

Special questions

1. When and where had you expected the invasion to take place?

- a. Judging from the reports of the Armed Forces High Command, according to which, larger units of German air forces were attacking concentrations of enemy landing crafts on the southern shores of the British Isles in April (or May?) and owing to indications made by higher German officers, showing their special attention to questions of ebb and flow and owing to cancellations of all furloughs, effective in April for officers holding posts as commanders, as well as officers of the General Staff, I was of the opinion that commencing with May we could expect the invasion at any time.
- b. On account of detailed, convincing discussions and map exercises which Lt Gen Marks, commander of LXXXIV Army Corps, conducted, I also held the opinion that the invasion, or at least a partial invasion, would be made on the Cotentin Peninsula and its approaches directly to the east and north, with the big objective of forcing its way to the chief communication center, Paris.

Why?

- a. Reports, appearing in the German press, indicated that Russia's demands, directed to the Western Powers, for an active, decisive participation in the war, were growing more

and more forcible; the strict regulations about censorship put in force in England, as well as the inconsiderate limitations on the rights of diplomats; growing air attacks against railroad nets in France and Belgium; very lively enemy communications with carrier-pigeons (only in the sector of 352 Inf Div, 27 pigeons were shot during 20 March 1944 and 20 May 1944); the regular destruction of almost all radar installations on the coast by enemy aircraft about the end of May, and the constant attacks on our army coast-artillery in the sector of LXXXIV Army Corps, as well as the capture of a leader of the French Resistance Movement in Brittany during the first days of June who made statements about the beginning of the invasion in a few days; all these things gave me a feeling of certainty that the invasion would come soon.

In conjunction with the above signs, announcing the invasion, my personal attention was caught by a low-level approach of a great number of enemy aircraft coming from the coast, flying south and departing east and west, which lasted for several hours on the nights of 3 - 4 June and 5 - 6 June 1944. As a result of this, increased attention was ordered of all troops; especially, for air-landing activities of the enemy. (In my opinion, the approach was made as a preparation for the air landings which took place on 5 June 1944.

- b. After having studied the particulars of landings in Sicily and Italy, it was clear to me that the invading enemy would

try to capture, first of all, serviceable harbors. The big harbor at Cherbourg and the harbors of Caen and St. Malo were, in my opinion, guaranties for a successful continuance of the invasion after bridgeheads of sufficient strength had been secured. Cherbourg's big harbor was of great importance owing to its favorable position with respect to the southern coast of England. After the coast defense sector "Bayeux" had been taken over by the 352d Infantry Division, I was more and more convinced that the enemy was informed (by air photos, agents, foreign engineer-soldiers captured by the Organisation Todt) of the fact that the construction of fortifications along the coast line of the LXXXIV Army Corps sector was backward compared with the Seine and Calais sectors. Therefore, the Cotentin Peninsula, with its approaches to the east and south, was the most probable place for a successful invasion.

2. Have you considered in particular, whether the construction of a coastal defense system had made sufficient progress?

Give the reasons why?

In my opinion the coast line in the 352d Infantry Division sector (on both sides of Bayeux) was not sufficiently fortified as yet. Only one army coastal battery in this sector had a built-in concrete-reinforced emplacement. The construction for a second battery was not yet completed. The infantry, with few exceptions, possessed only shrapnel-proof shelters, in which were also kept the supply

stocks of equipment (only one set!) Attack-reserves were quartered in field positions. (Armored foxholes.) The Division artillery and antitank arms (in position of readiness) were standing in open firing position. The permanent wire net was dug in (1m). First, after the sector was taken over by the new Army Group B (Lt. Gen. F. M. Rommel), the construction of the positions having been delayed, was commenced again, which owing to lack of materials and the difficulties over competency (the Organization Todt, fortress engineers, the navy and air forces commands) made little progress. The enemy invasion was hindered more by coastal field obstacles (hedgehogs, dragons' teeth, pile-driver rafts, underwater mines, roll mines, etc.), the construction of which suffered, however, from lack of experienced men and materials; which in the beginning, were built under the assumption that the invasion would be made at tide time only. Likewise, the construction of obstacles against air landings on free surfaces and the creation of a mine girdle 2 - 3 kilometers broad, along the coastal line, suffered from the lack of materials. To sum up, the planning of construction was made thoroughly, but the execution was defective, giving to the combat troops by no means what was expected from a so-called Atlantic Wall.

3. When did you first get the order to be on the alert for the invasion? By whom was it given?

The divisions committed to coastal defense were in permanent state of alertness for defense immediately after having taken

over a coastal defense sector. This was the case with 352d Infantry Division since 20 March 1944 (when it had taken over the "Bayeux" sector from the 716th Infantry Division).

4. When did you get the information that the invasion had actually begun? (Give the exact time, if possible, the hour and minute.)

I received from the special-missions staff officer of LXXXIV Army Corps at about 0005 hours the following order by phone: "Enemy parachute troops landed near Ceres. Alarm stage II."

5. Which were the first orders given to you after the invasion by the next higher command? To which units?

the first order by the LXXXIV Army Corps to 352d Infantry Division (on 6 June about 0300 hours) reads: "1. North Port-en-Bessin (small harbor in the middle of sector, northwest of Bayeux) enemy naval forces located. 2. Enemy air landings on low country south Carentan. Corps reserve (Reinforced Grenadier Regiment 915) to march immediately through Foret de Ceres to St. Jean de Days. Comdr of rgt to corps C.P."

/signed/ Ziegelmann, Col.