

U.S. forces had to share port facilities in the Isle of Wight area, it was evident that co-ordination of naval plans in some detail would be necessary on my level as the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief. This was effected smoothly due to the loyal support of both Task Force Commanders, but I am aware that the U.S. naval authorities had to exercise considerable restraint in submitting to a degree of control by superior authority on a level higher than that to which they were accustomed. In their reports the U.S. naval commanders have commented that in their view my orders extended to too much detail. No argument, however, that has been produced since the operation has led me to change my opinion that full co-ordination in detail was necessary on the highest naval level.

Development of the Plan.

5. An outline plan for the operation had been prepared by *C.O.S.S.A.C. in July, 1943, and was approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Quebec Conference. Its soundness was proved later in detailed planning as in no respect were its fundamentals altered, though its scope and range were extended. On the naval side, as the plan developed so the naval requirements grew, and for some months we were planning without being certain that our full demands would be met. This uncertainty was a constant anxiety to me and was only removed at the eleventh hour.

6. The naval problem that had to be faced can be briefly summarised as first the breaking of the strong initial crust of the coast defences by assault together with the landing of the fighting army formations; and secondly to commence, and continue without a pause for five or six weeks, their reinforcement at as high a rate as possible. The first required the co-ordination of the movement of thousands of ships and landing craft and aircraft and then of their fire power, the second the co-ordination of the activities of hundreds of thousands of men and women of all services, both in the United Kingdom and off the French coast, marshalling, loading, sailing, unloading and returning at least eight ship convoys a day in addition to ten or twelve landing craft groups. Considerations of time and space did not permit the use of any unexpected manoeuvre to confuse the enemy: we had simply to drive ahead in great strength and to ensure that the organisation was as efficient as it could be, as the time factor was all important.

7. The one fundamental question on which there had to be early agreement was whether to assault during darkness so as to obtain the greatest measure of surprise on the beaches, or whether to assault after daylight and to rely on the greatly increased accuracy of air and naval bombardment under these conditions. The decision which was made, to make a daylight landing, was in accord with experience in the Pacific against strong defences, when the assaulting force possessed decisive naval and air superiority, and I am convinced that this is the correct answer under these conditions. When the decision was made there were no beach obstructions in place on the "Neptune" beaches. Their later appearance

would almost certainly have caused the decision to be revised, had it been originally made in favour of darkness, and it was very fortunate that no change was necessary as all training and, to some extent, development of weapons was affected. It should, however, be noted that there was by no means general agreement as to a daylight attack, and that even after the initial decision had been agreed between the three Commanders-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force at least two vain efforts were made to change it.

Administrative Planning.

8. Administrative Planning for a major cross-Channel operation had been carried on in the United Kingdom since May, 1942, by a skeleton staff. As a result, preparations were far advanced before the operational plan took shape and the logistic requirements of the latter were able to be fully met.

Enemy Miscalculations.

9. Because the power of manoeuvre at sea was so limited the need for keeping the enemy uncertain as to our precise objectives was paramount. Characteristic wireless traffic accompanying training and movements of assault forces had to be controlled. I understand that the success of the radio measures taken was an important contributory factor in securing surprise. Other measures included the berthing of dummy landing craft in Dover and Nore Commands before D day and the parking of PHOENIX and WHALE Units* at Selsey and Dungeness. Arrangements were also made with the Admiralty for the large number of commercial ships that were destined for the Thames and ships for loading to sail in later "Neptune" convoys to wait in Scottish ports until the operation began. Thus the concentration of shipping automatically spread itself throughout the ports of the United Kingdom and, although most congested on the South Coast, it was not confined to that area.

10. Tactically, a naval diversion employing light craft was carried out in the Straits of Dover to support the air bombardment in this area simultaneously with the main assaults, whilst a similar diversion was made in the neighbourhood of Cap d'Antifer. In both of these and also off Cap Barfleur radio counter-measures were employed by aircraft and by the surface craft taking part to give an appearance to enemy radar similar to that presented by the real forces. We now know that these were very successful and were an instrumental factor in enabling our forces to continue for so long towards the enemy coast before their composition could be determined.

Security.

11. Complete security was maintained, and it is considered that the very highest satisfaction may be felt that, despite the many hundreds who were for months aware of all the details of the plan, so far as is known there was no leakage. Some anxiety was felt on one or two occasions over individual cases in which orders or maps were distributed or opened contrary to the instructions given, but no harm is believed to have come of these isolated incidents and, when the very large number of documents

* Admiralty footnote: C.O.S.S.A.C.—Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander, General Sir Frederick Morgan.

* Admiralty footnote: PHOENIX and WHALE Units were components of the artificial (MULBERRY) harbours.