

HISTORY

8 May - 15 Jul 1/1

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ANTHORNY NO 755077
By S.S.B. BARA, Date:

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DATE: 30 July HA

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HISTORY

XX C ORPS

THIRD UNITED S TATES AR MY

Commanded by: Major General WALTON H. WALKER

Chief of Staff: Col. Wm. A. Collier

G-1 Col. Chas. G. Meehan G-2 Col. Henry M. Zeller G-3 Col. W. B. Griffith G-4 Col. Wm. B. Leitch

Four Copies:

Copy #1 - CG XX Corps Copy #2 - TSCO XX Corps

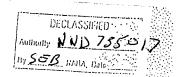
Copy #3 - Theater Historian ETOUSA

Copy #4 - B-2 Historical Branch, War Dept.

Historians: 2/Lt. H. A. Morris T/4 F. M. Indden

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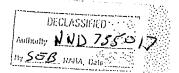
channel from England to the Normandy coast of France were devoted by the sections at XX Corps Headquarters to the preparation of detailed operational plans. For nine weeks every possibility and contingency, no matter how remote, complete to the most minute detail, under general missions assigned to XX Corps were probed, analyzed and exhausted. Nine weeks of unremitting effort, of research, and of checking and rechecking every point and every fact.

It began on the 8th day of May, 1944 when Major General Walker with his Chief of Staff, Colonel Wm. A. Collier, accompanied by; G-3, Col. W.B.Griffith; the G-2, Col. Zeller; the G-4, Col. Engerud; the Engineer Officer of XX Corps, Col. Tandy; and the assistant G-3, Lt. Col. Stark, went to Peover Hall at Knutsford England. There they met with Lt. General Patton, his Chief of Staff, Major General Hugh Gaffey and his deputy Chief of Staff, Brig. General Gay and the staff section chiefs of Third US Army. Major General Cook of XII Corps with corresponding members of his staff was also present. At this meeting the approximate date of the invasion of the European continent was divulged and the general plan of execution was discussed. General Walker was orally briefed on the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAE plan termed NEPTUNE for the combined American-English invasion of Normandy, France. At this time the employment possibilities of XX Corps were neither firm nor established. One week after their return, on the 15th of May 1944, the written plan in outline form called NEPTUNE which had previously been erally discussed was received at XX Corps Headquarters. On this date General Walker was

erdered by 3rd USArmy directive to prepare and submit XX Corps plan under the pertinent pertions of the general cutline plan.

Under the general outline plan NEPTUNE XX Corps was to be prepared to meve to France en er about D/45 or 23 July The then forecast of the progress of the Allied advance was that either by D#40 the reduction of the Brittany Peninsula by XV Corps, or by XV Corps in conjunction with VIII Corps would be well under way, or, in the event this was not true then VIII Corps and XV Corps would be contained and unable to reduce the Brittany Peninsula. However, if the Brittany Peninsula was reduced by D/40 1t was planned that the balance of the 3rd USArmy would land through the ports and beaches of the Brittany and Cetentin Peninsulas and would assemble for operations to the East. Again, ir the advance was contained and the facilities of the existing beachneads were limited, it would then be necessary to establish another beach-head by amphibious and airporne assault in the vicinity of Meriaix as a base from which to strike out and capture Brest and reduce the Brittany Peninsula.

Given this estimate of the situation XX Corps staff prepared three plans to meet the contingencies outlined. Plan A detailed instructions and priorities for an everseas movement and deparkation on secured beaches or ports of the Contentin Peninsula. Plan B, based on the same instructions and priorities called for a landing on the beaches in the Quiperon Bay area. It was assumed that these beaches would not be developed at the time of XX Corps landings. For this reason, a detailed terrain study of the beach approaches, capacities, and outlets was made, and it was further assumed

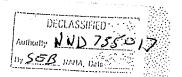


that the support of an Engineer Shore Brigade or additional Engineer troops would be available to support the operation.

Pian C (Operation SWORDHILT) cailed for a seaborne eperation to be carried out concurrently with an airborne attack in the vicinity of the city of Merlaix on the Brittany coast of Northern France. There to seize a beach-head, concentrate, then to sweep forward in a southwesterly direction towards the larger city and important harbor of Brost. This operation was to go into effect when VIII Corps and XV Corps had succeeded in pushing forward approximately 1/3 of the way up the bulky Brittany Peninsula. These three completed plans involving XX Corps were submitted to and as a part of Third U S Army general cutline plan on 1 June 1944. Immediately thereafter and as directed by the Commanding General of Third U S Army Plan C was expanded into the detailed plan known as Operation SWORDHILT.

To accomplish Operation SWORDHILT XX Corps was to be a highly mobile, self-sufficient independent Corps consisting of two Infantry Divisions (5th and 28th), an Armored Division (6th) and an Airborne Division (82nd) with attached or assigned units totalling in all, 99,900 efficers and enlisted men with 20,218 vehicles. The component parts of this large Corps force were set up as follows:

) Infontum nem /c.,	Personnel	Vehicles	ele ele
Infantry Div. (5th and 20th)	28246	4395	nt.
Armored Div. (6th)	11046	2744	
Airberne Div. (82nd)	8573	682	JV L
Engineers	15169	2981	्र स
Artillery	, 9167	2309	į
AA Arty (self propelled and mobile)	5392	1440	
wuritermaster troops	5112	1211 .	ે ભ
Tank Destroyer	4469	1235	
Armored Units (Composite Tank Bns)	3020	848	Ĭ.
	2278		9.5
Medical		539	
Signal O Collins		329	
Signal UP SE	1750	501	1.) ()
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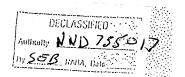
M171+nmm Do34				venicles /
Military Police Cavalry			836	161
Chemical			774	240
Special Units			622 379	308
XX Corps Hq. and	Hq. Co.		629	141 - 224
		OTAL 99	.9 00 2	0218

The Artillery listed above was in addition to the Division Artillery of each Division and consisted of:

3	Battaliens Battaliens	Armored	FA1	.05mm	How.	(SP)
~	DROUGHTIONS			55mm	Cam 16	3D1
2	Battalions	FA	1 8	.55mm	Hew.	(Trac)
1	Battalion H Hq. Batteri	^A	4	•5" 0	un (Ti	rac)
í	Observation	Battal:	Len			

The hazardous coast, the poor read facilities and the extremely rugged terrain account for the large number of Engineer Corp personnel. It was deemed necessary to have an Engineer Special Brigade to maintain any beach-head secured plus Bridge and Ponton Companies to develop and build up the road net in the target area. To illustrate the reasoning involved, a special Engineering survey report read, in part, as follows: "Coast line beset with offlying dangers from rocks *** beaches concerned could only be worked in fine weather *** practically all the roads are 3rd and 4th class needing development and construction to handle the tonnage assessed. Coast considered very bad, the anchorages are mostly exposed, there are many offlying dangers ** * local pilots ** * necessary ". Of the thirteen beaches in the target area generally only nine could possibly be used and five of these only after considerable development work by the Engineers. (See MAP NUMBER ONE attached herete for Engineers study of the target area).

To render the Operation Swordhilt, so painstakingly prepared, operational of the necessary to co-ordinate with the



Air Support, the Navy, and Services of Supply. However, XX Corps was not authorized to co-ordinate with these vital services and branches due to their pre-eccupation elsewhere, namely, the invasion. Nevertheless as submission of the detailed plan had been directed, the various section chiefs went shead and made basic assumptions predicated on the units and types or support furnished First U S Army for its assault on the Normandy Coast. This was secured by study of the First U.S. Army plan. basic assumptions if met by the interested branches of the service would then make the plan operational. This reasoning from logical premises continued until the plan was completed in detail on 22 June 1944. Thereafter each section chief prepared pertinent questions exnaustively searching and examining the requirements and necessities of his particular section. These questions dealt specifically with the Operation SWORDHILT and were based on the original assumptions. A deadline which was met of 28 June 1944 was established by the Chief or Starf, Colonel Collier for the completion and submission of these specific enquiries.

While these interrogatories were being prepared Headquarters XX Corps received word to direct the 28th Division, then
attached to it, to designate one of its amphibiously trained
Regimental Combat Teams to commence and complete a detailed
plan for a particular amphibious operation. Because of the
experience and skill of its Commanding Officer, a Colonel W.L.
Bianton, and the extensive training it had received in
amphibious operations the 109th Regimental Combat Team of the
20th Division was selected. Colonel Bianton was directed to
plan a seaporne assault of Belle Isle, off the western coast
of France, by an amplitude Regiment I tempat Team reinforced



by Tanks and Artillery and supported by the Air and the Navy.

The assault was to be proceeded by an airborne assault of two

Parachute Regiments and a battalion of Parachute Field Artillery.

This operation was to be an integral part of the larger operation

called CHASTITY which had for its goal the military reduction and

development of the entire Quiberon Bay area. Belle Isle

commanded the Quiberon Bay area from the ocean and its reduction

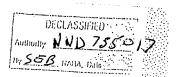
would be necessary. Major Overten of the G-3 Starr of XX Corps

was attached as a starf officer to the logth Regimental Combat

Team to assist Colonel Bianton.

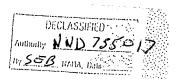
On 29 June 1944 XX Corps received a directive from Third U S Army to have its G-2 and G-3 representatives accompanied by similar representatives from the 28th Division meet at the Headquarters of First United States Army Group (FUSAG). This meeting was also attended by representatives from SHAEF, the Allied Naval Expeditionary Force, the Air Force, SOS, FUSAG, Third U S Army (TUSA) and members of the British Airborne Command. At this time the eperational plans BENEFICIARY and HANDS UP were outlined by FUSAG. This meeting was adjourned until the following Monday when final questions prior to detailed planning were to be submitted and discussed. At the meeting on the following Monday the date for the submission of the detailed plans of the operations was set as 8 July 1944 for Beneficiary and 15 July 1944 for HANDS UP.

Work commenced at once on BENEFICIARY. The Operation BENEFICIARY presupposed that the Allied advance would be contained on the Avranches-Argentan line by approximately 10 enemy divisions and that the ports and beaches of the Carentan Peninsula would not be said cieft to supply a further build-up



of troops. A landing at the base of the Brittany Peninsula would provide another Port of entry, be a diversion from the Avranches line and provide a force for the drive west to the port of Brest or east to provide junction with forces on the NEPTUNE beach-head in Normandy. The point selected for landing was the St. Malo area. The city of St. Malo has limited port facilities. The prominent feature of the area is the Rance Estuary, separating two peninsulas. The Estuary is to 2 miles wide, St. Malo on the East and the town of Dinard on the West. In the area the coast is rusged, with head lands rising 100 to 200 feet to a table land of gently rolling country with thin, sandy soil supporting crops of cerials and orchards and cut into small fields with hedges and windpreaks which restrict movement to roads and make observation nonexistent. There are a number of small streams which cut deeply the incised valleys that presumably would have to be bridged. The Engineers reconnotered thirty beaches on the two peninsulas, but only three of these were considered good beaches for assault landings. terrain definitely favored the derender.

G-2 estimated that there were four or five Battalions of Russians manning the coastal defenses and that the 5th Parachute Division could be prought up immediately to repel the assault. This force might be reinforced by elements of the enemy 319 Infantry Division drawn from the Channel Islands. By D/1 a reserve division from the Avranches line could be brought up, and by D/2 it was possible that two Regimental Combat Teams from the German 266th and the 275th Infantry Divisions could be brought in from their stations in the Southeast of Brittany. One could assume that approximately three divisions would possing the best-head assault by D/3.



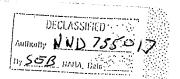
To make a successful landing on this terrain and against this defensive force FUSAG directed a combined Airborne and Seaporne assault by two Invantry Divisions plus airborne troops under XX Corps direction. XX Corps estimated that additional Engineer troops would be required and under the assumption that these troops would be made available, the planning went forward in detail. (See MAP NUMBER TWO attached hereto)

The plan provided for an intial airporne landing on H-(12to48) of the 1st British Airporne Division East of St.

Male to seize and clear beaches 379 and 381 and initiate the assault of St. Male. The 504 th Parachute Regimental Combat

Team and the Polish Independent Parachute Brigade Group were to land west of the Rance Estuary on the Dinard Peninsula, seize and clear beach 399 and initiate the assault on the town of Dinard. The 887th Airborne Aviation Engineer Battalian was to prepare a landing strip on the Dinard Peninsula.

elements of the 28th Inrantry Division and an Engineer Special Brigade. To the east the 110th Regimental Combat Team to be attached on landing to the 1st Airporne Division was to land over beaches 379 and 381, establish contact with and become a part of the 1st Airporne Division then to carry on the assault of St. Male and establish the initial beach-head line. To the west of the Estuary the 109th Regimental Compat Team of the 20th Infantry Division was to land over beach 399, establish contact with the 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. The 20th Infantry Division with the 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. The 20th Infantry Division with the 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. The 20th Infantry Division with the 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. The 20th Infantry Division with the 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team. The 20th Infantry Division with the 504th Parachute Regimental Combat Team the 20th Infantry Division with the 504th Parachute Brigade Group attached to it was to assist in the result of Carachute Brigade Group attached to it was

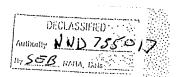


initial beach-head line. The reserve, the lizth RCT of the 28th Inrantry Division, minus the 1st Battalion was to rollow up over beach 399 after the 109th RCT while the 1st Battalion was to land if necessary on the Ile de Cezembre to neutralize hostile. Artillery present if such defenses had not been previously neutralized by the Navy and the Air support. The 80th Infantry Division was to follow, one RCT over beaches in the Dinard Peninsula and two RCTs over beaches in the St. Malo Peninsula area. The total force of the beach-head assault was to be 91,575 men and 17,661 vehicles.

It was estimated that the port and beach facilities would not be able to supply a larger force than this until, or if, the beach-head facilities were developed or contact was made with the NEPTUNE forces on the Avranches line. Thus the remaining elements of XX Corps troops were not to be phased into the initial planning. When the beach-head was established and the forces consolidated it would then be possible to make a thrust toward Rennes, link up with the NEPTUNE forces, or initiate a drive west with the objective of capturing Brest.

On the merning of 8 July 1944 the completed planning for Operation BENEFICIARY, in mimeographed form, was in the hands of FUSAG.

The full planning capabilties of XX Corps was then turned on the operation known as HANDS UP. This operation called for a combined sea and air assault to establish a lodgment area in the vicinity of Vannes. This to be done prior to the setting in of Winter and to exploit the harbor and port facilities of the entire Quiberon Bay area. Tentative snemes of maneuver and troop lists were submitted and discussed with FUSAG and the Navy. On 12 July-1944 after a conference with the Twenty-First Army Group



FUSAG ordered further planning by XX Corps on the Operation Hands UP be suspended. On the same day, 12 June 1944 XX Corps recieved official notice that it was alerted for overseas moverment in conformity with Plan A of the general Plan NEPTUNE. On 15 July 1944, nine weeks after the detailed operational planning began, XX Corps forward Echelon moved out of its location at Ogbourne St. George.

TOP SECRET

