man units from other places in the west to help stabilize the Normandy front.[7]

With *OB WEST*, *Army Group B*, and the *Seventh Army* in no position to look after Brittany, the task devolved upon the *XXV Corps*. Designated the commander of the forces in Brittany, Fahrmbacher, the *XXV Corps* commander, was delegated the job of directing what was to become the battle of the fortresses, a campaign independent of the action developing in Normandy.[8]

Fahrmbacher, who, as the temporary *LXXXIV Corps* commander, had met the Americans in the Cotentin in June, was ill-prepared to face them again in Brittany. Of the army field forces of 100,000 troops in Brittany at the beginning of June, less than one third remained at the end of July. The others, the best-armed and best-trained units, had been sent to Normandy— the *3d* and *5th Parachute Divisions*, the *77th, 353d,* and *275th Infantry Divisions,* and two mobile kampfgruppen of regimental size (from the *265th* and *266th Divisions*). Since the *319th Division* on the Channel Islands would not see action on the mainland, the defenders of Brittany consisted of the *2d Parachute Division* and the static *343d Infantry Division* near Brest, weak elements of the static *266th Division* (perhaps in regimental strength) near Morlaix, and the remaining parts of the static *265th Division* at Lorient, St. Nazaire, and Nantes. Augmenting these troops were antiaircraft batteries, coastal artillery units, antitank

groups, engineers, and Navy and Air Force personnel.[9] To reinforce them came units and stragglers fleeing from Normandy—in particular the *77th* and *91st Divisions,* which carried with them assorted remnants of once-proud outfits. These headed for the St. Malo area, whence Fahrmbacher dispatched the *77th* toward Pontaubault and the *91st* to defend Rennes.[10]

As Fahrmbacher understood the fortress policy, the fortress commanders of St. Malo, Brest, Lorient, and St. Nazaire were to protect the submarine bases, prevent the Americans from using the ports, and contain as much of the American force as possible. Although each fortress commander had no garrison troops organized as such under his direct control, he commanded all the units and individuals of all the services within the fortress. The commanders of the field force troops had charge of activity outside the fortresses. Only after they were forced to retire within the limits of the fortresses did they come under the control of the fortress commanders.

Fortification of the port cities had begun in 1942 in response to the major threat of Allied invasion from the sea. The main construction work had at first been concentrated on the submarine installations, then on headquarters and battery positions for coastal artillery and flak, next on combat installations at possible landing points, and finally on the land front proper. So much time, effort, and concrete had gone into the

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[7] Telecon, Kluge and Hausser, 2130, 1 Aug, *OB WEST KTB, Anlage 1015.*

[8] *OB WEST, a Study in Command,* I, 133. *LXXIV Corps* had been pulled out of Brittany on 25 July to take over a portion of the front facing the British. MS # B-722 (Gersdorff).

[9] MS # 731 (Fahrmbacher); *OB WEST KTB,* 2 Aug; Hodgson, R-34; *OB WEST, a Study in Command,* I, 40.

[10] MS # 731 (Fahrmbacher) is the basic source of this section.

Atlantic Wall installations, which, at the insistence of the Navy, had been faced toward the sea, that the land front, according to Army planners, was neglected. The fortress commanders who faced the Allied ground forces in August 1944 believed their landward defenses far from adequate.

Upon reports that the Americans had invaded the interior of Brittany and that armored columns were racing toward the port cities, Fahrmbacher and his *XXV Corps* headquarters moved on 3 August from Pontivy to Lorient. Four days later, on 7 August, when Kluge ordered Fahrmbacher to take command of Brest, Fahrmbacher did not carry out the order because land contact between Lorient and Brest had already been cut, because no preparations had been made for sea communications, and because he felt that the fortress commander of Brest was competent to conduct his own independent defense. Nor did Fahrmbacher exercise control over the action developing around St. Malo; he had no way of doing so. Though the *XXV Corps* remained nominally in control of operations in Brittany, for all practical purposes it directed only the forces in Lorient and St. Nazaire. Subordination of the St. Nazaire garrison lasted only a brief time—until U.S. troops encircled and isolated both Lorient and St. Nazaire. Reduced to a nonessential role in Lorient, Fahrmbacher and his corps headquarters found an opportunity to assume real command status when the fortress commander of Lorient was injured around 10 August by a mine. Fahrmbacher then took his place and functioned in that capacity.

Appointing Fahrmbacher commander of the forces in Brittany thus had availed the Germans little. After the first few days of August there was no unified command. All the German troops who could, abandoned the interior and scurried into the fortresses, where they awaited the inevitable opening of siege operations.

A New Army

Behind the armored spearheads pushing into German-held territory was an Allied strength on the Continent that had almost reached organizational maturity. General Crerar's First Canadian Army had become operational under the control of General Montgomery's 21 Army Group on 23 July, and it was apparent then that General Patton's Third Army would soon have to become active. The build-up was fattening the First Army almost to unreasonable proportions, and the broad scope of OVERLORD operations foreshadowed the early need of a U.S. army group. If American troops entered Brittany and drove westward as contemplated, they would diverge from British, Canadian, and other U.S. forces oriented eastward toward the Seine. An American army group in control of the American thrusts eastward and westward would simplify problems of command control and logistics.[11]

As early as mid-July, when the plans for creating an American army group still were indefinite and American forces

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[11] SHAEF Memo, Command and Organization After D Day—OVERLORD, 21 AGp/20657/1/G (Plans), 30 May; SHAEF/17100/5/Opns (A), 1 Jun; ETOUSA Ltr, Organization and Comd of U.S. Forces, 6 Jun. All in SHAEF G-3 Opns File A 322/011/1.

were far from Brittany, the growing
number of divisions under First Army
control had prompted General Bradley
to recommend (with Montgomery's
concurrence) that the 12th Army Group
and Third Army headquarters become
operational as soon as COBRA was com-
pleted, regardless of the progress
achieved in COBRA.[12]   Anticipating
General Eisenhower's approval, Bradley
informed Generals Hodges and Patton
that the change in command would be
made during the COBRA offensive and
"without any appreciable halt in the
attack provided everything is going well;
. . . we will not halt the advance to
reorganize."[13]   General Eisenhower ap-
proved Bradley's recommendation and
authorized him to set the date for the
change.   At the same time he made
clear his desire that Montgomery con-
tinue to act as the Allied ground forces
commander until SHAEF moved to the
Continent and he, Eisenhower, assumed
personal command of the Allied ground
forces.[14]

At noon, 1 August, as armored
columns streamed beyond Pontaubault,
the 12th Army Group, under General
Bradley's command, became opera-
tional.[15]   General Hodges assumed com-
mand of the First U.S. Army, and Gen-

eral Patton's Third U.S. Army came to
life.[16]

The most flamboyant personality in
the Allied camp was without question
General Patton.   Commander of assault
troops in the North African landings in
November 1942, leader of the II Corps
in Tunisia, organizer and commander of
the Seventh U.S. Army in Sicily, Patton
had been designated the Third Army
commander in the spring of 1944.   In-
tensely sensitive, at times overbearing,
always temperamentally dramatic, a con-
troversial figure recognized as one of the
outstanding field commanders in the
U.S. Army, Patton was able to exert "an
extraordinary and ruthless driving
power . . . at critical moments."   He
had "demonstrated [his] ability of
getting the utmost out of soldiers in
offensive operations."[17]

Closely associated with the develop-
ment of tanks and armor doctrine, a
cavalryman by temperament, tradition,
and training, and at the same time a
profound student of military history,
General Patton typified the tenets of
daring and dash.   If he seemed to be
reckless and impetuous, he was also bold
and imaginative, favoring "a good plan
violently executed *now*" rather than "a
perfect plan next week."   Like Napo-
leon, he believed that war was "a very
simple thing."   Its determining char-
acteristics were "self-confidence, speed,
and audacity."[18]   During the month of
August, Patton and his army—whose

[12] Ltr, Bradley to Eisenhower, 19 Jul, with hand-
written endorsement by Montgomery, 20 Jul, Gen
Bd Rpts File 322/011, Box 47, Item 50.
[13] FUSA Memo, Bradley to Hodges and Patton,
21 Jul, 12th AGp File 371.3, Mil Objectives.
[14] SHAEF Ltr, Comd and Organization, U.S.
Ground Forces, 25 Jul, SHAEF/17100/5/Opns (A),
SHAEF File Opns A-322/011.1; SGS SHAEF
War Diary, 25 Jul.
[15] Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Leven C. Allen;
G–1, Col. Joseph J. O'Hare; G–2, Brig. Gen. Edwin
L. Sibert; G–3, Brig. Gen. A. Franklin Kibler; G–4,
Brig. Gen. Raymond G. Moses.

[16] ADSEC continued to be the direct agency of
supply for the combat forces, but Lt. Gen. John
C. H. Lee's Communication Zone headquarters
was fast getting established on the Continent.
[17] Ltrs, Eisenhower to Marshall, 29 and 30 Apr,
cited in Pogue, *Supreme Command*, p. 166.
[18] Patton, *War as I Knew It*, p. 354.

members modeled their behavior on that of their chief—were to find a situation perfectly suited to the expression of their principles of combat.[19]

Partially as a result of the personalities of the commanders, the headquarters of the First and Third Armies functioned in slightly different ways. The difference was evident only by comparison. The First Army tended to be more methodical and meticulous in staff work, and required more reports from subordinate units. More planning was committed to paper in the First Army, whereas informal briefings and conversations frequently sufficed in the Third. Yet in both armies the work of the staff members was neither underrated nor unappreciated. Long hours of patient staff work often preceded a daring decision or brought a brilliant idea to maturity and reality. The many anonymous staff officers who toiled in relative obscurity, not only on the army level but on all echelons of command, made it possible for the military leaders of World War II to direct the complex operations with such apparent ease.

To enhance the FORTITUDE deception—the Allied threat of a landing on the Pas-de-Calais—General Eisenhower forbade publicity on Patton's entrance into battle.[20] The Germans were still being tricked into keeping a considerable number of their *Fifteenth Army*

forces immobile because they were expecting Patton's appearance on the Continent outside Normandy. They could construe his unexplained absence only as signifying that another Allied invasion of western Europe would take place.[21] The Germans knew that Patton had more combat experience than Bradley; they were conscious that he outranked Bradley in grade. Respecting Patton as a dangerous opponent, they logically expected the Allies to use him to head the main U.S. forces in western Europe, which evidently had not yet appeared.[22]

The Third Army arrived on the scene in the midst of an extremely fluid situation. By taking command of VIII Corps, which on 1 August was rapidly approaching Brittany, Patton assumed control of a going concern. Behind the front, XV Corps headquarters, which had arrived in France on 15 July, and XX Corps headquarters, which had arrived on 24 July, were ready for action. The XII Corps headquarters was staging the movement of Third Army units from England to the Continent and processing them from the beach forward; part of the headquarters reached Normandy on 29 July, the remainder on 7 August.[23]

To give close air support to the Third Army, Brig. Gen. Otto P. Weyland's XIX Tactical Air Command, which had been operating as part of the IX TAC, became operational. The transfer from England to France of the headquarters of the British Second Tactical Air Force and of the U.S. Ninth Air Force—moves scheduled to be completed in the first

[19] The Third Army general staff consisted of Maj. Gen. Hugh J. Gaffey, chief of staff; Col. Frederick S. Matthews, G–1; Col. Oscar W. Koch, G–2; Col. Halley G. Maddox, G–3; Col. Walter J. Muller, G–4. See Hugh M. Cole, *The Lorraine Campaign,* UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington, 1950), Chapter I, for a detailed discussion of the Third Army command and staff.

[20] Eisenhower to Marshall, FWD–12493, 30 Jul, Pogue Files.

[21] JIC (44) 345 (O) (Final), German Appreciation of Allied Intentions in the West, 7 Aug, JIC Papers, 1944, Pogue Files.

[22] *OB WEST, a Study in Command,* pp. 55ff.

[23] TUSA AAR, I, 7, 12.

week of August—complemented the es-
tablishment on the Continent of the two
army group headquarters for the ground
forces.   When SHAEF displaced to
France and the Supreme Commander
assumed direct control of ground opera-
tions, Headquarters, AEAF, was also to
move in order to facilitate co-ordination
of ground and air operations.[24]

The OVERLORD plan had designated
Brittany the stage for the Third Army's
initial operations, which were expected
to begin some time between two weeks
and two months after the invasion.   In
Normandy since the early days of July,
commanders and staffs of the Third
Army and its components had despaired
of performing within the original OVER-
LORD time limits.   Suddenly, less than
a week before the planned limit expired,
they were ordered into Brittany.

The peninsula of Brittany was im-
portant to the Allies because of its ports:
St. Malo, less than fifty miles west of
Avranches; Brest, on the western ex-
tremity of the peninsula; Lorient and St.
Nazaire, along the southern seashore;
Nantes, fifty miles east of the Loire River
mouth; and the many small harbors and
beaches useful for discharging cargo.   If
Brittany could be captured, one of the
basic requirements for the success of
OVERLORD would be fulfilled: a con-
tinental port capacity sufficient to sup-
port the forces deemed necessary to de-
feat the Germans.   Without the Breton
ports, the Allies, particularly the Amer-
icans, could not hope to sustain the con-
tinental build-up projected by OVER-
LORD.   As General Eisenhower stated it,

"the ideal situation [would be] . . . to
obtain the entire coastal area from
Havre to Nantes, both inclusive.   With
such a broad avenue of entry we could
[bring to the Continent] . . . every single
soldier the United States could procure
for us, and we would have . . . little in-
terest in ANVIL." [25]   To gain a broad
avenue of entry was a major Allied
objective.

Planners originally had projected the
capture of Brittany in two thrusts—
seizure of Nantes and St. Nazaire, and a
subsequent westward drive to secure
Brest and the other harbors.   Logistical
planners doubted that the Breton ports
could be used immediately after capture.
The Germans had fortified the impor-
tant ones, particularly Lorient, St.
Nazaire, and Brest, which were naval
bases for the underwater and surface
raiders that attacked Allied shipping on
the Atlantic, and they were certain to
defend them with determination and
destroy the facilities in the process.   On
this   assumption, the Americans had
decided to construct an entirely new port
on the south coast of Brittany between
Lorient and St. Nazaire, where the
Quiberon peninsula shelters a curving
bay from the Atlantic winds.   There,
four ports (including the not inconsider-
able harbors of Vannes and Auray), an
excellent rail and road network, hard
beaches with gentle gradients, and shel-
tered anchorages for ocean-going vessels
made the area attractive.   Closer to the
post-OVERLORD area of operations than
Cherbourg and Brest, a port complex
around Quiberon would obviate com-

[24] AEAF Ltr, Comd and Contl of Allied Air Force,
AEAF/TS 378/Air Plans, 5 Aug, Gen Bd Rpts
File 322/011/1, Box 47, Item 50.

[25] Ltr, Eisenhower to Montgomery, 10 Jul, SGS
SHAEF File 381, OVERLORD, I (a). ANVIL was the
code name for the invasion of southern France,
which was scheduled for 15 August.

plete dependence on the railway that linked Brest with the interior of France, a railroad the Germans would most probably have destroyed and one that would be difficult to repair. With the Allies in possession of Quiberon, it would not be necessary to rely so heavily on the original landing beaches in Normandy, which were expected to be useful only until autumn. Furthermore, protective bridgeheads south of the Loire River, the southern boundary of the OVERLORD lodgment area, would be needed in order to utilize Nantes and St. Nazaire, but would not be necessary for Quiberon Bay. On this basis, the Americans decided that instead of securing Nantes and St. Nazaire first, they would drive at once to seize the Quiberon area. As early as 13 May, the 1st Army Group had instructed the Third Army to prepare plans for this operation.[26]

Despite plans for using Quiberon Bay to handle large freight tonnages, the Allies were still interested in the major ports of Brittany, Brest in particular. Possession of Brest would enable personnel and vehicles coming directly from the United States to be landed there without waiting for the Quiberon complex to be built. Also, with Brest in

Allied hands, convoys could sail around Brittany to the Quiberon Bay area without hindrance from German warships based at Brest. Although doubts had been expressed in July that the Allies could obtain the major ports quickly and although there appeared an increasing reluctance to undertake the complicated engineering necessary to utilize Quiberon, the Allies at the beginning of August still felt that they needed Brittany and its port facilities.[27]

Personalities and Concepts

It had long been planned to turn the VIII Corps westward into Brittany as soon as the Americans reached the base of the Cotentin at Avranches. In moving toward Rennes and St. Malo, VIII Corps was to precede other units of the Third Army, which would clear the "whole of the Brittany Peninsula." [28] General Bradley thus ordered Patton to drive south from Pontaubault to seize Rennes and Fougères, then turn westward to secure St. Malo, the Quiberon Bay area, Brest, and the remainder of Brittany, in that sequence. The Communications Zone was alerted to the task of opening and developing the ports of St. Malo, Quiberon Bay, and Brest as soon as possible after their capture.[29]

Before the invasion, it had been thought necessary to divert a sizable U.S. force to capture the Breton ports, and plans had been formed to deploy not

[26] Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support*, I, 186–88, 285–97; SHAEF/17100/35 Opns, NEPTUNE, Summary of Jt Opns Plan, Phase II, 25 Apr, SGS SHAEF File 381, OVERLORD, I (a); SHAEF/17100/35/Opns, NEPTUNE, Summary of Rev Jt Opns Plan—U.S. Forces for Phase II of Opn OVERLORD, 20 May, and SHAEF/17100/35/Opns, NEPTUNE, Summary of Third U.S. Army Outline Plan, 22 May, both in EUCOM Files, Box 3; Capt Albert Norman, The History of 12th Army Group (Third Draft), MS, Hist Br, AG Sec, 12th AGp [27 Jul 45], pp. 349–56, 12th AGp File, Box 27; Interv by Pogue with Maj Gen K. R. McLean, 11–13 Mar 47, Pogue Files.

[27] Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support*, I, 468–74.
[28] 21 AGp Dirs, M–510 and M–515, 10 and 27 Jul; Ltr, Montgomery to Bradley, Dempsey, Patton, and Crerar, M–512, 21 Jul.
[29] 12th AGp Ltr of Instrs 1, 29 Jul. The 12th Army Group orders are conveniently reproduced as Annex 4 of the 12th Army Group History and also in Annex 1 of the Third Army AAR.

GENERALS HODGES, BRADLEY, AND PATTON *discuss the drive through Brittany at General Bradley's headquarters, 17 August.*

only the VIII Corps but also the XV, and possibly even the VII and XX.[30] When German disorganization seemed so thorough, the opportunity of seizing Brittany with smaller forces became feasible.

Specifically, General Patton planned to drive southwest from Avranches through Rennes to Quiberon Bay in order to cut the Brittany peninsula near its base and prevent the reinforcement or escape of German forces thus isolated.

Next, he would clear Brittany by seizing the central plateau of the peninsula. In so doing, he would liberate a vast region of France, open interior lines of communication, and reduce the enemy defenses to isolated pockets along the coast. With the Germans penned into a few port cities, it would be relatively easy to force their capitulation. Once the ports were in American hands, the Third Army would be free to turn east, where the decisive battle of the European campaign would obviously be fought. Thus, Patton visualized his primary mission as clearing the peninsula, his incidental mission as securing Quiberon

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[30] TUSA AAR, I, 13; SHAEF/17100/35/Opns, NEPTUNE, Summary of Third U.S. Army Outline Plan, 22 May, EUCOM Files, Box 3; 83d Div Min of Mtg, 0900, 30 Jul, 83d Div G-2, G-3 Jnl and File.

Bay and Brest first and the other ports later, his eventual mission as driving eastward toward Paris and the Seine.[31]

Patton's method for securing Brittany was to unleash armored columns in the peninsula. The 4th Armored Division was to drive through Rennes to Quiberon. The 6th Armored Division was to go all the way to Brest. A third column, formed by activating a provisional unit called Task Force A under the command of Brig. Gen. Herbert L. Earnest, was to advance to Brest to secure the vital railroad that follows generally the north shore.[32]

If Brest was to prove of value as a port of entry, the double-track railway linking it to Rennes had to be in good condition. Since the railroad crosses several big bridges that can not be quickly or easily replaced or repaired, Task Force A was to capture the bridges before the Germans could demolish them. That Patton considered this an important mission was clear when he requested General Grow of the 6th Armored Division also to keep an eye out for the bridges along the railroad, particularly the one at Morlaix.[33]

Unlike General Bradley, General Patton considered the capture of St. Malo incidental to the entire Brittany campaign. He did not specifically assign it as an objective to any of his forces. And he apparently influenced Bradley to the extent that Bradley agreed St. Malo could be bypassed and contained if its reduction appeared to require too many forces and too much time.[34]

What emerged was a concept quite different from that which had governed operations in the Cotentin. Patton saw his immediate objectives far in advance of the front, for his intent was to slash forward and exploit not only the mobility and striking power of his armored divisions but also the German disorganization.[35] Prone to give his subordinates free rein, Patton expected them to exercise independent judgment and tactical daring. Confident of the ability of armor to disrupt enemy rear areas and to sustain itself deep in enemy territory, and conscious of the weak and disorganized opposition, he felt that the ultimate objectives were immediately pertinent and attainable. There seemed little point in slowly reducing Brittany by carefully planned and thoroughly supervised operations unraveled in successive phases. As a result, Patton granted his subordinates a freedom of action that permitted the division commanders to be virtually independent.

With this concept of warfare that stressed taking advantage of the breaks, General Patton required constant knowledge of front-line changes. To get it,

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[31] TUSA FO 1, 4 Aug (confirming verbal orders, 1 Aug), AAR, I, 16, and Ltr, Confirmation of Verbal Orders Issued 2 Aug 44, 4 Aug; TF A AAR and Jnl, Aug. The Third Army orders are conveniently reproduced in Annex 2 of the Third Army AAR.

[32] The principal components of Task Force A were the 15th Cavalry Group and the 6th Tank Destroyer Group, both supported by attached engineers and operating under the headquarters of the 1st Tank Destroyer Brigade. The brigade had been activated in 1942 as a tactical headquarters, but, upon its assignment to the Third Army in 1944, it had been transformed into the army tank destroyer staff section. On 1 August it was again given command status and attached to VIII Corps.

[33] 1st Tank Destroyer Brigade History, 24 Nov 42–31 Dec 44; VIII Corps FO 9, 1600, 1 Aug; TUSA

Ltr, Confirmation of Verbal Orders Issued 2 Aug, 4 Aug; TF A FO 1, 2 Aug; Interv by author with Gen Grow.

[34] 12th AGp Dir for Current Opns, 2 Aug.

[35] TUSA AAR, I, 16–18.

he renamed the 6th Cavalry Group (Col. Edward M. Fickett) the Army Information Service and transformed it into a communications unit. A varying number of reconnaissance platoons (each usually with two officers, twenty-eight men, six armored cars, and six jeeps) formed into troops under two squadrons were to report the activities of combat units down through battalion size. The reconnaissance platoons were to funnel G–2 and G–3 information through troop headquarters to squadron and group. The latter would co-ordinate and condense the information into teletype messages and send it directly to the army advance command post. Known as Patton's "Household Cavalry" and required to bypass normal communications channels, the 6th Cavalry Group was to provide a means of contact between far-flung forces engaged in diverse missions and the army command post, which was sometimes to be as much as a hundred miles behind the front.[36] It thus happened on occasion that, though corps and divisions monitored the messages, the army staff was better informed on a particular situation than the corps directing the operation.

In Brittany, the corps commander in immediate charge of operations, General Middleton, methodical and meticulous, found himself in a whirlwind that threatened to upset his ideas of orderly and controlled progress. The transfer

of VIII Corps from First to Third Army brought changes in staff procedures, communications, and supply, but these were minor problems when compared to the exigencies that emerged in rapid succession as a result of the change from the positional hedgerow warfare in the Cotentin to wide-open exploitation in Brittany.

General Middleton's plans for Brittany grew out of the premises that had governed the action in the Cotentin: orderly advances were to be made to specific objectives by units developing a compact fighting front. In conformance with this manner of operation, he planned to send two columns into Brittany—two armored divisions abreast, each followed by an infantry division—the same formation employed so successfully during the post-COBRA exploitation to Avranches. The 4th Armored Division, followed by the 8th Division, was to move southwest from Pontaubault and capture Rennes; the 6th Armored Division, supported by the 79th Division, was to strike westward from Pontaubault and seize in turn Pontorson, Dol-de-Bretagne, and Dinan. Once these objectives were secured, General Middleton would send his columns on to Quiberon and St. Malo, respectively. St. Malo, Middleton believed, was his "immediate task" in Brittany.[37]

The commanders who were to lead the spearheads into Brittany regarded themselves as belonging to the Patton school of thought. They seized upon the situation of exploitation with relish. Generals Grow and Earnest, who were

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[36] TUSA AAR, I, 5; Interv with Lt Col Samuel M. Goodwin, Executive Officer, 6th Cav Gp, Hosp Intervs, IV, GL–93 (321), ML–2235. Between 1 August and 10 October, the reconnaissance platoons lost 1 officer and 57 men. Twenty-eight were casualties of enemy action, the remaining 30 victims of traffic accidents. Montgomery used a similar communications system called *Phantom*.

[37] VIII Corps AAR, Aug, Opns Instrs, 31 Jul (confirming fragmentary verbal orders, 31 Jul), and FO 9, 1600, 1 Aug.

to pass near St. Malo, for example, made no plans to capture the city, Earnest going so far as to tell his staff, with some exaggeration, that they would go by it without even looking at it.[38]

Generals Wood and Grow in particular felt toward General Patton, who, like them, was a tank officer, an affinity they could not feel toward General Middleton, bred in the infantry. They were convinced they understood better what Patton expected. Their units had been relatively untouched by the depressing combat in the hedgerows and had not sustained the heavy losses that were normal in the Cotentin. Having thrust victoriously to Avranches in the last days of July, they believed they had accomplished what other units had not been able to do. Having led the U.S. forces from the breakthrough into the breakout, the division commanders and their units became infected with an enthusiasm and a self-confidence that were perfectly suited to exploitation but proved to be a headache to those who sought to retain a semblance of control. A naturally headstrong crew became rambunctious in Brittany.

Problems

Control was one of the major problems of the Brittany campaign, and distance added to the problem. The VIII Corps command post was located north of Avranches, and General Middleton was able to displace forward to a point several miles south of that city only on 4 August. By then the combat components of the corps were scattered, out of sight and virtually out of hearing.

Although Middleton wanted to move his command post into Brittany and closer to his far-flung units, the Third Army staff was most anxious for him not to displace the corps headquarters beyond the limited range of field telephones. Middleton complied. Communications between the army and the corps headquarters thus remained satisfactory, but this state of affairs was not duplicated below the corps level. As early as 2 August, General Middleton remarked that contact with the armored divisions was "practically nil." [39]

With the corps units stretched over a vast area and moving rapidly, signal communications broke down almost completely. "The expensive signal equipment at the disposal of the Corps," General Middleton later wrote, "was never designed apparently for a penetration and pursuit of the magnitude of the Brittany operation." [40] It was impossible to install or maintain wire communications over such distances. During the night of 3 August, the few corps signal lines to forward units that did exist were bombed out by German planes, as were the wires to the army headquarters. For about eight hours, while the lines were being repaired, the corps headquarters existed in a virtual vacuum, able to exercise only the most limited influence on operations.[41]

Although communications with both armored divisions were strained, they were particularly weak in the case of the 6th Armored Division, which had dis-

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[38] TF A AAR and Jnl, Aug.

[39] Telecon, 6 Aug, VIII Corps G–3 Jnl; VIII Corps Sitrep, 2 Aug.

[40] VIII Corps AAR, Aug.

[41] Msg, VIII Corps Sig Officer to G–3, 0040, 4 Aug; Memo, Rpt of Evenings Activities, 4 Aug. Both in VIII Corps G–3 Jnl.