

orders as to the future of Norman Force, which was to continue in the meantime to co-operate with the Tenth French Army. I pointed out that that Army was carrying out the Brittany plan and had been ordered to withdraw on Laval and Rennes. I therefore asked that Norman Force should be allowed to disengage and withdraw on Cherbourg.

The C.I.G.S., however, was not prepared to give the decision, and asked that I should ring him up again on my arrival at my new Headquarters.

24. At 1430 hours, I moved my Headquarters S.W. from Vitre to Redon, which lies about 30 miles N. of St. Nazaire, and reached Redon soon after 1615 hours. I then rang up the C.I.G.S. who said that it had been decided that Norman Force was to stay with the Tenth French Army until that Army started to disintegrate, when General Marshall-Cornwall could withdraw his force for embarkation either to Cherbourg or the nearest available port.

25. I had previously arranged that 90,000 rations, as well as ammunition, should be sent up to Cherbourg, as this was the port on which Norman Force would be based. Any alterations to this plan at this stage would have caused a breakdown in the supply arrangements which were very difficult because the roads were congested and the railways working spasmodically.

26. During that evening I was in touch with Major-General J. S. Drew commanding the 52nd Division. He informed me that he had embarked one of his brigades and expected to get the other away the next day. I gave him orders to proceed to the United Kingdom with his second brigade.

27. Brigadier J. G. des R. Swayne, Head of No. 2 Mission*, reported to me on his way to the United Kingdom.

I also dispatched Brigadier N. M. Ritchie, B.G.S., 2nd Corps, to the United Kingdom that night, as there was no longer need for his services in France on account of the reduction of the number of troops.

28. Throughout the day the Germans maintained their pressure on the Tenth French Army. In the evening a message was received from General Marshall-Cornwall in which he gave it as his opinion that the Tenth French Army would disintegrate if it were seriously attacked. This opinion was confirmed by his G.S.O.1 (Lieutenant-Colonel R. Briggs, R.T.R.) who called at my Headquarters about 2300 hours that night. On the rest of the front the German advance continued, and the gap between the Tenth French Army and the Army of Paris was well over 50 miles wide. What German forces were in this gap it was impossible to say, as no Allied fighting troops were in the area and air reconnaissance was much hampered by low cloud and thunderstorms.

29. During the previous 24 hours about 47,000 troops and 250 vehicles of all kinds were reported to have been embarked.

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30. Early that morning I received a message from General Marshall-Cornwall to the effect

* No. 2 Mission had been attached to the Headquarters of General Georges (C.-in-C. North-Eastern Theatre of Operations).

that the Tenth French Army was in full retreat on Laval and Rennes, and that he was withdrawing his troops to Cherbourg. His own Headquarters were moving to Avranches and would go next to Cherbourg. At 1015 hours I spoke to the C.I.G.S. and explained the situation to him.

On receiving General Marshall-Cornwall's report, I ordered Air Commodore Cole-Hamilton—Commanding the Air Component—to move with two fighter squadrons and his one flight of reconnaissance aircraft to the Channel Islands whence he was to co-operate with Norman Force by carrying out reconnaissance tasks and by protecting the embarkation of that Force at Cherbourg. As soon as he had completed these tasks he was to proceed to the United Kingdom. The remaining Fighter Squadron was to operate from Brest to give close protection to that port during the embarkation of the B.E.F.

31. At 1130 hours, I spoke to Air Marshal Barratt, and explained my plan to him. I also discussed with him the arrangements for the withdrawal from La Rochelle of his party, which was defending Nantes and St. Nazaire during the evacuation. He expressed himself as satisfied with the arrangements that were being made.

32. At 1300 hours the C.I.G.S. telephoned and informed me that the B.B.C. had reported that the Petain Government had asked the Germans for an Armistice (this was subsequently confirmed by Capitaine Meric of the French Mission). He agreed that, in view of this, all efforts should now be directed to getting personnel away and afterwards, if the situation allowed it, as much material as possible. He further agreed that I should leave with my staff for the United Kingdom that evening. I said that I would ring up again about 3 p.m. to see if there were any final orders and that, if I should be unable to communicate owing to the cable being cut, I would embark as arranged.

I then saw General de Fonblanque and the Senior Naval Officer (Captain Allen, R.N.), explained the situation and ordered them to make every effort to get all personnel away, and also as many guns and vehicles as possible.

33. At 1445 hours I rang up the C.I.G.S. as arranged, but he had not returned to the War Office. At 1530 hours I rang up again, but was informed by Signals that all communications with London had been cut at Rennes, and that it was also impossible to get in touch with any port except Nantes. I, therefore, decided to leave Redon—which I did at 1615 hours—and proceeded with my staff and the G.O.C. L. of C. Area and the Senior Naval Officer to a point about 4 miles outside St. Nazaire. There I remained until 2045 hours.

34. At 2130 hours I left St. Nazaire in the armed trawler H.M.S. "Cambridgeshire." The destroyer which had been sent for my use by the Commander-in-Chief Western Approaches was not available as she was being used to assist in carrying survivors from the "Lancastria," which had been sunk by enemy aircraft that afternoon. The "Cambridgeshire" remained in the harbour during the night. During that time, three enemy air raids took place, but no damage was done, although a few bombs were dropped ashore.