strips, headquarters and similar targets; on 17 Jun Lt.-Col. J. R.W.T. Bessonette, C.R.A.S.C., was killed when rounds fell in his headquarters. (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A.S.C., 17 Jun.) It is of interest to note that a proportion of the enemy's shells were "blinds", a possible indication of sabotage by French workmen. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 17 Jun, serial 56; and 25 Jun, serial 40; W.Ds., Hist Offr, 3 Cdn Inf Div, 18 Jun; Q.O.R. of C., 28 Jun; and 13 Cdn Fd Regt, 12 Jun.) German fire-power, although inferior as regards artillery, was given added weight by the skilful use of mortars. To counteract the effectiveness of these weapons, arrangements were begun to add a counter-mortar staff to H.Q. R.C.A. (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div, 20 Jun.)

359. The arrival of 49 (West Riding) Inf Div as part of 30 Corps introduced a new formation on the right flank of 3 Cdn Inf Div, when 146 Inf Bde relieved 69 Inf Bde on 13/14 Jun. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 13 Jun.) Almost at once 49 Inf Div began to make its presence felt, for on 16 Jun a successful attack was made on CRISTOT, while a simultaneous feint towards BRONAY resulted in the occupation of that village as well. (*Ibid.*, 16 Jun.) The attack was given the support of three regiments of the Canadian divisional artillery (12 and 14 Cdn Fd Regts and 79 Medium Regt), which fired concentrations in the area of LE MESNIL-PATRY. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 16 Jun, serial 25.)

360. As a result of these advances on the right there seemed good reason to believe that the enemy was withdrawing from LE MESNIL-PATRY. This appears first to have been suggested by the G.O.C., 49 (WR) Inf Div, and was confirmed by information from other sources. (W.D., and Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 Jun.) At about 1700 hours, therefore, 1 C. Scot R. was ordered to send out a patrol South of the CAEN - BAYEUX railway in order to investigate the area. (Ibid.) The patrol, consisting of a platoon of infantry and three sections of carriers, entered the wood (9071) midway between PUTOT and LE MESNIL and found it empty. The carriers continued forward into the town and discovered that it too was clear of enemy. Much of it was in flames as a result of the artillery bombardment earlier in the day. At 2200 hours, "C" company proceeded to enter LE MESNIL. (Ibid.; W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 16 Jun.) As early as 1735 hours, R. Wpg Rif had been warned to be ready to move forward at an hour's notice. When word came that the company of 1 C. Scot R. was in position, the order was given to advance through PUTOT-EN-BESSIN to LE MESNIL. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 Jun.) The leading company moved off at 2300 hours and the whole battalion was in position by 0400 hours, 17 Jun. R. Wpg Rif also remarked on the devastation caused by the shelling, and from the numbers of German dead concluded that the enemy had had to conduct his withdrawal under this fire. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 18 Jun; the date is clearly in error.) The pioneer platoon at once set to work clearing away the booby traps and mines with which the buildings had been liberally furnished. "C" company of 1 C. Scot R. was withdrawn to PUTOT, and by virtue of these changes in disposition that battalion now became reserve unit. (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 17 Jun.) In their new area in LE MESNIL-PATRY, R. Wpg Rif were subjected once more to shelling and mortaring, and enemy attempts at infiltration were broken up by our artillery. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 18 Jun.) 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts had also moved, having been brought forward from BRAY to positions near PUTOT and BRETTEVILLE respectively. Their proximity to the enemy can be judged from the fact that the first target engaged by the latter regiment was at a range of only 1800 yards. (W.Ds., 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts, 17 Jun.)

361. Since a period of rest was plainly in order for 7 Cdn Inf Bde, arrangements were made for 7 and 8 Cdn Inf Bdes to exchange positions. Thus it occurred that 7 Cdn Inf Bde had no sooner adjusted its new brigade area (LE MESNIL-PATRY--BRETTEVILLE-- PUTOT-EN-BESSIN) than it was compelled to vacate it. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 17 Jun.) The changeover was carried out during the night 17/18 Jun, one of the shortest of the year. (Brig. Foster, as above.) It was not merely a case of a reserve brigade moving into a forward position, but was rather a transfer between two areas, both in the face of the enemy. The units of 8 Cdn Inf Bde were the first to move. As they arrived in their new areas, the battalions of 7 Cdn Inf Bde departed to occupy the positions vacated by their reliefs. Thus, Q.O.R. of C. relieved Regina Rif in BRETTEVILLE-L'ORGUEILLEUSE and NORREY-EN-BESSIN, and the latter thereupon proceeded to BRAY; when R. de Chaud had arrived in PUTOT-EN-BESSIN, 1 C. Scot R. moved to ROTS and LE HAMEL; and R Wpg Rif, on being relieved by N. Shore R. in LE MESNIL-PATRY, moved to LASSON and ROSEL. By 0700 hours, 18 Jun, these moves had been accomplished without incident

despite the danger of enemy intervention, for during the night the battalion areas in the MUE valley had been occupied only by reconnaissance parties. Luckily the enemy had chosen to lie dormant. (W.Ds., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, and battalions, 17-18 Jun.) One squadron of 7 Cdn Recce Regt was now ashore, and as an interim measure this sub-unit was placed under the command of 7 Cdn Inf Bde. It took up its first position at the chateau (945713), 500 yards North of LA VILLENEUVE. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 4, Sitrep, 18 Jun.)

362. Meanwhile, during the regrouping of 7 and 8 Cdn Inf Bdes, there had not been complete inaction throughout the remainder of the divisional area. The most important event was the reduction of the enemy fortress at the DOUVRES Radar Station by 41 R.M. Commando on 17 Jun (D plus 11). Since the failure of the attack against it ten days previously, this area had been contained by British forces and had remained a source of continual annoyance owing to the presence of its many snipers and mortars. The station consisted of two heavily defended localities, each built around the huge coast-watching and aircraft-reporting installations. Locality "A", centred on 004800, was the larger; it was surrounded by wire and mines and equipped with guns in concrete and open emplacements. Locality "B", farther North at 006808, was similarly defended. After an intensive artillery programme, the attack on the Radar Station began at 1700 hours, 17 Jun. A.V.R.E. teams flogged gaps through the minefields and planted "Beehive" charges on the emplacements. The enemy at once sought shelter in the deepest concrete structures and the infantry who followed the armour were confronted with almost no opposition. Organized resistance in both localities ceased at about 1830 hours. Casualties were very light, and prisoners taken numbered about 5 officers and 200 other ranks. (Hist Sec file AEF/1 Brit Corps/C/F: Capture of Enemy Radar Station at DOUVRES-LA-DELIVRANDE, Report by G.S.O. 1 (L), H.Q. 1 Corps.) Of these the majority were German Air Force personnel, the remainder coming from II Battalion, 736 Grenadier Regiment (716 Inf Div) and I Battalion, 192 Panzer Grenadier Regiment (21 Pz Div). (Hist Sec file AEF/1 Brit Corps/L/F: 1 Corps Int Summary No. 5.) It was another, if belated, proof that elements of 21 Pz Div had been located very near the coast at the time of the beach assault.

(b) Plans for Operations

363. The details of a proposed attack by 8 Cdn Inf Bde were set forth on 18 Jun. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, June 1944: Appx "G", 3 Cdn Inf Div Op Instr No. 1.) The operations of 30 Corps on the right flank had brought 50 (N) Inf Div to a line North of TILLY-SUR-SEULLES. In order to improve the corps situation a new attack by 49 (W.R.) Inf Div, to the East of that town, was designed to capture FONTENAY-LE-PESNEL (8767) and RAURAY (8865). When FONTENAY was secured 8 Cdn Inf Bde was to make an advance in three bounds to capture the high ground North of GRAINTILLE-SUR-ODON -- the same objective as that for the unsuccessful operation of 11 Jun. This move would cover the left flank of 49 Inf Div in its capture of RAURAY. Considering the limited nature of this venture, it is perhaps a little surprising to find that it was to be supported by the fire of five field regiments, two medium regiments, two cruisers and a battleship. (Ibid.) But on 19 Jun it was announced that the attack was cancelled. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 19 Jun, serial 39.) This was occasioned by

a change in plans for the employment of 8 Corps. It has been mentioned above (para 352) that the original intention to pass that formation through 1 Corps' bridgehead East of the ORNE was abandoned because of the enemy's formidable strength in that sector. It was therefore necessary to reduce the scale of operations on the left flank of the proposed pincer attack on CAEN, and to divert 8 Corps to a more favourable opening on the right..

364. It will be useful to present in outline the projected sequence of operations as set forth at this time, because the actions of 3 Cdn Inf Div are so closely bound up with them. The main effort of Second Army was to consist of the attack by 8 Corps (Operation "EPSOM") which would be launched through 8 Cdn Inf Bde's sector West of the River MUE, and which had as its object the establishment of a bridgehead over the ORNE South of CAEN and the seizure of the high ground Northwest of BRETTEVILLE-SUR-LAIZE. The offensive by 30 Corps, once but no longer the main effort of the Army, was to be continued; and 49 Inf Div, in order to protect the right flank of 8 Corps, was to establish itself on the RAURAY feature (its original objective in the previous plan). 1 Corps was charged with keeping active its bridgehead East of the ORNE so as to attract the enemy to that sector and also to provide a base for a left-flanking movement around CAEN. This limited operation, which was to be made by 51 (H) Inf Div as a preliminary to "EPSOM", was named "PERTH", and was to be launched first. Later, when the effect of the operations of 8 Corps became apparent, 1 Corps was to eliminate the enemy's salient North of CAEN and clear the city itself. (Hist Sec file AEF/1 Brit Corps/C/I: 1 Corps Op Instr No. 1, 19 Jun.)

365. For this latter task two separate operations were envisaged: (i) Operation "ABERLOUR", by 3 Brit Inf Div with 9 Cdn Inf Bde under command, was to clear the salient North of CAEN; (ii) Operation "OTTAWA", by 3 Cdn Inf Div and 2 Cdn Armd Bde, was to capture CARPIQUET village. The dates of "ABERLOUR" and "OTTAWA" were of course dependent on the progress achieved by 8 Corps in Operation "EPSOM", to which all the others were subsidiary. (Ibid.)

366. As must inevitably be the case when **preparations** are under way to set in motion a chain of interdependent operations, there now followed a period of readjustment and regrouping. The first event affecting 3 Cdn Inf Div was the move of 154 Inf Bde to rejoin 51 (H) Inf Div in the sector East of the ORNE. The news of this formation's departure from BASLY and ANGUERNY was not received cheerfully, for it was felt that 9 Cdn Inf Bde had been left "out on the limb". (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 18 Jun.) It was seen that the enemy was thus given access to two possible "tank runs" which were now left unguarded: one on the right between VIEUX CAIRON and LES BUISSONS and another on the left along the CAEN-BASLY road. To rectify this situation certain precautions were taken. The motor battalion of 4 Armd Bde (2 K.R.R.C.) was disposed astride the road in question, and on the other flank one company of H.L.I. of C., with a troop of 17-pounders, was ordered to move from LES BUISSONS and adopt a position in the wood North-east of LE VEY (984757). These alterations, which were completed by first light on 19 Jun, sealed off, if only lightly, the two dangerous avenues leading into the divisional area. (Ibid.; W.D., H.L.I. of C., 18 Jun.) One company of Nth N.S. Highrs was moved back into VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS to fill the gap left in that position. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 18 Jun.)

367. The next change in disposition affected the armoured reserve. Since 4 Armd Bde formed part of 8 Corps it became necessary to shift it to the West into the sector from which the corps attack would eventually be mounted. Thus, on 19 Jun 2 Cdn Armd Bde and 4 Armd Bde were ordered to exchange positions. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 19 Jun, serial 60.) The changeover began on the following day, with 27 Cdn Armd Regt proceeding to COLOMBY-SUR-THAON, a move which was greeted with delight by 9 Cdn Inf Bde. (W.Ds., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, and H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Jun.) The unit was joined in that area by the remainder of the brigade on 21 Jun. The departure of brigade headquarters from LE FRESNE-CAMILLY was solemnly described by the diarist:

As the two ACVs moved out of the courtyard where they had stood for 10 days, the household of French women and children came out to wave a friendly good-bye. The waving was in full swing both ways when the ACV clipped a stone wall, going out through a narrow gateway; the parting gesture was the slow, stately, and complete collapse of the wall....

(W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 21 Jun.)

368. Meanwhile 9 Cdn Inf Bde proceeded to acquire greater depth in its defensive position. This was accomplished by moving H.L.I. of C. out of VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS altogether and placing the battalion South of COLOMBY-SUR-THAON, astride the CAEN-BASLY road (9977-0077), for the withdrawal of 2 K.R.R.C. had left this troublesome avenue open once again. The move was begun on the evening of 20 Jun and was completed by 1000 hours on the next day. The battalion was no sooner in position, however, than orders were received to dispose the brigade as before, and H.L.I. of C. returned forthwith to VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS, leaving one company Northeast of LE VEY and one company guarding the CAEN-BASLY road. (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 20-21 Jun.) S.D. & G. Highrs and Nth N.S. Highrs remained in VIEUX CAIRON and LES BUISSONS respectively. This reversal of plans followed a visit by the corps commander, when it was decided that the new disposition in depth was not to be preferred to the more linear one previously employed. (*Ibid.*; W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 21 Jun.) The net result of these goings and comings was that the enemy, evidently suspecting that an attack was forthcoming, heavily shelled VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS during the night 21/22 Jun with guns of large calibre. Although certain casualties were sustained, it was remarked that many of the projectiles had failed to detonate. (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 22 Jun.)

369. Still another outcome of the decision to pass 8 Corps through 3 Cdn Inf Div was that the right boundary of 1 Corps would have to be shifted some distance to the East. Inasmuch as divisional headquarters was located at CAMILLY, a warning was issued that it must soon move to a new site so that it should not be on the "wrong side" of the new boundary. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 20 Jun, serial 59.) Two days later headquarters was opened at the Chateau de THAON (9777). (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 22 Jun.)

370. After a long series of conferences and discussions, the operation orders for "ABERLOUR" were issued on 25 and 26 Jun. The operation itself was scheduled to commence not before 27 Jun, i.e., as soon as Operation "EPSOM" on the right flank should have made sufficient progress. The general intention, as outlined above (para 365), was that 1 Corps was "to mop up the area NORTH and NW of CAEN". (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Brit Inf Div/C/I: 3 Brit Inf Div O.O. No. 2, 25 Jun.) This task was the responsibility of 3 Brit Inf Div with the following additional troops under command: 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 27 Cdn Armd Regt, two squadrons of 5 Assault Regt R.E. (A.V.R.E.), one squadron of 22 Dgns (Flails), and one squadron of 141 R.A.C. (Crocodiles). The following units were placed in support: two field regiments of 51 (H) Inf Div, three field regiments of 3 Cdn Inf Div, 4 A.G.R.A. (two field, three medium and one heavy regiment), and units of R.N. Bombardment Squadron. Extra support was to be provided by naval bombardment and air attack. (Ibid.)

371. The intention of 3 Brit Inf Div was to capture the high ground in the area AUTHIE - CUSSY - ST. CONTEST and to exploit forward to the BAYEUX - CAEN road. This was to be executed in four phases. In Phase I, 9 Brit Inf Bde was to capture GALMANCHE (0073). During Phase II, while 9 Brit Inf Bde captured ST. CONTEST, 9 Cdn Inf Bde was to move forward in conjunction with it from VIEUX CAIRON and LES BUISSONS to seize GRUCHY and BURON. The objectives in Phase III were AUTHIE for 9 Cdn Inf Bde and BITOT for 9 Brit Inf Bde. Lastly, Phase IV was to see the capture of CUSSY by 9 Brit Inf Bde while 9 Cdn Inf Bde pushed patrols forward to the CAEN - BAYEUX road. One feature of the plan requires explanation. It was planned that, as a preliminary, 8 Brit Inf Bde should first clear the area LA BIJUDE - EPRON (Operation "MITTEN"), so as to prevent enemy interference with the opening stages of the main attack. (Ibid.; W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 2, 9 Cdn Inf Bde O.O. No. 2, 26 Jun.)

372. Here, although it involves a violation of chronological sequence, it will also be useful to consider the plans subsequently drawn up for Operation "OTTAWA", which was to follow closely on the heels of "ABERLOUR". In order to appreciate its relation to the general situation it may be pointed out that "OTTAWA" presupposed not only the acquisition of a large area to the West of CARPIQUET, extending through the CHEUX feature across the ODON (Operation "EPSOM"), but also the removal of "the ST. CONTEST salient", North and Northwest of CAEN (Operation "ABERLOUR"). These prior advances would assure both a firm base and a secure left flank for the assault on CARPIQUET. Indeed, by the time the divisional operation order was issued (28 Jun), the first of these two premises -- the advance by 8 Corps -- had already been realized.

373. That the capture of CARPIQUET would be the responsibility of 3 Cdn Inf Div had been recognized for some time even before plans had actually "jelled". The chief point of discussion seems to have been the direction the attack should follow. The corps instruction of 19 Jun (at which time arrangements were still in a fluid state) had specified that the axis of advance was to be from the Northwest (1 Corps Op Instr No. 1, 19 Jun, as cited above); on the following day a message from the B.G.S., 1 Corps, had informed 3 Cdn Inf Div that the corps commander considered an attack on CARPIQUET from the West to be "too complicated". (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div,

20 Jun, serial 59.) Actual planning for "OTTAWA" appears to have been begun by the division's General Staff on 24 Jun. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 24 Jun.) The operation order, which was produced four days later, shows that in effect "OTTAWA" was to be a continuation of "ABERLOUR", in that the attack was to be based on AUTHIE, following the prior capture of that village by 9 Cdn Inf Bde. It was thus to come from almost due North. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, June 1944: Appx "L", 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 2, 28 Jun.) The operation was to be carried out by 8 Cdn Inf Bde, supported by a considerable force of armour and guns. The brigade was to advance in three bounds across the CAEN - BAYEUX road and establish itself in CARPIQUET with its forward troops along the Southern perimeter of the airfield. 9 Cdn Inf Bde was at the same time to extend its position South of AUTHIE by occupying the village of FRANQUEVILLE, just North of the highway. (Ibid.) But in time the course of events was to render it necessary to revert to the more "complicated" method of attack from the West.

(c) The Opening of the Offensive in the CAEN Sector.

374. Before these final arrangements had been completed, the stage was set for the opening of the series of operations described above. The first of these, the limited advance by 51 (H) Inf Div (Operation "PERTH"), commenced early on the morning of 23 Jun, after one day's postponement. 152 Inf Bde successfully attacked and captured STE. HONORINE-LA CHARDONNERETTE (0970). The enemy's reaction, as expected, was vigorous and sudden; and a sharp counter-attack by infantry and tanks created for a time a critical situation. But by nightfall the town was still firmly held by the Highland soldiers after many hours of fluctuating fighting. All three brigades of 51 Inf Div planned active patrols so as to induce the enemy to believe that further attacks were impending. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 23 Jun, serials 53 and 108; 24 Jun, serial 6.)

375. Meanwhile, within 8 Cdn Inf Bde's area there had been a continual influx of troops of 8 Corps who were making ready for the "main effort" of Second Army -- Operation "EPSOM". As early as 20 Jun, officers of 15 (Scottish) Inf Div were visiting battalion localities to conduct preliminary reconnaissance. (W.Ds., Q.O.R. of C., 20-21 Jun, and N. Shore R., 21 Jun.) In preparation for the advance of this division through their areas, the Canadian troops commenced lifting their protective minefields. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 22 Jun.) The great concentration of troops, vehicles and guns, which soon spread even into forward areas, caused the brigade commander to order that "enemy infiltration be countered by most vigorous means". (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 2, Patrol Instructions, 22 Jun.) Special fighting patrols of platoon strength were despatched by N. Shore R. and Q.O.R. of C. on their respective battalion fronts. These were charged with the task of capturing prisoners for purposes of identification, of killing enemy sentries, and of "pinpointing" enemy mortar, machine gun and rifle positions so that these could be subsequently engaged by heavy weapons. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., June 1944: Appx 84, Patrol Instructions, 23 Jun.) Satisfaction was expressed over the results obtained by these patrols, which were said to have "kept the enemy on the jump". (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 2, Daily Int Summary, 24 Jun.) On 25 Jun, General Keller received from the commander of 8 Corps a letter of appreciation for the work done by these special fighting patrols:

My Dear General,

Thank you so much for all the help you are giving my Corps and in particular the 15th (Scottish) Division who can't say enough in gratitude.

I know these reconnaissances must have been the devil for your troops and I can only say how sorry I am that they should have caused casualties.

I hope, and believe, all will go well in our operation provided the German has not brought up a number of formations which we know nothing about.

Yours ever

R.A. O'Connor

(W.D., N. Shore R., June 1944: Appx 2.)

376. On the Eastern sector of the divisional front, patrolling likewise continued to be the most important task undertaken by the battalions of 9 Cdn Inf Bde, until such time as preparations should be complete for the mounting of Operation "ABERLOUR". It is easy to underestimate the importance of what was described merely as "normal patrol activity". Of all the enemy-held positions facing the division, GRUCHY and BURON were given most attention; each night brought fresh information about the enemy in and around these two shattered villages. (See W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 4, Patrol Reports.) The knowledge of the enemy thus laboriously pieced together did much to build up the Intelligence appreciation of his strength and dispositions.

377. The attack by 49 (W.R.) Inf Div, which was the second in the series of operations and as such the immediate prelude to "EPSOM", began on 25 Jun. The preliminary barrage commenced at 0415 hours, with three field regiments of 3 Cdn Inf Div providing a smoke screen. (W.D., H.Q. R.C.A., 3 Cdn Inf Div, 25 Jun, and Appx 5.) Heavy mist conditions restricted visibility to a minimum. Severe enemy resistance was met in FONTENAY, and by evening confused fighting was still going on in the town so that it was impossible for the moment to continue the attack towards RAURAY. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 25 Jun, serial 119.)

378. But sufficient progress had already been made to secure the right flank of 8 Corps, and Operation "EPSOM" accordingly commenced on the following day. It was preceded by a barrage of 4000 yards in length and of overpowering intensity. This was laid down by ten field and five medium regiments (including the Canadian divisional artillery), and created "an awful uproar". (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 26 Jun.) At 0730 hours, 15 (S) Inf Div commenced to advance on a narrow front from LE MESNIL-PATRY and NORREY-EN-BESSIN, 46 (Highland) Inf Bde on the right and 44 (Lowland) Inf Bde on the left. (Hist Sec file AEF/15 (S) Inf Div/C/I: 15 (S) Inf Div O.O. No. 1, 22 Jun 44.) In the face of such force and determination, the German S.S. troops fought hard but were soon overcome. CHEUX and LE HAUT DU BOSQ were captured and by nightfall the advance had gone as far as GRAINVILLE-SUR-ODON and COLLEVILLE; 15 (S) Inf Div reported that the enemy had been reduced to his last reserves. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 27 Jun, serial 20.) How desperate was the enemy's situation was

soon to be demonstrated by the fact that he was forced to commit 1 S.S. Panzer Grenadier Regiment (of 1 S.S. Pz Div) as soon as it arrived on 28 Jun. (Dietrich, as above.)

379. Canadian field artillery maintained its supporting fire throughout the day, engaging targets of opportunity after the initial timed programme had been completed. 13 Cdn Fd Regt answered 35 calls for fire, and at one period during the day the detachments served their guns for four hours without "Stand Easy" once being ordered. (W.D., 13 Cdn Fd Regt, 26 Jun.) Their labours went on unabated the next day, commencing with a fire plan of 100 rounds per gun on CARPIQUET from 12, 13 and 14 Cdn Fd Regts and 6 Fd Regt, R.A. (W.Ds., 12, 13 and 14 Cdn Fd Regts, 27 Jun.) 8 Corps continued to press on, as 43 Inf Div moved forward to occupy the first objectives won by 15 Inf Div. During the afternoon of 27 Jun the ODON was forced Northwest of ESQUAY. By this time RAURAY was in the hands of 49 Inf Div on the right. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 27 Jun, serials 84 and 119.)

380. The sudden and unheralded entry of 8 Corps into the battle had at once reduced the front of 3 Cdn Inf Div by half its length and deprived 8 Cdn Inf Bde of an operational role. The boundary between 8 Corps and 1 Corps now ran South along the River CHIROMME and thence Southeast through MARCELET (9468) and VERNON (9665). (Ibid., 25 Jun, serial 101.) The relief of 8 Cdn Inf Bde by 130 Inf Bde of 43 Inf Div, as previously arranged, was carried out on 27 Jun, the day following the opening of the attack by 8 Corps. (W.Ds., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 26 Jun, and H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 27 Jun.) The new brigade area selected for the former lay around BOUANVILLE (9776), at some distance from the enemy. The move of 8 Cdn Inf Bde, which began in the early afternoon, was completed by 1830 hours, by which time Q.O.R. of C. were in CAIRON, R. de Chaud in LE VEY and N. Shore R. and brigade headquarters in BOUANVILLE. (Ibid.; W.Ds., of battalions, 27 Jun.) 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts were likewise withdrawn East of the new corps boundary. (W.Ds., 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts, 27 Jun.) It was understood that the brigade was to remain in this area until the time came for the attack on CARPIQUET. To the infantry the new location seemed like a rest area, and bath parades were soon being organized. But the enemy, still on the alert, shelled the vicinity of CAIRON and some casualties were sustained. (W.Ds., Q.O.R. of C. and R. de Chaud, 28 Jun.)

381. Thus far all had gone well in the series of operations planned by Second Army. The initial diversion staged by 51 (H) Inf Div had proved that the enemy was extremely sensitive to pressure East of the ORNE below CAEN. The main attack by 8 Corps, miles to the West, was proceeding satisfactorily. The eventual participation of 3 Cdn Inf Div in Operations "ABERLOUR" and "OTTAWA" seemed but a matter of course.

382. In preparation for its role in "ABERLOUR", arrangements were made for H.L.I. of C. to move forward into LES BUISSONS near the proposed start line. This move was made after dark on 27 Jun. (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 27 Jun.) Once again there arose the question of guarding the vulnerable entries into the rear areas, for the removal of the battalion from its position astride the road (9977) left "nothing between CAEN and SOUTHAMPTON except some LCTs, the Cdn Army HQ, a refugee camp and a mobile bath unit". (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 26 Jun.) It should be noted, however, that the area ANGUERNY - COLOMBY-SUR-THAON - BASLY was at this

time being occupied by 71 Inf Bde of 53 Inf Div. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 25 Jun, serial 108; W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 27 Jun.) The position vacated by H.L.I. of C. was, moreover, now taken up by "B" Squadron, 7 Cdn Recce Regt. (Ibid.)

383. At 1530 hours on 27 Jun, 8 Brit Inf Bde commenced Operation "MITTEN", the preliminary attack to clear LA BIJUDE and EPRON. It was soon discovered that enemy opposition was too formidable, especially in the area of the CHATEAU DE LA LONDE (O32737), and with no substantial progress having been made by nightfall, it appeared that "ABERLOUR" must be postponed. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 28 Jun, serial 6; W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 27 Jun.) On the following day came confirmation when the corps commander took the decision to abandon the plan. 9 Cdn Inf Bde once more returned to its old defensive positions in VILLONS-LES-BUISSONS, LES BUISSONS and VIEUX CAIRON. Despite their very natural disappointment at thus seeing plans for offensive action evaporating, the troops were aware that the decision not to continue with the operation under the circumstances was a wise one. (W.Ds., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde and Nth N.S. Highrs, 28 Jun.) 9 Cdn Inf Bde, which had been under the command of 3 Brit Inf Div since 1800 hours, 27 Jun (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 27 Jun, serial 63), reverted to its parent formation. (Ibid., 28 Jun, serial 125.)

384. With the cancellation of "ABERLOUR", the entire corps plan to clear the enemy from his positions around CAEN underwent thorough revision. In the evening of 28 Jun word was received at H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde to suspend further preparations for the attack on CARPIQUET, which was now clearly an impossibility from the North. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 28 Jun.) The revised plan, which was issued soon after, specified that the corps intention was to be achieved by three divisional attacks: (i) the capture of CARPIQUET by 3 Cdn Inf Div (Operation "WINDSOR"); (ii) the capture of LEBISEY and the high ground Northeast of CAEN by 3 Brit Inf Div (Operation "SHERWOOD"); (iii) an attack by 51 (H) Inf Div from its bridgehead East of the River ORNE to clear COLOMBELLES (O870) and the factory area (O769). (Hist. Sec file AEF/3 Brit Inf Div/C/I: 3 Brit Inf Div O.O. No. 3, 20 Jun. The date should read 29 Jun.) The attack on CARPIQUET was now visualized as being mounted by 8 Cdn Inf Bde from the West, i.e., from MARCELET (which had been occupied by 43 Inf Div), so that in effect the brigade should "stand on the shoulders" of 8 Corps. D Day was to be 1 Jul (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, June 1944: Appx "M", 3 Cdn Inf Div Op Instr No. 3, 29 Jun.) The date of "SHERWOOD" was then set at 2 Jul. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 29 Jun, serial 49.)

(d) The Return to the Defensive

385. After the necessary conferences, the units of 8 Cdn Inf Bde commenced to move to the assembly area near MARCELET from which the attack was to be mounted. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 29 Jun.) Even while these moves were in progress, however, the first confused reports were being received of a powerful enemy counter-attack against the advanced units of 8 Corps near GRAINVILLE-SUR-ODON. Throughout the day tactical reconnaissance aircraft had observed large enemy forces moving Northwards. (Cf., for example,

Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 29 Jun, serials 24 and 55.) By evening it was reported that German tanks had broken through to LE HAUT DE BOSQ. (Ibid., serial 109.) Brigadier Blackader was hurriedly summoned to divisional headquarters where orders were issued for the regrouping of his brigade in a defensive position. Because the battalions were on the move the brigade commander took personal charge of the matter and at once proceeded to allocate areas of responsibility. By 2330 hours, 8 Cdn Inf Bde had established its new dispositions without confusion. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 29 Jun.) Each battalion prepared a "tank-proof locality" to await possible further enemy penetration: N. Shore R. in LA VILLENEUVE, R. de Chaud in ST. MAUVIEU and Q.O.R. of C. in MARCELET. (16) (W.Ds. of battalions named, 29-30 Jun.) 10 Cdn Armd Regt, which was to have supported the attack on CARPIQUET, took up a position near BRETTEVILLE-L'ORGUEILLEUSE. (W.D., 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 29 Jun.)

386. By the next day, the shock of the enemy's attack had been absorbed and positions had been restored. It was known that its main weight had been provided by 2 S.S. Pz Corps, composed of 9 S.S. Pz Div (Fruntsberg) and 10 S.S. Pz Div (Hohenstaufen); its object had been to break through from the Southwest to the CAEN - BAYEUX road. (Dietrich, as above.) Neither of these formations had arrived in full strength and the enemy had had to commit his forces in small groups. At no time did the infantry employed exceed two companies in strength, and their supporting tanks were likewise few in number. (Second Army Int Summary No. 27, 1 Jul.) The attack had cost the enemy heavily and gained him nothing.

387. Although the danger of counter-attack had been for the moment averted, it was nonetheless clear that the enemy had assembled in front of Second Army an enormous weight of armour, involving no less than five S.S. divisions (1, 2, 9, 10 and 12 S.S. Pz Divs). With such resources it was considered that he might once again attempt a breakthrough. 8 Corps was therefore ordered to relinquish temporarily its offensive role and regroup itself so as to withstand further attacks. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 30 Jun, serial 49.) In like manner the operations which had been planned for 1 Corps ("WINDSOR" and "SHERWOOD") were postponed. (Ibid., serial 11.) At 1430 hours on 30 Jun, Major-General Keller issued further instructions for the reorganization of 3 Cdn Inf Div against a renewal of enemy attacks from the East, South or Southeast. 7 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes were directed to continue to hold their present areas, the former placing one battalion in LA VILLENEUVE, on the CAEN - BAYEUX road. 8 Cdn Inf Bde was ordered to withdraw once more into divisional reserve in the BOUANVILLE area, from which position it was to be prepared to restore any loss of ground in either of the two forward brigade areas. An additional reserve was to be furnished by 2 Cdn Armd Bde, which would be concentrated around COLOMBY-SUR-THAON. (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/CI:

(16) The danger of relying solely upon the evidence of War Diary narratives is illustrated by the entry by Q.O.R. of C. for 30 Jun, which fails to record that in this critical situation the battalion had moved from CAIRON to MARCELET. (See W.D., Q.O.R. of C., July 1944: Appx 6, Trace of Coy Locations, 30 Jun.)

Notes on O Gp held 1430 hrs, 30 Jun 44.) In fulfilment of these directions, Regina Rif relieved N. Shore R. in LA VILLENEUVE and the latter rejoined the remainder of 8 Cdn Inf Bde, now once more established near BOUANVILLE. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 30 Jun.) These defensive arrangements led to extensive regrouping of 7 Cdn Inf Bde. R. Wpg Rif moved to BRAY, which had been vacated by Regina Rif, and 7 Cdn Recce Regt (now risen to three squadrons under brigade command) took over the former battalion's positions in LASSON and ROSEL. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 6, Confirmatory Notes, Bde Comd's Conference, 30 Jun; W.Ds. of units named, 30 Jun.)

388. The disposition of 3 Cdn Inf Div on this date is illustrated by the map at Appendix "J", which gives also an approximate indication of the front line held by flanking formations. It demonstrates more effectively than lengthy description the gradual tightening of the Allied grip on the German salient around CAEN.

389. At the same time, while anti-tank defences were further improved, a heavy blow was struck at the enemy forces still remaining in the area. The air attack of 30 Jun against a concentration of German armour at VILLERS-BOCAGE marks the first use of heavy bombers in direct support of the ground forces on a target situated in the immediate vicinity of the enemy's front line. (Bomber Command Quarterly Review, No. 9, Apr-Jun 44, as cited above.) Long after the attack, dense clouds of smoke drifted far over the countryside, reducing visibility to a few hundred yards and puzzling the forward troops, who reported the presence of "mist, fog or smoke". (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 30 Jun, serial 88; W.D., Hist Offr, 3 Cdn Inf Div, 30 Jun.)

390. So ended the month of June in Normandy. On many occasions it had seemed to the Canadian troops that they were about to join in the great offensive to break out of the bridgehead. This opportunity had so far been denied them, and their first great task still lay ahead -- the capture of CAEN. And yet, although the weeks of waiting on the defensive might appear to have accomplished little, the enemy forces holding the CAEN salient were being defeated as surely as if they had been subjected to full-scale attacks. The German panzer troops had steadily dissipated their strength in futile counter-attacks, a role for which they were conspicuously ill-adapted. According to the evidence of its commander, 12 S.S. Pz Div had lost 1500 men by the end of June. (Meyer, as cited above.) Similarly, the battle strength of 21 Pz Div had during this time been reduced from 4500 to 1200 men. (Feuchtinger.) When, early in July, the battle of CAEN was joined in full force the enemy had already been beaten.

FIRST CANADIAN ARMY

391. It will be recalled that the "OVERLORD" **plans respecting** the employment of First Cdn Army were based on the principle that that formation would remain in the United Kingdom until the bridgehead should be firmly established (para 39 above). It was intended that Second Army, comprising eventually 1, 30, 8 and 12 Corps, should first reach a line extending from the sea along the River

DIVES through ARGENCES, and thence to the high ground near FALAISE. These objectives, provisionally estimated to require three weeks of operations, had not been reached by 30 Jun, chiefly owing to two factors: the stubbornness of the enemy's resistance near CAEN, and the advent of bad weather conditions which had limited the progress of the build-up. As yet only three corps (1, 30 and 8) were in action, and with 12 Corps still in the process of building up it became unlikely that First Cdn Army could assume an immediate operational role.

392. Earlier in the month it had appeared, however, that the concentration of First Cdn Army in Normandy would proceed as planned. On 14 Jun, Tactical H.Q. left HEADLEY COURT, LEATHERHEAD, Surrey, for its marshalling area, arriving on 17 Jun in France to establish itself at AMBLIE (9480). (W.D., G.S., H.Q. First Cdn Army, June 1944.) On 18 Jun, Lieut.-Gen. H.D.G. Crerar, G.O.C.-in-C., left PORTSMOUTH with a small party aboard H.M.C.S. "Algonquin". Later in the day he landed in Normandy on MIKE Sector, where less than two weeks before 7 Cdn Inf Bde had made its assault. During the days following his arrival, General Crerar found time to visit the troops of 3 Cdn Inf Div, 2 Cdn Armd Bde and 1 Cdn Para Bn. (W.D., Lt.-Gen. H.D.G. Crerar, G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, June 1944.) At 2400 hrs on 19 Jun, Main and Rear H.Q. First Cdn Army were closed in the United Kingdom and at the same moment opened (theoretically) at AMBLIE. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. First Cdn Army, June 1944.) But the actual moves of these headquarters to France were soon to be postponed, at first owing to the gale (which began on 19 Jun) and subsequently because it was decided that the operational situation did not yet permit the introduction of another army.

393. At a series of conferences at his headquarters, General Montgomery, C.-in-C., 21 Army Group, explained to General Crerar why it had become necessary to "phase back" the concentration of the Canadian Army in Normandy. Briefly, the reason for the postponement was that until Second Army had been fully brought up to strength and had completed its planned expansion of the bridgehead area there was simply not room in which to deploy another army with its vast complement of army troops. (W.D., Lt.-Gen. Crerar, June 1944: Appendices "H" and "I".) On 24 Jun, therefore, it was announced that further moves of H.Q. First Cdn Army from the United Kingdom were postponed indefinitely, but that Tactical H.Q. would remain in France. In consequence, Main and Rear H.Q. were closed on the continent at 0001 hrs, 26 Jun, and reopened simultaneously at HEADLEY COURT. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. First Cdn Army, 26 Jun.) For the time being, 3 Cdn Inf Div and 2 Cdn Armd Bde would remain the only Canadian formations engaged in Normandy and would continue to function under British command. The grouping of Second Army at the end of June is outlined at Appendix "E".

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394. This report has been prepared by Major J.R. Martin, formerly Historical Officer, 3 Cdn Inf Div, who landed with the division on D Day and was present in Normandy throughout the operations described above. Much of the information contained in the report has been derived from the accounts given by participants to the Historical Officer in the field. With him, in the capacity of Official War Artist, was Lieut. (now Capt.) O.N. Fisher, who was entrusted with the task of making a pictorial record of this phase of the campaign.

395. In addition to formation and unit war diaries and the contemporary narratives prepared by the Historical Officer, reference has been made to numerous important documents relating to the plans and execution of Operation "OVERLORD". Many of these were made available to the writer by Historical Section, Offices of the Cabinet, by the Admiralty, and by Historical Section, H.Q. R.C.A.F. Special mention should be made of the series of interrogation reports of enemy commanders concerned in the Canadian battle area, which were produced after the cessation of hostilities by the staff of "G" Intelligence, H.Q. First Cdn Army (Hist Sec file AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/L/F). Although this evidence must be used with care, as inevitably reflecting a prejudiced point of view, it presents to the historian a unique opportunity to widen his knowledge of the campaign on the basis of authoritative enemy opinion.

396. In order to meet the varying requirements of the text, which ranges from the strategic to the tactical level, maps of widely different scale have been used. In general, the following principle has been observed: where Allied operations as a whole were under discussion, small-scale maps (1:250,000) were found adequate; the 1:100,000 scale has served to cover the British assault area; and in the Canadian sector reference has been made to sheets both of 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 scale. The requisite sheets are listed below.

G.S.G.S. 2738	1:250,000	France	Sheet 3a & 8
G.S.G.S. 4249	1:100,000	France	Sheets 6E, 7E, 7F
G.S.G.S. 4250	1:50,000	France	Sheets 7E/5, 7E/6, 7F/1, 7F/2.
G.S.G.S. 4347	1:25,000	France	Sheets 37/18 S.E. 40/18 S.W. 37/16 N.E. 37/16 S.E. 40/16 N.W. 40/16 S.W.

397. Aerial photographs have been found valuable in the preparation of this report. Numerous mosaics and individual photographs are appended to brigade War Diaries. A particularly interesting series, taken on D Day, covers the entire divisional beach area by battalion sectors. The time at which this sortie was flown is not certain, but it can only have been shortly after H Hour, when the first beachhead objective was being consolidated. (Hist Sec file AEF/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/G.)

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CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

HIST

AMENDMENT TO
REPORT NO. 147
HISTORICAL SECTION
CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

~~RESTRICTED~~
CANCELLED
DECLASSIFIED
Authority: DHD 3-3
by CKC for DHist NDHQ
Date: NOV 26 1986

1. The following amendment, dealing with Canadian Army Casualties on 6 Jun 44, should be read in place of Appendix "D" to Report No. 147. This more detailed breakdown of casualty figures has been compiled by the Officer i/c War Diaries, Historical Section, C.M.H.Q., from the "battle casualty statistics cards" of the Casualty Section, Overseas Canadian Records Office.

CASUALTIES SUFFERED BY CANADIANS LANDED FROM THE SEA

Unit	Killed	Died of wounds	Wounded	Missing	Total
R. Wpg Rif	15	43	66	5	129
Regina Rif	15	1	55	1	102
1 C. Scot R.	17	5	63	1	86
Q.O.R. of C.	55	5	78	-	138
R. de Chaud	17	1	48	38	104
N. Shore R.	28	6	90	-	124
H.L.I. of C.	-	-	-	-	Nil
S.D. & G. Highrs	1	-	13	-	14
Nth N.S. Highrs	3	1	6	-	10
C.H. of O. (M.G.)	1	-	3	-	4
7 Cdn Recce Regt	1	-	1	-	2
6 Cdn Armd Regt	22	-	17	4	43
10 Cdn Armd Regt	14	-	12	-	26
27 Cdn Armd Regt	-	1	2	-	3
12 Cdn Fd Regt	1	-	7	-	8
13 Cdn Fd Regt	5	1	4	2	12
14 Cdn Fd Regt	10	-	12	-	22
19 Cdn Fd Regt	3	-	17	-	20
R.C.E.	17	2	42	-	61
R.C.C.S.	3	-	1	-	4
R.C.A.M.C.	6	1	5	3	15
R.C.A.S.C.	4	-	7	-	11
R.C.F.M.E.	-	-	-	7	7
H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde	-	-	1	-	1
Others #	-	-	-	-	Nil
TOTALS	268	67	550	61	946

All other Canadian units on Order of Battle of 3 Cdn Inf Div for 6 Jun 44.

All men reckoned as "Missing" subsequently returned save the great majority having presumably been prisoners of war.

2. In addition to the above losses, the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion of the British 6th Airborne Division suffered the following casualties:

Presumed Killed	2
Killed	18
Missing	91
Wounded	<u>6</u>
Total	117

The figure 'Missing' 91 includes 10 listed as now safe and 81 listed as P.O.W. now repatriated.

C.P. Stacey
(C.P. Stacey) Colonel
Director Historical Section

5 Oct 46