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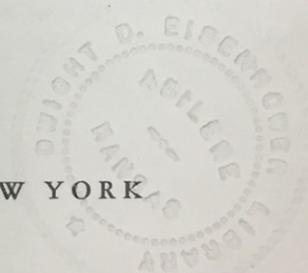
Eisenhower, General Dwight D. Eisenhower's Own Story of the War. New York: Arco Publishing Co., 1946.

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*The Complete Report by the Supreme Commander*  
GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER  
*on the War in Europe from the Day of Invasion  
to the Day of Victory*

ARCO PUBLISHING COMPANY NEW YORK



Book Excerpt



EISENHOWER'S  
OWN STORY  
OF THE WAR



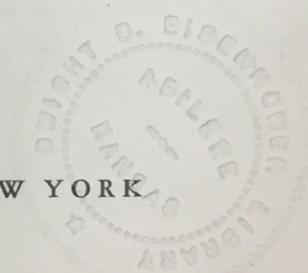
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Vian. The Western and Eastern Task Forces were again subdivided to include, altogether, five assault forces, each responsible for the landing of an assault division upon one of the five beach areas, and two follow-up forces. The assault forces were known for the American zone as Force "U" and Force "O" (Utah and Omaha) and were under the command respectively of Rear Adm. D. P. Moon and Vice Adm. (then Rear Adm.) J. L. Hall, Jr. For the British zone the assault forces were similarly known as Force "S", Force "J", and Force "G" (Sword, Juno, and Gold) and were commanded by Rear Adm. A. G. Talbot, Commodore G. N. Oliver, and Rear Adm. C. Douglas-Pennant.

In order to insure the safe arrival of the assault troops on the beaches, the Navy was to provide adequate covering forces to protect the flanks of the routes of our assault and was, with mine sweeping vessels, to clear the Channel ahead of the assault craft. For this latter purpose 12 mine sweeping flotillas were to be employed. Once within range of the beachhead area, the heavy naval guns were to neutralize the enemy coastal batteries, supplementing the work of the Air Forces, and then, as the landing craft drove inshore, there was to be an intense bombardment of the beach defenses by every gun that could be brought to bear.

Some consideration had initially been given to the possibility of assaulting at night in order to obtain the maximum surprise, but it was decided that the lessons of the Pacific should be adhered to, and that, possessing superiority in air and naval forces, the assault against strong defenses should take place by day. This was palpably advantageous to the Navy in the coordinated movement of a vast fleet in relatively narrow waters. H-hour varied for most of the five assault forces, due to varying beach conditions such as the necessity for higher tide to cover certain rock obstacles and the length of time needed to remove enemy obstructions. Force "U" was to touch down at 0630 hours while Force "J" was not to land until 35 minutes later.

With the success of the assault determined, the naval forces were to maintain swept channels between France and England through which supplies and reinforcements could be shuttled to the Continent. In view of the initial limited port facilities and the fact that we did not anticipate seizing the Brittany ports for some time after the assault, the Navy was also charged with providing for the establishment off the French coast of five artificial anchorages (Gooseberries). Two of these were subsequently to be expanded into

major artificial harbors (Mulberries); through these the bulk of our stores were to be unloaded during the early stages of the campaign. To provide oil and gasoline in bulk, the Navy was also to set up tanker discharge points off the French coast and to establish cross-Channel submarine pipe lines.

By 26 April, the five naval assault forces were assembled in the following areas: Force "U," Plymouth; Force "O," Portland; Force "S," Portsmouth; Force "G," Southampton; and Force "J," Isle of Wight. The two follow-up forces, Force "B" and Force "L," were assembled in the Falmouth-Plymouth and Nore areas. In addition to the berthing problems inherent in the assembly of these seven forces, other space had to be found for the many ships and craft which were assigned the tasks of supply, maintenance, repair, and reinforcement. The berthing problem was one of major proportions, but it was solved, as Admiral Ramsay reported, by making use of every available berth from Milford Haven to Harwich. Many units had, additionally, to be berthed in the Humber, at Belfast, and in the Clyde.

The concentration of ships in southern ports was bound, we felt, to be detected by the enemy and would thus give him some indication that our assault was about to be launched. In order to confuse him in this respect, arrangements were made with the British Admiralty to have the large number of commercial ships destined for the Thames and also the ships to be used in later supply convoys to our forces on the Continent held in Scottish ports until the operation was under way. The concentration of shipping thus spread itself automatically throughout the whole British Isles and was not confined to a single area. As was the case against Sicily, we did not believe that the growing preparations and the size of our forces could be entirely concealed from the enemy. We hoped, though, to be able to confuse him as to the time of the assault and the exact beachhead area of attack. In this we were to be successful for a variety of reasons which I shall consider later.

The air plan in support of the amphibious operation consisted of two parts, the preparatory phase and the assault phase, and was brought into being under the direction of Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory, commanding the Tactical Air Forces. These forces, composed of the British Second Tactical Air Force and the U. S. Ninth Air Force, were to operate in direct support of the land armies. The Strategic Air Forces also would be given definite tactical responsibilities during critical periods, although their principal mission would be to

continue their attacks on the industrial potential of Germany, with emphasis now placed on the facilities for aircraft production. They had also definite tactical responsibilities at critical periods of the battles.

Until January 1944, the view had been held that the heavy bombers of the Strategic Air Forces could make sufficient direct contribution to the assault in a period of about a fortnight before D-day. Further consideration, however, indicated the need to employ them for a much longer period—about three months—and a plan was finally adopted which aimed at the crippling of the French and Belgian railway systems and the consequent restriction of the enemy's mobility. The plan had a wider conception than the dislocation of the enemy's lines of communication in the zone in which the land forces were to be deployed. It was looked upon as the first of a series of attacks, which as they spread eastward, would ultimately affect the whole German war effort. The adoption of this plan entailed a major effort by the Strategic Air Forces.

In the preparatory phase, the striking power of the Tactical Air Forces was to be directed against rail targets, bridges, airfields in the vicinity of the assault area, coastal batteries, radar stations, and other naval and military targets. In addition to reserve aircraft, these forces had operationally available 2,434 fighters and fighter-bombers, and 700 light and medium bombers.

The program of attack on rail centers and bridges was designed to deprive the enemy of the means for the rapid concentration of men and material and to hinder his efforts to maintain an adequate flow of reinforcements and supplies, forcing him to move by road with resultant delay, increased wastage in road transport and fuel, and increased vulnerability to air attack. Blows against the railroad centers were to be started about D-minus-60 and were to cover a wide area so as to give the enemy no clue to our proposed assault beaches. Shortly before D-day, however, the attacks would be intensified and focused on key points more directly related to the assault area but still so controlled as not to indicate to the enemy the area itself.

Attacks against coastal batteries, airfields, bridges, and other targets in the preparatory period were planned in such a manner that only one-third of the effort expended would be devoted to the targets threatening the success of our assault. The preliminary attacks upon the bridges in Northwestern France were scheduled to begin on D-minus-46 and to be intensified in tempo as D-day approached. The ultimate purpose of these at-

tacks was to isolate the battle area from the rest of France by cutting the bridges over the Seine and the Loire below Paris and Orléans, respectively. The attacks upon the airfields had a similar purpose. Within a 130-mile radius of the battle area, all enemy airfields and air installations were to be attacked beginning not later than D-minus-21. By neutralizing the fields, we were certain to limit the maneuverability of German fighter forces, compelling them to enter the battle from fields situated a considerable distance from the Normandy beaches.

This preparatory bombing program was placed in effect as scheduled and, as D-day approached, the intensity of our attacks increased and the preparatory phase gave way to the assault phase. In the assault itself, the air forces were assigned the tasks, in conjunction with the navies, of protecting the cross-Channel movement of our forces from enemy air and naval attack. They were also to prepare the way for the assault by destroying the enemy's radar installations and by neutralizing coastal batteries and beach defenses between Ouistreham and Varreville, the area of our attack. Additionally, the air forces were to provide protective cover over the landing beaches and, by attacking the enemy, reduce his ability to reinforce and counterattack. Subsequent to the establishment of the beachhead, the Tactical Air Forces were to support the land troops in their advance inland from the assault beaches.

During the assault it was planned to maintain a sustained density of ten fighter squadrons to cover the beach area, five over the British sector and five over the American. An additional six squadrons were to be maintained in readiness to support the beach cover if necessary. Over the main naval approach channels we agreed upon a sustained density of five squadrons centered at 60 miles and three at 80 miles from the south coast of England. Additionally, a striking force of 33 fighter squadrons was to be held in reserve for use as the air situation might require, subsequent to its initial employment as escort to the airborne formations.

The total fighter aircraft which we allocated for the D-day assault was as follows:

Beach Cover .....	54	Squadrons
Shipping Cover .....	15	Squadrons
Direct Air Support .....	36	Squadrons
Offensive Fighter Operations and Bomber Escort .....	33	Squadrons
Striking Force .....	33	Squadrons
Total .....	171	Squadrons

## German Miscalculations

While our plans developed and the build-up of supplies and men in readiness for the operation continued with regularity, we had been studying the possible action which the enemy might take in the expectation of an assault against him mounted from the United Kingdom. In any operation as large as OVERLORD it was palpably impossible to keep from the enemy the fact that we intended, during 1944, to launch an attack against Europe. Where, when, and in what strength the attack would be launched was another matter, and I was not without hope that he would not necessarily appreciate that our target was the Normandy beaches. Indeed we had some reason to believe that the enemy expected numerous attacks from many quarters and was continually uncertain as to the strength of any of them, unable in his own mind to determine or distinguish between a threat which we had no intention of launching, a diversion in strength, or an all-out main assault. Thus, he was stretched to the utmost in every theater.

We thought that to the German High Command an assault upon the Pas-de-Calais would be the obvious operation for the Allies to undertake. Not only was this the shortest sea journey where the maximum air cover would be available, but a lodgement in the Pas-de-Calais would lead the Allies by the shortest road directly to the Ruhr and the heart of Germany. Such an operation would have to be mounted mainly from Southeast England and the Thames area. Concentrated in the Pas-de-Calais was the German Fifteenth Army, which had the capability both of shifting its forces to Normandy prior to the assault if the intended area of the attack were to become known and also of quickly reinforcing the divisions in Normandy, after the assault.

Acting on the assumption that this would be the German estimate we did everything possible to confirm him in his belief. Without departing from the principle that the efficient mounting of the operation remained at all times the first consideration, we took every opportunity of concentrating units destined ultimately for the Normandy beachhead in the east and southeast rather than in the southwest. In this way it was hoped that the enemy, by his observations based on aerial reconnaissance and radio interception, would conclude that the main assault would take place farther to the east than

was in fact intended. As a result of these measures, we also felt that had an enemy agent been able to penetrate our formidable security barrier, his observations would have pointed to the same conclusion.

Shipping arrangements were made with the same end in view. Surplus shipping was directed to the Thames Estuary where an enormous concentration was already assembled in preparation for the invasion, while landing craft were moored at Dover, in the Thames, and at certain East Anglian ports.

Further support was afforded by the aerial bombing program. The distribution of bombing effort was so adjusted as to indicate a special interest in the Pas-de-Calais. It was also hoped that the bombing of the V-1 sites would be misinterpreted in our favor. Finally the large and very visible components of the artificial harbors, which were subsequently set up on the Normandy beaches, were anchored in Selsey Bay immediately before the invasion, a point farther east than originally proposed.

After the assault had gone in on 6 June we continued to maintain, for as long as possible, our concentrations in the southeast and our displays of real and dummy shipping, in the hope that the enemy would estimate that the Normandy beachhead was a diversionary assault and that the main and positive blow would fall on the Pas-de-Calais when the diversion had fulfilled its purpose.

The German Fifteenth Army remained immobile in the Pas-de-Calais, contained until the latter part of July by what we now know from high-level interrogation was the threat of attack by our forces in the southeast of England. Not until 25 July did the first division of the Fifteenth Army advance westward in a belated and fruitless attempt to reinforce the crumbling Normandy front.

Every precaution was taken against leakage of our true operational intentions against Normandy. The highest degree of secrecy was maintained throughout all military establishments, both British and American, but additional broader measures affecting the general public were necessary as D-day approached.

On 9 February, all civilian travel between Britain and Ireland was suspended to prevent the leakage of information through Dublin, where German agents