

one of which was the Tenth Army (General Altmayer) with which the B.E.F. was operating—and that considerable gaps existed between the groups.

The Armies, he explained, would continue to fight under the orders of their own Commanders, but co-ordinated action of the force as a whole would no longer be possible. Reserves were exhausted and many formations worn out.

He then informed me that, in accordance with a decision taken by the Allied Governments, Brittany was to be defended by holding a line across the peninsula in the vicinity of Rennes. He suggested that we should proceed to General Georges' Headquarters to discuss with him the details of this project.

We then went to General Georges' Headquarters, at Briare, where we continued the discussion. I pointed out that the length of the proposed line was some 150 kilometres which would require at least fifteen Divisions. I gathered from both General Weygand and General Georges* that they did not consider the Brittany project to be a feasible proposition with the forces that now remained available in the Tenth French Army including the B.E.F. General Weygand referred to the project as "romantic," and said that it had been adopted without military advice. General Weygand stated, however, that, since the Allied Governments had issued instructions for the defence of Brittany he must carry out their orders. Consequently, in consultation with General Georges, he had drawn up instructions for the participation of the B.E.F. in the scheme. Being under the impression that H.M. Government had approved this plan, I signed the document which prescribed the rôle of B.E.F. in it. (Copy attached at Appendix 'A').

6. In view of the gravity of the situation which General Weygand had described to me, I immediately sent a telegram to inform the C.I.G.S. I also requested Major-General Sir Richard Howard-Vyse to proceed to the War Office as soon as possible to report more fully to the C.I.G.S., and to take to the C.I.G.S. a copy of the document reproduced in Appendix "A".

7. I then returned to my Headquarters at Le Mans, arriving at 1615 hours. I spoke to the C.I.G.S. by telephone at 1630 hours and explained the situation. I asked whether the Brittany scheme had H.M. Government's approval and told him that both Generals Weygand and Georges appeared to consider it impracticable with the force available. The C.I.G.S. informed me that he knew nothing of the Brittany scheme, but said he would refer the matter to the Prime Minister.

I told the C.I.G.S. that, in view of the general state of disintegration which was beginning to spread in the French Army, I considered that all further movement of troops and material to France should be stopped, and that arrangements should be started for the evacuation of the B.E.F. from available ports. The C.I.G.S. informed me that orders had already been issued to stop the dispatch of further troops and material to France.

8. An hour later (1715 hours) the C.I.G.S. telephoned to say that the Prime Minister knew

nothing of the Brittany plan, and that all arrangements were to start for the evacuation of those elements of the B.E.F. which were at that time not under the orders of the Tenth French Army.

As H.M. Government had not been consulted with regard to the Brittany scheme, and the withdrawal of the B.E.F. had been approved, I considered that I was no longer in a position to carry out the dispositions settled with Generals Weygand and Georges. I therefore requested the C.I.G.S. to inform General Weygand, and I understood this was to be done. The instructions which I received later (see paragraph 10 below), stating that I was no longer under General Weygand's orders, confirmed this opinion.

Orders outlining the arrangements for the evacuation were at once issued, and an officer was dispatched to Lieutenant-General J. H. Marshall-Cornwall requesting him to come to my Headquarters.

9. The C.I.G.S. telephoned again at 2015 hours and said that it was most important that everything should be done to ensure good relations between ourselves and the French, and to avoid, in every possible way, giving the impression that the B.E.F. was deserting them. I replied that I would most certainly see that this was done, that I was moving no troops engaged with the Tenth Army, but that I was arranging to move back all other troops and material towards the ports.

At this stage the Prime Minister himself spoke and asked about the employment of those elements of the 52nd Division which were not under the orders of the Tenth French Army. I assured him that I considered that no useful purpose could be served by adding them to the forces already with that Army. They could not possibly restore the situation on that front, nor could they close the gap of some 30 miles which now existed between the Tenth French Army and the Army of Paris.

The Prime Minister then agreed to my proposal that the troops under orders of the Tenth French Army should remain fighting with that army for the present, whilst the withdrawal of the remainder of the B.E.F. should proceed.

Moves to ports of embarkation were therefore continued, Canadian forces moving on Brest, corps troops on St. Malo, 52nd Division (less elements with Tenth French Army) on Cherbourg, L. of C. troops and material on St. Malo, Brest, St. Nazaire, Nantes and La Pallice. Finally those elements with Tenth French Army were to embark at Cherbourg when the situation admitted of their withdrawal from that Army.

10. At 2235 hours I spoke to the C.I.G.S. and told him of the Prime Minister's approval for evacuation. The C.I.G.S. informed me that I was no longer under the orders of General Weygand, and that the B.E.F. was to act as an independent force. I was, however, to continue to co-operate in every way possible with the Tenth French Army.

11. During the night of 14th/15th June, my staff and myself were busily engaged in perfecting the arrangements for the embarkation and evacuation of approximately 150,000 personnel, with large stocks of vehicles and material which had been accumulated since September, 1939. Major Macartney of the Quartermaster General's Movement Staff

* General Georges was C.-in-C., North-Eastern Theatre of Operations.