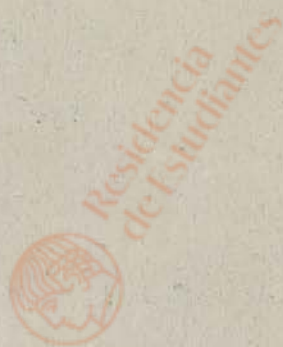




Report by  
**THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER  
MEDITERRANEAN**  
to the  
**COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF**  
on  
**THE OPERATIONS IN  
SOUTHERN FRANCE**

AUGUST 1944





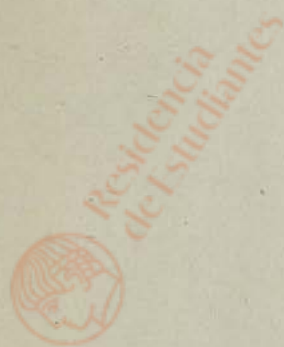
R4

REPORT BY THE  
SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER  
MEDITERRANEAN  
TO THE COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF  
ON THE OPERATIONS IN  
SOUTHERN FRANCE  
AUGUST 1944

LONDON

HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

1946





# CONTENTS

	PAGE
BACKGROUND OF THE PLAN ... ..	1
ORIGINAL OUTLINE PLAN ... ..	2
THE LST BOTTLENECK ... ..	6
THE ONE-DIVISION ASSAULT ... ..	8
PRIORITY OF THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN ... ..	10
NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FRENCH ... ..	13
ALTERNATIVES ... ..	17
THE JUNE DECISION ... ..	20
CO-ORDINATION WITH GENERAL EISENHOWER ... ..	25
CO-ORDINATION OF PLANNING ... ..	27
THE ASSAULT LANDINGS ... ..	34
TOULON AND MARSEILLES ... ..	38
TRANSFER OF OPERATIONAL CONTROL TO GENERAL EISENHOWER ... ..	40
TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPLY RESPONSIBILITIES ... ..	43
CONCLUSION ... ..	46
(Glossary of abbreviations ... ..)	48





## BACKGROUND OF THE PLAN

THE decision to launch an amphibious operation against the shores of Southern France in conjunction with a major invasion effort in Northern France in 1944, and the early planning for such an operation in the Mediterranean Theatre, ante-date my assumption of command in that Theatre. The Combined Chiefs of Staff had decided on a diversionary attack on Southern France as early as the QUADRANT Conference in Quebec the preceding August, but the decision for a major assault was taken by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the SEXTANT Conference held in Cairo late in November, 1943, which I attended in my capacity as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East. The decision was subsequently embodied in agreements with Soviet Russia reached at the Teheran Conference, where Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt conferred with Marshal Stalin. These agreements were concluded at the highest level, and subsequently Mr. Churchill quoted President Roosevelt as saying "in view of the Soviet-British-American agreement reached in Teheran, I cannot agree without Stalin's approval to any use of force or equipment elsewhere that might delay or hazard the success" of either of these two complementary operations which were to create the "Second Front" in Europe. In fact, the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided to postpone amphibious operations tentatively scheduled for 1944 in the Bay of Bengal until 1945, in order to divert the necessary landing-craft to support the European operations. In their final report, they described the two assaults on France as the "Supreme Operations" of 1944.

On 6th December, 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff advised General Eisenhower as Commander-in-Chief, Allied Force, that the operation in his Theatre was to be launched in conjunction with the assault on Northern France mounted from the United Kingdom, and that the object was to be the establishment of a bridgehead on the South Coast of France, with subsequent exploitation northward in support of the northern invasion. The exact target date for the latter had not yet been determined, but was tentatively set for the "most suitable date during May, 1944". The Mediterranean operation was to be timed approximately to coincide with the Northern assault, and its exact date was to be set in consultation with the planning staff in the United Kingdom who were charged with planning the main invasion. General Eisenhower was informed that he would be given assault shipping and craft for a lift of at least two divisions, and he was directed to inform the Combined Chiefs of his requirements which could not be met from resources already available in the Mediterranean. In assessing these resources he was to assume that the forces already committed to the Italian campaign had advanced as far as the Pisa-Rimini line, where they were to maintain the strongest pressure possible without detracting from the new operation, and that no forces were committed to any other offensive operation in the Theatre.

During the next two weeks the Joint Planning Staff proceeded vigorously with the draft of an appreciation and outline plan. In the words of General Eisenhower, the projected operation, "instead of a diversionary threat



as formerly envisaged which would land only in the event of little opposition, had become an operation of major proportion." It would probably employ a corps of three United States divisions, two of which at least would probably be employed in the assault, and planning was based on an eventual build-up to ten divisions. From the beginning it was decided to utilise French divisions, at least in the follow-up formations. General Eisenhower pointed out to the Combined Chiefs of Staff that an experienced Army Headquarters was needed for the detailed planning and operational control of such an undertaking and requested permission—which was promptly granted—to retain Seventh Army Headquarters in the Theatre for the task. The following day, 17th December, he advised them that the preliminary appreciations upon which the planning was based pointed to the compelling need for a heavier assault force, three divisions instead of the two originally proposed, if the necessary landing craft could be made available. Pending examination of available resources to determine whether the assault force was to comprise two or three divisions, the planners prepared an outline to cover both contingencies.

## ORIGINAL OUTLINE PLAN

CHANGES in organisation and personnel at Allied Force Headquarters did not disturb the orderly progress of the planning. Effective 10th December, 1943, a unified command was established in the Mediterranean Theatre under Commander-in-Chief, Allied Force, who was redesignated Allied Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean Theatre, and still later—9th March, 1944—rechristened Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre. Shortly after Christmas General Eisenhower left the Theatre to visit the United States, prior to assuming his new post as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, with headquarters in the United Kingdom. On 8th January, 1944, I succeeded him in the Supreme Command, Mediterranean Theatre.

The day before Christmas the Joint Planning Staff of A.F.H.Q. submitted a preliminary Appreciation and Outline Plan, based on certain assumptions furnished to them by the Staff in the United Kingdom which was at work on the plans for the major invasion of Northern France, to which the plans for the invasion of Southern France must necessarily be secondary and supplementary. The Joint Planners in the United Kingdom naturally stipulated that the Mediterranean Theatre should not plan to launch an amphibious assault against the shores of Southern France prior to the major invasion effort against Northern France, which was at that time scheduled for early May. They specified in addition that the assault force must include "one or more United States or British Divisions", and that this force should exploit its successful landings on the coast by penetrating Northward in the direction of Lyon and Vichy, a distance of about 225 miles.

A.F.H.Q. planners had to make certain further assumptions of their own in estimating the availability of forces adequate to the task specified.



They assumed, therefore, that the problem of internal security in North Africa need not be a limiting factor in assessing the availability of either United States or French formations for the projected operation ; they assumed that the Allied advance in Italy had proceeded to the Pisa-Rimini line, without, however, securing possession of the port of Leghorn, and maintaining there only the degree of pressure consistent with adequate provision for the new operation. Naturally, in view of limited resources, they had to assume that remaining resources in the Mediterranean would not be committed to any other offensive operations. Under these conditions, the planners defined their task as the preparation of a plan for an amphibious operation against Southern France to be undertaken early in May, 1944, with an assault lift of either two or three divisions and a projected build-up to a total of ten divisions, and with provision for subsequent exploitation northwards.

The scale of such an operation required the early seizure of a major port, and Marseilles was the obvious choice as the best port in France, with a total capacity in excess of our requirements. Although it was an artificial harbour, and as such an excellent target for enemy demolitions, it was doubtful that the Germans could complete destruction of the entire port before its capture. The only possible alternatives were Sete and Toulon, of which the former was the smaller with a capacity of a maximum 7,000 to 8,000 tons per day, completely unsuitable for deep-draught shipping, and with bottleneck approaches and exits which the enemy could very easily block. Sete was ruled out from the beginning as unsuitable for development into a main supply base. Toulon, with adequate port facilities to supply the assault force during the initial stages of the operation, suffered the handicap of bad clearance facilities which could easily be made much worse by enemy demolitions. It was concluded that Toulon's facilities and the beaches must provide maintenance for sufficient forces to consolidate the bridge-head and for the advance on Marseilles, but that Marseilles itself must be developed as the main base port to support the exploitation northwards.

The choice of Marseilles as the major port objective of the initial assault almost automatically determined the selection of beaches east of Toulon for the assault landings. Toulon itself is only 45 miles from Marseilles, and the only other beaches in Southern France capable of accommodating a force of the size projected lay beyond Sete, 150 miles west of Marseilles, well beyond the range of shore-based short-range fighter cover whose western limit was Marseilles itself. There was the further consideration that the strong winds which tended to prevail in the coastal areas west of Marseilles decreased considerably to the eastward.

Within the three main subdivisions of the general area east of Toulon, it was more difficult to select the most suitable beaches. The Rade d'Hyeres was closest to Toulon, only 20 miles to the west, and there was an airfield near by. The beaches were adequate for a large force, some of them of good gradient, and on the whole with good exits. The islands off-shore and the formation of the mainland form a good anchorage for



a large number of ships. There were at the same time serious disadvantages. The position of the islands flanking the approach was such as to make the achievement of tactical surprise unlikely, and the approaches were, moreover, easily mined and strongly defended by coast artillery; the Western beaches of this area were backed by an anti-tank ditch. These difficulties were not regarded as insuperable, and the advantages were held to be compelling, provided the difficulties could be surmounted. The Cannes beaches at the extreme eastern limit of the general area considered were ruled out at once despite the advantage of a nearby airfield, for a number of reasons: their distance from Toulon, about 70 miles; the sea wall protecting the beaches; and the high ground surrounding the area with comparatively poor communication inland and westward.

There remained the beaches between Hyeres and Cannes, especially those of the Cavalaire-Cap Camarat area, 50 miles east of Toulon, suitable for landing but with no airfield which could be captured by D plus 2, although fighter strips could be constructed. The planners tentatively decided on the Rade d'Hyeres as meeting all our requirements, especially for a large immediate follow-up through the beaches, provided the initial difficulties of assault could be overcome. They concluded, however, that should the defence prove so strong as to make an assault on the Rade d'Hyeres too hazardous, the Cavalaire-Cap Camarat area should serve as an alternative.

The Navy was allotted the role of working out the details of convoy sailings, providing proper escort, evaluating beaches over which the amphibious assault might be launched, making recommendations which weighed heavily in the final choice of these beaches, preparing naval gunfire support for the landings, and arranging follow-up supply over the assault beaches, and through the ports of Toulon and Marseilles when they were captured. In short, the Navy undertook to place the Army firmly on the assault beaches and retain command of the assault forces until Army headquarters was ashore and assumed command of the Army forces. Danger from an enemy battle-fleet was no longer a threat in the western Mediterranean; naval escort thus served primarily to protect against a few submarines, corvettes, torpedo boats and lighter craft known to be present in these waters. It was expected at this date that for naval gunfire support one "old French battleship" would be available, in addition to some 12 British, American and French cruisers, light cruisers and contre-torpilleurs, and the equivalent of a flotilla of destroyers. The Navy was also to provide four escort carriers to supplement the air cover from land-based fighter aircraft.

Prior to the actual assault, and beginning as early as D minus 42, Air Force bombing missions must be designed to neutralise the enemy force by attacks on airfields within range of the assault area. There was to be, in addition, a bombing programme on selected targets to assist the operation directly and to impair the enemy's ability to counter the assault. It was directed that in devising the details of the bombing programme,



care must be taken not to jeopardise surprise. Finally, as D-day approached, air forces were to be withdrawn from other commitments, except those of purely defensive character, in order to ensure the exertion of maximum effort in support of the operation during the initial phase. On D-day itself, air cover during the approach and assault would be provided by land-based fighters operating from Corsica, supplemented by fighters operating from the four escort carriers. As in the plan for the invasion of Sicily an airborne mission was designed to drop in enemy territory behind the beaches immediately prior to the assault, in order to delay the arrival of enemy reinforcements and to obtain a lodgement in the bridge-head as it developed after the landings. One airborne regimental combat team was assigned to this mission, and it was to be withdrawn on completion of the second phase in the establishment of the bridge-head by about D plus 2. Meantime one airborne regimental team was to be held in reserve.

Special measures were deemed necessary to neutralise the series of defended islands which flanked the approaches to the Rade d'Hyeres, tentatively selected as the assault area ; and for this purpose Commandos and Rangers were to land from assault craft prior to the main assault, in order to neutralise the defences on the islands of Porquerolles, Port Cros, Levant, as well as at Cap Benat and Giens on the mainland, and also at Cap Negre in the event of a three-division assault.

The plan provided for simultaneous assaults by one division each on the western and northern beaches of the Rade d'Hyeres, and, in the event of landing craft for a third division being available, for an assault in the Cap Benat area as well. It was calculated that in the immediate follow-up, one French infantry division and one French armoured division would be ashore by the morning of D plus 3, and that, provided a secure bridge-head had been established, they could form an effective striking force to exploit westwards for the capture of Toulon by D plus 5. The outline of operations subsequent to the capture of Toulon was necessarily vague, since they would depend on the extent of enemy resistance and on the direction of ascertainable enemy movement. The object would be to seize the major port of Marseilles as directly as our military situation vis-a-vis the enemy permitted, with subsequent exploitation northwards in order to gain control of the Lyon-Vichy area.

The administrative appreciation and outline plan indicated the possibility of achieving the total build-up to ten divisions by D plus 80, if assault shipping and craft for a two-division assault were available, or by D plus 68 if resources were allotted to make a three-division assault possible. It was planned to have a total of five divisions ashore by D plus 3, or a total of 125,000 men, calculated on the basis of 25,000 men as the "divisional slice", of which 14,000 comprise the actual division, and 11,000 comprise corps and army troops, beach groups and other types of service troops. It was estimated that such a force supplied over the assault beaches could be self-sustaining for the exploitation of a maximum 20 miles for the capture of Toulon, but that capture of the port would immediately require



additional service troops for development and maintenance of the port facilities. On this basis it was calculated that the port might be serviceable by about D plus 10 or D plus 12, and that with the additional service troops the maintenance for further operations could be assured. With the capture and development of Marseilles as the main supply base, the proportion of service troops required would again increase. The "divisional slice" of 25,000 men accepted for the initial assault was, therefore, increased to 45,000 men for the ensuing period of operations, and the allotment of vehicles per division rose from 4,000 to 8,000. The total ultimate force of ten divisions would, therefore, number roughly 450,000 men and 80,000 vehicles.

In estimating shipping requirements, the planners calculated that on the basis of SEXTANT Conference decisions, 76 LST's would be available—including 15 which would be released from the projected operations in the Bay of Bengal and returned from India to the Mediterranean—and that 70 of the 76 LST's would be serviceable. These, together with the numerous assault ships and craft of other categories which were more readily available—LSI(M)'s, LSI(L)'s, and LCI(L)'s and LCT's of several types (II, III, IV, V) would lift a two-division assault. The planners concluded that for the lift of a three-division assault an additional 15 LST's and 15 LCT's would be required.

A further vital factor in these operations was to get the fighters and fighter bombers ashore and to improvise air strips at the earliest possible moment, as the provision of air cover from remote bases such as Corsica (see page 5), in addition to being a waste of resources, would preclude that close co-ordination between the Land Commander and the Air Force Commander which is an essential feature of a plan of this nature. In the event, Spitfire Wings were actually operating from the beach-head within a few days.

## THE LST BOTTLENECK

THE major problem, not only in the Mediterranean Theatre, but in every Theatre, was the shortage of assault shipping. The United Nations were committed to major amphibious operations all over the world and there were insufficient craft to meet all requirements simultaneously. Even after the Combined Chiefs of Staff had deferred for a year the amphibious operation scheduled for 1944 in the Bay of Bengal, there remained competing demands not merely as between the Mediterranean and European Theatres of operations but within the Mediterranean itself.

So far as the Mediterranean was concerned, the problem of priorities was extremely complicated. The Combined Chiefs of Staff had tentatively decided on an amphibious operation against the Island of Rhodes leading to the capture of the Dodecanese, to be mounted by my Middle East Command, but subsequent to the SEXTANT Conference the competition of other demands led first to its indefinite postponement and finally to its abandonment.



At this time the battle in Italy was making slow progress in its advance to capture Rome and certain of the senior Commanders were convinced that an amphibious landing of not less than two divisions behind the enemy's right flank would greatly facilitate a quick decision. As Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, I attended a Conference held on Christmas Day, 1943, to discuss the implications of this new project with Mr. Churchill, General Eisenhower and his Chief of Staff, General Smith, General Alexander, Air Chief Marshal Tedder, Admiral Cunningham and a number of Staff Officers.

It was necessary to consider the entire shipping position in the Mediterranean in the light of existing and prospective commitments. It was agreed that it would be folly to allow the campaign in Italy to drag on and to face the supreme operations against Northern and Southern France in the spring with our task in Italy only half-completed, but the crux of the problem was the provision of LST's because the LST programme was a very tight fit and permitted no flexibility to meet the hazards and uncertainties of amphibious warfare. There were existing commitments both to the assault on Northern France and the assault on Southern France, in that 56 of the 90 odd LST's then in the Mediterranean were due to sail for the United Kingdom by the middle of January, 1944, to be prepared for the Northern assault, while ten of the remainder were pledged to constant use in the development of Corsica as the major airbase for support of the Southern assault. If any of the latter were to be withdrawn temporarily to support a new operation, the number later devoted to the Corsica build-up would have to be doubled for a corresponding period if the completion of build-up were to be achieved at the proper time. It was thought possible, however, that the sailing of the 56 LST's to the United Kingdom might be delayed about three weeks until 8th February to permit their use in an amphibious operation in Italy the latter part of January, and it was decided that plans should be made for a two-division amphibious assault at Anzio on or about 20th January, 1944, in support of the Italian Campaign in order to achieve decisive results there. It was decided, further, that the projected operation against Rhodes must be postponed indefinitely, in order not to detract from the main battle in Italy, and not to prejudice plans for the invasion of Southern France. Finally, the construction work in Corsica to accommodate the necessary air forces for the support of the latter assault must be given the highest priority consistent with the requirements of the new operation in Italy, and nothing must be allowed to interfere with the May date for the Northern and Southern assaults on France.

There was still the problem of competing demands between the requirements for the main invasion of Northern France and those for the essentially secondary and supplementary invasion of Southern France. The planning staff in the United Kingdom had not yet determined the precise scale of their own assault, which would ultimately determine the scale of assault possible in the Mediterranean. Until these questions had been determined there could be no adequate assessment of resources available



or required, much less any firm decisions which would permit detailed planning. The complications of the situation were increased by the impending changes of command, with General Eisenhower shortly to become Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force based in United Kingdom, with myself to succeed him in Supreme Command in the Mediterranean Theatre.

Shortly after Christmas, General Eisenhower sent Brigadier Thompson, Chief of the Joint Planning Staff,\* with the Outline Plan to London to coordinate with the planners there, and he despatched a copy of the original Outline Plan to the Combined Chiefs of Staff with the statement that it had not yet been coordinated with the London staff, nor had there been time to obtain my approval as his successor. He added that in any case he did not wish to approve the plan in his new capacity until he had the opportunity of discussing it with his new Headquarters Staff. His final official act in the Mediterranean Theatre was to designate U.S. Seventh Army Headquarters as the Command Agency for the new operation, of whatever scale, and as such to be charged with detailed planning.

## THE ONE-DIVISION ASSAULT

GENERAL EISENHOWER'S proposal that the Southern assault force be increased from a two-division to a three-division basis and his plea that sufficient assault craft should be made available for this purpose were made at the very time the London planners were considering the increase of their own assault force at the expense of the projected operation in the Mediterranean. Original plans had envisaged a three-division assault on Northern France, which it was now proposed to increase to five divisions, with a corresponding drain on the already limited supply of assault craft. Early in January just as the London planners were beginning their study of the Outline Plan for the Mediterranean, Brigadier Thompson reported his impression that they had always preferred the idea of a strong-Northern assault with the Mediterranean operation as a diversionary threat only. On 4th January he reported that a high level conference in London, attended by General Smith as Chief of Staff and General Montgomery as Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, definitely decided in favour of the purely diversionary role of the Southern assault.

This decision was in line with the original concept of a one-division assault on Southern France. The previous August the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Quadrant Conference in Quebec had instructed General Eisenhower to submit an outline plan for a diversionary operation against the Southern Coast of France in support of the major invasion in the north, and on 29th October he had submitted a scheme based on the assumption that nothing more formidable than a one-division assault would be possible, and that consequently more was to be gained by mounting a threat on the largest scale possible than by actually launching an operation, unless German opposition promised to be negligible.

\* He was succeeded in this position on 9th June, 1944, by Brigadier General Jenkins.



Now that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had proposed a minimum two-division assault—which General Eisenhower suggested further increasing to three—some of the planners in the United Kingdom argued that such a full-scale assault, though holding in Southern France such German divisions as might already be there, could not for a long period exert direct influence upon the main battle in Northern France where the enemy was likely to employ his available reserves. In their view, it would, moreover, divert strength, not only from the Northern assault, but from the Italian Campaign, committing the Allies to an attempt to fight three battles simultaneously, no one of them close enough to the others to lend tactical support, and each of them short of adequate resources to achieve decisive results in its own sphere. On 12th January, 1944, they decided to ask the Combined Chiefs of Staff to approve the principle of strengthening their own assault at the expense of the Mediterranean, in order to concentrate maximum resources at the decisive point, and at the same time to enquire of the A.F.H.Q. planners as to what might be accomplished in their Theatre by a one-division assault.

I was in London during the period of these important conferences immediately prior to assuming command of the Mediterranean Theatre. I was kept informed of the discussions at all stages, and while still in London I agreed that the prevailing views appeared to me, in principle, well founded. I was quite willing that, in general, we should be prepared to follow whichever course should be considered, strategically, more desirable. I was insistent, however, that on no account should the Mediterranean Theatre be left with assault lift for less than one division. On 8th January I assumed my new post in Algiers, and two days later I approved the original Outline Plan as meeting the terms of the SEXTANT Conference directive which provided for a minimum two-division assault, pending final decision by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington as to whether to revise that directive by ordering a one-division assault.

General Eisenhower was personally very much opposed to such a reduction if it could be avoided. While still in Washington on 20th January, he still demurred at accepting completely the conclusions of his London staff. He agreed that increase in scale of the Northern assault to five divisions must have priority over retention of the Mediterranean assault at two, but he was very unwilling that the latter should be reduced, and was even prepared to postpone his own operation a full month if in that additional period he could find the extra resources needed for the five-division assault without cutting into Mediterranean resources. He was in any case opposed to any measures which would cause the Mediterranean operation to become impracticable through lack of resources, both because of the commitments to the Russians at Teheran, and because such a decision would have the effect of denying to the French Forces any significant part in the invasion of their homeland.

Meantime H.Q. FORCE 163, the cover designation for U.S. Seventh Army planning and operational staff, opened on 12th January, 1944, at the Ecole Normale in Bouzarea. Brigadier General Caffey from the



Fifth Army was in charge of Army (Ground Force) planning. Planners from the staff of Vice Admiral H. K. Hewitt, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Fleet, developed all naval plans, and Brigadier General G. P. Saville, who was to command Twelfth Tactical Air Force, developed all air plans. For more than a month there was no firm decision by the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the allocation of assault shipping which would determine the scale of our own assault, and provide the basis for their detailed planning. I did order an investigation of what our forces could reasonably hope to achieve on the basis of a one-division assault, in the event that the Combined Chiefs of Staff allocated us only sufficient shipping for that scale of attack. By the middle of February, as a result of that examination, it was apparent that we could achieve nothing by such an operation.

## PRIORITY OF THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

AT the same time the stalemate which had developed in Italy made me increasingly skeptical of the wisdom of attempting even a two-division assault against Southern France. All the decisions and plans for such an assault to take place in May, 1944, assumed a prior dislodgement of the enemy from his strong positions on the Italian peninsula south of Rome, and his retirement behind prepared defences along the Pisa-Rimini line, where our forces could maintain pressure without diverting resources from the new operation. It was for the purpose of turning the enemy's flank by sea in order to enforce his withdrawal north of Rome that the amphibious operation at Anzio had been designed and executed on 22nd January, 1944. At the Christmas conference all the commanders who were to be involved had expressed confidence that our two-division assault would achieve the desired result, and I stated my agreement with the general conception of the operation, while emphasising the importance of putting in a force of sufficient strength at the outset.

None of us had sufficiently realised the strength of political and prestige considerations which would induce the enemy to reinforce his front south of Rome up to seventeen divisions to seal off the bridgehead, and even to expend much of his fighting strength in counter-attacks to drive us into the sea. It was bold and resourceful strategy but, in the light of the enemy's own strained resources, it required instant and complete success to justify the lavish expenditure of resources. Short of complete and immediate victory, his temporary frustration of our plans was purchased at excessive cost, and left him at our mercy in an unsound strategic position when the weather should clear in the spring and give our overwhelming air mastery proper scope. For the remaining winter months, however, the isolated position of our bridgehead constituted a first mortgage on our own resources, and necessarily made junction between the bridgehead forces and the main front our primary pre-occupation.

Moreover, the fact that the enemy had chosen to defend Rome at all costs for essentially prestige reasons constituted a challenge which we



were bound to accept. There was already adequate military reason to capture Rome for the sake of denying use of its airfields to the enemy and to acquire it for ourselves, but it was agreed that the capture of Rome probably had even more political than military value. The Prime Minister said that if Rome were not captured, the world would regard our Italian Campaign as a failure.

On 18th February I held a conference at Caserta with General Alexander and my other Commanders-in-Chief to canvass the entire situation. We agreed that over-riding priority must be given to seeing the main battle through, to link up our main forces with the bridgehead and then to go on to take Rome. There was no thought of planning a one-division assault of Southern France in the Spring, and since at this time odds were still against our being allotted sufficient resources by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to mount a two-division assault, it very much looked as if the projected operation in Southern France was dead. Even if they should find the resources, I was now opposed to their expenditure in this way.

On 22nd February I signalled both the British and the United States Chiefs of Staff that any effort to prepare a two or three-division assault against Southern France would have a most serious effect on the operations in Italy and could not but prejudice the success of the battle, adding that, in view of our responsibilities for the defence of convoys and back areas throughout the Mediterranean and the necessity for holding in reserve a substantial force of fighter squadrons for despatch to Turkey, our air resources were inadequate to permit of fighting two battles at the same time, one in Southern France and another in Italy. I represented, therefore, that the launching of the proposed operation against the South of France could not be implemented under these circumstances and suggested that I be given a fresh directive to conduct operations with the object of containing the maximum number of German troops in South Europe with the forces now earmarked to be placed at my disposal including an assault lift of one division plus.

At the same time the Combined Chiefs of Staff were investigating every possibility of providing me with a two-division assault lift. It had already been decided to defer the invasion date a whole month, from early May to early June, in an effort to relieve the tightness of the shipping situation, and on 26th February, Major-General Hull and Rear-Admiral Cooke arrived in Algiers to report on their conference with General Eisenhower's staff in the United Kingdom, to gain firsthand information on the Italian Campaign, and to inform me directly of the views of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. On the same date I received a new directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, approved by the President and the Prime Minister, to govern Mediterranean operations. The directive relieved my concern for the future of the Italian Campaign by granting it "overriding priority over all existing and future operations in the Mediterranean" and giving it "first call on all resources, land, sea and air" within the Theatre.



However, as General Hull and Admiral Cooke explained in more detail during our conferences, the Combined Chiefs of Staff were desirous of maintaining the maximum flexibility of operations in the Mediterranean, in order to meet unexpected developments and especially in order to afford the strongest direct support possible to the invasion of Northern France. They particularly envisaged the possibility of the enemy's voluntary withdrawal behind the Pisa-Rimini line covered by extensive mining and demolition. They therefore directed me, subject to the over-riding priority of the Italian Campaign, to "prepare alternative plans and make such preparation as can be undertaken without prejudice to operations in the Mediterranean with the object of contributing to the northern invasion by containing and engaging the maximum number of enemy forces".

The first of such alternatives was to be the invasion of Southern France on approximately the scale originally contemplated, i.e. a two-division assault building up to about a ten-division total, giving full consideration to the maximum use of French forces. The directive contained certain data as to the landing-craft we might expect to be available, further amplified in the course of my conferences with General Hull and Admiral Cooke. The directive concluded with the statement that the situation should be reviewed on 20th March in the light of the situation then existing in Italy, and if at that time the operation against Southern France appeared to be impracticable, all such landing-craft (over and above a one-division ship-to-shore lift) as could profitably be employed in the northern invasion should be diverted to the United Kingdom.

During the next month, pending ultimate decision as to the practicability of the operation, planning was pushed vigorously. I directed the Joint Planning Staff to review the original Outline Plan in the light of subsequent developments and decisions and to suggest any essential modifications or additional requirements. They were to assume over-riding priority for the Italian Campaign until our forces were established on a line north of Rome; that such a line would be achieved by 1 May; and that by 15 April this outcome would be sufficiently clear to permit the first measures to be taken in mounting the new operation without impairing the priority schedule. It had been agreed, however, that one United States division would probably need to be withdrawn from the battle for rest and refit by 1st April, and that this division could properly begin its training at that time for its assault role in the new operation.

The planners stated that D-Day for the projected operations must be calculated as roughly ten weeks after the date on which the first participating division began to refit and that on the assumption of 1st April as that date, the earliest possible D-Day would be 10th June.

To make that date possible, moreover, the additional United States and French formations required would have to train and load on a carefully prearranged schedule. The two United States assault divisions, both drawn from the Italian Campaign, would have to begin their training on 15th and 29th April respectively and to start loading on 13th May. Of the immediate



follow-up a third United States division and one French division could be ready to start preloading on 6th May, and the remaining four French infantry divisions and two French armoured divisions could be ready when required. Since practically all these formations must be withdrawn from the Italian Campaign, it was obvious that any delay in achieving the primary objectives of that campaign would postpone D-Day of the new operation correspondingly.

The review made a careful study of maintenance and shipping implications of this fairly tight schedule and presented estimates of requirements, which necessitated further complicated correspondence between my Headquarters and the Combined Chiefs of Staff. In only one important particular did the planners suggest any basic alteration in the original Outline Plan. In the light of a re-examination of all the factors, they reported that the Planning Staff Force 163 favoured an assault area between Cap Cavalaire and Agay considerably to the east of the Rade D'Hyerres which had been tentatively proposed in the original Outline Plan. They stated, however, that a new Ground Force Commander had only recently been assigned, and that final selection of the assault area must be made by the commanders concerned with directing the assault.

It had been General Eisenhower's intention to assign Lieutenant-General Mark Clark to the new command when he could be spared from his responsibilities as Fifth Army Commander in the Italian Campaign. In fact, on 31st December, 1943, he was notified of the new appointment and told that he was to "remain in command of the Fifth Army until such time as he considers it necessary to devote his entire time to preparations for the new operation when he will apply to this Headquarters for formal transfer to command of the Seventh Army". In view of his commitment to the Italian Campaign and his responsibility for the Anzio operation, it became necessary to find a substitute. On 1st March I appointed Major-General Patch Commanding General, Force 163, later to be known as Seventh Army, and from this date detailed planning went forward at his Headquarters on the basis of the most recent directives and discussions.

## NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FRENCH

PLANNING had now reached the stage where I thought it essential to brief the French High Command on the very important role allotted to French forces, and on 7th March I had a long interview with the French Commander-in-Chief, General Giraud. Ultimately, the French would comprise seven-tenths of the invasion forces, and there were two very delicate matters touching French prestige which must be settled as tactfully and as early as practicable. One was the relegation of the French formations to the follow-up, leaving the initial assault exclusively to United States divisions. Actually I had no difficulty in satisfactorily explaining the cogent reasons for this arrangement to General Giraud



and in securing his ready concurrence. It was a sufficiently compelling argument that the available United States formations had experience of amphibious operations, whereas the French had not, but in addition it was essential that the inevitably complicated problem of signals communications during hazardous landing operations should not be further complicated by language difficulties. The landings were to be supported by elements of United States and British naval forces combined, also by United States and British air forces, and the use of United States assault divisions would make the enterprise an exclusively English-speaking affair.

I emphasised the special hazards of this operation as greater than those of any previous amphibious assault in this Theatre, in that the south coast of France was strongly fortified in all the areas suitable for assault. General Giraud readily agreed and argued that the enemy had so strongly fortified the coast that a two-division assault was not adequate. He thought there should be three divisions in the assault force reinforced with armoured elements, parachutists, airborne units and commandos, and he offered us the use of certain special French units, a parachute regiment, the Bataillon de Choc and a commando battalion. He also emphasised the importance of utilising the organised and unified activities of the French Resistance Movement. I assured him of our intention to use parachute and commando units in the assault and to take full advantage of the assistance to be had from the activities of the Resistance. As to the size of the assault force, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, General Devers, pointed out that the two assault divisions were to be reinforced divisions, each comprising 25,000 men and including armoured elements.

The commando problem was more difficult. General Giraud felt compelled to make reservations with regard to my statement that the Land Force Commander of the operation would be a United States General because of the important role of Allied air and naval forces, as well as of the United States ground forces. He was at pains to assure me that although France lost the war in 1940, the subsequent performance of the French Expeditionary Corps in Italy proved that there were still competent French generals. On two counts he maintained that a French general should assume over-all command, first because the bulk of the invasion force would be French, and second because of the psychological importance of having a French Commander to exploit the full military capabilities of the French Resistance Movement. I replied that whatever command arrangements might be ultimately established on French soil, it would be a considerable time before all the French follow-up forces were ashore and that for the reasons I had already elaborated, command during the initial phase of the operation must be exercised by a United States general.

Giraud undertook to consult with General de Gaulle on the various points we had covered and when I saw him again two days later, 9th March, we covered much the same ground, and confirmed the substance



of our earlier understandings on matters such as the French formations to be used and the areas where they were to be mounted. I had previously mentioned to him the necessity of two experienced French Corps Headquarters for the command of the seven divisions which would ultimately comprise the French force. He now confirmed the possibility of providing them, but said that both he and General de Gaulle were concerned that no provision had been made for a French Army Command to direct the two separate French corps and to operate parallel to the United States Army Command. He and de Gaulle were agreed that General Patch should command the "first phase of the operation", during which United States forces were to comprise the main assault formations, but as to the later phases he repeated his earlier reservation—in which General de Gaulle fully concurred—in favour of a French Army Commander. For the later phases they both insisted on a separate French Army Command, parallel to General Patch's United States Seventh Army Command, and both of them subject to an Army Group Command.

I replied that at the present stage of planning no provision had yet been made for a French Army Command, beyond the principle that the French were to serve under their own Corps Commanders, and that, although the more elaborate arrangements appropriate to an Army Group might develop in time, we had available at the moment neither the staffs nor the organisation required to construct them. Meantime, it was essential that the officer responsible for the administration and maintenance of an Army must be the Army Commander. I had no authority to settle the question of command for the later phases of the operation, and emphasised again that the immediate problem was to get on with planning for the assault, leaving the issue of ultimate command for later determination. Giraud did not in the least concur, but agreed shortly to confer with General Patch with regard to the French personnel of a liaison group to be assigned to Force 163 for detailed planning.

Within a few days, 15th March, I saw General de Gaulle who offered his full cooperation in the plans and preparations for the "Battle of France". I gained the impression that he was chiefly concerned lest the priority granted the Italian Campaign, and the necessary delay in finally deciding, in the light of the progress of that campaign, whether the French operations would be practicable, might altogether eliminate the latter. He said that "any perspective which did not include the battle for France was unthinkable for a Frenchman".

On 4th April, General Giraud ceased to be Commander-in-Chief of the French forces and from that time on we dealt exclusively with General de Gaulle and with his representatives.

The office of Commander-in-Chief was abolished by decree of the French Committee of National Liberation and General Giraud was offered the newly created post of Inspector General of the French Forces which more nearly corresponded to his actual functions. General Giraud refused to accept the change, and he declined the new position offered him. His protest was on an issue not likely to elicit much sympathy for



him from democratic countries, in that he appeared to be objecting to the submission of the military to the civil authority, which was one technical effect of the new decree, but many well-meant efforts to induce him to change his mind were unavailing. Primarily his value to us had been that of a figure-head with a stabilising influence on the French Army, but even General Juin thought his retirement would not adversely affect the morale of the French Armed forces. My view was that the decree had merely the effect of regularising the status quo, since for some time de Gaulle had in fact been the ultimate authority to whom we had to turn to get any definite commitments.

It was de Gaulle, therefore, who pressed the issue of a French Army Command by insisting that General de Lattre de Tassigny be accorded a position in the chain of command of any subsequent Allied operation which employed French formations. On 15th April, General Bethouart as Chief of Staff of the National Defence reminded me that General de Gaulle had named General de Lattre to the Command of French Army "B" and hoped that he might be permitted at this stage to work out the details of his new Command with Force 163. I said I was glad the choice had been made, but that it was too early to fit a French Army Commander into the picture and that I could not in any case give an immediate answer in the absence of the two United States Generals concerned, Devers and Patch, who were to be absent for about two weeks.

Before I could obtain an answer, the same sort of question was raised in connection with the relatively minor operation against Elba, which was under the immediate command of a French Corps Commander, General Martin. De Gaulle insisted that even in this operation General de Lattre be recognised in the chain of command as Army Commander, and on 28th April the latter made it clear that General Martin could accept no orders without his approval. I accepted the principle of General de Lattre's command responsibility for General Martin's Corps, and in order to give effect to this principle arrangements were promptly agreed to permitting General de Lattre to see in advance all orders issuing from my Headquarters to General Martin.

I had never interposed any objection to the creation of a French Army command after the initial phases of the invasion of France had been completed, because after that stage the landing of additional French divisions would actually constitute an Army of at least two corps. I had made this perfectly clear to General Giraud when he first raised the question, but there could be no question of accepting General de Lattre as an Army Commander in the initial phase of the operation, much less in the planning stage. As a compromise arrangement and to ensure full continuity of command, I proposed to the French that General de Lattre command the initial French Corps to land in Southern France as part of United States Seventh Army, and assume his Army Command later at a time when the additional French formations landed, and this was the arrangement finally agreed to. It ensured the proper subordination to General Patch's Seventh Army of the French formations closely associated



with the immediate follow-up of the assault and it assured General de Lattre of his full Army Command at such time as that arrangement became appropriate.

## ALTERNATIVES

MEANTIME the situation of the Italian Campaign made it increasingly obvious that whatever operation we planned against the shores of Southern France would have to be postponed long after the projected early June date for the invasion of Northern France. I had been directed to give over-riding priority to the Italian Campaign while at the same time proceeding with the planning for the other operation, but on 20th March I was to report whether in my view that operation would be feasible, in the light of a comprehensive appreciation of the situation in the Mediterranean Theatre as a whole. On 21st March, after full discussion with General Alexander and Lieutenant-General Eaker, I reported that the results of the Cassino battle would probably be such as to give General Alexander a bridgehead over the Rapido River and adequate jumping off ground for a further offensive, but that the Gustav Line was still unbroken and regrouping and a fresh offensive would be necessary in order to rupture both this line and the Adolf Hitler Line, which lay behind. Such an offensive could not be mounted before 14th April at the earliest and I could not count on a junction of our Anzio Bridgehead forces with the main front until 15th May. Automatically, in view of the ten weeks interval estimated by our planners, this postponed the target date for the invasion of Southern France until the end of July.

With this late date, considering the character of the defences and the limitation of the assault force to two divisions with a relatively slow rate of build-up to ten, I was not hopeful of our ability to capture a major port before the onset of bad weather. It appeared to me, therefore, that the best contribution which my Theatre could make to the success of the invasion of Northern France would be to continue the offensive in Italy with all available resources. I regarded the capture of Rome as an essential part of the campaign in Italy, and I estimated that it could be achieved within a month of the junction between our main front and the bridgehead. Accordingly I proposed to the Combined Chiefs of Staff that they cancel entirely the proposed invasion of Southern France, providing only for a landing in the event of German collapse and voluntary withdrawal, and that they give me a new directive, first to carry through the battle in Italy to include the capture of Rome and its airfields, and, thereafter, to concentrate on intensive operations up the mainland of Italy, with provision for amphibious "end runs" by the allotment of an assault lift of one division plus on a "shore-to-shore" basis, and with allotment of resources to carry out any commando operations which I might wish to employ.

There were so many variables in the over-all strategic situation in Europe that for more than two months it proved to be impossible to



reach firm decisions as to what major Mediterranean operation should succeed the achievement of our immediate objectives in Italy. The situation even within our own Theatre necessarily remained fluid as well. It soon became apparent that the mid-April date I had suggested for the renewed offensive by General Alexander's Allied Armies in Italy was too optimistic. At a conference which I attended at his Headquarters on 2nd April it was pointed out that, although Fifth Army could be ready by 25th April, Eighth Army after its extensive regrouping could not be ready before 10th May because of rehearsals which remained to be completed, and the approximate D Day agreed to was, therefore, 10th May. This decision automatically deferred the earliest possible D Day for operations against Southern France until mid-August, and still further increased my doubt as to the wisdom of committing my Command to that particular operation as the best service to the invasion of France from the United Kingdom.

In view of the rate at which phased withdrawals of landing-craft had taken place in order to equip General Eisenhower's forces, it seemed to me impossible in any case that we should retain enough resources to mount a large-scale amphibious operation, even late in the summer. On the other hand, postponement of amphibious operation in the Mediterranean a full two months after the invasion of Northern France should make it possible for a considerable amount of assault shipping to be diverted back to us in time for such an operation. Certainly it was because of such a possibility that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had directed me to plan for a two-division assault against Southern France, because the shipping could be found in no other way. But in the nature of the case it would require complicated three-way negotiations between my Headquarters, London, and Washington, to work out the details of any such arrangement. The decision on that remained in suspense for some time, though planning was carried out to meet any eventuality. However, on 22nd March the British Chiefs of Staff proposed that the projected operation be cancelled as an operation but be retained as a threat, and on 19th April the United States Chiefs of Staff agreed to this proposal.

During this period of uncertainty I canvassed the entire situation with my Commanders-in-Chief with a view to determining how most effectively to use our existing resources in support of the Northern invasion, once our immediate objectives in the Italian Campaign had been secured, and what additional resources we would require in order to give the most effective aid. My conclusion was that in order to achieve maximum flexibility in the employment of my strategic reserves, I should need shipping resources for a three-division assault lift with a three-division follow-up. I was opposed to tying our hands at this time by a definite commitment to an assault on Southern France in view of the uncertainties of the strategic situation, and I therefore proposed a number of alternative possibilities.

On 29th April I advised the United States and British Chiefs of Staff



that in my view it would be neither profitable nor wise to attempt at the present stage of the war to decide on any one plan of operations for mid-summer, but there were a number of possibilities which presented themselves provided adequate amphibious resources were allotted to me to exploit them. In the first place I had to envisage the possibility that the enemy might succeed in stabilising another defensive position south of Rome, in which case I would need amphibious resources to strike in force behind him. Secondly, he might fight a slow delaying action back to the Pisa-Rimini Line, and since I could follow him on land at most with eight divisions, with an initial build-up by land in front of the Pisa-Rimini Line of a maximum fifteen divisions over a period of many weeks, I felt I must be in a position both to outflank him by sea in sufficient strength to avoid becoming involved in a prolonged supply and air-cover problem, and also to accelerate by sea my build-up in front of the Pisa-Rimini Line. Thirdly, I anticipated the possibility that a modified form of the proposed invasion of Southern France might become feasible and desirable under conditions of German weakness, and I must be prepared either to exploit that condition or to create it if opportunity offered. Finally, I foresaw the possibility that German difficulties might be exploited by an operation in Northern Yugoslavia with the effect of precipitating the collapse of Hungary, provided we were in a position to secure an advanced airbase in the Split area across the Adriatic.

I concluded that on the basis of our experience anything less than a three-division assault with an immediate three-division follow-up except for minor operations in close tactical support of the main force, was likely to lack penetrating power and to be contained, and that if I was to be in a position to exploit any of the opportunities I had outlined, either singly or in combination, I must have an additional shore-to-shore lift of two and one-third divisions, to bring my present shore-to-shore lift up to a three-division basis. I realised the difficulty of making a definite allotment of assault shipping to my Theatre until it was possible to see what progress the invasion of Northern France had made, but I suggested that assault vessels released after the launching of the invasion for diversion to the Far East might be used in the Mediterranean en route, and I suggested the same method for acquiring the additional air lift which I required in order to increase my present lift for one RCT to the strength of roughly one division.

It soon became apparent that General Eisenhower was in no better position to commit himself to the release of assault craft than I was to commit my Theatre to the operation against France without his assurance that they would be available. I spent the early days of May in London discussing the problem with General Eisenhower and the British Chiefs of Staff. General Eisenhower told me that his release of craft would depend upon how soon he could obtain use of a deep-water port, and that he had also to envisage the possibility that his initial landing might be "sealed in", requiring a subsidiary landing elsewhere. It was the same problem with airborne forces, which General Eisenhower would have to



reserve for use after the initial assault for the purpose of loosening up any "stickiness" which might develop subsequently in the ground operations. It was clear that in making my own plans I could not count on receiving any considerable or early accretion of either amphibious or airborne resources from his Theatre, and that confirmed me in my judgment that my best course was to plan a number of alternatives, the ultimate choice to be made in the light of the strategic situation which developed from our own major offensive on the Italian front and from General Eisenhower's invasion of France.

There were certain alternatives I could not only plan but actually prepare without interfering with the coming Italian offensive or sacrificing future flexibility. There were large numbers of United States service units already present in the Mediterranean which could be immediately grouped and located in the manner most appropriate to any of these alternatives ; the United States 91 Division had recently arrived and was already engaged in amphibious training at Arzew ; two French armoured divisions had completed their equipment and were available for any operation I chose to mount. I did emphasise the immeasurable advantage to any of my projected operations of having the assurance of the early arrival in the Mediterranean of the 26 LST's which the United States Chiefs of Staff had at one time intended to allot to me for the assault on Southern France, and the British Chiefs of Staff supported my request that they be made available. The alternative operations I listed were : (a) the Sete area of the Mediterranean coast of France, west of Marseilles ; (b) the Riviera section of the French coast farther east, already tentatively selected by our planners as the most suitable for an assault on Southern France ; (c) the Gulf of Genoa ; (d) the Italian coast north of Rome, possibly near Civitavecchia.

The United States Chiefs of Staff regarded these proposals as satisfactory, and requested that the more detailed plans to implement them be communicated to them as soon as possible. They would not allocate the 26 LST's I asked for, but offered instead 19 LST's, each carrying one LCT, of which the first nine would arrive in the Mediterranean by 20th June, and the remainder during June and July, the latest by about 20th July. These were to be in addition to three LST's recently allocated to me as replacement for three which I had transferred to United Kingdom.

## THE JUNE DECISION

WITH our new Italian offensive beginning on 10th May, and General Eisenhower's invasion of Northern France to take place about a month later, it was still quite impossible to make a firm decision as to which one of the alternative amphibious operations in the Mediterranean should be mounted in mid-summer, but in view of the resources pledged to me by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, I continued to accord first planning priority to the assault against Southern France, and I so notified them on 17th May. By 7th June, the day after General Eisenhower's forces



landed in Normandy, our Italian offensive had proceeded so well that I advised the Combined Chiefs that I was definitely in a position to say that I could be prepared to carry out an amphibious operation on 15th August on the scale permitted by full use of the assault resources available to me, and that planning was proceeding on the assumption that the proposed operation against Southern France on this date would fit into the general European pattern. I presented them with details of my shipping requirements ; stated that administrative preparations were proceeding and that the fitting out of cargo shipping then in the Mediterranean and earmarked for the purpose had already begun ; and pointed out that if the 15th August date was to be met, allocation of the necessary shipping and also the supplies and troops which were deficient must be authorised immediately.

The British Chiefs took exception to the assumption that the operation I specified would " fit into the general European picture " on 15th August, stating that decision as to the precise objective of amphibious operations must await further light on the developments in both France and Italy, but they agreed that in order to retain the necessary flexibility to exploit any situation which might arise, it was essential that the allocations to supply my deficiencies be authorised at once.

It was, in any event, clear that whatever its final objective might be, the assault would be of the type that we were planning for Southern France. The decision to mount such an operation was firm by 14th June and it required that certain steps be taken immediately for the removal of certain units from AAI. On 9th June I had advised General Alexander that these preparations would not affect his operations adversely until July, and I assured him that by early July we should have a decision as to whether the new operation would be directed against Southern France, or whether it might be launched in support of his own operations, in which case all the resources involved would be released to him for furtherance of the Italian Campaign.

On 14th June I sent orders to AAI for the immediate release from Fifth Army of Headquarters United States VI Corps, Major-General Truscott commanding, for assignment to Seventh Army. United States combat units were to be withdrawn on a phased programme : 45 Division immediately to Salerno ; 3 Division and one Engineer Shore Party on 17th June to Pozzuoli ; 36 Division and one Engineer Shore Party on 27th June to Salerno. An AA, TD and tank battalion was to be withdrawn to accompany each of the three divisions, the appropriate units in each case to be nominated by Fifth Army and SOS. Two French divisions, unspecified, were to be withdrawn from the lines on 24th June and during the first week in July respectively, for assignment to Seventh Army on arrival at Naples. Additional corps and service troops, both United States and French, were to be withdrawn according to a phased programme to be worked out later.

On the same day the Combined Chiefs proposed a *three-division* assault to be made up from landing craft already in the Mediterranean, such



craft as General Eisenhower might be able to release without prejudice to his operations, and such additional resources as could be provided from the United States, adding that a total lift for at least a full airborne division should be provided. They agreed as to the over-riding necessity of completing the destruction of German forces south of the Pisa-Rimini Line, and stated that there must be no withdrawal of any Allied forces needed for that purpose. For the period subsequent to our advance to the Pisa-Rimini line they suggested three possible amphibious operations : (1) against Southern France ; (2) against Western France ; (3) at the head of the Adriatic Sea. They were emphatic that no choice could be made at the present moment, but must depend on the general development of the strategic situation resulting from the German reaction to the assaults on her eastern and western fronts. They urged an earlier target date than appeared to us possible, 25th July, but stipulated that efforts to meet the earlier date must not be permitted to limit the completion of our Italian offensive short of the Pisa-Rimini line.

My discussion of these proposals with my Commanders-in-Chief during the next few days brought out a fourth possibility not mentioned by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, namely the allocation of existing and prospective resources to General Alexander for continuation of his offensive through the Pisa-Rimini line into the Po Valley, and with the support of an amphibious operation against the Istrian Peninsula, for exploitation through the Ljubljana Gap into the plains of Hungary. Such a course would have certain obvious advantages in maintaining the cohesion and striking force of an extremely effective air-ground force team which, under the leadership of General Alexander and General Cannon, had already achieved brilliant results. It would ensure for the supply of this team full use of naval and shipping resources, which must otherwise be withdrawn from that service by D minus 20 in preparation for whatever other operations should be decided upon, and it would avoid a lull in operations which appeared to be otherwise likely.

It was possible that such a course might achieve decisive results by striking at the heart of Germany and thereby provide the most powerful kind of indirect support to General Eisenhower's operation in France by inducing the Germans to withdraw formations from the west to meet the new threat, but it was clearly impossible to decide this question on a Theatre basis, and we were not in a position to estimate the validity of the argument from the viewpoint of European strategy as a whole. On the basis of the preliminary discussion on 16th June I was still disposed to think the balance of argument was in favour of the assault on Southern France, but I directed that General Alexander be informed of the three possible courses of action proposed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and of the fourth possibility brought to light in my recent conferences, and that he be invited to confer with me at Caserta concerning them on the basis of his own appreciation of his capabilities and requirements under alternative assumptions, (a) that ground, air and naval forces were to be diverted from AAI in preparation for an assault on Southern France,



(b) that all available ground, air and naval forces were to be allotted to AAI for a breakthrough into the Po Valley.

On the basis of General Alexander's appreciation, the latter appeared to be the more promising course from the Theatre point of view, in that, unlike the proposed operations against Southern France—which did not seem to us likely to affect General Eisenhower's battle for a longer period—our threat to the vital Danube area might materialise rapidly enough to cause German withdrawals from France. In our view, although the support thus offered General Eisenhower would be less direct, it would prove to be the more effective.

At almost the same time, and for the first time, I learned from General Marshall a consideration of paramount importance in the entire strategic problem which was ultimately to decide the issue. On 17th June, the same day I conferred with General Alexander, I had the first of several conferences with General Marshall, General Arnold, and Major-General Handy. General Marshall informed me that General Eisenhower required operations to clear additional French ports in order that Allied formations might be deployed in France more rapidly and on a broader front, that there were between 40 and 50 divisions in the United States which could not be introduced into France as rapidly as desired or maintained there through the ports of Northwest France or by staging through the United Kingdom. General Marshall also expressed his opinion that General Eisenhower was likely to agree readily to the diversion of enough of his own resources to make possible our own assault on Southern France which would be designed to capture a major port.

On 19th June I reported my own conclusions to the British Chiefs of Staff for transmission to the United States Chiefs and for ultimate decision by the Combined Chiefs. Taking account of all factors I recommended from the Mediterranean viewpoint that the strategy best calculated to assist the success of General Eisenhower's operations would be continuation of General Alexander's land advance to the Po Valley and the Ljubljana Gap, with the assistance of amphibious operations against Trieste in September. Otherwise the shift of main effort from Italy to Southern France would involve Mediterranean resources in approximately a six-weeks' pause in which the Germans could gain breathing space for rest and regrouping. Hitherto the success of our operations in Italy had been largely due to the efficient application of our overwhelming air power. The enemy's build-up had been severely restricted, and his ability to re-group and make firm dispositions crippled. Conversely, our supply organisation and movement were virtually immune from interference. Continuation of the land battle with this effective air support seemed to promise rapid results in the destruction of the enemy's forces in Italy and to hold out hope of achieving a decisive strategic threat to Southern Germany before the end of the year. In my opinion such a threat was likely to cause the withdrawal of enemy divisions from France.

I was careful to state that this was a Theatre view and that I was obviously in no position to judge whether, from the viewpoint of European strategy



as a whole, it was the right answer. I admitted that General Marshall's emphasis on the necessity of seizing a major port in Southern France was to me a new factor of paramount importance, but a shift of our operations for that purpose seemed to me to imply a strategy aimed at defeating Germany during the first half of 1945 at the cost of an opportunity to defeat him before the end of 1944. I stated, however, that if from the viewpoint of European strategy as a whole it was considered essential to seize the additional port, I was convinced that our only course was to carry out the assault on Southern France on the lines already planned. I had every confidence in the success of such an assault on the *three-division* scale made possible by the additional resources promised me.

I sent my Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Sir James Gammel, to London to confer with General Eisenhower and with the British Chiefs of Staff. He reported that General Eisenhower was firm in his desire for the operation against France, because France was the decisive Theatre and additional ports must be acquired for the deployment of reinforcements from the United States in that Theatre. Although the British Chiefs had originally supported my recommendation, General Eisenhower's requirements were naturally decisive, and on 2nd July I received a directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff that I was to carry out the assault on Southern France on the target date 15th August if possible. By copy of the same directive General Eisenhower was directed to release to me as early as practicable the additional resources I required for approximately a three-division assault, with a ten-division build-up; the exact scale and time schedule for the release of such resources to be decided in direct consultation between General Eisenhower and myself.

The problem of securing the necessary additional resources from the United Kingdom was readily adjusted. I was to be provided, on loan, with six groups of troop carrier aircraft, which, added to our own resources, would provide lift for the operations of a single airborne division. My total requirements in LST's approximated very closely the 85 estimated by the original Outline Plan as essential for a three-division assault. I had made an official request for 45 to make up my deficit, of which nine were pledged from the United States, leaving 36 to be supplied by General Eisenhower. We eventually agreed on 24, together with certain numbers of other craft needed, and although this left me short of the full three-division shore-to-shore vehicle lift I had originally requested, I stated that I was prepared to carry out the operation on this basis.

In accordance with my new directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, I advised General Alexander on 5th July that as of this date overriding priority would be transferred from the battle in Italy to the new operation, but that not more than three United States and four French divisions would be removed from his Command for the purpose, together with the necessary corps, army and service troops, and that there would be allocated to his command two new divisions, 92 United States (coloured) Division and a Brazilian infantry division, available to him approximately on 15th September and 30th October respectively. I directed that he



continue the task of destroying the German forces in Italy by first advancing through the Appenines to the Po River and thereafter by advancing north of the Po to secure the line Venice-Padua-Verona-Brescia. I pledged him for the purpose all available resources at my disposal in the Theatre, less those required for the new operation, and advised him that Air Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean had been requested to afford him maximum air support consistent with the over-riding priority granted the new operation.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal of the United States VI Corps, the French Expeditionary Corps and a considerable proportion of the Air Forces with supporting service troops severely taxed the road and railway routes leading southwards from the operational area in Italy. This and the reduction in imports consequent upon the heavy outloading programme from Naples and the "Heel" ports, together with the subsequent withdrawal of port operating units and truck companies to Southern France, undoubtedly slowed up the rate at which reserves could be built up for the assault on the Pisa-Rimini line.

## CO-ORDINATION WITH GENERAL EISENHOWER

FROM this time on there was close co-ordination between General Eisenhower's Headquarters and my own on all matters affecting the planning. There was no change in the general character of the support mission of our enterprise as it had been originally conceived by the Combined Chiefs of Staff and set forth in our original Outline Plan in December, 1943, but on 6th July, 1944, General Eisenhower defined more precisely the ways in which he expected our invasion to support his own, which was then exactly a month old : (a) to contain and destroy enemy forces which might otherwise directly oppose him ; (b) to secure a major port in Southern France for the entry of additional Allied forces ; (c) by advancing northward to threaten the south flank and rear communications of enemy forces opposing him ; (d) to develop lines of communication for the support of our own advancing force and for the deployment and support of additional forces to be introduced through the port as reinforcements for his own Command. General Eisenhower's views coincided with our own in the selection of Marseilles as our port objective (although at one time his planners had considered Bordeaux) with subsequent exploitation up the Rhone Valley to Lyon and probably Dijon.

It was understood that, in accordance with instructions from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, I was to exercise operational control over the forces after the landings and until such time as General Eisenhower was able to assume this responsibility, the date for the transfer to be decided in future conferences between us. I was also to assume administrative responsibility for these forces, including Civil Affairs Administration in a defined area of Southeastern France, and be prepared to maintain the forces even when they operated beyond this area if General Eisenhower's Headquarters was unable to do so.



Exploitation of the French Resistance Movement in support of our operations also required close co-ordination between the two Headquarters. General Giraud had stressed the importance of the French Forces of the Interior as a powerful auxiliary to any invasion force, and our plans had always taken account of them as a potential factor of critical importance. One of the considerations affecting the final decision to invade Southern France was the expectation of such support, and General Eisenhower testified to us from his own experience that the support to his own operations by the FFI exceeded his most optimistic anticipations.

He stated to us his own intention to develop resistance in Southern France in order to afford maximum assistance to our operations, and in as much as the bulk of resources for supply of the Resistance were located in the United Kingdom, he offered to have his Headquarters act as our agent in making the necessary supply preparations in support of whatever programme we agreed on. For many months a RAF heavy squadron operating from North Africa had been engaged in supplying the Resistance in the South of France, and had been supplemented in the Spring by a U.S. Heavy Squadron, but this was not enough. It was estimated that there were about 24,000 armed Maquis in the South of France, most of whom required re-supply of ammunition and explosives. General Eisenhower proposed to arm an additional 53,000 men by 1st August using 200 to 300 sorties flown by USSTAF from United Kingdom to supplement specially allotted lift for Resistance activities. Operational direction of Resistance activities within a defined area of the South was to pass under my command, in co-ordination with General Eisenhower's Headquarters, on 15th July. The French General Koenig had already been designated as Commanding General, under General Eisenhower, of the FFI in the area of the latter's command, and on 10th July, in signifying to General Eisenhower my general agreement with his proposals, I stated that, upon representations of General de Gaulle, General Cochet had been designated Commanding General, FFI, Southern Zone, with the same powers and duties as General Koenig exercised in his command.

General Eisenhower's proposed utilisation of the large amount of air lift based in the United Kingdom would relieve North African and Italian based aircraft of some of their supply commitments, and permit them to concentrate on : (a) supply of overt and clandestine resistance in the Mediterranean littoral ; (b) supply of Jedburgh teams and operational groups which had been dropped by Special Projects Operations Centre ; (c) supply of areas which could not be reached by special aircraft from United Kingdom ; (d) maintenance of small reserves of sorties to meet emergency demands. An ambitious operation proposed by General de Gaulle for the drop of an airborne division in the region of the Massif Centrale on D plus 10, for the seizure of airfields and the organisation of a large FFI army in the area were carefully considered by both of our Headquarters in consultation with each other and with Washington and rejected as incompatible with the main operation and as not directly



contributory to it. It would have drawn off formations from our invasion troop-list and its requirements in troop carrier aircraft were prohibitive.

In anticipation of the ultimate build-up of the invasion force to a total of ten divisions of which seven would comprise the two corps of French Army "B", which the French High Command envisaged as operating at that stage independently of United States Seventh Army, provision was made for an Army Group Command both to meet that situation and to provide convenient machinery for the transfer of all these forces from my command to General Eisenhower at the appropriate time. On 30th July General Devers, Commanding General Natoussa, received authority from Washington to activate Sixth Army Group Headquarters. The Headquarters was established in Corsica but until its assumption of operational functions at the time of the transfer of command from me to General Eisenhower, it was designated as Advance Allied Force Headquarters Detachment.

## CO-ORDINATION OF PLANNING

THE movement, training and shipping arrangements of the naval, ground and air forces for the invasion of Southern France coincident with the support of a major battle in Italy involved a number of urgent decisions on priorities between the headquarters concerned, particularly on the administrative side.

I therefore decided that the time had come to move my Headquarters to Italy. Caserta offered the most convenient accommodation for my staff, enabling close touch to be kept with General Alexander's Headquarters and with the port of Naples which bore the chief strain in mounting the assault forces of the new operation. The planners moved with the Advanced Party and their work proceeded almost uninterrupted. My complete Headquarters was moved from Algiers to Caserta between 1st July and 3rd August and I was thus in a position to make the final arrangements on the spot before the sailing of the assault forces.

The only essential change in the strategy set forth in the original Outline Plan of December, 1943, lay in the choice of target area for the assault. The Rade d'Hyeres tentatively chosen in the first instance because of its proximity to Toulon, despite strong natural and artificial defences both ashore and on the islands flanking the approach, was for this latter reason rejected in favour of the more distant, but more readily approachable beaches from Cap Cavalaire to Agay, farther to the east. Even the beaches of our choice, however, offered formidable obstacles. Since 1st February, there had been an expected build-up and series of changes in the defence pattern. Germans had taken over from the Italians and had greatly extended the defence system. During the first three weeks of July this activity had increased rapidly: casemating of guns had begun in the Marseilles and Sete area; five or six batteries had recently appeared in the area chosen for assault; beach obstacles originally appeared both east and west, but more recently concrete pyramids and stakes, or jetted rails, had been placed off four of the assault beaches. The entire south



coast of France from Cap Benat to Agay Road was heavily defended with a great variety of weapons, and in general the terrain behind the beaches was admirably suited for the establishment of observation posts and the placing of batteries where they would be protected from naval gunfire.

The neutralisation of these strong defences emerged as a more difficult problem than in any of the previous amphibious operations in the Mediterranean Theatre, requiring a closer co-ordination of all the services than had yet been achieved. It was my chief concern during the month preceding the operation to see to it that all elements of the naval, air and ground force plans were closely articulated and interlocking to ensure initial success for the landings by overwhelming the coast defences.

I had already requested of General Eisenhower and the British Admiralty additional battleship and cruiser strength, not because of any significant enemy naval threat, which had been removed once and for all by the surrender of the Italian fleet, but in order to augment our naval fire power against coast defence batteries. On 25th July I was granted additionally a United States battleship, a British monitor, 4 United States cruisers, and 2 British cruisers, making my total resources in these categories :

BATTLESHIPS AND MONITORS			CRUISERS	
U.S.	..	.. Nevada	Brooklyn	Quincy
		Arkansas	Philadelphia	Omaha
		Texas	Augusta	Marblehead
BRITISH	..	Ramillies	Tuscaloosa	Cincinnati
		Abercrombie	Aurora	Black Prince
			Orion	Achilles
			Ajax	Argonaut
			Dido	Sirius
FRENCH	..	Lorraine	Montcalm	
			George Leygues	
			Emile Bertin	
			Gloire	
			Jeanne d'Arc	

In addition I had 100 destroyers, the bulk of them British and American, but it was a genuinely United Nations force in that it comprised French, Polish, Dutch and Greek destroyers as well.

Yet it was the Navy view that the siting of coast defence batteries was in many cases such as to make them incapable of neutralisation by naval gunfire alone, and the Navy was therefore one of the strongest proponents of heavy aerial bombardment in the target area prior to the actual assaults. Commando forces were to land under cover of darkness to neutralise certain of the batteries prior to the daylight landings of the main body of the assault force, and for this purpose 1 Special Service Force was assigned the mission of seizing the islands of Port Cros and Levant at the western limit of the assault area, while a French group of Commandos was to



operate in the vicinity of Cap Negre. Even for these missions Admiral Cunningham stressed the importance of preliminary air bombardment, particularly to ensure that coast defence batteries on the neighbouring islands remained out of action during the Commando assaults.

The elaboration of an effective schedule for pre-D-Day bombing raised the most intricate questions of timing and co-ordination between the naval, air, and ground plans, and especial care had to be taken not to jeopardise the element of surprise. During the last three weeks of July I devoted a series of meetings with my Commanders to the effort to solve these problems. The immediate Task Force Commanders concerned were : Vice-Admiral H. K. Hewitt, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Fleet operating as the Western Task Force ; Major-General A. M. Patch, Commanding General Seventh Army ; Brigadier-General G. P. Saville, Commanding General XII Tactical Air Command. Admiral Cunningham as Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, Lieutenant-General Eaker, Air-Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, and his deputy, Air Marshal Slessor, were also usually present.

Exhaustive analysis of the problem showed that tentative plans for air bombardment confined to D minus 1 and to the period immediately preceding H-Hour of D-Day itself, even supplemented by the Naval bombardment to follow, could not be counted upon to neutralise the shore batteries. For this there were a number of reasons, largely technical, which need not be explained in detail, but several of the more fundamental serve to illustrate the complexities of planning three-dimensional warfare. To begin a concentrated bombing programme on D minus 1 was to incur a double risk ; first, of starting fires which would subsequently obscure the targets : second, of alerting the enemy in time to dispose mobile batteries to compensate for any of the fixed batteries which might be destroyed. If weather conditions prevented bombardment, D-Day would have to be postponed 24 hours. To wait until nearly H-Hour of D-Day was likewise dangerous, in that the programme fixed for that time diverted most of the heavies on to beach defences, while medium and light bombers concentrated on the pin-point targets offered by the batteries which required a greater degree of accuracy than the heavies could provide. Nor could we rely on subsequent naval gunfire to compensate for inadequacy of air bombardment by increased intensity, because of limitations both of ammunition and of the life-span of the naval guns.

The evident answer was to begin air bombardment at least by D minus 15, but to arrange it as part of a larger programme, while achieving sufficient cumulative damage in the target area to make the knock-out blow on D-Day itself a relatively simple matter. Accordingly, I directed the Force Commanders concerned to work out the details of such a programme, to include attacks from Genoa to Sete, with particular reference to eight priority targets in the assault area, and I also expressed my willingness to exercise discretionary authority granted me by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to divert Strategic Air Force to the target area, if in the opinion of the Force Commanders that should be a necessary step.



By 1st August the plan was presented, providing for carefully phased attacks to cover the entire area from Genoa to Sete, with adequate attention to the priority targets in the assault area, over a 15-day period. It was presented as the best compromise possible between conflicting interests having regard to available resources. The bombing programme for Genoa at the beginning and at the end of the period appeared sufficient to maintain the plausibility of a threat to that point, but in view of the fact that the enemy was likewise known to be very sensitive to a threat in the Sete area, it was suggested that more should be done to enliven that threat than the 100 fighter-bomber sorties against radar installations in the area which were scheduled for D minus 5, and that in addition it would be desirable to attack Marseilles on the afternoon of D minus 1 with eight groups of heavies. Both these suggestions went beyond the resources allotted. Air Marshal Slessor\* thought there would be no insuperable difficulty about additional attacks on Sete, but he was certain that the suggested attack on Marseilles could not be carried out without prejudice to the D-Day programme, although Wellingtons might be used on the night of D minus 1/D. I agreed that there should be a second attack on Sete, as providing a better balance, since a single attack might be regarded as diversionary. I directed that at least four heavy bomber groups be assigned for the purpose, and that General Saville and Air Marshal Slessor make arrangements accordingly, on behalf of XII Tactical Air Force and Mediterranean Allied Air Force respectively and I likewise directed the latter to arrange a night attack by Wellingtons on Marseilles, if possible, on D minus 1/D.

Actually air action in support of the operation had already begun, and the primary objective of neutralising the enemy's Air Force had been largely accomplished. Nearly a year of strategic bombing had reduced enemy air strength in Southern France to about 200 operational aircraft of which 130 were bombers employed for anti-shipping strikes, whereas MAAF disposed of 5,000 aircraft and, in particular, operated 14 airfields on the advance base of Corsica with all supplies necessary to maintain thirty-eight United States, British and French squadrons in addition to six squadrons on loan from Strategic Air Force.

Air operations directly in support of the invasion may be said to have begun on 28th April with the bomber attack on Toulon, and from that date to 10th August, MAAF accomplished 6,000 sorties and dropped 12,500 tons of bombs on Southern France. Much of the programme was normal anti-U-boat and anti-Luftwaffe activity, but all of it afforded at least indirect support for the coming invasion, and at least 25% of it was specifically so designed at the time of execution. Enemy lines of communication received the heaviest concentration of attack, ports, industry, and airfields following in that order. In the last five days of the period 5th August to 10th August, priorities were reversed, giving

---

\* General Eaker was away in the United States arranging with General Spaatz for co-ordination of the strategic bombing between USTAF and MAAF.



primary attention to the enemy air forces in the Marseilles-Toulouse area, as well as in the Udine area, and secondary attention to the enemy's communications. Strategic Air Force concentrated on communications on the line Valence-Grenoble-Montmelian-Modane and Tactical Air Force on the Rhone rail bridges south of Valence, of which only one of the original six, that at Avignon, remained serviceable on D-Day. During the following five days from 10th August to 0350 hours on D-Day, primary attention was to be focussed on coastal batteries and radar stations.

The schedule of air, naval and ground force operations on D-Day provided the most intricately articulated design, beginning with the mission of Brigadier-General Frederick's 1 (Provisional) Airborne Division to block the enemy's reinforcement routes from the west and northwest. General Patch reported some modification of the original plan to drop over a wide area behind the beaches in favour of concentration in the Le Muy area relatively closer to the coast. There was difficulty about the time of the drop, which could not be satisfactorily solved, in the absence of the moon to provide adequate early morning light. It was essential that the airborne drop occur substantially in advance of the assault landings, and it was inadvisable to postpone the latter too far into the daylight period. Consequently the plan called for the dropping of 12 airborne pathfinder crews beginning at 0323 hours, followed by the main body of parachutists in 396 carrier planes from 0412 to 0509 hours. The first glider landing was to take place from 0814 to 0822 hours with a total of 103 Wacos and 35 Horsas to land. Later in the day, 1810-1839 hours, 42 paratroop plane loads and 374 Waco gliders were to land. This phased programme had to be carefully co-ordinated both with the naval and the air bombardment to take place on the same morning, primarily by agreed routing of the aircraft.

In considering the plans for air bombardment during the early light of D-Day, I stressed the importance of so distributing the aerial bombardment and co-ordinating it with the naval bombardment as to numb the faculties of the defenders completely at the actual moment of assault, a principle which had been operated with great success to facilitate the landings in Normandy. H-Hour for the assault had originally been set for 0740, and Lieutenant-General Eaker's plan was to create a solid blanket of fire over the assault area during the entire two hours preceding the assault by six groups of B-17's and six groups of B-24's which he proposed to form up in darkness. The bombardment would begin at 0530, 20 minutes after "nautical twilight" and continue until 0730. Later, however, in view of the division of labour, which diverted the heavy bomber effort to beach defences, leaving the relatively more accurate fighter-bombers and mediums to attack the more difficult targets provided by coast defence batteries, it was decided not to begin the aerial bombardment until 0710, postponing H-Hour to 0800, in order better to co-ordinate the heavy bomber efforts with the other groups. The schedule of attack on coast defence batteries was carefully co-ordinated with the Navy, some of the original targets proposed being left to the Navy alone,



the total of 40 originally proposed being cut to 30 by agreement with the Navy. The Navy agreed to 12 fighter-bomber sorties per battery, and to seven successive attacks on the eight priority targets selected by the Navy, these attacks consisting, in all but a single case, of three medium bomber boxes of six sorties each and four fighter bomber boxes of four sorties each. One reason for limiting attacks on the priority targets to seven was to provide the Navy with a 15-minute interval between attacks for the dust to clear and to permit spotting of the co-ordinated naval gunfire on the same targets.

Provision for air cover and tactical support of the assault was made with the same intricate precision. Faced with the task of maintaining adequate support of General Alexander's land battle in Italy and at the same time covering the amphibious operations against France, General Eaker made definite allotments of squadrons of medium bombers from Mediterranean Tactical Air Force for the two purposes, while retaining the bulk of Tactical Air Force Mediums under command of Major-General Cannon for action in support of either action as required, and on request of the respective commanders concerned. In the event of conflicting demands, General Devers was to determine the allocation as my representative. General Saville as Commander of XII Tactical Air Command had as his specific allotment from Tactical Air Force, ten groups of fighters and fighter bombers (six United States, three R.A.F. and one French), one United States group of light bombers, as well as three squadrons of night fighters (one United States, one British, and one French). For additional cover General Saville was to co-ordinate the carrier-based aircraft of a naval aircraft carrier force, consisting of seven Royal Navy carriers and two United States Navy carriers, each with a capacity of 24 aircraft.

By early August all the finishing touches had been put to our plans and the mounting schedule was well under way for the three United States assault divisions of VI Corps at Naples, and the two French divisions of the immediate follow-up at Brindisi and Taranto. In all cases the loading of vehicles and stores aboard MT/Stores ships was complete, and in the case of the assault divisions an exercise in loading and unloading assault shipping was shortly to take place, with reloading and reembarkation to be complete by 10th August, the embarkation of personnel ships to be complete by the same date and the assault convoy to sail 13th August, the follow-up on 14th August. Ships and craft of all types to participate in the assault numbered 2,110.

Meantime the rapid development of General Eisenhower's campaign in Normandy, and the break-through by his forces into Brittany, affected the over-all strategic situation profoundly. It offered the prospect of weaker enemy resistance than we had anticipated in the area of our assault, both on the ground and in the air, and for the moment it seemed to offer through the ports of Brittany an unopposed and rapid entry of our own forces into the decisive battle area of Northern France as an alternative course of action. On 4th August, the British Joint Chiefs



advised me of this latter possibility, which they had not yet had time to discuss with the United States Joint Chiefs, and directed me to begin immediate examination in the greatest secrecy of how and when I should manage to divert all my resources to Brittany ports in the event of the Combined Chiefs of Staff deciding to adopt that course.

After hasty consultation with my Commanders-in-Chief I sent an interim reply stating that the French follow-up divisions could be diverted without undue difficulty, but would arrive without their full complement of service troops, and would suffer delay in their later build-up which was based upon the quick shipping turn-around calculated for our own Mediterranean operation. The problem of the three United States assault divisions was more complicated, since about one-third of their leading personnel was carried in LCI (L) or by over-berthing of LST's. Since loading had already begun, there must be unloading and complete reloading for the longer voyage with some 42,000 men displaced thereby, for whom additional shipping must be found. The reassembly of the divisions as fighting formations after disembarkation was certain to be very slow. After further study I sent a more detailed reply to the same general effect on the following day, but on the same date I received word that the United States Chiefs of Staff did not agree to the diversion because of the uncertainty as to when ports and communications system of Brittany would be available. They stated their conviction that our landings would be successful, and would be followed by a rapid advance up the Rhone Valley aided to the fullest extent by French Resistance Groups. General Eisenhower agreed and expressed himself as strongly opposed either to cancellation or major modification of our assault, and on 10th August the Combined Chiefs of Staff advised me of their decision that I should proceed with the planned assault.

At the same time I appreciated that, as a result of the break-through in Northern France, the enemy's potential strength to oppose our landings had considerably diminished. The original 14 divisions available to the German First and Nineteenth Armies south of the line Lyon-Bordeaux had been reduced to 11, three of which we knew to be inferior formations. Two of the 11 were Panzer Divisions, and one of these, the 9 Panzers, reported to be moving from Bordeaux possibly in our direction, later was diverted to the north, leaving ten divisions in Southern France, only three of them ready to oppose us initially in the assault area, two infantry (244 and 242) and one reserve division. Under the circumstances I did not anticipate that the enemy could repulse our landings or even contain them to prevent further advance. I did, however, anticipate correctly that he could and would fight delaying actions to deny us the ports of Toulon and Marseilles as long as possible.

In the last days before the assault, in considering the directive to be issued to my force commander, I made one addition to the strategic plan it embodied. The original line of advance after the landings was westward for the capture of Toulon and Marseilles, and thence northward in the Rhone Valley. In addition to that line of advance it seemed desirable



to exploit any weakness in enemy resistance, by striking with light forces almost due north up the Durance Valley toward Sisteron, both to gain touch with the Maquis in Vaucluse and to afford some protection to the right flank of General de Lattre de Tassigny's advancing forces in the coastal area. I confirmed that there would be no exploitation in the direction of the Toulouse Gap, and I directed that the directive to the Commander Seventh Army be amended to include the new line of advance.

## THE ASSAULT LANDINGS

THE Navy prepared and executed in remarkably short time a complicated schedule of loading and assembling the vast armada which carried the invasion forces. In the Naples area, 307 landing craft, 75 combat loaders and merchant ships with 165 escorts were loaded and sailed for the operation. Naples was the principal mounting port both for the assault and follow-up convoys, but Oran was a second principal mounting port, responsible for two combat commands of the French 1 Armoured Division, one of which was to land on D-Day, the other to sail in the D-Day assault convoy. Taranto and Brindisi were loading ports for personnel, supplies and equipment of the French 1 Infantry Division and 3 Algerian Infantry Division. The Navy established an organisation to deal with the port authorities, with representatives of each Army division, and with Peninsular Base Section to coordinate all loading problems between the Navy and the Army in the Naples area. As a result of the experience gained in the Anzio operation, loading of each type of ship and craft was accomplished at separate points in accordance with a loading bill drawn up for the entire area. All convoys sailed in accordance with plan and without incident.

The selection of convoy routes and the phasing of convoys along these routes were complicated matters to be solved by the Naval Commander, Western Task Force, subject to the policies and approval of the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean. The solutions had to take account of a number of factors : (a) the final approach must be conducted in the hours of darkness ; (b) routes must have a maximum of air coverage throughout ; (c) they must be so selected as to avoid interference and congestion ; (d) they must be clear of mineable water except where unavoidable, and then only through swept channels.

The route for the attack convoys from the Naples area passed through the mine-swept channel in the Straits of Bonifacio between Corsica and Sardinia and thence up the west coast of Corsica, suggesting a threat to Genoa. To meet the schedule which required LST's and LCT's to arrive in the initial transport areas by 0500 hours and LCI(L)'s by H-Hour (0800 hours), the LST convoy sailed from Naples at 1530 hours 12th August (D minus 3) and proceeded directly to the assault area. The LCI convoy left Salerno at 1230 hours 12th August and passing the Straits of Bonifacio, staged through Ajaccio on the West Coast of Corsica on



14th August, sailing directly from there at 1630 hours for the assault area. The LCT convoy sailed from Naples at 1000 hours 9th August and staged at Ajaccio 12th-13th August, when it departed for the assault area. Combat loaders left Naples at 1400 hours 13th August, proceeding directly to the assault area. This careful phasing avoided congestion in the comparatively narrow mineswept channel through the Straits of Bonifacio.

The convoys from Oran and Taranto-Brindisi conformed to the regularly assigned east-west Mediterranean routes, until they nearly converged off the African coast almost due south of the assault area, thence they turned due north up the west coast of Sardinia and Corsica, satisfying all requirements in view of the careful timing of their approach through waters clear of mines within easy reach of MACAF's shore-based aircraft, and on an ultimate course suggesting Genoa as their destination. Meantime, diversionary forces were, in part, sailed north from Bastia along the east coast of Corsica, and an eastern diversion group proceeded on a direct course to Genoa until 2300 hours 14th August.

The approach was excellently conducted by all groups of ships and craft which reached their final assault destinations according to plan, and the Commando operations were begun on schedule shortly after midnight. At 0030 hours advance scouts and preparatory units of the 1 Special Service Force landed on the islands of Port Cros and Levant and the French group of Commandos on the mainland. The latter reported some bombing by friendly planes, but by 0825 hours they were firmly established ashore, and by 1000 hours they had disposed of a battery on Cap Negre, and having beaten off a counter-attack and cut the coastal highways, they had advanced into the high ground north of the Cape. By 0920 hours initial resistance on the islands was overcome, although isolated strong points continued to hold out during most of D-Day, and one enemy group on Port Cros held out till D plus 2.

Meantime the take-off of the Airborne Division from its bases in the Rome area was accomplished shortly after midnight with a minimum of accident despite the clouds of dust and the lack of moonlight which reduced visibility to practically nil. Despite similar lack of visibility over the target area and a 90 degree error in the wind forecast, all navigational difficulties were overcome by a combination of radio, radar, marker installations, and beacon ships to guide the mission through the corridor northeast of the convoy lane, and the parachute drop through the valley mist which blanketed the Dropping Zone was eminently successful, a greater percentage of the troops landing in the correct area than in any previous airborne operation. The pathfinders took off at 0030 hours and executed their drop a few minutes ahead of schedule at about 0315 hours, all landing with considerable accuracy, and one pathfinder team landing not more than 100 yards from its appointed target. They were followed about an hour later by the main body of parachutists in 396 Troop Carrier aircraft, who dropped exactly on schedule, and for the most part in the right place, although an estimated 37 aircraft missed the designated



zone and executed their drops as far as 20 miles away. The strays for the most part found individual missions with the aid of FFI and many of them were assembled in their proper area near Le Muy by evening. Not more than 175 paratroops, scarcely more than 2%, suffered jump casualties, many of them very slight and only temporarily disabling.

The heavy ground fog lifted by 0800 hours when the first glider landings were scheduled to take place, but a heavy overcast imposed some delay of schedule, and Serial No. 14 carrying supporting artillery and anti-tank weapons for one brigade was able to land only at 0900 hours, nearly an hour behind schedule. In most cases, however, supporting weapons were available, and in operation within an hour of landing. Although the Germans had taken the precaution of sowing suitable landing areas with stakes—Rommel's "Asparagus"—to obstruct glider landings, French workmen charged with the task had set them in the ground not too thickly or too firmly to be a serious hazard. It was estimated that not more than 50 of 407 gliders could be salvaged without excessive cost, but damage to personnel and equipment was very slight, the combined landing casualty figure for parachute and glider troops being roughly 3%.

The ground operations by the airborne units were everywhere successful against generally slight opposition except at Le Muy itself, which was not captured until D plus 1. The capture of Le Mitin, La Motte, Castron, and Les Serres by noon of D-Day, however, effectively cut the enemy's reinforcement routes to the assault area, and the 509 Parachute Battalion contributed directly to the success of the landings by sending working parties to the shore. During the course of the day full contact was established as planned between the Airborne Division and the 36 and 45 Divisions which had landed.

The carefully synchronised programme of naval and air bombardment which preceded the assault landings achieved an almost complete neutralisation of shore batteries. Observers described naval gunfire as heavier and more effective than during any previous operation in the Mediterranean Theatre. In the preliminary bombardment and subsequent gunfire support of the landings, the Navy fired 43,795 shells of minimum 5-inch calibre, of which 2,299 were of 12-inch calibre or above. In all three areas the gunfire support ships fired on the assigned targets during the hour preceding the landings between 0700 and 0800 hours, lifting their fire periodically for the waves of bombers attacking the same targets. At the same time heavy bombers were pulverising the beach defences. Despite the conditions of overcast which restricted effective bomber sorties to 610 of the total 959, the results were highly satisfactory, and both Naval and Army commanders stated to me the day following that their own success at such slight cost in casualties was in large measure due to the effect produced by air action. The Air Forces also provided continuous fighter cover, attacked troop concentrations and ensured isolation of the beach-head. During the day (15th August) the MAAF flew 3,733 sorties in all duties in support of the assault.

So effective was the combined naval and air bombardment, that



opposition to the landings was in most cases confined to small arms and mortar fire, and only at one beach, in the St. Raphael area, was there artillery fire serious enough to require elements of the 36 Division to put into effect a prearranged alternative plan to abandon that assault and to go ashore in the Rade d'Agay area. Otherwise the landings of the 36 Division on the extreme right of the assault area encountered little opposition. By noon of the day following both Frejus and St. Raphael had been captured by an advance from west, north and south, and the St. Raphael beaches were in operation.

In the centre 45 Division landed on the beaches of Ste. Maxime against very light mortar fire which caused no damage or casualties, and captured the town by 1700 hours. Before midnight all personnel and vehicles had been unloaded from LCT's, LCI's and combat loaders and unloading of merchant ships had begun. Early the next day the Division assisted the 36th on its right in the capture of Frejus and then proceeded northwest in two columns, one of which made contact with elements of the Airborne Division in the vicinity of Le Muy.

On the left the first eight assault waves of the 3 Division landed on schedule on beaches in the Bays of Cavalaire and Pampelonne with only slight hindrance from mines, enemy fire, and underwater obstacles. Unloading, hindered in the early stages by shallow water mines, was later accelerated with the development of additional landing points. The division advanced westward, reaching Le Lavandou before noon of D plus 1, while the French Commando Group which had originally cleared Cap Negre turned south to clear Cap Benata.

The enemy was certainly not taken by surprise by the actual fact of an Allied landing, but his Intelligence was almost totally wrong as to its exact timing and as to the target area. Reliable reports, supported by the nature of his troop dispositions, indicate that our plan was successful in encouraging him to regard Genoa as the most probable objective, with the Sete-Narbonne coast as a likely alternative. The full force of the Allied assault was accordingly met by elements of two divisions—148 Reserve and 242 Infantry—supported by the coast defence and static forces in the area.

There was neither naval nor air resistance on any scale worthy of mention to counteract the well-nigh perfect co-ordination of our own three Services in the assault, and consequently our own losses were relatively light, and the enemy's correspondingly heavy. We had no figure of enemy dead in the first two days, but by noon of D plus 1 our forces had captured more than 1,000 enemy prisoners, and by D plus 2 1,500 prisoners. After the landings resistance was stiffer and casualties were heavier than we had at first realised. Our own losses for the first two days were 1,221 Americans killed and missing and 1,754 hospitalised ; 314 British killed and missing and 54 hospitalised. The French, only recently disembarked, had not yet suffered appreciable casualties. Our shipping losses were also light on the day of the assault, a United States LST and two LCV(P)'s sunk by glider bomb, about nine LCT damaged



by mines and shell-fire and about a dozen smaller craft damaged in the same way. During the first week, when over 11,000 sorties were flown, air casualties amounted to 42 aircraft lost.

By midday of D plus 1 from Advanced AFHQ at Bastia in Corsica I signalled AFHQ that the attack was a full day ahead of schedule, and Major General Patch, Commanding General of Seventh Army, publicly commended the spirit of the troops and the unusual aggressiveness displayed in both the assault and follow-up. By noon of D plus 1 the three assault divisions were completely ashore, each with its supporting tank and tank destroyer battalions, together with a balanced stock of ammunition and supplies. Combat Command I of the French 1 Armoured Division was partially unloaded and was assembling in the area west of Ste. Maxime. The two French follow-up divisions, 1 DMI and 3 DIA of French II Corps, began unloading over the beaches at St. Tropez and assembled in the area Bourmes-Cogolin for their drive on Toulon.

## TOULON AND MARSEILLES

OUR most immediate objectives, once the landings had been successfully accomplished, were Toulon and Marseilles, especially for the sake of the port facilities at the latter place, both to build up our own advance north and to provide for the deployment and supply of additional United States divisions for General Eisenhower's command. My forecast of operations despatched to the Prime Minister on 7th August predicted the capture of Toulon by French II Corps by D plus 20, that is by 4th September, and of Marseilles by D plus 40, 24th September. The extraordinary rapidity of the advance made my forecast appear unduly pessimistic, despite the bitter resistance of the German garrisons in Toulon and Marseilles.

Moreover, while the French II Corps with continued support of naval and air forces cleared the coastal area and seized the major ports, VI Corps was able to strike directly for the Rhone Valley, while also expanding the right flank of the beach-head by advancing toward the Italian border. United States 36 Division not only took over this latter commitment from the Airborne Division, but pushed its main body north through the Durance Valley in the direction Sisteron Gap-Grenoble, following its own highly mobile Task Force BUTLER, whose reconnaissance elements had reached the vicinity of Grenoble by 22nd August. 45 and 3 Divisions pursued a more westerly course towards the Rhone Valley, the former reaching Pertuis, the latter penetrating beyond Aix directly north of Marseilles by D plus 7.

Meantime, the two original divisions of French II Corps 1 DMI and 3 DIA, were reinforced by the landing of the 1 Armoured Division which began on D plus 3, and of the 9 DIC beginning on D plus 5. The following day French Army "B" took French II Corps under command, General de Lattre de Tassigny, who had commanded II Corps as part of Seventh Army at the time of the landings, now assuming his original position as



Commanding General, French Army "B".

By D plus 5 the 3 DIA attacking south from St. Maximin had entered Toulon from north and northwest and occupied about a quarter of the city, while Combat Command I of 1 French Armoured Division, advancing southwest from St. Maximin was reported near Aubagne, only 12 miles east of Marseilles, and the DMI was attacking coastal strongholds at Sollies Pont and Hyeres, an advance of between 10 and 20 miles for a single day.

At the end of the first week of the campaign, both Toulon and Marseilles were sealed off for piecemeal reduction in bitter fighting, while the greater part of VI Corps had reached positions dominating the Rhone Valley as far north as Montelimar and even Valence. General Patch's plan was to send 36 Division by motor to join its Task Force BUTLER between Montelimar and Valence, and to send 45 Division up behind it and thence to Grenoble to fulfil the VI Corps mission by sealing off the Rhone Valley and seizing Grenoble to prevent the escape of the Germans. The 3 Division remained based on Aix with elements deployed about ten miles west to protect against a counter-thrust by the 11 Panzer Division which was believed to have 40 tanks in the area, and thus cover the French flank during the reduction of Toulon and Marseilles.

The crippling speed of the advance and penetration of the enemy lines, coupled with the destruction of all the Rhone bridges south of Pont St. Esprit by our Air Force prevented the enemy from ever achieving a co-ordinated system of defence where he could bring reinforcements to bear. Among the 16,500 prisoners claimed in the first week were the commanding generals and staffs of one Corps Headquarters, and two Feldkommandanturen, usually entire strangers to the actual battle area. All three commanders expressed their amazement at the rapidity of the advance which had enveloped them.

From D plus 1 through D plus 14 Tactical Air Force steadily and heavily attacked enemy communications, bombing and strafing rail lines, roads, bridges, land and river traffic, and gun positions throughout the Rhone Valley. These attacks not only prevented supplies and reinforcements from reaching the enemy and interfered with his retreat but also cost him some 3,000 M/T, 800 railroad cars, and 70 locomotives.

During the second week of the invasion both Toulon and Marseilles were cleared, Montelimar was captured, and organised enemy resistance throughout Southern France, south of a line from Grenoble to Bordeaux had ceased, with the exception only of the southeast corner of France, where east of the Var River the German 148 Infantry Division was gradually withdrawing across the Franco-Italian frontier. XII Tactical Air Command was already operating from captured French bases—the first landing strip was in operation at Pampelonne by D plus 4—and played havoc with blocked German traffic on the roads on both sides of the Rhone between Avignon and Valence.

Constant naval and air action supported the operation of French forces in the coastal area, especially in the vicinity of Toulon, well guarded batteries covering the seaward approaches. The most formidable of these



batteries were twin-mounted turrets of 340-mm. guns taken by the enemy from the old French battleship *Provence* and placed on the St. Mandrier peninsula which guards the entry to Toulon. Their range of 38,000 yards was a serious challenge to the Allied naval gunfire support force. Allied bombing of the harbour on D plus 3 struck the French battleship *Strasbourg*, and reportedly capsized the *Galissoniere*. The day following, *Augusta*, *Lorraine* and *Nevada*, escorted and screened by four destroyers and air cover and employing air observation, bombarded the heavy coastal batteries protecting the naval base. This permanently knocked out the *Strasbourg*. The attack by French ground forces on D plus 5 was supported by air and surface forces of the Navy employing *Lorraine*, *Quincy*, *Aurora*, *Black Prince*, *Emile Bertin*, *Fantasque*, *Nevada*, *Augusta*, *Philadelphia*. At the same time the coast defence batteries of Hyeres and the island of Porquerolles were heavily hit.

In the city General de Lattre encountered much stiffer resistance than he had anticipated and ultimately he had to use two regimental combat teams of 3 DIA, one regimental combat team of 9 DIC, and the entire DMI to reduce the port. Having entered Toulon on D plus 5, General de Lattre expected to take the city by the evening of D plus 8, but the last pocket of resistance on San Mandrier peninsula surrendered at 1100 hours D plus 13, which still anticipated my forecast by exactly a week. At virtually the same time the Marseilles garrison surrendered with some islands nearby, although most of the city had been in Allied hands for several days, more as a result of the spontaneous rising of the population led by well-directed FFI action than by direct Allied intervention.

At the same time it was reported that Port de Bouc, northwest of Marseilles, had been captured by the FFI and that, swept of mines, it could be used immediately to ease our maintenance problem, whereas Marseilles and Toulon would require considerable time to clear for use. In Marseilles a "counter-scorch" organisation had preserved many of the most important installations intact, but demolitions had been effected in the quays, warehouses and dry docks, and all but three vessels had either been sunk to obstruct internal berths or had left harbour. Two quays in the Bassin Mirabeau were reported undamaged, as well as the Old Port and the small boat harbour, the entry of which was blocked by a sunken ship.

## TRANSFER OF OPERATIONAL CONTROL TO GENERAL EISENHOWER

ON 16th August General Patch disembarked from the flagship of Admiral Hewitt and assumed command of the army forces of the Western Task Force with headquarters at St. Tropez at 2359 hours. He thus assumed direction of practically all the tactical and operational planning for land operations, and I confined my operational control to consulting with General Patch as to his plans and approving them. On 27th and 28th August I made my first visit to Southern France since the assault, and was



able to view the conclusion of that phase of operations which cleared the ports and to attend a parade of French troops in Toulon. I visited General Patch's Headquarters to discover his future plans in order to co-ordinate them with General Eisenhower's movements and to make the necessary arrangements for the transfer of my operational responsibilities to General Eisenhower at the proper time.

At that time one regiment of the 45 Division was already north of Grenoble, and General Patch intended to send all of VI Corps north from both Valence and Grenoble to Lyon, thereafter continuing the advance on an axis Lyon-Beaune-Dijon while French Army "B" moved north on the more easterly axis Grenoble-Bourg-Besançon, maintaining a strong reconnaissance force between Narbonne and Lyon on the west bank of the Rhône. While the French thus undertook protection of VI Corps' right flank facing the Franco-Italian frontier, they would be assisted in their security mission by the Provisional Airborne Division and the 1 Special Service Force. After the capture of Lyon, United States VI Corps was to be regrouped so as to operate west of the Rhône on the line Autun-Dijon-Langres with the object of making contact with the United States Third Army of General Eisenhower's command.

I approved General Patch's tactical plan, knowing that it conformed to General Eisenhower's wishes that American forces advance on the left flank to make junction with his own, while the French advanced on the right close to the Italian and Swiss borders. I also calculated that logistically these operations could be supported in view of the capture of Toulon and Marseilles ahead of schedule, with the unexpected windfall of Port du Bouc practically undamaged. I believed that by the middle of September the ports would be able to handle any foreseeable demands which might be made upon them. The only logistical bottleneck was likely to be the railway in the Rhône Valley, but thanks to the speed of our advance which reduced the expected scale of demolitions, Seventh Army expected to be able to maintain a force of one armoured and four infantry divisions north of Lyon by 15 September. As a preliminary estimate, taking account of the capacity of the Rhône canal, it was estimated that some 10,000 tons per day might be delivered in the Lyon area from that date.

I proposed that at this stage, when VI Corps was ready to operate north of Lyon, operational control should pass from me to General Eisenhower, and it appeared to me that this was also the time to transform General Devers' Advanced AFHQ into Sixth Army Group. Although the forces then employed under Seventh Army did not seem to be of sufficient magnitude to warrant that step, I thought it desirable that Sixth Army Group should take over command of Southern France, in view of the length of communications, the very heavy responsibilities for port maintenance and civil affairs, and matters connected with the French Resistance Movement, together with the possibility that forces from the right wing of General Eisenhower's forces might either be merged with



Seventh Army under Sixth Army Group or maintained through its line of communications. On 2nd September, anticipating approval by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, I sent General Devers to concert plans with General Eisenhower, while at the same time sending a representative to the latter's Headquarters to discuss when administrative responsibilities should likewise pass from my Headquarters to his.

Again plans were outstripped by events as the result of the unpredictable speed of our advance. Despite our utmost speed the German Nineteenth Army succeeded in rescuing elements of about five divisions, three of which were still capable of operating as divisional formations, with considerable fighting ability left. Among the enemy survivors were elements of the 11 Panzer Division, but his losses in men and equipment were heavy and cost him some 50,000 prisoners by 2nd September. But the disorganised character of the withdrawal north and northeast left Lyon with insufficient protection to warrant our delaying to launch a co-ordinated assault on the city. Accordingly on 3rd September, I approved a change of Seventh Army's plan in order to send VI Corps in hot pursuit of the Germans northeastwards toward the Belfort Gap via Lons Le Saunier and Besançon, leaving French Army "B" to capture Lyon and thereafter to pursue up the left bank of the Saône on the line Dijon-Epinal, detaching only sufficient forces to protect the right flank of Seventh Army.

This reversed the axes of advance desired by General Eisenhower, and previously approved by me, by placing the Americans on the right, and the French on the left flank of the advance, but in view of the fleeting nature of the opportunity, I decided that this disadvantage must be accepted with the understanding that regrouping to conform to General Eisenhower's wishes might be accomplished at a later stage. Moreover, though I had determined that operational control should pass to General Eisenhower as soon as Seventh Army was prepared to operate north of Lyon, I was convinced that such transfer should not be permitted to delay operations, and I therefore proposed to retain control until the establishment of signal communications made it possible for General Eisenhower to assume it.

During the following week the rapid tempo of advance was maintained. On 3rd September a number of forces converged on Lyon, United States 36 Division of VI Corps, and elements of 1 French Armoured Division of French II Corps, as well as a regiment of the DMI from the same Corps which occupied the city the day following, while the other forces by-passed it to continue the northward advance. The United States VI Corps cleared Besançon with 3 Division on 8th September, and at the same time French I Corps became operational to take over protection of its right flank toward the Swiss frontier. 1 French Armoured Division of French II Corps cleared Beaune on the same date and advanced on Dijon which they took on 11th September.

At 1500 hours, 11th September, elements of this French Division from General Patch's command made junction near Sombernon with the



French 2 Armoured Division operating as part of United States Third Army under General Patton. The two invasion forces thus joined to form a continuous Allied front from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. The bag of prisoners taken west of the junction point numbered 18,000, including three generals, probably static commanders, and one admiral somewhat out of his element, bringing the grand total of prisoners captured in both fronts in France to 395,000.

Meantime General Eisenhower and I had agreed on the arrangements for the transfer of operational command which we had decided was to take place at 0001 B, 15th September. At that time Sixth Army Group was to become operational, in command of all Allied and service forces in the southern area, except for those units assigned to, or reserved for assignment to SOS (earmarked for Continental Base), and those units presently assigned to AFHQ, NATOUSA, and Headquarters Command Allied Force. At the same time General Eisenhower was to assume operational control of Sixth Army Group. Similarly, Commanding General IX Air Force was to assume operational control of XII Tactical Air Command, of one fighter group and auxiliary units which were then with Seventh Army, together with such additional Air Force units temporarily under command of Commanding General, XII Tactical Air Command, but later to be withdrawn.

Thus ended my operational responsibility for the invasion force in Southern France. It was understood, however, that I was to retain my responsibilities with regard to administration, logistical support and maintenance of these forces, as well as for the administration of Civil Affairs within the area, until I received revised instructions.

## TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPLY RESPONSIBILITIES

THE principle which determined retention of supply responsibility, was the existence of reserves of United States supplies in the Mediterranean Theatre in excess of those required for United States units, other than those engaged in France. It was decided that I should continue to administer the supply of operations in France at least as long as this continued to be the case.

The chain of command through which I exercised this responsibility was chiefly the American organisation provided by NATOUSA, although there had to be constant co-ordination with AFHQ and Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean on shipping matters. General Devers was both my Deputy Supreme Allied Commander and Commanding General NATOUSA, but after 15th September was wholly absorbed in his new functions as Sixth Army Group Commander, leaving the direction of logistics chiefly to Major General Thomas B. Larkin as Commanding General, SOS, NATOUSA, who became Deputy Theatre Commander NATOUSA on 21st September in addition to his existing duties. On



22nd October, Lieutenant-General Joseph T. McNarney succeeded General Devers both as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander and as Theatre Commander, NATOUSA.

SOS operated through the Communication Zone set up for the supply of the forces operating in Southern France, and as the lines of communication lengthened, SOS subdivided its "COMZONE" into base sections. Northern Base Section, under command of Brigadier General John Ratay, had developed the airfields and staging facilities in Corsica during the period of planning, mounting and launching the operation. Headquarters Coastal Base Section ("COSBASE") was activated on 7th July at Naples, and personnel of the section accompanied the invading forces ashore on D-Day. From 15th August until 4th September they operated as part of the Beach Control group of Seventh Army, and on the latter date COSBASE took over operation of the beaches. On 10th September COSBASE extended its administration over all of COMZONE up to the line Moulins-Macon-Bourg-Geneva which represented Seventh Army Rear Boundary at that date. On the same day Coastal Base Section was redesignated Continental Base Section—CONBASE. With the opening of the port of Marseilles on 15th September, the development of major Base Depots and maintenance installations required further administrative machinery. Accordingly, on 10th October Continental Base Section became Continental Advance Section to move forward in direct support of First French Army and Seventh Army, to which XV Corps (composed of French 2 Armoured Division and United States 79 Infantry Division\*) had recently been transferred from Twelfth Army Group. On that date the newly activated Delta Base Section took over administration of the Marseilles area.

The development of Marseilles as a base marked the achievement of one of our major objectives and it became the nerve centre of the line of communications. Our planners had warned us that it would be unwise to count on unloading over the beaches after the middle of September because of the increasing probability of bad weather after that date. On 5th September the first Liberty ship berthed at Toulon, and by precisely 15th September Marseilles, which had unloaded dribblets of supplies since 3rd September, was open to large ships. The first Liberty ship berthed at pier 9 at 1350 hours, and another Liberty and a coaster got inside and berthed the same day. Eight more Liberty ships were anchored inside the breakwater ready for overside discharge. At the same time 48 LST's of the D plus 30 convoy had discharged by 1600 hours at berths in the Northern section of the harbour, known as Port Mourrepaine. On that date Marseilles unloaded 10,109 personnel, 49 vehicles and 3,241 tons of cargo. The total figures by this date, representing almost entirely unloading over the beaches, were 324,672 personnel, 65,349 vehicles, 319,926 tons of cargo.

---

\*44 Division was not part of XV Corps when the latter was transferred to Sixth Army Group, but was attached to Seventh Army for supply on 22nd October,



By 20th September the total figures had reached 400,614 personnel, 68,480 vehicles, 360,373 tons of cargo, and on 25th September the beaches were closed. We estimated that by 1st October there would still remain to be shipped 180,000 personnel and 40,000 vehicles, but during this period not only were the port facilities adequately developed to handle this movement, but the rail communications to Lyon were sufficiently repaired to handle the northward flow of supply. Between 25th September and 1st October the main double-track line was handling 5,000 tons a day and shortly expected to double that capacity.

Under these circumstances the question of the final transfer of all administrative and supply responsibilities from my Headquarters to General Eisenhower was under constant review and it was decided that on 1st November my general administrative responsibility, apart from supply, might be terminated. Accordingly on that date General Eisenhower's Headquarters assumed certain administrative functions, chiefly those pertaining to personnel, and at the same time took over the administration of French Civil Affairs, except for the provision of civil supply requirements. As to these, SHAEF would assume responsibility for over-all planning and, after consultation with H.Q. Communication Zone Advance (NATOUSA) advise AFHQ as to its desires for import and movement of civil supplies to Southern French ports. AFHQ was thereafter to act as agent for SHAEF in the procurement, calling forward, shipment and discharge of such supplies, and to determine priority of discharge as between civilian and military cargo.

Just prior to this transfer of administrative responsibility, decision was also reached as to the transfer of supply responsibility as well. Effective 20th November ETOUSA was to take over the administration of supply from NATOUSA. Effective that date H.Q. Southern Line of Communications ETOUSA was to be activated under General Larkin as Commanding General, and authorised to communicate direct with NATOUSA on matters pertaining to personnel and shipment of supplies from Italy and North Africa to Southern France and movement of shipping in the Mediterranean. Responsibility for the movement of shipping in the Mediterranean was to remain with AFHQ/NATOUSA and Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean. Practically, this involved the transfer of a considerable part of SOS NATOUSA with its Chief, General Larkin, from NATOUSA to ETOUSA. Initially his new headquarters was to be located at Caserta and, pending its removal to France, an advance headquarters was to be established at Dijon.

These arrangements completed the transfer of general administrative and supply responsibilities to General Eisenhower, and at 0001A hours on 20th November my last official connection with the operations in Southern France was dissolved.



## CONCLUSION

IN the event, the invasion of Southern France represented a considerable departure from the original strategic conception of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Originally designed as an assault practically simultaneous with General Eisenhower's invasion of Northern France, with the mission of drawing off enemy forces which might otherwise oppose him, it was launched roughly six weeks after the Northern invasion, because there were insufficient landing-craft to support them both at once and because of the prior claims of our Italian Campaign. The success of the Northern invasion and particularly the break-through into Brittany had actually drawn off forces from the southern invasion area, which for the moment made the original mission assigned to our forces appear almost superfluous. As I have related above, there was even some thought of diverting them through the ports of Brittany to achieve direct access to the decisive battlefields of Northern France. In fact those ports had not been captured in time for effective diversion, and General Eisenhower's requirements for additional port capacity in the south for the ultimate deployment of additional United States divisions proved sufficient reason for continuing with our plans for the capture of Toulon and Marseilles.

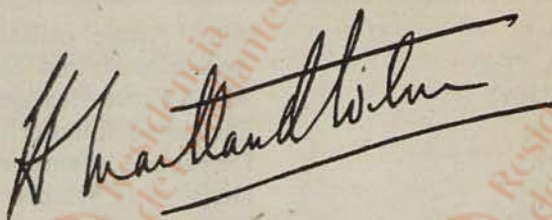
It was the same reason which had been decisive in June when I had proposed as an alternative that all resources allocated to the invasion of Southern France be diverted to the support of General Alexander's land battle in Italy, with the purpose of exploiting through the Po Valley and the Ljubljana Gap to threaten the plains of Hungary. General Eisenhower's requirements for additional port capacity in the south and the direct increment of strength to his forces in the land battle in France naturally prevailed.

General Alexander's battle had enjoyed over-riding priority in the allocation of resources from March until the decision in June which transferred priority to the invasion of France. The entire United States VI Corps and the whole of the French Expeditionary Corps were withdrawn from the Italian battle to be employed in the new operation, as well as a considerable portion of the air support he had previously enjoyed. The result was necessarily a reduction in the margin of superiority which had enabled him to win a brilliant victory by his May offensive, but that was the price which had to be paid to ensure decisive results in the French Theatre.

The invasion was planned, mounted and carried through by the Allied forces of the three services with great skill to outstanding success. Co-ordination of the services was exemplary. The success of the landings combined with the determination and speed of manoeuvre of the forces ashore paralysed the enemy's powers of resistance. Before, during and after the landings the effective work of the FFI proved as powerful an aid to our invasion as it had to General Eisenhower's forces. The capture of the key ports of Toulon and Marseilles ahead of schedule, the rapid and efficient work of the Navy and supply services in the development



of the ports to perform their supply function, the rapid advance of our forces northward to effect junction with General Eisenhower's forces within less than a month of the landings, amply fulfilled the mission of the Mediterranean Theatre to support the decisive battle of Northern France to the limit of its resources.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "H Marshall Wilson", written over two horizontal lines.

General,  
Supreme Allied Commander,  
Mediterranean Theatre.



## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.I.	...	...	Allied Armies in Italy.
A.A., T.D.	...	...	Anti-Aircraft and Tank Destroyer.
A.F.H.Q.	...	...	Allied Force Headquarters.
D.I.A.	...	...	Division d'Infanterie Algerienne.
D.I.C.	...	...	Division d'Infanterie Coloniale.
D.M.I.	...	...	Division de Marche d'Infanterie.
E.T.O.U.S.A.	...	...	European Theatre of Operations, United States Army.
F.F.I.	...	...	French Forces of the Interior.
L.C.I.	...	...	Landing Craft Infantry.
L.C.I.(L)	...	...	Landing Craft Infantry (Large).
L.C.T.	...	...	Landing Craft Tanks.
L.C.V.(P)	...	...	Landing Craft, Vehicle or Personnel.
L.S.I.(L)	...	...	Landing Ship Infantry (Large).
L.S.I.(M)	...	...	Landing Ship Infantry (Medium).
L.S.T.	...	...	Landing Ship Tanks.
M.A.A.F.	...	...	Mediterranean Allied Air Forces.
M.A.C.A.F.	...	...	Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Forces.
M.T.	...	...	Motor Transport.
N.A.T.O.U.S.A.	...	...	North African Theatre of Operations, United States Army.
R.C.T.	...	...	Regimental Combat Team.
S.H.A.E.F.	...	...	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.
S.O.S.	...	...	Service of Supplies.
U.S.S.T.A.F.	...	...	United States Second Tactical Air Force.
0001 A hours	...	...	One minute after midnight British Summer Time.
2359 B hours	...	...	One minute to midnight Double British Summer Time.





Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



COPYRIGHT RESERVED

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses :  
York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2 ; 13a Castle Street, Edinburgh 2 ;  
39-41 King Street, Manchester 2 ; 1 St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff ;  
80 Chichester Street, Belfast ;  
or through any bookseller

1946