

(b) Since the United States Army Air Force and the Royal Air Force respectively depended on separate administrative systems, no attempt to combine them should be made, except where advantage was clearly to be gained.

(c) The main base was to be the United Kingdom, and the principal administrative units were not to be moved to the Continent until it was clearly advantageous to do so.

21. These Administrative Plans were supplemented from time to time by additional Administrative Instructions issued by my Headquarters.

22. The completeness of these administrative plans and the accuracy of forecasting which was used enabled the air forces involved to fulfil all of the commitments laid upon them, and in the midst of their heaviest operations, to move across the Channel without any diminution of their effectiveness. This, I feel, constitutes a major triumph of organisation. Some details of the problems involved and overcome in this planning and administration are given in Part IV of this Despatch.

23. A comprehensive Signal Plan for Operation "Neptune" was also issued by my Headquarters. This plan was implemented with success on the whole. I deal with certain features of Signals Communications in Part IV of this Despatch.

24. To supplement the Overall Air Plan as necessary, Air Staff Policy and Operational Instructions were also issued by my Headquarters. Operational Memoranda and Administrative Memoranda were additionally issued by your Headquarters in cases where two or more of the Services were affected.

Overall Air Plan.

25. In the Overall Air Plan I set out the undermentioned principal air tasks for the forces under my command and for the allotted effort of the strategical air forces and Royal Air Force Coastal Command. These tasks were decided upon after discussions with yourself and the respective Commanders-in-Chief as to the requirements of the Army and the Navy from the air forces.

(a) To attain and maintain an air situation whereby the German Air Force was rendered incapable of effective interference with Allied operations.

(b) To provide continuous reconnaissance of the enemy's dispositions and movements.

(c) To disrupt enemy communications and channels of reinforcement and supply.

(d) To support the landing and subsequent advances of the Allied armies.

(e) To deliver offensive strikes against enemy naval forces.

(f) To provide air lift for airborne forces.

26. The co-ordination of the Air Plans with those of the other services was achieved by weekly meetings between the other Commanders-in-Chief and myself, together with our respective Chiefs of Staff and Chief Planners. These meetings, held alternately in the office of the planning centre of each of the three Services, ensured that each service was kept informed of the relative development of planning.

Objects of Preparatory Bombing.

27. I considered that the primary objective of preparatory bombing should be to impose the greatest possible delay in the movement of the enemy reinforcements and supplies, and to this end, the railway bombing plan was designed. The object of this plan was to produce a lasting and general dislocation of the railway system in use by the enemy. By so doing the capacity of the system as a whole would be greatly reduced, and the task of dealing with isolated movement once the battle was joined would be made all the easier. Accordingly, the primary targets planned for attack were the railway centres where the most important servicing and repair facilities of Northern France and the Low Countries were located; the secondary targets were the principal marshalling yards, particularly those which possessed repair facilities. The selection of targets was made difficult in some cases by the necessity of avoiding heavy civilian casualties or damage to historic buildings. Where railway centres were situated in thickly populated areas (as at Le Bourget, for example), alternative centres were chosen in order to isolate them. A further limitation was imposed by the necessity to pinpoint the attacks on these targets; this demanded visual bombing conditions for day attacks and clear weather during moon periods for night attacks. The possibility of unreliable weather, particularly round about D-Day, was one of the major factors which dictated an early commencement of this plan; in fact the weather did seriously hamper its execution. The development of the railway plan and some indication of its success are set out in Part III of this Despatch.

28. Complementary to the railway plan, a further plan was made, covering the destruction of road and rail bridges. This plan which called for the cutting of the Seine bridges below Paris and the bridges over the Loire below Orleans was put into operation at D-30.

29. In the formulation and adoption of these plans to cause the maximum overall interference with enemy movements, it was fully appreciated, that the more successful were our attacks, the more embarrassing it would be to the Allied Armies when they came to move through the same area. This disadvantage though serious, was felt by the planners to be outweighed by the advantage of preventing the enemy from bringing in to the assault area sufficient reinforcements to contain the Allied bridgehead. I have dealt with this subject further in the section dealing with post-assault operations in Part III of this Despatch.

30. Other preparatory bombing plans included attacks on coastal batteries, enemy naval and military targets and the Radar chain. It was necessary to remember when making these plans that the enemy should not be given any indication of the area selected for the assault. The principal effect of this on the preparatory air operations was that at least two attacks were made on each type of target outside of the projected assault area to one attack on a target within that area.

Estimation of G.A.F. Capabilities.

31. I was confident that the German Air Force would constitute no serious threat to our operations on land, sea or in the air. However, I could not dismiss the possibility that the enemy was conserving his air forces for a