

Date on Document: July 27, 1944

Description: This is a letter from General Eisenhower to the British Chiefs of Staff requesting that soldiers' leave not be re-opened yet.

Eisenhower, Dwight D., Pre-Presidential Papers, 1916-52; Principal File; Box No. 60

File: Ismay, Hastings (3) [June 1943-July 1946]

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I have examined the recommendation of the British Chiefs of Staff that leave should be re-opened on the basis of seven days every three months, with effect from 1st August.

The cover-plan is still operating with full effect on the enemy's appreciation of our intentions, and it therefore remains a vital factor in the security and continued success of our operations in NORMANDY.

There is evidence that the enemy has been decisively influenced by the suspension of leave in conjunction with the visitors' ban. These two restrictions together constitute the essential security background for the mounting of an amphibious operation and the removal of the one would neutralise the effect of the other.

Service leave has already become a matter of some public interest and I am satisfied that, although no public announcement were to be made, the granting of seven days' leave to even 10% of all units on 1st August would be recognised by the enemy in a day or two at most, as the prelude to the general resumption of leave. He could no longer reconcile his expectation of an attack on the PAS DE CALAIS with this relaxation.

The question of morale is of course ever-present in my mind and on these grounds I felt it wise to assent in an earlier memorandum to leave being granted for forty-eight hours generally, and for longer periods in compassionate cases. In view of the fact that references have now been made in two LONDON newspapers to the impending resumption of leave, I would urge that an announcement through the Press should be re-considered, to the effect that normal leave is still suspended. There would be no objection to its being made known to service personnel through service channels, that restricted leave facilities have been sanctioned. I am firmly of opinion, however, that these concessions are the limit to which my consent is at present justified.

At the same time I shall keep the matter constantly under review to ensure that normal leave may be resumed at the earliest date compatible with the security of our operations.

Maj. Gen. L.C.Hollis, C.B., C.B.E., R.M.,
Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee,
Offices of the War Cabinet,
Great George Street,
S. W. 1.

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