lem of control inherent in a night operation.[11]

To help overcome the terrain difficulties, General Landrum arranged for heavy fire support. Since his was to be the only attack in progress in the corps zone, more than normal fire power was available. He received the assistance of the entire VIII Corps Artillery. Because the 83d Division had found the la Varde operation so difficult, preparatory bombardment by tactical air was promised for the 90th Division. To make certain of a preponderance of fire power, Landrum directed all nonparticipating infantry units to support the attack by fire.

General Landrum selected the 358th Infantry to make the attack. The regimental commander, Lt. Col. Christian E. Clarke, Jr., planned to attack with two battalions abreast, each advancing along one of the roads to the island. Once on the island, the two battalions were to form a consolidated bridgehead. Engineers were then to lay bridging so that tanks and assault guns could cross the Sèves and support a drive eastward to clear the rest of the island.

Initially scheduled for 18 July, the operation was postponed several times until artillery ammunition problems—matters affecting the COBRA preparations—were settled. The attack was finally set for the morning of 22 July. Poor visibility that morning grounded not only the fighter-bombers that were to make an air strike on the island but also the artillery observation planes. Though in great volume, the artillery preparation thus was unobserved.

ADVANCING TOWARD ST. GERMAIN

Since no other actions were occurring in the area, the Germans, like VIII Corps, were able to utilize all their fire resources within range to meet the American attack. Enemy fire prevented the assault troops from advancing beyond the line of departure. A battalion of the 90th Division not even taking part in the attack sustained forty-two casualties from enemy shelling.[12] American counterbattery fires plotted by map seemed to have no real effect.

Three hours after the designated time of attack, one battalion moved forward along the muddy country lane. Taking 50 percent casualties in the assault companies, men of the battalion crossed the swamp, waded the stream, and reached

[11] This account has been taken from: 90th Div AAR, Jul; FUSA IG Ltr, Failure of Elements of the 358th Inf, 90th Div, to Resist a German Counterattack, 26 Jul; VIII Corps IG Ltr, Rpt of Investigation of 358th Inf Regt, 90th Inf Div, 11 Aug.

[12] 357th Inf Jnl, entry 1210, 23 Jul.

the island. The momentum of their advance carried them 200 yards into the interior. Colonel Clarke quickly ordered the other assault battalion to take the same route, but only one rifle company managed to reach St. Germain in this manner. Though Colonel Clarke replaced the battalion commander with the regimental executive officer, the new battalion commander had no more success in reinforcing the foothold. The Germans pounded the approaches to the island with artillery and mortars and swept the open ground with machine gun fire. The only practical method of crossing the exposed area was by infiltration, and most men sent toward the island lost their way.

By dark of the first day of attack, at least 400 men were on the island. One battalion reduced to half strength by casualties and stragglers, less its mortar platoon, plus little more than one company of another battalion, formed a horseshoe line on the island about 200 yards deep and a thousand yards wide, with both flanks resting on the swamp. The troops repelled a small German counterattack, and the positions seemed quite stable. Still, efforts to reinforce the bridgehead failed. Because enemy fire prevented engineers from bridging the stream, neither tanks nor tank destroyers could cross.

With the descent of darkness, the troops on the island began to experience a sense of insecurity. Lacking mortars, tanks, and antitank guns, the men withdrew to a defiladed road along the north edge of the island. In the pitchblack darkness, some of the demoralized troops began furtive movement to the rear. Stragglers, individually and in groups, drifted unobtrusively out of the battle area. Soldiers pretended to help evacuate wounded, departed under the guise of messengers, or sought medical aid for their own imagined wounds. German fire and the dark night encouraged this unauthorized hegira and added to the problems of unit commanders in recognizing and controlling their recently arrived replacements.

Shortly after nightfall, Colonel Clarke discovered that the battalion commander of the forces on the island had remained on the near shore. When he ordered him to join his men, the officer did so, but neglected to take his staff. Learning this later, Colonel Clarke dispatched the staff to the island, but the officers lost their way and did not reach St. Germain.

At daylight, 23 July, the German shelling subsided, a prelude to the appearance of three German armored vehicles on one flank of the American positions and an assault gun on the other. As these began to fire, a German infantry company of about platoon strength—perhaps thirty men—attacked. Only a few Americans in the bridgehead fired their weapons. Panic-stricken for the most part, they fell back and congregated in two fields at the edge of the island. Hedgerows surrounded each of these fields on three sides; the fourth, facing the swamp, was open and invited escape. Continuing German fire across the open ground provided the only restraint to wholesale retreat.

Officers at regimental headquarters on the "mainland" had begun to suspect that the situation was deteriorating when unidentified cries of "cease firing" swept across the two fields. A shell landed in

a corner of one field, inflicting heavy casualties on men huddling together in fear. At this moment, despite little firing and few Germans in evidence, a group of American soldiers started toward the enemy, their hands up, some waving white handkerchiefs. That was the end. The rest of the men either surrendered or fled across the swamp.

At the conclusion of the fight for St. Germain, about 300 men were missing in action. A later check revealed that approximately 100 men had been killed, 500 wounded, and 200 captured.

The causes for failure were clear. Weather, terrain, a resourceful enemy, command deficiency at the battalion level (caused perhaps by combat exhaustion during the preceding battle of the hedgerows) had contributed to the result. The main cause, however, was the presence of so many inadequately trained replacements. The 90th Division had not had enough time to fuse its large number of replacements into fighting teams.

It seemed as though the performance of the 90th Division at St. Germain was but a logical extension of earlier unsatisfactory behavior. General Eisenhower remarked that the division had been "less well prepared for battle than almost any other" in Normandy, for it had not been "properly brought up" after activation.[13] Judging that the division needed new leadership, a commander not associated with experiences of the hedgerow battle, higher headquarters decided to relieve the division commander. "Nothing against Landrum," General Eisenhower remarked, adding that he would be glad to have General Landrum in command of a division he himself had conducted through the training cycle.[14]

Failure in the preliminary operations was in many ways depressing, but American commanders still were hopeful that COBRA would not bring another recurrence of the difficult hedgerow fighting. The First Army that was to execute COBRA was not the same one that had launched the July offensive. Battle had created an improved organization, and a continuing continental build-up had strengthened it. What the army needed was the opportunity to get rolling, and COBRA might well provide just that.

The Troops

The hedgerow fighting that had exhausted and depleted the ranks had also made the survivors combat wise. Common mistakes of troops entering combat were "reliance on rumor and exaggerated reports, failure to support maneuvering elements by fire, and a tendency to withdraw under HE [high-explosive] fire rather than to advance out of it." [15] Each unit now had a core of veterans who oriented and trained replacements. Most combat leaders had taken the test of ordeal by fire. The great majority of divisions on the Continent were battle trained.

An assurance had developed that was particularly apparent in dealings with

[13] Ltr, Eisenhower to Marshall, 5 Jul, Pogue Files; see Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack,* p. 403; Robert R. Palmer, Bell I. Wiley, William R. Keast, *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops,* UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD WAR II (Washington, 1948), p. 459, n. 19.

[14] Ltr, Eisenhower to Marshall, 2 Aug, Pogue Files.

[15] 12th AGp Immed Rpt 41, Misc Comment, 29 Aug.

enemy armor. Earlier, when a regiment had blunted a tank-infantry counterattack, the significant and gratifying result was that it had stopped German armor. "Glad to know they can hold their own against tanks," was the comment.[16] But such experience was becoming increasingly common, and definite identification of a knocked-out Mark VI Tiger proved conclusively that even the German tank with the strongest armor was vulnerable to American weapons. Artillery, tanks, bazookas, tank destroyers, and tactical aircraft could and did destroy German tanks. By 11 July the First Army Ordnance Section had accumulated in collecting points 36 Mark III's and IV's, 5 Mark V's and VI's. The hedgerowed terrain had neutralized to a great extent the ability of the Tiger's 88-mm. gun and the Panther's 75-mm. gun to penetrate an American tank at 2,500 yards. Tanks generally engaged at distances between 150 and 400 yards, ranges at which the more maneuverable Sherman enjoyed a distinct superiority.[17]

Though a tank destroyer crew had seen three of its 3-inch armor-piercing shells bounce off the frontal hull of a Mark V Panther at 200 yards range, a fourth hit had penetrated the lower front hull face and destroyed the tank.[18] A soldier who had met and subdued an enemy tank later reported, "Colonel, that was a great big son-of-a-bitch. It looked like a whole road full of tank. It kept coming on and it looked like it was going to destroy the whole world." Three times that soldier had fired his bazooka, but still the tank kept coming. Waiting until the tank passed, he had disabled it with one round from behind.[19]

The ability to destroy German armor generated a contagious confidence that prompted some units to add a two-man bazooka team to each infantry battalion, not principally for defense but to go out and stalk enemy armored vehicles.[20] With this frame of reference becoming prevalent, the troops displayed a decreasing tendency to identify self-propelled guns as tanks. Even such a battered division as the 83d manifested an aggressiveness just before COBRA when it launched a reconnaissance in force that developed spontaneously into a coordinated limited objective attack. Not the objective gained but the indication of a spirit that was ready to exploit favorable battle conditions was what counted.[21]

One of the major problems that had hampered the First Army—how to use tanks effectively in the hedgerow country—appeared to have been solved just before COBRA. The most effective weapon for opening gaps in hedgerows was the tank dozer, a comparatively new development in armored warfare. So recently had its worth been demonstrated that a shortage of the dozers existed in Normandy. Ordnance units converted ordinary Sherman tanks into dozers by

[16] 83d Div G–2, G–3 Jnl, entry 1209, 8 Jul.

[17] XIX Corps Msg, 1800, 8 Jul, FUSA G–3 Jnl; Annex 1 to FUSA G–2 Per Rpt 48, 28 Jul; XIX and VII Corps AAR's, Jul.

[18] Notes, XIX Corps AAR, Jul; VII Corps AAR, Jul.

[19] CI 30 (4th Div). The soldier was Pvt. Eugene Hix of the 22d Infantry, who was posthumously awarded the DSC for destroying three tanks in three days with his rocket launcher.

[20] See, for example, 356th Inf Jnl, 24 Jul.

[21] 83d Div AAR, 23 Jul; Confirmation of Oral Instrs, 22 Jul, 83d Div G–2, G–3 Jnl and File.

RHINO TANK *with hedgerow cutter crashing through a hedgerow.*

mounting a blade on the front. Some hedgerows, however, were so thick that engineers using satchel charges had first to open a hole, which the dozers later cleared and widened.[22]

Because the use of demolitions and tank dozers was time consuming, the tanks in offensive activity had often remained on the roads, and when cross-country movement became necessary, progress was inevitably slow. In order to speed up the movement of armor, Ordnance units and tankers throughout the army had devoted a great deal of thought and experimentation to find a device that would get tanks through the hedges quickly without tilting the tanks upward, thereby exposing their underbellies and pointing their guns helplessly toward the sky. The gadgets invented in July 1944 were innumerable.

As early as 5 July the 79th Division had developed a "hedgecutter," which Ordnance personnel began attaching to the front of tanks. Five days later the XIX Corps was demonstrating a "salad fork" arrangement, heavy frontal prongs originally intended to bore holes in hedgerow walls to facilitate placing engineer demolition charges but accidentally found able to lift a portion of the hedgerow like a fork and allow the tank to crash through the remaining part of the wall. Men in the V Corps invented a "brush cutter" and a "greendozer" as antihedgerow devices.

The climax of the inventive efforts was achieved by a sergeant in the 102d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Curtis G. Culin, Jr., who welded steel scrap from a destroyed enemy roadblock to a tank to perfect a hedgecutter with several tusklike prongs, teeth that pinned down the tank belly while the tank knocked a hole in the hedgerow wall by force. General Bradley and members of his staff who inspected this hedgecutter on 14 July were so impressed that Ordnance units on the Continent were ordered to produce the device in mass, using scrap metal salvaged from German underwater obstacles on the invasion beaches. General Bradley also sent Col. John B. Medaris, the army Ordnance officer, to England by plane to get depots there to produce the tusks and equip tanks with them and to arrange for transporting to France by air additional arc-welding equipment and special welding crews.

Every effort was made to equip all tanks with this latest "secret weapon," for it enabled a tank to plough through

[22] ETOUSA Engr Hist Rpt 10, Combat Engineering, Aug 45, pp. 30–33.

a hedgerow as though the hedgerow were pasteboard. The hedgecutter sliced through the earth and growth, throwing bushes and brush into the air and keeping the nose of the tank down. The device was important in giving tankers a morale lift, for the hedgerows had become a greater psychological hazard than their defensive worth merited.

Named Rhinoceros attachments, later called Rhinos, the teeth were so effective in breaching the hedgerows that tank destroyer and self-propelled gun units also requested them, but the First Army Ordnance Section carefully supervised the program to make certain that as many tanks as possible were equipped first. By the time COBRA was launched three out of every five tanks in the First Army mounted the hedgecutter. In order to secure tactical surprise for the Rhinos, General Bradley forbade their use until COBRA.[23]

Not the least beneficial result of the July combat was the experience that had welded fighting teams together. "We had a lot of trouble with the tanks," an infantry commander had reported; "they haven't been working with us before and didn't know how to use the dynamite." [24] Co-operation among the arms and services had improved simply because units had worked together. Part of the developing confidence was generated by the fact that increasing numbers of medium tanks had received the newer and more powerful 76-mm. gun to replace the less effective 75-mm. gun, and thus were better able to deal with the enemy.[25]

Perhaps the most significant improvement in team operations was the increasing co-ordination that was developing between the ground forces and the tactical airplanes. In addition to performing the primary mission of trying to isolate the battlefield by attacking enemy lines of communication, the IX Tactical Air Command had employed a large portion of its effort in direct and close ground support. The pilots had attacked such targets as strongpoints retarding the ground advance, troop concentrations, gun positions, and command posts. They had also flown extensive air reconnaissance for the ground troops.[26] On a typical day of action the fighter bombers of the IX TAC exerted 40 percent of their air effort in close support of the First Army, 30 percent in direct support of the Second British Army, 10 percent against rail lines and communications 50 to 70 miles behind the enemy front, and 20 percent in offensive fighter activity and ground assault area cover.[27]

[23] 79th Div G–4 Jnl, 5 Jul; XIX Corps G–4 (Rear Echelon) Jnl, 10 and 19 Jul; XIX Corps Ord Sec Jnl, 24 Jul; 30th Div G–3 Jnl, 1405, 19 Jul; Bradley, *Soldier's Story*, p. 342; Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, p. 269; First U.S. Army, *Report of Operations*, I, 122; *V Corps Operations in the ETO*, pp. 120–21; [Lt Col Glenn T. Pillsbury *et al.*], Employment of 2d Armored Division in Operation COBRA, 25 July–1 August 1944, a research report prepared by Committee 3, Officers' Advanced Course (Fort Knox, Ky., The Armored School, May, 1950) (hereafter cited as [Pillsbury], 2d Armd Div in Opn COBRA), p. 8; Guingand, *Operation Victory*, p. 395; Sylvan Diary, 14 and 17 Jul.

[24] Telecon, Stephens and Kelly, 1225, 15 Jul, 30th Div G–3 Jnl and File; 30th Div Ltr of Instrs, 15 Jul.

[25] [Pillsbury], 2d Armd Div in Opn COBRA, p. 19.

[26] First U.S. Army, *Report of Operations*, I, 91; [Robert F. Futrell], Command of Observation Aviation: A Study in Control of Tactical Air Power, USAF Hist Study 24 (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., Air University, 1952), *passim*.

[27] FUSA and IX TAC Air Opns Summary for 18 Jul, 30th Div G–3 Jnl and File.

Ground-air communications were being improved. "Wish you would tell the Air Corps we don't want them over here," an irate division staff officer had pleaded early in July after a few strafing planes had struck an American artillery battalion and wounded several men. "Have them get out in front [and] let them take pictures [but] no strafing or bombing." [28] Complaints of this nature were decreasing. Pilots of a tactical reconnaissance group attended courses of instruction in artillery fire adjustment, and as a result high performance aircraft began to supplement the small artillery planes with good effect.[29] Particularly interested in developing a practical basis for plane-tank communications, General Quesada, the IX TAC commander, had very high frequency (VHF) radios, used by the planes, installed in what were to be the lead tanks of the armored column just before COBRA was launched. Tankers and pilots could then talk to each other, and the basis for the technique of what later became known as armored column cover was born. The success of the technique in August was to exceed all expectations.[30]

The development of new air operational techniques and weapons such as rocket-firing apparatus and jellied gasoline, or napalm, also promised more effective support for the ground troops. Experiments with radar-controlled blind dive bombing and with the technique of talking a flight in on target indicated that night fighter operations might soon become more practical. Since no fields for night fighters were operational on the Continent, the craft were based in England. Employment of night fighters in tactical support was not usually considered profitable even though ground forces requested it.[31] In July work with radar-controlled night flights and projects for eventually basing night fighters on continental airfields promoted hope of round-the-clock air support.

Fighter-bomber groups in direct tactical support of the First Army were moving to continental airfields at the rate of about two each week. By 25 July twelve had continental bases. Their nearness to the battle zone eliminated the need to disseminate ground information across the channel to airfields in England as prerequisite for ground support. American ground units desiring air support channeled their requests to the First Army joint air operations section, which secured quick action for specific missions.[32]

During July, the American ground build-up proceeded steadily. Four infantry and four armored divisions reached the Continent during the month

[28] 1st Div G–3 Jnl, entry 1717, 7 Jul.

[29] First U.S. Army, *Report of Operations*, I, 124; Ltr, Corlett to OCMH, 1956.

[30] Brereton, *Diaries*, 21 Jul, p. 311; Bradley, *Effect of Air Power*, p. 41; Bradley, *Soldier's Story*, pp. 337–38; Leigh-Mallory, "Despatch," Fourth Supplement to the *London Gazette* of December 31, 1946, pp. 65–66. Artillery often marked ground targets for the aircraft. Interv by author with Gen Collins, 30 Mar 56, Washington, D.C.

[31] 83d Div G–2, G–3 Jnl, 8 Jul; 1st Div G–3 Jnl, entries 1326, 5 Jul, 0008 and 0012, 6 Jul. Two American night fighter squadrons operated under British control, mainly against guided missiles. In September P–38's of one IX TAC fighter group operated by radar control against German night troop movements, but they were not very successful. [Joe Gray Taylor], Development of Night Air Opns, 1941–1952, USAF Hist Study 92 (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., Air University, 1953), pp. 26–27, 116–17. See Leigh-Mallory, "Despatch," Fourth Supplement to the *London Gazette* of December 31, 1946, p. 89.

[32] First U.S. Army, *Report of Operations*, I, 91.

before COBRA. The arrival in England early in the month of the 80th Division brought the theater total of U.S. divisions to 22: 14 infantry, 6 armored, and 2 airborne. Four more were expected in August. During the first twenty-five days of July, almost half a million tons of supplies were brought into France, the bulk across the beaches. Although the Cherbourg harbor began to be used on 16 July, port operations there were not to become important until the end of the month.[33]

To launch COBRA, the First Army had four corps controlling fifteen divisions actually on the army front.[34] General Patton's Third Army headquarters had assembled in the Cotentin during July and was ready to become operational. Similarly awaiting the signal for commitment, two additional corps headquarters were in France at the time COBRA was launched and another was to reach the Continent soon afterward. An infantry division and an armored division, not in the line, were available for use by the First Army in COBRA; another armored division was scheduled to land on the Continent before the end of the month. The First Army also was augmented by many supporting units that belonged to the Third Army: engineer and tank destroyer groups, evacuation hospitals, and Quartermaster railhead, general service, gas supply, graves registration, and truck companies. The Forward Echelon of the Communications Zone headquarters was established at Valognes by 22 July, and the entire Communications Zone headquarters would soon arrive.[35]

Obviously, one field army, the First, could not much longer effectively direct the operations of such a rapidly growing force. To prepare for the commitment of General Patton's army and to meet the necessity of directing two field armies, the U.S. 1st Army Group headquarters began to displace from England to the Continent on 5 July, a move completed one month later.[36] In order to maintain the fiction of Operation FORTITUDE, the Allied deception that made the Germans believe a landing in the Pas-de-Calais might take place, ETOUSA activated the 12th Army Group under the command of General Bradley. Transferred to the 12th Army Group were all units and personnel that had been assigned to the U.S. 1st Army Group "except those specifically excepted," in actuality, none. The 1st U.S. Army Group, under a new commander, thus became a nominal headquarters existing only on paper until its abolition in October 1944. The 12th Army Group became the operational headquarters that was to direct U.S. forces on the Continent.[37]

The presence of uncommitted headquarters in Normandy proved an embarrassing largess. General Montgomery did not utilize General Crerar's First Canadian Army headquarters until 23 July, when it assumed a portion of

[33] Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support, I*, 449, n. 58; 457, 464–65.

[34] One of these corps and seven divisions (plus the 90th Division, which had been attached to the First Army since March) belonged to the Third Army.

[35] FUSA Ltr, Attachment of Third U.S. Army Units, 17 Jul; TUSA Msg, 17 Jul; Forward Echelon, COMZ, ETOUSA Memo, 22 Jul. All in FUSA G–3 Jnl. TUSA AAR, I, 12; XV Corps G–3 Jnl and File, Jul (particularly Telecons 12, 20, and 21 Jul).

[36] 12th AGp AAR, I, 40.

[37] 12th AGp AAR, I, 6; ETOUSA GO 73, 14 Jul, quoted in 12th AGp AAR.

the Second British Army front.[38] And, on the American side of the beachhead, General Patton's Third Army, along with several corps headquarters, was still not employed in combat. Since Brittany had been selected as the stage for General Patton's initial operations, the U.S. First Army had to reach the base of the Cotentin peninsula to provide the Third Army a means of ingress. A successful COBRA was a vital step toward this achievement.

General Eisenhower on 25 July gave General Bradley authority to change the existing command structure of the U.S. forces and erect the organization envisioned by the OVERLORD planners. At General Bradley's discretion in regard to timing, the 12th Army Group headquarters was to become operational, assume control of the First Army, and commit under its control the Third Army.[39]

Between the end of the earlier July offensive and the launching of COBRA, there was a lull for about a week. Not only did the period of inactivity permit plans to be perfected and the troops to be better organized for the attack, it also gave the men some rest and time to repair the equipment damaged in the battle of the hedgerows. Units were able to integrate replacements. By the time COBRA got under way, all the divisions on the Continent were close to authorized strength in equipment and personnel and most had undergone a qualitative improvement.[40]

The quiet period before COBRA also made possible increased comforts such as hot meals, showers, and clothing changes. Even though B rations—a nonpackaged food affording a variety of hot meals—had reached the Continent early in July and were ready for issue to the troops, the battle of the hedgerows had prevented their being substituted for combat 10-in-1, K, and C rations until later in the month. With kitchens set up to serve hot meals, "it was amazing how many cows and chickens wandered into minefields . . . and ended up as sizzling platters."[41]

As Allied leaders searched rain-filled skies for a break in the clouds that might permit the air bombardment planned for COBRA, a phrase of the Air Corps hymn came to mind: "Nothing can stop the Army Air Corps." Nothing, they added, except weather. While impatient commanders waited anxiously for sunshine, and while General Bradley facetiously assumed the blame for having "failed to make arrangements for proper weather," the First U.S. Army rested and prepared for the attack.[42]

The Plot Against Hitler

During the lull over the battlefield in the west that followed GOODWOOD and preceded COBRA, and while defeats in the east gave the Germans increasing worry over the eventual outcome of the war, a dramatic attempt was made on Hitler's life on 20 July. In a speech

[38] Stacey, *The Canadian Army*, pp. 187, 194.

[39] 12th AGp AAR, I, 6.

[40] See, for example, 9th Div Jnl, 1525, 17 Jul; 743d Tk Bn Rpt 14, 18 Jul, 30th Div G–3 Jnl and File; FUSA Daily Strength Rpt; First U.S. Army, *Report of Operations*, I, 99.

[41] 314th Infantry Regiment, *Through Combat*, p. 23; 357th Inf Jnl, entry 1900, 15 Jul; 2d Div AAR, Jul, Observations of the Div Comdr; 79th Div G–4 Jnl, 14 and 18 Jul.

[42] Bradley, *Effect of Air Power*, p. 53; Ltr, Bradley to Leigh-Mallory, 23 Jul, OCMH Files.

the following day, Hitler himself released the news to the world. "A very small clique of ambitious, unscrupulous and stupid officers" he announced, "made a conspiracy to kill me, and at the same time to seize hold of the German Supreme Command."[43] Within a short time Allied intelligence officers had pieced together a remarkably accurate account of the occurrence: a cabal of high-ranking Army officers had tried to assassinate Hitler with a bomb in order to seize political power in Germany. The bomb had inflicted only minor wounds on Hitler, and the Fuehrer moved swiftly to suppress the revolt. He named Heinrich Himmler—already Reich Minister of Interior, Reichsfuehrer of the SS (and *Waffen-SS*), and Chief of the Gestapo and German Police—Commander of the Home Forces and gave him control of the military replacement system. Hitler replaced the ailing Generaloberst Kurt Zeitzler, chief of staff of OKH and vaguely implicated in the conspiracy, with Generaloberst Heinz Guderian. High-ranking officers of Army, Air Force, and Navy were quick to reaffirm their loyalty to Hitler. The immediate result of the conspiracy was to tighten centralized control of the military in Hitler's hands.[44]

Allied intelligence had not only the facts but a plausible interpretation. The cause of the *Putsch* was "undoubtedly the belief . . that Germany had lost the war." [45]

That a "military clique," as Hitler calls them, should have been plotting to liquidate him is encouraging; that they should have chosen this moment is exhilarating. . . . The very fact that plotters reckoned that the time was ripe for a venture so complicated as the assassination of the Fuehrer argues that they had good reason to hope for success. . . . There seems . . . no reason to disbelieve Hitler's assertion that it was an Army *Putsch* cut to the 1918 pattern and designed to seize power in order to come to terms with the Allies. For, from the military point of view, the rebels must have argued, what other course is open? How else save something, at least, from the chaos? How else save the face of the German Army, and, more important still, enough of its blood to build another for the next war? [46]

Colonel Dickson, the First Army G–2, believed that the Hitler government would remain in office by suppressing all opposition ruthlessly. He saw no evidence to suppose that the existing German Government would be overthrown by internal revolution or by revolt of one or more of the German field armies. He was certain that only the military defeat and the surrender of the German armies in the field would bring about the downfall of Hitler. The first step toward that goal was to intensify "the confusion and doubt in the mind of the German soldier in Normandy" by "an Allied break-through on the First Army front at this time, which would threaten to cut him off from the homeland, [and which] would be a decisive blow to the German *Seventh Army*." [47] On its knees, the *Seventh Army* had no future "save in the fact that so long as the battle

[43] Hitler Speech, 21 Jul, FUSA G–3 Jnl File, 23 Jul.

[44] FUSA G–2 Est 11, 24 Jul; see Hodgson, R–57, for a detailed bibliographical account of the *Putsch* and also for the reaction in the west; see Wilmot, *Struggle For Europe*, pp. 366ff., for a good account of the revolt.

[45] FUSA G–2 Est 11, 24 Jul.

[46] Hitler and His Generals, App. B to 15 (S) Inf Div Intel Summary 30, n.d., reprinted in SHAEF Weekly Intel Summary 18, n.d., V Corps G–3 Jnl File.

[47] FUSA G–2 Est 11, 24 Jul.