Field Marshal Montgomery, Operation Market-Garden, and the Decline of British Power 1944-1945

by

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On the basis of this thesis and of the written and oral examinations taken by the candidate on 4/12/96 and on 5/2/96 we, the undersigned, recomend that the candidate be awarded Honors in History:

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Maps and Tables

[1] The maps are from, respectively, Cornelius Ryan, A Bridge Too Far, pp.86,87; Jeffrey Clarke, Riviera to the Rhine, p.72; Dwight Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, pp.224-225; Charles MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor, p.307; David Eisenhower, Eisenhower: At War 1943-1945, pp.418, 419; Ryan, A Bridge Too Far, pp.34, 35; Pogue, The Supreme Command, p.373; Tables III and IV from Pogue, The Supreme Command, pp 159, 262 respectively

Introduction: Operation Market-Garden

The sun shone down onto the earth, unhindered except for an occasional cloud. Soon, however, vast formations of British and American troop-carrying and glider-towing aircraft, escorted by swarms of fighter planes, soared above the water-logged Dutch countryside that 17 September 1944 day. Anybody outside must have heard the deafening noise and witnessed the awesome spectacle in the sky. Hundreds of airplanes -- more planes then anyone had ever seen during the course of the war -- thundered overhead. The local inhabitants almost turned away from the roaring planes, oblivious now to the war that had dominated their lives, when from these massive machines men leapt into the skies, as if from dragons' bellies. One after another they drifted to the ground, slowed by their oscillating parachutes.

These paratroopers belonged to the British First Airborne Division, an elite formation, idle since before the Normandy invasion on 6 June 1944. The Red Devils -- a self-proclaimed nickname because of their red berets -- were being employed in the greatest gamble of the war, Operation Market-Garden, designed to help end the war in 1944. Their objective: to seize and hold, with the aid of the Polish First Airborne Brigade, the Arnhem bridge over the Rhine River. Commanded by Major General Robert Urquhart, they were to hold the river crossing for two or three days until the arrival of the armored units of Lieutenant General Brian Horrocks' XXX Corps, part of General Miles Dempsey's British Second Army, some 60 miles away.

At the same time the men of American Major General Maxwell

Taylor's 101st Airborne Division would land, just to the north of XXX Corps, to capture eleven bridges near Eindhoven. Between the drop zones of the 101st and 1st airborne divisions, the American 82nd Airborne Division, under Brigadier General James Gavin, landing near Nijmegen, would secure the bridges over the Maas and Waal rivers. The airborne forces, under the tactical command of British Lieutenant General Frederick "Boy" Browning, would seek to create a corridor that would allow Horrocks' XXX Corps to advance to Arnhem, and then across the Rhine River, where it could threaten the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heartland.[1]

Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery devised Market-Garden to provide the exclamation point on the great Allied pursuit across France and Belgium, which had begun after the capture of Paris and the crossing of the Seine River on 25 August. Since then the Allied Expeditionary Force (AEF) had advanced farther and faster than had been thought possible; over the span of ten days, elements of Twenty-First Army Group, under Montgomery, had driven to and captured the Belgian port of Antwerp. Suddenly the field marshal saw the possibility of using the forces under his command to end the war before Christmas.

Though Montgomery had dedicated his entire life to the British army, in the summer of 1944 he had the greatest opportunity of his career: the chance to defeat Germany. After entering the military at the age of twenty-one, Montgomery sustained a serious wound during the First Battle of Ypres in

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[1] Cornelius Ryan, A Bridge Too Far (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) pp. 86-87. Alternative names for the Maas and the Waal rivers are respectively the Meuse and the main channel of the Rhine. The code name Market-Garden signified both aspects of the operation. Market the airborne component. Garden the ground element. The airborne forces were part of the First Allied Airborne Army, commanded by American Lieutenant General Lewis Brereton, and his subordinate, Browning.

October 1914. This injury forced Montgomery to serve as a staff officer for the remainder of the First World War, saving him from further front line duty. His experiences as a staff officer ingrained into the young Montgomery the importance of proper planning; he viewed the campaigns of World War One, where soldiers were sent over the top to charge fortified machine gun emplacements, as ill-planned and sloppy operations. Montgomery vowed never to waste his soldier's lives in operations that did not offer a chance for great success. Market-Garden was such a plan.[2]

After the Great War, Montgomery served throughout the British Empire, but only with the start of the Second World War did his fame grow. He soon became Britain's most prominent and publicized general. This reputation lent a certain conviction to the field marshal, who convinced his superior, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the AEF, that Market-Garden could help speed the end of the war. On 10 September, Eisenhower gave Montgomery the go-ahead (see map, p.4).[3]

Market-Garden proved a disaster. When the battle ended on 25 September the British First Airborne Division had been wrecked.[4] Many factors accounted for the failure. Poor weather prevented aerial reinforcements, supplies, and bombing missions.[5] Stemming

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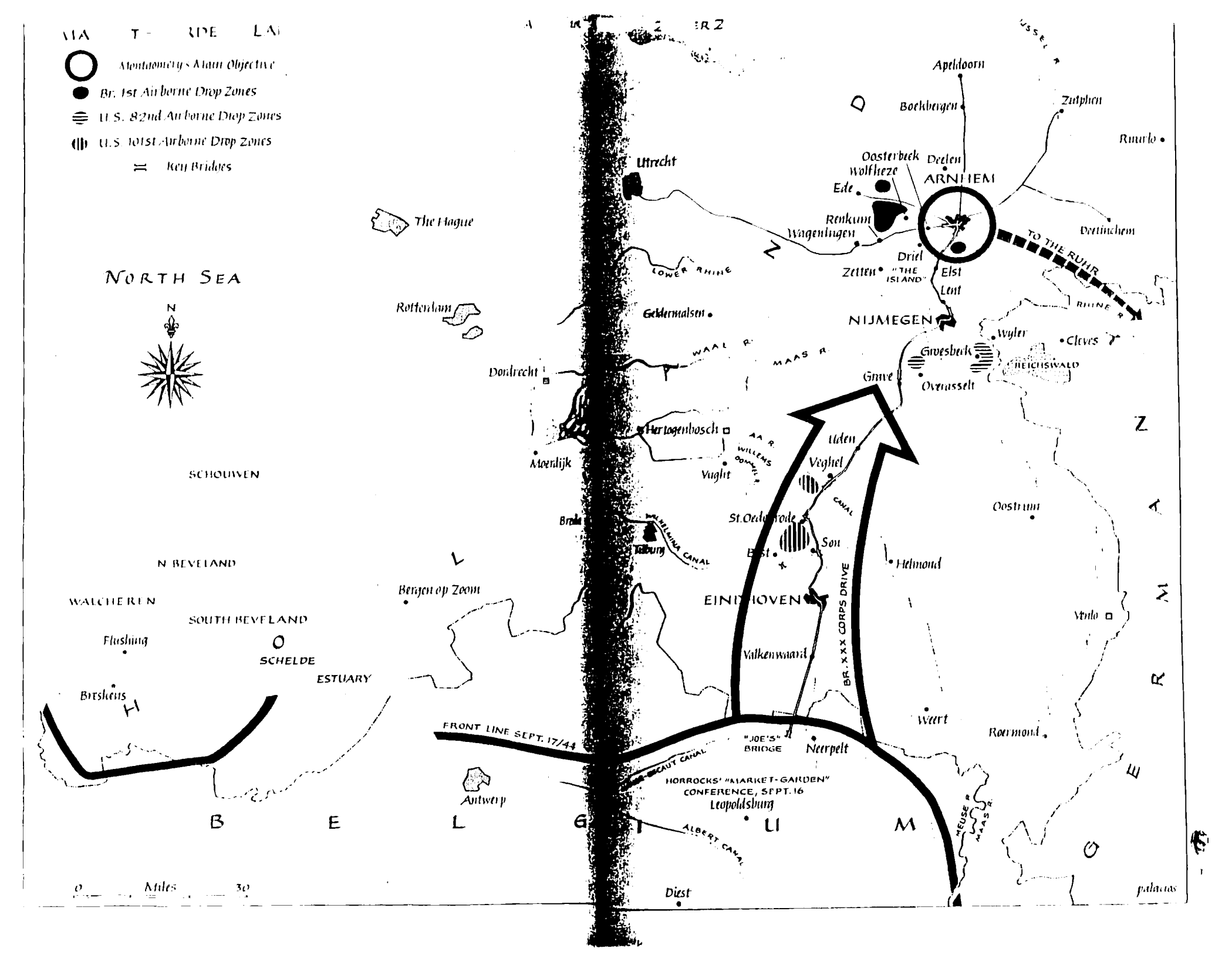
2 Michael Carver, "Montgomery Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery" in John Keegan (ed.) Churchill's Generals (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), pp.146-165, esp. pp.148-151.

3 Christopher Hibbert, The Battle of Arnhem (London:B T Batsford, 1962) p.23

4 Russell Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaigns of France and Germany 1944-1945 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) p.317. The Red Devils landed near Arnhem with over 10,000 men, they retreated with only 2,000. For more on Market-Garden see Ryan, A Bridge Too Far, Hibbert, The Battle of Arnhem, Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp.305-319, Chester Wilmot, The Struggle for Europe (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1952),pp 498-522, and Richard Lamb, Montgomery 1943-1945: Success or Failure?(New York: Franklin Watts, 1954) pp 226-251

5 Hibbert, p.201


Montgomery's Main Objective
Br. 1st Airborne Drop Zones
U.S. 82nd Airborne Drop Zones
U.S. 101st Airborne Drop Zones
Key Bridges
NORTH SEA
The Hague
Rotterdam
Dordrecht
Moerdijk
SCHOUWEN
N BEVELAND
WALCHEREN
SOUTH BEVELAND
Flushing
SCHELDE
ESTUARY
Breskens
Bergen op Zoom
Antwerp
Tilburg
WILHELMINA CANAL
Hertogenbosch
Vught
Geldermalsen
LOWER RHINE
WAAL R.
MAAS R.
AA R.
WILLEMS CANAL
Uden
Veghel
CANAL
St.Oedenrode
Son
Best
EINDHOVEN
Valkenswaard
BR. XXX CORPS DRIVE
Helmond
Oostrum
Venlo
Weert
Roermond
Neerpelt
"JOE'S" BRIDGE
FRONT LINE SEPT. 17/44
ALBERT CANAL
HORROCKS' "MARKET-GARDEN" CONFERENCE, SEPT. 16
Leopoldsburg
Diest
MEUSE R.
MAAS R.
Uden
Apeldoorn
Zutphen
Ruurlo
Borkbergen
Oosterbeek
Deelen
Wolfheze
ARNHEM
Ede
Renkum
Wageningen
Dieren
Driel
Zetten
"THE ISLAND"
Elst
Lent
TO THE RUHR
RHINE R.
NIJMEGEN
Wyler
Cleves
Groesbeek
REICHSWALD
Gmve
Overasselt
Utrecht
0 Miles 30
palacios

from the single narrow road over which it had to advance, poor terrain, heavy German resistance, and the blown bridge near Eindhoven, XXX Corps advanced too slowly and never reached Arnhem.[6] But the decision of the British to land their airborne troops eight miles west of Arnhem was likely the main cause of defeat. This distance, coupled with the loss of the Red Devils' jeep squadron, allowed two panzer divisions, whose presence the British did not expect, the time they needed to prevent the bulk of the division from reaching the bridge. Instead, the Germans surrounded and severely mauled the division.[7]

The British field marshal had staked his nation's future on the outcome of Market-Garden. The only chance for Britain to regain its faltering status within the Grand Alliance lay in ending the war in 1944 while the island nation still bore a great proportion of the fighting; Montgomery hoped to accomplish this with Market-Garden. As the war continued into 1945, the United States shouldered the burden of defeating Germany in the west, relegating Montgomery and Britain to a junior role within the Alliance and the peacemaking that followed the fighting.

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[6] Weigley, p.318. Weigley (p.318) and Hibbert (p.206) contend that Horrocks' lack of urgency in driving his men up the road contributed to the failure, though Lamb (pp.246-47) and Wilmot (p.527) disagree, arguing that the advance would have been stopped due to the blown bridge.

[7] Wilmot, pp.505,524. Scholars disagree with regard to field marshal Montgomery's responsibility for ignoring the presence of German armor in the area. Wilmot (p.488) and Alistair Horne with David Montgomery, The Lonely Leader: Monty 1944-1945, (London: Macmillan, 1994, p.286) assign no blame to Montgomery. Lamb (pp.215, 222-226) claims that Montgomery bears full responsibility; he was aware of Ultra intercepts (Ultra was a British organization designed to break the Germans codes, which it did with great success)on 10 September of German 9 and 10SS Panzer Divisions. These intercepts, backed by aerial reconnaissance photos and Dutch underground reports during the following week, were ignored by Montgomery. Weigley (pp.295-296) concurs with Lamb. Hibbert (pp.36-37) does not mention Montgomery directly, but he says that 21st Army Group Intelligence, perhaps infused by Montgomery's spirit, was very optimistic about the upcoming operation.

Though Great Britain and the United States had fought Germany in North Africa, Italy, and western Europe, as well as in the skies over Europe and on the Atlantic, the United States had begun exerting its military and industrial might to take control over the Grand Alliance during the summer of 1944. Despite the affinities that existed between the two nations, such as language, government, and historical bonds, this shift in power disrupted the careful balance that the leaders of Great Britain and the United States had sought to ensure.

From this milieu emerged Montgomery, the commander of British armed forces in western Europe with a reputation that offset the American's superiority of numbers. Ever since his seemingly miraculous victory in October 1942 over Field Marshal Erwin Rommel at the Battle of El Alamein, he had become a savior to the British people; even Montgomery's soldiers worshiped him because of his concern for their well-being.[8] As the historian Martin Blumenson wrote, in 1944 Montgomery had become "an international star...He was...the savior of Allied hopes."[9] Despite his fame, Montgomery, who preferred working in solitude, could not function adequately within the Alliance, nor work specifically with General Dwight David Eisenhower, to secure an eventual victory over Germany in 1945. More important to him and to his nation, Montgomery wanted to end the war in 1944. Market-Garden was the first step towards

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[8] The Battle of El Alamein, 23 October to 4 November, forced Rommel to retreat from the Egyptian border and back into Tunisia. The battle was largely a set piece affair, which is a static battle for heavily fortified areas where no flank can be turned, preventing a mobile battle. Though Montgomery won the battle, he missed the opportunity of completely annihilating the enemy, however, the defeat signaled the beginning of the end for German occupation in Africa. see I.C.B. Dear (ed.) The Oxford Companion to the Second World War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) pp.326-28.

[9] Martin Blumenson, The Battle of the Generals: The Untold Story of the Falaise Pocket - - The Campaign that Should Have Won World War II (New York: Quill, 1993), p.30.

the larger goal.

Most military historians recognize that the United States became the dominant partner in the Grand Alliance during the summer of 1944. Indeed, Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill, one of the foremost historians of the Second World War, understood this all too well; once the United States had surpassed Great Britain in active military strength in July 1944, he noted in an offhand manner the key to the United States' supremacy; "influence on Allied operations is usually increased by large reinforcements."[10] Norman Gelb and Michael Carver disagree with Churchill, stating that the victory of Falaise during August, not the United States' enormous army, signaled the end of British primacy within the Alliance.[11] Alistair Horne offers a different date for the American ascension, 1 September.[12] On that day, Eisenhower officially took control over the AEF, leaving Montgomery in charge of Twenty-First Army Group. These interpretations, though, disregard Market-Garden. Montgomery had devised the airborne operation to counter-balance America's strength by having a British army end the war. Only after the failure did Great Britain truly lapse into a subordinate partner.

By contrast, other authors attach little importance to Market-Garden, except to note that its failure clearly showed that the war would continue into 1945 and that the clearance of the Scheldt Estuary leading to Antwerp, which would shorten

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10 Winston Churchill. The Second World War Triumph and Tragedy Vol VI (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1953). p.71.

11 Norman Gelb. Ike and Monty Generals at War (London: Constable and Company. 1994) p.347. Michael Carver "Montgomery Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery" in John Keegan (ed). Churchill's Generals. p.161

12 Horne. The Lonely Leader. p.272.

overstretched supply lines, should have been given priority.[13] The events of summer 1944 clearly showed that the Allies would win the war eventually, but these authors fail to comprehend Britain's plight; the longer the war continued, the longer it would take for Britain to recover. In this light, the opening of Antwerp assumes a secondary importance to Montgomery when compared to the defeat of Germany in 1944, which would have boosted Britain's strength and prestige. David Eisenhower, Dwight Eisenhower's grandson, offers an explanation that recognizes Britain's diminishing role in the Alliance. He postulates that Montgomery designed the airborne drop to secure control over substantial numbers of American soldiers, which would lead to a greater British voice within the Alliance. However, he fails to understand that Montgomery needed more than American soldiers under his command to increase British influence, which he had during the Battle of the Bulge; he had to have a decisive victory over Germany.[14]

This study will examine, through Field Marshal Montgomery's actions in the summer of 1944, Operation Market-Garden as the last effort to reaffirm Britain's position within the Alliance. In chapter one, we will discuss Britain's diminishing power through manpower. This, coupled with the entrance of the majority of the United States soldiers to battle in the summer of 1944, compromised the influence of Britain's military leaders. As we

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[13] John Ehrman, Grand Strategy, August 1943-September 1944, Vol V (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956) p 528. Charles MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor: American Armed Forces in the European Theater in World War II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969) p 347. Philip Warner, World War II (London: The Bodley Head, 1968) p.246.Richard Lamb, Montgomery in Europe 1943-1945: Success or Failure? p.216. Hibbert, The Battle of Arnhem, p 207. Ryan, A Bridge Too Far, p 60-61. Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp.316-319. Forrest Pogue, United States Army in World War II, The European Theater of Operations, The Supreme Command (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History Department of the Army, 1954) p.288.

[14] David Eisenhower, Eisenhower, At War: 1943-1945 (New York: Random House, 1986), p 444

will see in chapter two, Britain's two foremost political and military leaders, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Field Marshal Alan Brooke, recognized the United States' dominance during the Anvil debate, which was an amphibious landing on the French Riviera. Churchill and Brooke's loss of influence left Montgomery the only Briton capable of saving his faltering nation. Chapter three will detail Montgomery's strained relationship with Eisenhower, from which emerged Operation Market-Garden. The final chapter will illustrate Montgomery's impotence, and by extension Britain, to influence the successful outcome of the war and the peace that followed.

The Decline of British Military Strength

After France capitulated to Germany in June 1940, only Great Britain militarily opposed the Nazi menace. Though Britain received aid from the United States, it would be a year before another nation joined the struggle against Germany. That nation was the Soviet Union; Hitler invaded his former ally on 22 June 1941. On 8 December of that same year, the United States, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, plunged into war with Japan. Three days later, Japan's Axis brethren, Germany and Italy, declared war on the United States. A true world war had begun, one in which the strength of the Soviet Union and the United States would eclipse, not only that of the Axis powers, but that of Great Britain.[15]

Squeezed between these giants, Great Britain's leaders struggled to maintain their independence and pride. Though the United States was increasingly sustaining the British war effort, British armed forces did a larger share of the fighting through 1943 and into 1944.[16] In 1942, British armies engaged Germans and Italians in North Africa and the Japanese in Burma; the Royal Air Force began heavy bombing of German cities; and the Royal Navy battled the enemy on the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean.[17]

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[15] John Keegan. The Second World War (New York: Viking Press, 1989). The Red Army numbered 6.5 million men, or 400 divisions, in the summer of 1942 despite the loss of over 4 million men the previous year(pp.220-467). The industrial power of the United States provided civilian and military aid to her Allies "sufficient for her to raise 2000 divisions" (p.217). H.P. Willmott. The Great Crusade: A New Complete History of the Second World War (New York: The Free Press, 1989), p.183.

[16] Willmott, The Great Crusade, pp.111-113. Great Britain, whose gold reserves disappeared by April of 1941, depended upon Lend-Lease(March 1941), and the United States' protection of British convoys over half of the North Atlantic, to supply her armies and population.

[17] Keegan, The Second World War, p.311.

During these years the United States military leaders often deferred to their British counterparts, who "had amassed more experience, and had more military forces engaged." But towards the end of 1943 things began to change for the worse for Britain; her manpower pool began to diminish even as the United States only started to tap its military potential. With this reversal, British leaders began to lose their senior status in the Anglo-American Alliance.[18]

In May 1943, during the Trident Conference in Washington, Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill and his military leaders won one of their last strategic debates. Repeating their performance of the year before, in which they convinced American commanders to assault North Africa in November 1942, they now persuaded United States military leaders to invade Sicily in July, to be followed by an invasion of Italy in the fall. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), who preferred to attack Germany through an invasion of France, acceded to the proposal, well knowing that the alliance, especially their own nation, still lacked the military strength for a cross-channel invasion.[19]

Even as the United States mobilized for full-scale war, Britain's human resources were being stretched beyond limits. On 9 July 1943, field marshal Alan Brooke, Commander of the Imperial General Staff (the head of the army) and leader of the British

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[18] Quoted in Jeffrey Clarke and Robert Smith United States Army in World War II European Theater of Operations Riviera to the Rhine. (Washington D.C. Center of Military History United States Army. 1993). p. 4 Martin Blumenson The Battle of the Generals,p. 50

[19] Ibid p.53 Many people in the United States especially the navy wanted to deal with Japan first To ensure that Germany remained the primary goal American leaders agreed to these peripheral operations. see MacDonald The Mighty Endeavor pp 57-59

Chiefs of Staff (BCS), noted in his diary that his country had "reached a stage when all three Services, and industry supplying them, were living above their means...Cuts must be made."[20] Though Britain was the most highly mobilized nation in the war, the United Kingdom could not compete with the United States, the Soviet Union, or Germany in terms of manpower resources (see Tables I and II, p.13). After four years of war, with 20 million of Britain's 48 million people engaged in war and industrial production and with 5 million men serving in the armed forces, Great Britain was nearing the end of its manpower pool.[21]

Until that time arrived, however, British leaders continued to exert their influence within the alliance. Churchill and the BCS instructed the Allies to combat Germany through peripheral attacks, like those against North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Designed to weaken Germany, these assaults committed Britain's army to narrow terrain, where casualties would be relatively light.[22] This strategy caused British leaders, fearful of high battle casualties that would further strain their manpower pool, to delay the attack on western Europe until Germany's army, the *Wehrmacht* had deteriorated sufficiently at the hands of the

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20 Arthur Bryant. The Turn of the Tide: A History of the War Years Based on the Diaries of Field-Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1957),p.539. This book contains both the diary of Brooke, and Bryant's own views of the war. After the war field marshal Brooke changed his name to Lord Alanbrooke. He is so identified in most of the literature. The BCS comprised the heads of the three armed services; the American JCS followed suit. The BCS and JCS merged into the Combined Chiefs of Staff to arrive at joint decisions. Marshall was the driving force behind the JCS, with Brooke his opposite number; see Blumenson, The Battle of the Generals,p.48; and Clarke, Riviera to the Rhine, pp.3-4.

21 Ehrman, Grand Strategy, p.41; Bryant, The Turn of the Tide, p.539; and Clarence Long, The Labor Force in War and Transition: Four Countries, National Bureau of Economic Research 36 (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research Inc., 1952), pp.16-17.

22 Pogue, The Supreme Command,p.101; Warren Kimball (ed), Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Volume III: Alliance Declining (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p.198; Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp.7,33.

Table I [1]

	Population	Military Deaths
United States:	132 Million	292,000
Great Britain:	47 Million	244,000
Soviet Union:	170 Million	over 7 Million
Germany:	79 Million	over 4 Million
Canada:	12 Million	37,000

Table II[2]
1944

	Armed Forces	Total Workers
United States:	14.8 Million	53.6 Million
Great Britain:	5.0 Million	20.4 Million
Soviet Union:	11.2 Million	54.1 Million
Germany:	9.1 Million	36.1 Million
Canada:	1.0 Million	4.5 Million

[1] United States' population for 1940 in Donald Dodd, Historical Statistics of the States of the United States: Two Centuries of the Census, 1790-1990 (London: Greenwood Press, 1993), p.104. The population of Canada, Germany, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union for 1939 in I.C.B. Dear (ed.), The Oxford Companion to the Second World War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.182, 456, 1133, and 1207 respectively.

[2] Armed forces in Dear, The Oxford Companion to the Second World War, pp.185,1060.Statistics for the United States, Great Britain, Canada and Germany's total workers in Clarence Long, The Labor Force in War and Transition: Four Countries, National Bureau of Economic Research 36 (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., 1952) pp.1-61 esp. pp.16-17. Statistics for the Soviet Union's workers in John Barber and Mark Harrison, The Soviet Home Front 1941-1945: A Social and Economic History of the U.S.S.R. in World War II (New York: Longman Inc., 1991), p.219.

Russians.[23]

Unfortunately for Britain, the delay sought by the BCS created a paradox. Though Germany became weaker with each passing year, so too did Great Britain in comparison with the United States. Until the Anglo-Americans opened another front in France, the bulk of American troops waited to join the fighting. Great Britain, however, had already deployed the majority of its soldiers overseas. On 1 November 1943, Churchill issued a memorandum to the British government outlining the inevitable; "Our manpower is now fully mobilized for the war effort. We cannot add to the total; on the contrary it is already dwindling." The Prime Minister foresaw two alternatives for Great Britain: either reduce the number of men and women in the armed forces, or the number of men and women in industry. Whatever the choice, concluded Churchill, Britain "shall have to increasingly rely on United States resources to make up for the declining scale of our own effort."[24]

Not surprisingly, the BCS chose to reduce the industrial work force; a reduction in the armed forces would have undercut Britain's war effort. As it was, this manpower shortage developed at a critical time in the war, for Josef Stalin and the JCS had finally gotten Britain to commit to a definite date for the cross-channel invasion during the Teheran Conference in November 1943.

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[23] Wilmot. The Struggle for Europe p.129. David Eisenhower. Eisenhower At War. (p 19) and Kimball. Churchill and Roosevelt. (pp 197-99) claim that Churchill hoped to defeat Germany through these peripheral attacks. Weigley. Eisenhower's Lieutenants. (pp.7,33). Wilmot. The Struggle for Europe. (pp 128-130. esp 130) Keegan. The Second World War. (pp 310-316 esp 312). Willmott. The Great Crusade. (pp 340-41) state that Churchill and the BCS did want Overlord, but that remembering the devastating losses of World War I they were reluctant to participate in that sort of warfare again. Thus British leaders chose to fight on the periphery. these narrow arenas also better sustained Britain's equal partnership with America.

[24] Reprinted in Ehrman. Grand Strategy pp 569-71

British leaders, knowing that the United States would supply the majority of men and equipment for the invasion, agreed that the leader of the AEF should be an American. On 7 December 1943, General Dwight D. Eisenhower received news that President Roosevelt had appointed him supreme commander of the Allied forces in northwestern Europe.[25]

Overlord, the operation to free northwest Europe from German occupation, began on 6 June 1944.[26] That day Allied forces landed on five beaches in Normandy -- two beaches under British control, two American, and one Canadian -- under the tactical command of General Bernard L. Montgomery. Eisenhower had not chosen Montgomery as the tactical commander, for he had preferred General Harold Alexander. Brooke, however, used his influence on the BCS to secure the post for Montgomery.[27] Eisenhower later explained the command situation to General George Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the American Army: because operations would be constricted to a small area after the initial landing "it was obvious that one man...had initially to be responsible for such details of coordination as timing of attacks." He further stated that until extensive communications had been erected for his "air-

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[25] Pogue. The Supreme Command p.24. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Crusade in Europe (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1948) p.208. Brooke had been promised command of the AEF by Churchill on 7 July 1943. But Brooke knew that Churchill could not make the decision alone. Roosevelt and the CCS would have an input as well. By the time the appointment was made, the United States had far more soldiers, so it went to Eisenhower. see Bryant. The Turn of the Tide. p 539, 540-542.

[26] Willmott. The Great Crusade. p 353. In June 1944, the United States displayed its military might by engaging the Japanese in an amphibious invasion of the Mariana Islands, and by fighting the largest naval air battle in history: the battle of the Philippine Sea, as well as the landings at Normandy. see Willmott. The Great Crusade. p 338-340.

[27] Pogue. The Supreme Command. pp 13-21, 54. Dwight Eisenhower. Crusade in Europe. p.210. To maintain unity within the alliance, Eisenhower's main subordinates were British. Air Chief Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory commanded the AEF air force. Admiral Bertram Ramsay commanded the AEF navy. Eisenhower's deputy supreme commander was Air Chief Marshal Arthur Tedder, and Montgomery.

naval-ground headquarters" the Supreme Command would remain in Britain. Eisenhower concluded by stating that he had placed Montgomery "in temporary charge of the coordination of ground operations, but always under plans of campaign approved by me."[28]

During the initial phase of Overlord then, Eisenhower served as overall commander, but General Montgomery commanded Twenty-First Army Group, which consisted of General Miles Dempsey's British Second Army and the United States First Army, under Lieutenant General Omar Bradley. As Overlord progressed, an American army group would be created to handle the growing number of American divisions engaged on the continent; with the loss of Bradley's army, the Canadian First Army, whose units had participated in the Normandy landings, would be added to Montgomery's Twenty-First Army Group. Bradley would assume command of the new Twelfth Army Group after the American Third Army, under General George S. Patton, began operations in France; General Courtney Hodges would replace Bradley as commander of the American First Army.[29] At this juncture Eisenhower would replace Montgomery and direct both army groups. The supreme commander recalled in his memoirs that both sides fully understood the command structure, including the provisions for Montgomery's removal (see Tables III and IV, pp.17,18).[30]

For six weeks tenacious German defenders fought the Allies to a near standstill in the hedgerows of Normandy. Then German

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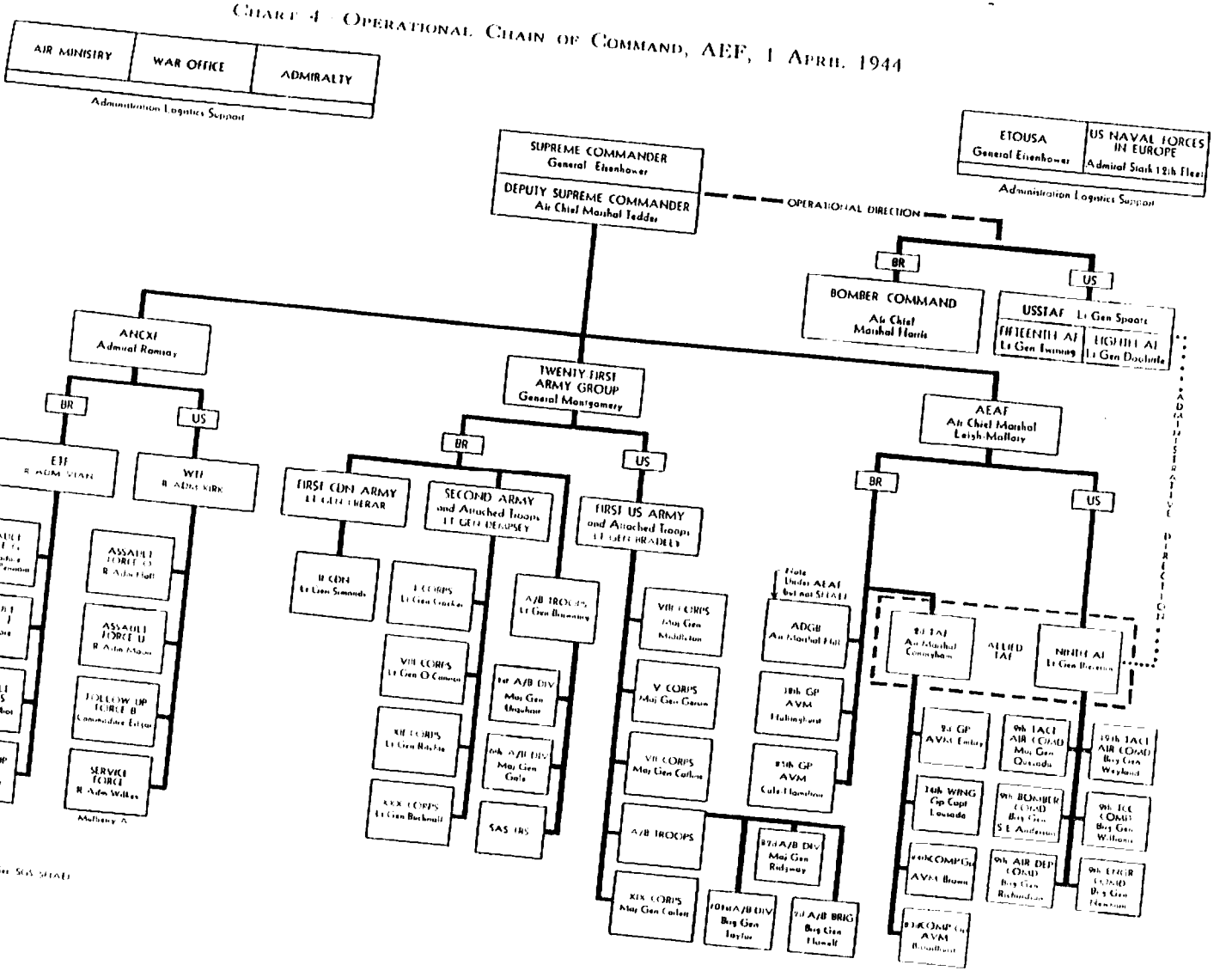
28 Eisenhower to Marshall, 19 August 1944, in Alfred Chandler and Steven Ambrose (eds), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol IV (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press,1970), p.2075.

29 Omar Bradley, A Soldier's Story (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), pp.209-211. In his memoirs Bradley said that he learned he would command new the American army group on 18 January 1944.

30 Eisenhower to Bradley, 6 June 1944 (Authors document). Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, p.223.

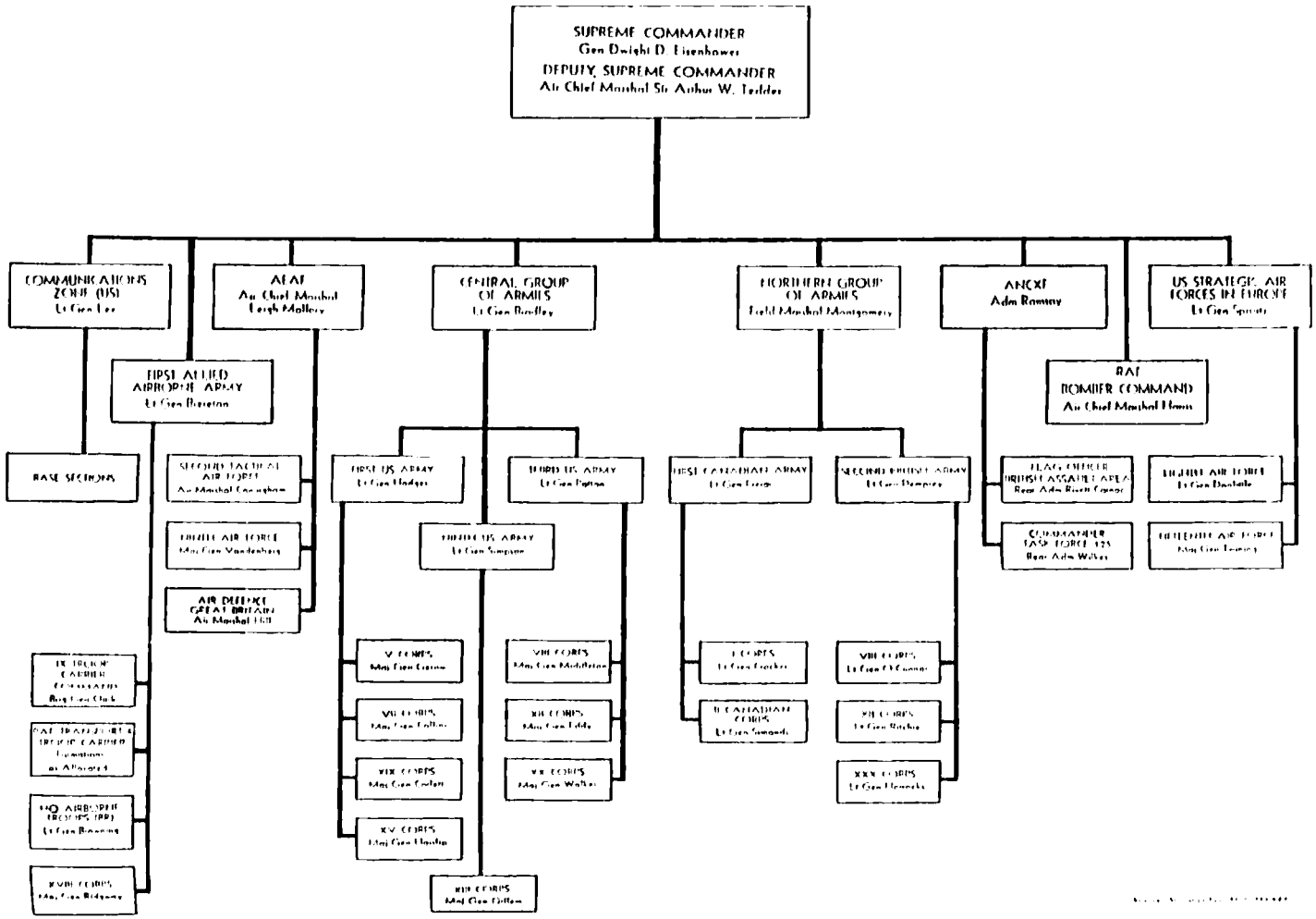
CHART 4 — OPERATIONAL CHAIN OF COMMAND, AEF, 1 APRIL 1944



Source: Supreme Hq. SCS SHAEF

TABLE IV

CHART 5- OPERATIONAL CHAIN OF COMMAND, AEF, 1 SEPTEMBER 1944



resistance crumbled, and a massive push by Bradley's army pierced their lines. Hitler, hoping to avert disaster, ordered his panzer divisions to counter-attack, rather than retreat. This proved a mistake; the Allies entrapped and nearly destroyed two German armies in a pocket near the town of Falaise on 15 August 1944. This crushing defeat left the Germans unable to halt an Allied advance across northern France and into the lowland countries.[31]

With the long campaign in Normandy nearing a close, British manpower problems manifested themselves more than ever. Even Captain Harry Butcher, Naval Aide and confidant to Eisenhower, noted in his diary "that Monty, his British Army Commander, Dempsey...are so conscious of Britain's ebbing manpower that they hesitate to commit an attack where a division may be lost...When it is lost, it's done and finished."[32]

Though the War Office had earmarked sufficient soldiers to Twenty-First Army Group for the start of Overlord, the operation's enormous requirements left few replacements for a long campaign.[33] This was immediately compounded by an error concerning anticipated battle casualties. Every year the War Office estimated the likely number of casualties for Britain's armed forces, and from this figure allotted replacements to the various formations. Twenty-First Army Group's replacements, in turn, were divided among infantry, armor, and artillery. Unfortunately, the War Office had

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31 For an excellent account of the Falaise Pocket see Martin Blumenson The Battle of the Generals; other works include Weigley Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp 189-217 Keegan The Second World War pp 396-414

32 Diary 24 July 1944 in Harry C Butcher, My Three Years with Eisenhower The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C Butcher USNR Naval Aide to General Eisenhower 1942 to 1945 (New York Simon and Schuster 1946) p 622 Butcher kept Eisenhower's unofficial war diary but when it was published Eisenhower denied to his former British colleagues that he had authorized Butcher to keep the diary

33 Carlo D Este Decision in Normandy (1983) p 252

underestimated the rate of infantry losses for the Normandy campaign, and consequently failed to designate enough infantry replacements; the longer the army group fought, the fewer infantry men it would have. In short, as the historian Alexander McKee wrote, "two men were becoming casualties; and there was only one man to replace them both. The time was rapidly arriving...when there would be no more infantry reinforcements."[34]

Montgomery was aware of this frightful certainty. As he cabled Brooke on 14 August: "My infantry divisions are so low in effective rifle strength that they can no -- repeat NO -- longer fight effectively in major operations." That day he requested permission to disband a division to create replacements.[35] Each battle Twenty-First Army Group fought further depleted its infantry strength, limiting its capacity to fight future battles -- battles that might win the war. The situation was critical, but Britain still managed to maintain an army comparable to the size of the United States' in France; however, this would change the longer the war continued. As Montgomery wrote in his memoirs, "the British economy and manpower situation demanded victory in 1944: no later."[36]

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[34] D'Este, Decision in Normandy, pp.252,254-258, esp. 255. McKee quote p.258. Britain's manpower had to be divided among the army, navy, and air force; even within the army the infantry arm was smaller than the artillery. But was Britain's manpower situation that critical? D'Este, pp.268-71, esp. p.269, states that over 100,000 soldiers were still in Britain, troops that might have been used as replacements for Twenty-First Army Group. Later in the war, Churchill himself, in a letter to the government on 19 December 1944, realized that over 50,000 British soldiers languished in the Mid-East. These too could be used as reinforcements for Twenty-First Army Group, see Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, Vol. IV (New York: Bantam Books, 1962), pp.610-611.

[35] D'Este, Decision in Normandy, p.262. Montgomery had hoped to use his own forces for the break-out, but the heavy cost of the attack prevented this; his soldiers were needed to maintain Britain's status, see Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, p.51.

[36] Bernard L. Montgomery, The Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, K.G. (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1958), p.243.

To all intents and purposes, Great Britain reached the end of its manpower resources during the summer of 1944. Churchill noted in his memoirs that:

> "...[Britain] had now passed the day in July when for the first time in the war the movement of the great American Armies into Europe and their growth in the Far East made their numbers in action for the first time greater then our own. Influence on Allied operations is usually increased by large reinforcements."[37]

This would prove only too true for Britain. Already, as the United States increasingly asserted itself within the Alliance, American leaders demanded that the Allies concentrate on the invasion of France, toning down Britain's peripheral attacks. This threatened to reduce the fighting in Italy from a major campaign to merely a side affair. Both Churchill and Brooke worked fervently to prevent this.

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[37] Churchill, Winston. The Second World War: Triumph and Tragedy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953) p. 71

The Anvil Controversy

The debate over Anvil, the amphibious landings on the French Riviera, illustrated the growing impotence of Churchill and Brooke on account of the greater American involvement in the war against Germany. Both leaders wanted to increase the scope of fighting in Italy, invaded on 9 September 1943, to include operations in Eastern Europe. However, the JCS viewed the Italian campaign, dominated by Britain, as secondary to the projected cross-Channel campaign, which they had deliberately named Overlord to emphasize the point. The two sides stood in direct variance over Anvil; Churchill and Brooke opposed the operation for it undermined any expansion of the Italian campaign; the JCS, however, insisted upon Anvil to ensure that Overlord remained the primary offensive against Germany.[38]

During the spring of 1943, American planners for the European Theater of Operations envisaged a diversionary seaborne landing in support of Overlord. In accordance with the United States' strategy of attacking Germany through France, the JCS chose to invade the French Riviera, giving birth to Anvil. Not only would this operation utilize French forces waiting in liberated North Africa, it would better employ the Allied forces in the Mediterranean. Realizing that Anvil would preclude any major expansion of the Italian campaign, Churchill and Brooke cabled the JCS on 4 February 1944, arguing that the war in Italy

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[38] Willmott, The Great Crusade, pp. 340-41. For a more detailed account of the Anvil debate see Ehrman, Grand Strategy, pp. 225-269, 337-366. Others include Clarke, Riviera to the Rhine, pp. 3-22; Pogue, The Supreme Command, pp. 108-117, 216-226. Anvil was later renamed Dragoon to maintain secrecy. Churchill called it Dragoon because he maintained "that he had been 'dragooned' into the operation." see Chandler (ed), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, Vol. IV, p. 2056, footnote 1.

would provide the better diversion for Overlord. In other words, as Brooke wrote in his diary, the Alliance should "give up any idea of a weak landing in Southern France."[39] What Churchill and Brooke wanted was an important European operation commanded and controlled by Britain. If they failed, Britain would soon be overshadowed by the United States.[40]

The JCS refused to postpone Anvil, insisting that Britain honor agreements made at the Teheran conference for simultaneous landings in Normandy and on the Riviera.[41] However, they designated Eisenhower "the representative of the United States Chiefs of Staff" to discuss Anvil with the BCS. In Britain, Eisenhower desperately tried to convince his Allies of the importance of Anvil as a diversionary operation and to locate sufficient landing craft for both landings.[42]

Meanwhile, the Italian campaign had reached a critical stage. On 22 January 1944, the Allies had launched an amphibious landing at Anzio on Italy's western shore to capture Rome. Unfortunately for the Allies, the Germans immediately prevented this force from advancing inland. Though supplied by the Allied navies, the Anzio troops remained isolated from the main battle line.[43] Because of this, Brooke argued that American troops earmarked for Anvil could not embark for the French Riviera until the Anzio forces were

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39 Quote in Bryant, Triumph in the West, p.143. Pogue, The Supreme Command, p. 112.

40 Warren Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt: The Complete Correspondence, Vol. III, Alliance Declining: February 1944- April 1945 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p.198.

41 Bryant, Triumph in the West, p.144.

42 Diary, 11 February 1944 quoted in Butcher, My Three Years, p. 490. Pogue, Supreme Command, pp.113-114.

43 Dear (ed.), The Oxford Companion to the Second World War, pp.45-46.

rescued.[44] In response, Eisenhower and the JCS agreed to reevaluate Anvil in light of Italian operations. The Allied offensive against Rome would have priority until talks resumed on 20 March. Meanwhile, planning for Anvil was to continue.[45]

Brooke was happy that the United States had finally seen reason, remarking that "we have got all we want;" Italy would remain the main diversion for Overlord.[46] After the revival of the debate on 20 March, Eisenhower realized that "Anvil as we originally visualized it is no longer a possibility." Landing craft simply did not exist in sufficient numbers to launch both Overlord and Anvil simultaneously; Overlord must take precedence.[47] However, the JCS informed Eisenhower on 24 March that the amphibious operation must not be abandoned, even with the obsolescence of its original purpose, insisting that Anvil have absolute priority once the Allies relieved the Anzio invaders.[48]

Once Anvil lost its diversionary mission, it temporarily faded into the background. The BCS clearly emerged as the victor during this period, for it not only delayed Anvil, but ensured that Italy would continue as a major theater of operations for a time. Though the BCS succeeded because of the lack of landing craft, Brooke and Churchill could only delay, but not prevent, Anvil.

When Overlord commenced on 6 June 1944, the JCS became eager to send its massive army into France. Since over 40 divisions

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44 Diary, 22 February 1944, in Bryant, Triumph in the West, p.152.

45 Diary 26 February 1944 in Butcher, My Three Years, p. 497

46 Bryant, Triumph in the West, p.153

47 Eisenhower to Marshall, 20 March 1944, quoted in Chandler (ed) The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, Vol. III, p.1775. Bryant, Triumph in the West, p.139.

48 Ehrman, Grand Strategy, p.252

awaited in the United States, the JCS used this numerical advantage to exert control over the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS).[49] Pre-Overlord plans had called for these divisions to move into France through its Atlantic ports. The JCS sought to speed up the movement of troops and materiel by acquiring another major port to funnel men, POL (petrol,oil, and lubricant), and ammunition into France. This lent a previously unknown urgency to the CCS's discussion of future plans, among them Anvil.[50]

On 11-14 June the CCS met in London to discuss future Mediterranean operations and their relation to the Normandy invasion. The British concluded that "the overriding necessity is to apply all our forces to the enemy, at the earliest possible moment, in the way best calculated to assist the success of Overlord." To accomplish this, the CCS cabled Eisenhower and field marshal Henry Maitland Wilson, Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater, on 14 June asking for their recommendations regarding a future amphibious operation based on three options: an assault in southern France near Marseilles, or western France near Bordeaux, or at the head of the Adriatic. In the cable the CCS favored the invasion near Bordeaux as the closest port to the United States.[51]

Two days later Eisenhower wrote to Wilson discussing the directive. He disagreed with the CCS on Bordeaux because of the limiting topographical features in the area. Eisenhower favored attacking near the major port of Marseilles. This, he reasoned,

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[49] Churchill to General Hastings Ismay 5 July 1944 in Churchill Triumph and Tragedy Vol IV (Bantam Books) p 589

[50] Clarke Riviera to the Rhine p 19

[51] CCS to Eisenhower and Wilson 14 June 1944 in Ehrman Grand Strategy pp 268-69 See also Chandler (ed) The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol III p 1931 footnote1

would draw the greatest number of Germans away from Normandy and receive aid from the French Resistance, which was particularly strong in that area.[52]

Wilson replied to Eisenhower and the CCS on 19 June, stressing the importance of transporting the vast supplies and numerous divisions waiting in the United States If, Wilson conceded, the CCS simply desired another port to handle quantities of POL, materiel, and men then Anvil should be executed to capture Marseilles.[53] However, he disagreed with Anvil, as it would break up the Allied force in Italy, and give the Germans in Italy a five-week rest until Anvil could be launched on 15 August. Instead, Wilson argued that the Allies should continue advancing up the Italian peninsula until they reached the River Po. Then, the Italian force should advance toward southern Hungary, aided by a landing at the head of the Adriatic. This, Wilson concluded, would threaten Germany more than Anvil, and give the Allies victory in 1944. In stating this, he commented that the CCS was faced with a decision, "whether our strategy in the coming months is to be aimed at the defeat of Germany this year, or, while making every endeavor to defeat him this year, at ensuring his defeat in the first half of 1945."[54]

Eisenhower and Marshall contested Wilson's views on Italy, returning to the old argument that France was the main military

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52 Eisenhower to Wilson, 16 June 1944 in Chandler (ed), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol. III, pp 1938-39

53 Martin Van Creveld, Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p 207 Pogue, The Supreme Command p 220

54 Chandler (ed), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol III p 1939 footnote 1 Wilson, the Supreme Commander for the Mediterranean, dealt with the planning for Anvil, as it lay within his jurisdiction He proposed the 15 August date as the earliest it could be accomplished without jeopardizing the drive to the Po River

theater, and that the Allied forces should be concentrated there; Anvil provided the means for this concentration. Marshall also feared the involvement in Central Europe at which Wilson and Churchill hinted.[55] The two leaders agreed with Wilson's proposal to launch Anvil on 15 August. The JCS gave its approval.[56]

Brooke and the BCS still protested, urging that the CCS allow Wilson to engage and destroy the Germans in Italy, while only threatening to assault southern France.[57] On 28 June, Brooke recorded in his diary that, "This morning the American reply to our wire arrived, a rude one at that! They still adhere to Anvil being carried out and want it at once."[58] Churchill wired the President that day, imploring him not to ruin their "great affairs" in the Mediterranean. He then begged Roosevelt to reconsider the matter before agreeing with the "arbitrary" JCS. Roosevelt, however, had already sent Churchill a message that very day concurring in the decision of the JCS and asking Churchill to support Eisenhower's decision to launch Anvil. He also remarked that Wilson's plans for a continued drive up the Italian peninsula were "not acceptable...and I really believe we should consolidate our operations and not scatter them."[59]

Churchill wired Roosevelt on 30 June in a last effort to reverse the decision, but to no avail. Roosevelt answered Churchill on the next day, making it quite clear that the United

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55 Bryant, Triumph in the West, p. 222

56 Eisenhower to Marshall, 23 June 1944, in Chandler (ed), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, Vol. III, p. 1942. Pogue, The Supreme Command, p. 220

57 Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, 63

58 Diary, 26 June 1944, in Bryant, Triumph in the West, pp. 224-25

59 Churchill to Roosevelt, 28 June 1944, in Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt, Vol. III, pp. 212-13. Roosevelt to Churchill, 28 June 1944, in ibid., p. 213

States would not allow Anvil to be delayed and that he felt that Italian operations were not being unfairly curtailed. Roosevelt concluded that he would never "survive" the upcoming presidential election if Overlord failed.[60] Brooke noted in his diary on 30 June that owing to the dominance of the United States "on land, in the air and on the sea...we shall be forced into carrying out an invasion of Southern France...there is nothing more to be gained by argument."[61]

Eisenhower ecstatically wrote to Marshall on 1 July that the Prime Minister had finally agreed to Anvil.[62] He thought the long debate over, but, as D-Day for Anvil neared, Churchill reopened the controversy. On 4 August the Prime Minister cabled the President with a new plan. The operations in Normandy had opened new possibilities for the forces earmarked for Anvil. Now, Churchill argued, the Allies might ship these divisions directly to the Brittany peninsula, then being overrun by the Americans, where they could immediately influence the battle in France.[63]

The Prime Minister's proposal fell on deaf ears. Roosevelt refused to shift Dragoon's divisions, reemphasizing Eisenhower's need for Dragoon "in driving the Huns from France."[64] Undeterred, Churchill met with Eisenhower to discuss his plan on 5 August, but "Ike said no, continued saying no all afternoon, and ended saying no" to the proposal.[65] Eisenhower, gravely concerned over the

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60 Roosevelt to Churchill, 1 July 1944 in Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt Vol. III, pp.221-23.

61 Bryant, Triumph in the West, pp. 225-226

62 Eisenhower to Marshall, 1 July 1944 in Chandler (ed) The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol. III, p. 1967

63 Churchill, Triumph and Tragedy, pp. 66-67. Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt Vol. III, pp. 263-64

64 Roosevelt to Churchill, 8 August 1944, in Kimball, Churchill and Roosevelt Vol. III, p. 267.

65 Diary 7 August 1944, quoted in Butcher, My Three Years, pp.634-635

Germans' tenacity in holding the Brittany ports, refused to sacrifice Marseilles for some other scheme.[66]

On 9 August Eisenhower visited the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street. There, according to Eisenhower, Churchill expressed an ever-increasing truth of the alliance: the United States had become the dominant partner, able to behave indifferently to British campaigns and concerns.[67] Obviously Britain no longer possessed the influence it once had enjoyed with the United States. The accusation upset Eisenhower, a close friend of Churchill's, who struggled to ensure unity within the alliance. He wrote to the Prime Minister that

> "I do not, for one moment, believe that there is any desire on the part of any responsible person in the American war machine to disregard British views, or cold-bloodedly leave Britain holding an empty bag in any of our joint undertakings...and I am sorry you seem to feel that we use our great actual or potential strength as a bludgeon..."[68]

This closed the matter; on 15 August Operation Dragoon began (see map, p.30).[69] Yet the long argument affected operations in

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66 Eisenhower to Marshall, 14 September 1944, in Chandler (ed), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol. IV, p.2144.

67 Eisenhower to Marshall, 11 August 1944, in ibid., p.2066-67

68 Eisenhower to Churchill, 11 August 1944, in ibid, p.2065

69 Historians are divided over the necessity of Anvil. Lamb, Montgomery in Europe, (p.70), Horne, The Lonely Leader (pp.78, 198), Bryant, Triumph in the West, (p.24), Wilmot, The Struggle for Europe, (pp.446-457 esp. p.453), and Keegan, The Second World War, (pp.361-62) feel that Anvil, as it was originally envisaged, was a useless campaign because it never drew German divisions away from Normandy. Horne also argues from hindsight that Marseilles would not have been needed had Antwerp been opened to Allied shipping. Willmott, The Great Crusade (pp.350-51), Forrest Pogue, George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory 1943-1945 Vol. III (New York: Viking Press, 1973, pp.326-347 esp. p. 329), MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor (p.252), Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, (pp.216-19), and David Eisenhower, Eisenhower At War, (pp.130-135) argue that Anvil was important for two reasons: to concentrate forces in France through another major port and to show that the United States would not cave in to British demands to halt operations.

MAP 3

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Northwest Europe. Eisenhower, after his confrontation with Churchill, was predisposed to think favorably of British operations -- one of the reasons he allowed Montgomery to attempt to "bounce" the Rhine River with Market-Garden, while the Canadian First Army cleared the Scheldt Estuary of German soldiers.

Above all, the Anvil debate demonstrated the weakness of Churchill and Brooke in influencing war strategy in the face of American dominance. As British military strength declined throughout 1944, it became increasingly difficult for the BCS to prevail with its views. The most dramatic illustration of this occurred after the start of Overlord. Once the United States began to land its vast army in France, the JCS completely dominated the Anvil debate, and refused to implement the ideas of the BCS.

Though Churchill attempted to derail Dragoon early in August, the discussion had really ended on the last day of June. After that day, with Britain's military stretched to the maximum and the BCS unable to direct the course of the war, General Bernard Montgomery alone could restore British primacy. Commander of the British armed forces in the northwestern European theater of war and more importantly the commander of the AEF, Montgomery had the power to regain British prestige. Moreover, by the beginning of August, even his position was threatened by the growing strength of the American army.

Montgomery's Unique Position: Command Questions

With Churchill and Brooke no longer capable of influencing the direction of the western European war to favor British interests, the task fell to the highest ranking British commander in France, Montgomery. He attempted to achieve this in two ways: to remain in command of the AEF, and if that failed, to propose a plan that would enable the British Second Army to have a primary role in the defeat of Germany.

Ironically, the beginning of the Anglo-American break-out on 25 July 1944, perhaps the pinnacle of Montgomery's achievements and fame, coincided with the creation of the American Twelfth Army Group, under General Bradley, comprising American first and third armies. This meant, according to the pre-invasion plans, that Eisenhower would soon replace Montgomery and begin directing both army groups, Twenty-First Army Group (British Second Army and Canadian First Army) and Twelfth Army Group. The reason for this, as Eisenhower explained to the CCS, was "because on each of the main fronts there must be a commander who can handle...the day by day detailed operations of troops, guided by the overall directives prescribed by this headquarters."[70] Already, Montgomery's primary means of ensuring British prestige and power, his command of the AEF, was slipping from his grasp.

The victory at Falaise had surpassed all expectations, creating the possibility of an early victory over Germany. Montgomery wanted this desperately, but time was short. He would

[70] Eisenhower to the CCS, 22 August 1944 in Chandler (ed.), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol. IV, pp 2087-89. Eisenhower's quote on p 2089

have to contend not only with the reduced fighting capability of Twenty-First Army Group but with the possibility of his removal as ground commander. As long as Montgomery directed American soldiers, their success added to his own fame and prestige; without them he had to rely on the less numerous British and Canadian forces.

Though Bradley continued to serve under Montgomery until Eisenhower formally took command, Montgomery's orders after 1 August were tempered by the knowledge of Eisenhower's ascension. Bradley recalled in his memoirs that "Montgomery...granted us the latitude to operate as freely and as independently as we chose."[71] This independence helped to conclude the Normandy campaign, but, to prevent the Germans from discovering the operational status of Patton's American Third Army, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) censored any news of his army from the Allied papers. On 14 August, Eisenhower's confidant, Captain Butcher, leaked the story of the restructured commands, which indicated that Bradley commanded Twelfth Army Group and held a rank equal with Montgomery. The story implied that Eisenhower had already replaced Montgomery in France.[72]

Spurred by their newspapers neglect in covering American operations, the British public expressed immediate outrage over the supposed demotion of their favorite military commander. The Deputy Supreme Commander, Air Marshal Arthur Tedder, noted in his memoirs that "one of the most disturbing features of the

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[71] Bradley, A Soldier's Story, pp. 319-20.

[72] Diary 19 August 1944 in Butcher, My Three Years with Eisenhower, p. 648. David Eisenhower, Eisenhower: At War, pp. 413-14. The leak forced Eisenhower to reassign Butcher to Britain. Eisenhower's feelings over the crucial next month, as recorded by Butcher, are thus unknown. SHAEF was Eisenhower's command post, coordinating air, land, and naval forces.

campaign...had been the uninhibited boosting at home of the British Army at the expense of the Americans."[73] The uncensored story made it appear to the common Briton that the Americans, though doing little of the fighting, had elbowed Montgomery from command. Bradley clearly summarized the situation in his memoirs: "...knowing nothing of the original Overlord agreement...the British Press alleged Monty had been slurred...undermined by a United States bid for equality. Some writers denounced it as a demotion for Monty."[74] SHAEF issued a statement shortly after the mistaken article to ease the situation, denying that Bradley had equal status with Montgomery. However, it omitted that he would achieve equality once Eisenhower superseded Montgomery.[75]

Whether the SHAEF release mollified the British, it triggered an uproar in the United States over "'British dominance' of invasion command."[76] The New York *Times* thought it "unfortunate" that Montgomery still commanded United States forces; "each army in France should have its own commander, operating under one supreme command. This is a principle...that is as old as the First World War. It should be honored today."[77]

The American outcry did not go unnoticed by Marshall, who cabled Eisenhower on 17 August, saying that "I and apparently all of America are strongly of the opinion that the time has come for you to assume direct exercise of command."[78] Eisenhower responded

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73 Arthur Tedder With Prejudice The War Memoirs of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1966), p 586.

74 Bradley A Soldier's Story, p 352

75 Chandler (ed) The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol IV p 2077 footnote 1

76 Diary 19 August 1944 in Butcher My Three Years with Eisenhower p 648

77 New York *Times*, 17 August 1944, quoted in Pogue, George C. Marshall Vol III, p 425

78 Marshall quoted in ibid, p 425

two days later, shocked that the transition of command had been so misunderstood; he promised to take command on 1 September, even if his headquarters had incomplete communications. Eisenhower then expressed irritation over public pressure, complaining that "it seems that so far as the press and the public are concerned a resounding victory is not sufficient; the question of 'how' is equally important."[79]

Montgomery was startled by the realization that Eisenhower would actually assume command of the ground forces. As his chief of staff, General Freddie de Guingand, later recalled, Montgomery never "thought that the day would come so soon...he thirsted after the simple solution, and, therefore, hoped that the initial command set-up was there to stay for a long time." Thus, though most British military leaders realized that Montgomery could no longer command the "more numerous American formations," he did not.[80]

Some of the British general's reticence to relinquish command stemmed from his own frustration over the upcoming removal and his poor opinion of Eisenhower as a general. Montgomery voiced this in a letter to Brooke; "[Eisenhower] is over here now [France], which is a very great pity. His ignorance as to how to run a war is absolute and complete."[81] Even after the war, Montgomery could "not class Eisenhower as a great soldier."[82] His close friend "Brookie" helped to stoke these feelings, by openly disparaging

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[79] Chandler (ed) The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower pp.2074-2077, quote p 2074

[80] Francis de Guingand Generals at War (London, Hodder and Stoughton 1964), pp 100-101

[81] Montgomery to Brooke 13 August 1944 in Horne, The Lonely Leader, p 267

[82] Dedication to Eisenhower 6 August 1970 in Bernard Montgomery The Memoirs of field marshal the Viscount Montgomery (Cleveland The World Publishing Company, 1958), back cover

Eisenhower abilities: "it is equally clear that Ike has the very vaguest conception of war."[83] Brooke's remonstrances extended beyond Eisenhower:

> "Bedell Smith [Eisenhower's chief of staff]...has brains but no military education in its true sense. He is certainly one of the best American officers, but still falls far short when it comes to strategic outlook. With that Supreme Command set-up it is no wonder that Monty's real high ability is not always realized. Especially so when 'national' spectacles pervert the perspective of the strategic landscape."[84]

In contrast to his demeaning of Eisenhower, Montgomery never doubted his own genius as a general. He had beaten the Germans in North Africa in 1942-43, and now in 1944 his leadership had led to the destruction of vast amounts of German equipment and large numbers of men. Under the circumstances, why should the Allies alter a winning line-up. Montgomery felt that the Alliance should institute "an overall land force commander under Eisenhower," with himself "the right man for such a post." In essence, Montgomery wished to gain greater authority by denying Eisenhower operational command of the Allied armies.[85]

Hoping to delay his own subordination to an allegedly incompetent general, Montgomery dispatched de Guingand to win Eisenhower over to his views on command structure. Montgomery gave de Guingand notes asserting that "single control and

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[83] Brooke to Montgomery, 28 July 1944 in Bryant, Triumph in the West, pp.243-245, esp. p.244.

[84] Diary, 27 July 1944 in Bryant, Triumph in the West, p.243.

[85] de Guingand, Generals at War, p.101. British military practice called for three separate commander in chiefs for the army, navy, and air force. The AEF only had a navy and air force c-in-c. Montgomery wanted to add an army c-in-c to the AEF. The Supreme Commander would then coordinate the activities of all three, as well as look after logistics and reinforcements; this relegated Eisenhower to a lesser role. However, Eisenhower considered himself the army commander in chief.

direction of the land operations is vital for success. This is a WHOLE TIME job for one man...To change the system of command now, after having won a great victory, would be to prolong the war." Eisenhower refused this overture, but Montgomery continued to press the issue, requesting, rather undiplomatically, that Eisenhower journey to his encampment on 23 August -- the first of two meetings during the following month.[86]

When Eisenhower arrived at Conde-sur-Noireau, Montgomery imperiously demanded that the two meet alone, without Eisenhower's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith. After Smith's departure, Montgomery gave a diatribe on Eisenhower's role. The Supreme Commander "should not descend into the land battle and become a ground C-in-C." Rather, Eisenhower "must sit on a very lofty perch...to take a detached view of the whole intricate problem -- which involves land, sea, air, civil control, political problems, etc. Someone must run the land battle for him;" that someone was Montgomery.[87] Eisenhower, however, would have none of his subordinate's schemes, as he wrote in his memoirs, that served only to place "Montgomery in position to draw at will, in support of his own ideas, upon the strength of the entire command." Ending the disagreement, the Supreme Commander informed his disgruntled general that 1 September would mark the

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[86] Nigel Hamilton, Monty: Master of the Battlefield 1942-1944 Vol. II (London: Hamish Hamilton,1983), p.807. Montgomery, Memoirs, p.240 for quote.

[87] Montgomery, Memoirs, p.241. Few reliable accounts of the meeting exist. Authors have had a hard time deciding who was at the meeting. Lamb, Montgomery in Europe (p.188), claims that de Guingand was present and stayed. Hamilton, Monty Vol. II, says that General Humfrey Gale, Eisenhower's Chief of Administration, was also present. David Eisenhower, Eisenhower: At War (p.422) states that only Bedell Smith was there. Montgomery, in Memoirs (p.241), recalls that he requested to meet with Eisenhower alone.

command switch.[88]

Questions of Strategy

Though the 23 August meeting stopped Montgomery's attempt to retain command of the AEF's armies, the British general still endeavored to gain control of the ever increasing American armies to supplement Twenty-First Army Group. With this force, Montgomery strived to end the war in 1944, while Britain fielded an army relative to the size of the Americans, which would ensure a greater British voice in the peace accords. As the war continued into 1945, the American preponderance of men would preclude such a British voice after the war (see Tables V and VI, p.39). Montgomery hoped to convince the supreme commander that his strategy would win the war quickly. During the 23 August meeting, the two main Allied leaders, Eisenhower for the United States and Montgomery for Great Britain, decided the future strategy of the AEF.

With the closing of the Falaise trap on 17 August, the main Allied commanders, Montgomery, Bradley, Patton, and Eisenhower had begun devising plans for an advance into Germany. All wanted to end the war as quickly as possible, but Montgomery, Bradley, and Patton each thought that he could dash into Germany. Undermining these plans, however, were problems of supply bases, transportation, reinforcements, and lines of communication -- logistics.

The Overlord planners had assumed that the Germans would

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[88] Dwight Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, p.285. David Eisenhower, Eisenhower At War, pp. 420-21. Lamb, Montgomery in Europe, p.188

Table V[3]

Combat Units of the AEF at
the End of the Normandy Campaign

	United States	Great Britain/Canada
Army Groups	1	1
Field Armies	2	2
Corps	7	7
Armored Divisions	7	6
Infantry Divisions	14	9
Airborne Divisions	2	1

Table VI
Combat Units of the AEF during
the remainder of the Northwest Europe campaign

	United States	France	Britain/Canada
Army Groups	2	-	1
Field Armies	5	1	2
Corps	14	2	7
Armored Divisions	15	3	7
Infantry Divisions	42	9	12
Airborne Divisions	3	-	1

[3] D'Este. Decision in Normandy pp 263-264

stubbornly defend France, using its major rivers as defensive barriers. Falaise changed this. The collapse of enemy resistance compelled Eisenhower to forego a pause on the Seine River, during which communications could have been restored, and forward supply depots established. Instead, Eisenhower urged his armies to bound forward to the German border. Eisenhower wrote that "for some days it has been obvious that our military can advance almost at will, subject only to the requirement of maintenance. Resistance has largely melted all along the front." On 19 August, Patton's army crossed the Seine, followed by the other armies on 24 August; the hectic pursuit to the German border had commenced (see maps, pp.41, 42).[89]

Eisenhower's decision to cross the Seine on the move had triggered a severe logistical crisis. Although the AEF had captured only one port, Cherbourg, copious supplies, even fuel, had accumulated on the invasion beaches, to which they had been transported. The logisticians, however, predicted that, as the armies drove eastward (lengthening supply lines), a shortage of POL would occur at the front. Each army, advancing rapidly and doing little real fighting, needed 400,000 gallons of gas, to move its highly mechanized formations, and 6,000 tons of food and ammunition daily. The Allies needed to haul this materiel, for Patton's army some three hundred miles, from the beaches to the front.[90] This transportation represented a problem. The extensive

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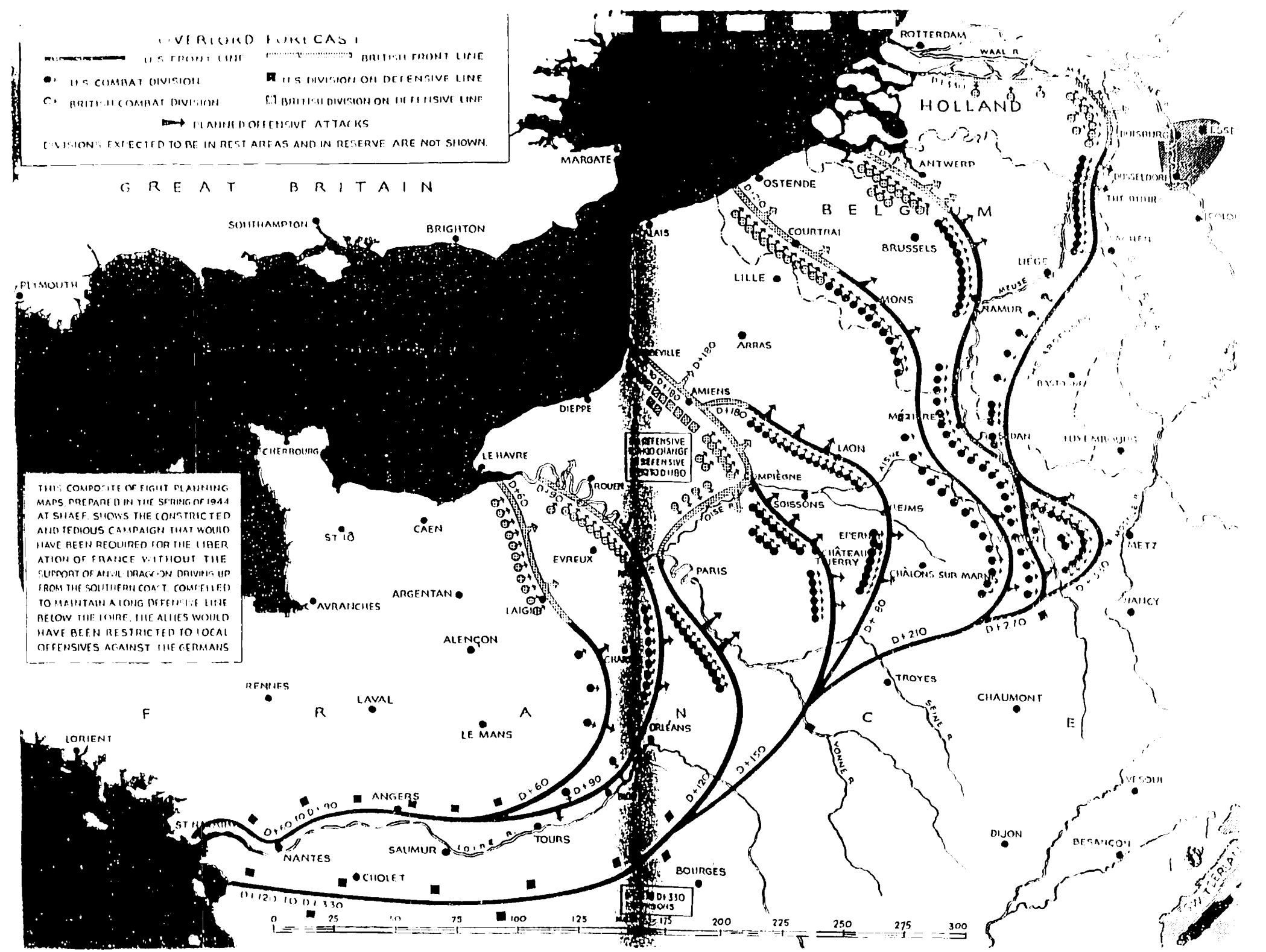
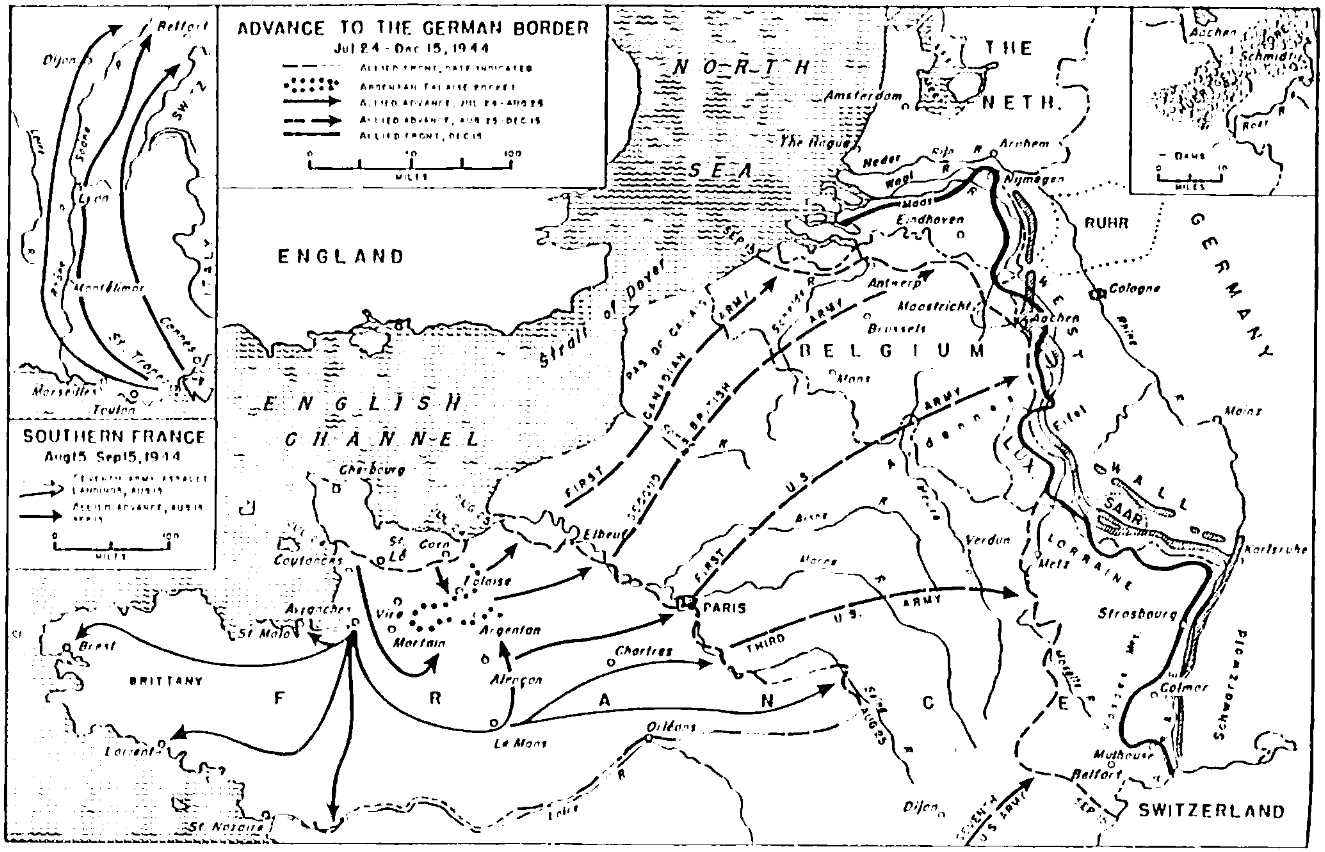
[89] Eisenhower Memorandum 5 September 1944 in Chandler (ed.) The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol IV pp 2121-22. Martin Van Creveld. Supplying War Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton (New York Cambridge University Press. 1977). p.213. Roland Ruppenthal. United States Army in World War II The European Theater of Operations Logistical Support of the Armies Vol I (Washington Office of the Chief of Military History Department of the Army 1953) p 483

[90] Ruppenthal. Logistical Support of the Armies Vol I. p 491. Bradley A General's Life pp 320-21


OVERLORD FORECAST
U.S. FRONT LINE
BRITISH FRONT LINE
U.S. COMBAT DIVISION
U.S. DIVISION ON DEFENSIVE LINE
BRITISH COMBAT DIVISION
BRITISH DIVISION ON DEFENSIVE LINE
PLANNED OFFENSIVE ATTACKS
DIVISIONS EXPECTED TO BE IN REST AREAS AND IN RESERVE ARE NOT SHOWN.
THIS COMPOSITE OF EIGHT PLANNING MAPS, PREPARED IN THE SPRING OF 1944 AT SHAEF, SHOWS THE CONSTRICTED AND TEDIOUS CAMPAIGN THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN REQUIRED FOR THE LIBERATION OF FRANCE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF ANVIL DRAGOON DRIVING UP FROM THE SOUTHERN COAST. COMPELLED TO MAINTAIN A LONG DEFENSIVE LINE BELOW THE LOIRE, THE ALLIES WOULD HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED TO LOCAL OFFENSIVES AGAINST THE GERMANS
GREAT BRITAIN
HOLLAND
BELGIUM
FRANCE
ROTTERDAM
WAAL R.
MARGATE
ANTWERP
OSTENDE
COURTRAI
BRUSSELS
LILLE
MONS
LIÉGE
MEUSE
NAMUR
ARRAS
AMIENS
DIEPPE
SOUTHAMPTON
BRIGHTON
PLYMOUTH
CHERBOURG
LE HAVRE
ROUEN
CAEN
ST LÔ
EVREUX
AVRANCHES
ARGENTAN
FALAISE
ALENÇON
RENNES
LAVAL
LE MANS
LORIENT
ANGERS
NANTES
SAUMUR
TOURS
CHOLET
ORLÉANS
BOURGES
LAON
COMPIÈGNE
SOISSONS
REIMS
ÉPERNAY
CHÂTEAU-THIERRY
CHÂLONS SUR MARNE
PARIS
SEINE R.
YONNE R.
LOIRE R.
OISE R.
AISNE
METZ
NANCY
TROYES
CHAUMONT
VESOUL
DIJON
BESANÇON
D+60
D+90
D+120
D+150
D+180
D+210
D+270
D+330
0 25 50 75 100 125 175 200 225 250 275 300


ADVANCE TO THE GERMAN BORDER
Jul 24 - Dec 15, 1944
MILES
SOUTHERN FRANCE
Aug 15 - Sep 15, 1944
NORTH SEA
ENGLAND
ENGLISH CHANNEL
Strait of Dover
THE NETH.
BELGIUM
GERMANY
RUHR
FRANCE
BRITTANY
SWITZERLAND
LUX
WEST WALL
SAAR
LORRAINE
Amsterdam
The Hague
Arnhem
Nymegen
Eindhoven
Antwerp
Maastricht
Brussels
Aachen
Cologne
Mons
Mainz
Karlsruhe
Metz
Verdun
Strasbourg
Colmar
Mulhouse
Belfort
Dijon
Cherbourg
St. Lô
Caen
Coutances
Avranches
St. Malo
Brest
Lorient
St. Nazaire
Vire
Mortain
Falaise
Argentan
Alençon
Le Mans
Chartres
Orléans
Elbeuf
PARIS
Marseilles
Toulon
Lyon
Montélimar
Cannes
St. Tropez
FIRST CANADIAN ARMY
SECOND BRITISH ARMY
FIRST U.S. ARMY
THIRD U.S. ARMY
SEVENTH U.S. ARMY
Ardennes
Eifel
Vosges Mts.
Schwarzwald
Aachen
Schmidt
Roer R.

French railway system, ruined by the massive Allied aerial bombardment, was inoperable; the rapid advance precluded the possibility of repairing the damaged tracks. Air drops helped, but they could not supply whole armies, landing only about 1000 tons a day. Instead, the logistical planners turned to truck companies to bear most of the supplies. However, trucks were a short-term solution; only large ports, located closer to Germany and to the Allied armies, could alleviate the crisis.[91]

During the planning of Overlord, the Allies had recognized the need for ports near Germany to aid in the build-up of forces and supplies for the final invasion of Germany. Realizing that Berlin, the ultimate objective, lay beyond the immediate reach of the Allied armies, the planners decided to capture the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heartland, first. The planners, then, decided upon a major northern thrust, along the coastline into Belgium and the Netherlands and then swinging east to the Ruhr. This advance would also solve any logistical problems by capturing ports closer to the German border: Antwerp and those in the Pas de Calais area. A subsidiary advance directly east from Paris towards the Saar, Germany's other major industrial zone, to stretch the *Wehrmacht*'s resources and assist in the capture of the Ruhr.[92]

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[91] Weigley. Eisenhower's Lieutenants pp.268-271. esp p.269. For more on the Allied supply crisis, especially the lack of fuel at the front, see Ruppenthal. Logistical Support of the Armies Vol. I. pp.475-583. esp pp.481-509. Van Creveld. Supplying War. pp.202-230. esp pp.216-227; Weigley. Eisenhower's Lieutenants. pp.268-271. Pogue. The Supreme Command. pp.256-260; MacDonald. The Mighty Endeavor pp.328-29.

[92] Eisenhower. Crusade in Europe. pp.225-26. Ruppenthal. Logistical Support of the Armies Vol. I. p.485. Fearful that two thrusts might not be adequately supported, Overlord planners originally planned for the northern advance. It was only after it was recognized that logistics could support both thrusts that the Saar attack was officially incorporated into assault against Germany. see Ruppenthal. Logistical Support of the Armies Vol. I. p.485.

Bradley and Patton recognized the sudden opportunity to drive into Germany and seize the Saar, without emphasizing Montgomery's northward advance. Patton, already far in advance of Montgomery, proclaimed in his diary on 21 August that "If they will let me move...on the line Metz-Nancy-Epinal [East towards the Saar], we can be in Germany in ten days. We have, at this time, the greatest chance to win the war ever presented."[93] His superior, Bradley, surprised his unruly subordinate with a strengthened version of Patton's plan when they met on 22 August. Instead of a broad advance into Germany, Bradley wanted Twelfth Army Group, the main force, to advance eastward to the Saar and then Frankfurt, while Twenty-First Army Group mounted a secondary drive only to Antwerp. This plan fully utilized the spectacular advances of Patton, already half-way to the German border, to complete the lunge into a key industrial area of Germany.[94]

On the same day that Bradley and Patton talked of future plans, Eisenhower wrote the CCS, vaguely outlining his own views on future strategy. The Supreme Commander agreed with the pre-Overlord plans, which called for a broad front advance into Germany; Eisenhower had to fight a coalition war that would eventually lead to Germany's defeat, without playing favorites to any ally. Twenty-First Army Group would secure the various coastal ports "with its final base possibly Antwerp." This force would receive, at least, the aid of the First Allied Airborne Army (FAAA), as well as two corps from American First Army. Bradley's

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[93] Diary 21 August 1944 in Martin Blumenson The Patton Papers 1940-1945 Vol. II (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1974), p.523

[94] Bradley A Soldier's Story pp.398-99. diary 22 August in Blumenson (ed.) The Patton Papers p.525

armies would advance east from Paris either to assist Montgomery or "strike directly eastward, passing south of the Ardennes" (see map, p.46).[95]

During the meeting on 23 August, Montgomery implored Eisenhower to decide upon a course of action, although the Supreme Commander already favored a strong northern thrust for the capture of Antwerp, which would forestall a supply crisis. The British general, after being rebuffed in his ill-advised challenge to the command structure long since decided upon, pressed Eisenhower to adopt his plan for an advance to the Ruhr. Though Montgomery had agreed with the pre-Overlord plans, the AEF's subsequent successes over the *Wehrmacht* in France convinced him that they were outdated. He first expounded his views to Bradley on 17 August and then in a telegram to Brooke on 18 August; "After crossing Seine 12 and 21 Army Groups should keep together as a solid mass of some 40 divisions which would be so strong it need fear nothing. This force should move northwards."[96] The entire AEF could seize the Channel ports; capture Antwerp, Europe's largest port; attack the Ruhr; and then advance to Berlin. Instead of

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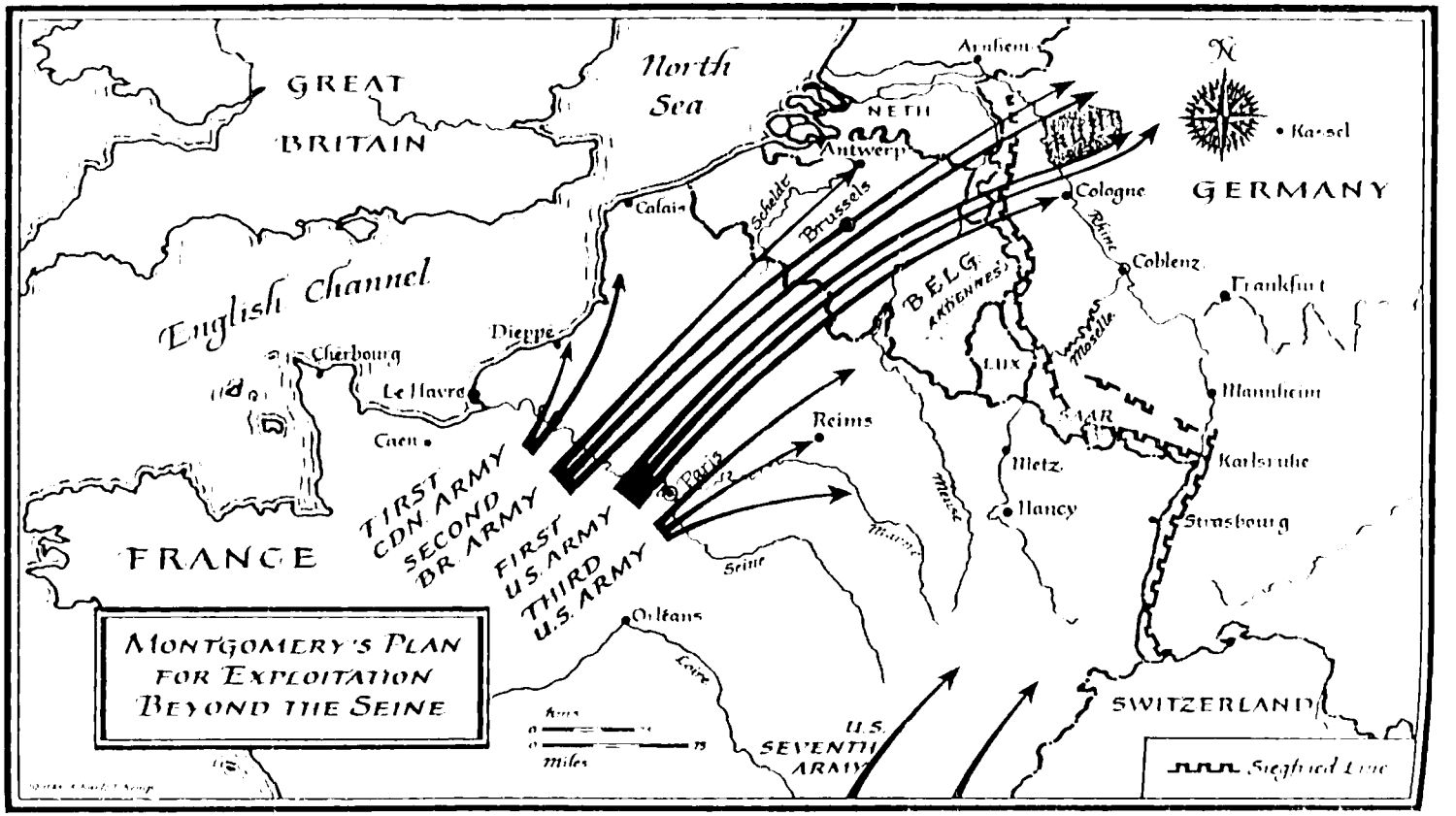
[95] Chandler (ed.), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, pp.2067-2089 esp p.2087. This broad front strategy (Eisenhower) versus single thrust (Montgomery) debate provided one of the greatest controversies during and after the war. The debate centers on whether Eisenhower made a crucial mistake by not unleashing Montgomery on a massive drive into Germany. Wilmot, The Struggle for Europe (pp 458-476, 482-497), Hamilton, Monty Vol II (pp.806-818); Nigel Hamilton, Monty: Final Years of the field marshal 1944-1976 Vol.III (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1986, pp.3-7,22-31),Bryant, Triumph in the West (pp.265-292, esp.281-285) feel that a strong drive by Montgomery could have won the war. MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor, (pp.328-331); David Eisenhower, Eisenhower.At War (pp.422-23) claim that Eisenhower's choice was the correct one. Pogue, The Supreme Command (p.259), Van Creveld, Supplying War (p.223), Stephen Ambrose, "Eisenhower as Commander: Single Thrust Versus Broad Front," The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol V, (ed.) Alfred Chandler (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970) pp.39-48 say that the debate will never be solved.

[96] Montgomery to Brooke, 18 August 1944 in Ellis, Victory in the West Vol I p.459. In the telegram and later in Memoirs (p.239), Montgomery claimed that Bradley had agreed with his plan. In his memoirs Montgomery stated that Bradley had subsequently changed his mind. However, Bradley, in A General's Life(p.313), denies this.


GREAT BRITAIN
North Sea
English Channel
FRANCE
GERMANY
NETH
Arnhem
Antwerp
Brussels
Calais
Cologne
Coblenz
Frankfurt
Mannheim
Karlsruhe
Strasbourg
Dieppe
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Caen
Paris
Reims
Metz
Nancy
Orléans
Seine
Loire
Rhine
Moselle
Meuse
Schelde
BELG.
ARDENNES
LUX.
SAAR
SWITZERLAND
Kassel
FIRST CDN. ARMY
SECOND BR. ARMY
FIRST U.S. ARMY
THIRD U.S. ARMY
U.S. SEVENTH ARMY
miles
Siegfried Line
MONTGOMERY'S PLAN FOR EXPLOITATION BEYOND THE SEINE

employing the pre-Overlord plans calling for a broad attack, Montgomery devised a single thrust strategy, which he felt would end the war in 1944. If the Allies ignored his strategy, "the advance would inevitably peter out...and the war would go on all through the winter and well into 1945."[97]

Montgomery, however, realized on 23 August that logistics prevented a concerted advance by the AEF into Germany. He then presented Eisenhower with a revised version of his original plan. In contrast to Bradley and Patton's plan for a strong strike eastward to the Saar, Montgomery wanted an American army of four corps under his command to aid in the invasion of the Ruhr; "the quickest way to end this war is for the great mass of the Allied armies to advance northward, clear the coast as far as Antwerp...and advance into the Ruhr." The British Second Army and American First Army would march towards Antwerp and then the Ruhr, while the Canadian First Army cleared the Pas de Calais area. To ensure adequate supplies for American First Army, Montgomery also requested that Eisenhower halt Patton's army east of Paris. A static American Third Army would provide protection for Paris and the right flank of Montgomery's advance (see map, p.48). Eisenhower replied that public opinion in the United States would not allow him to stop Patton, then miles ahead of Montgomery's armies, nor would it allow him to reduce Twelfth Army Group to one army.[98]

However, Eisenhower, realizing the importance of the northern thrust, agreed to reinforce Montgomery. In a letter to Montgomery

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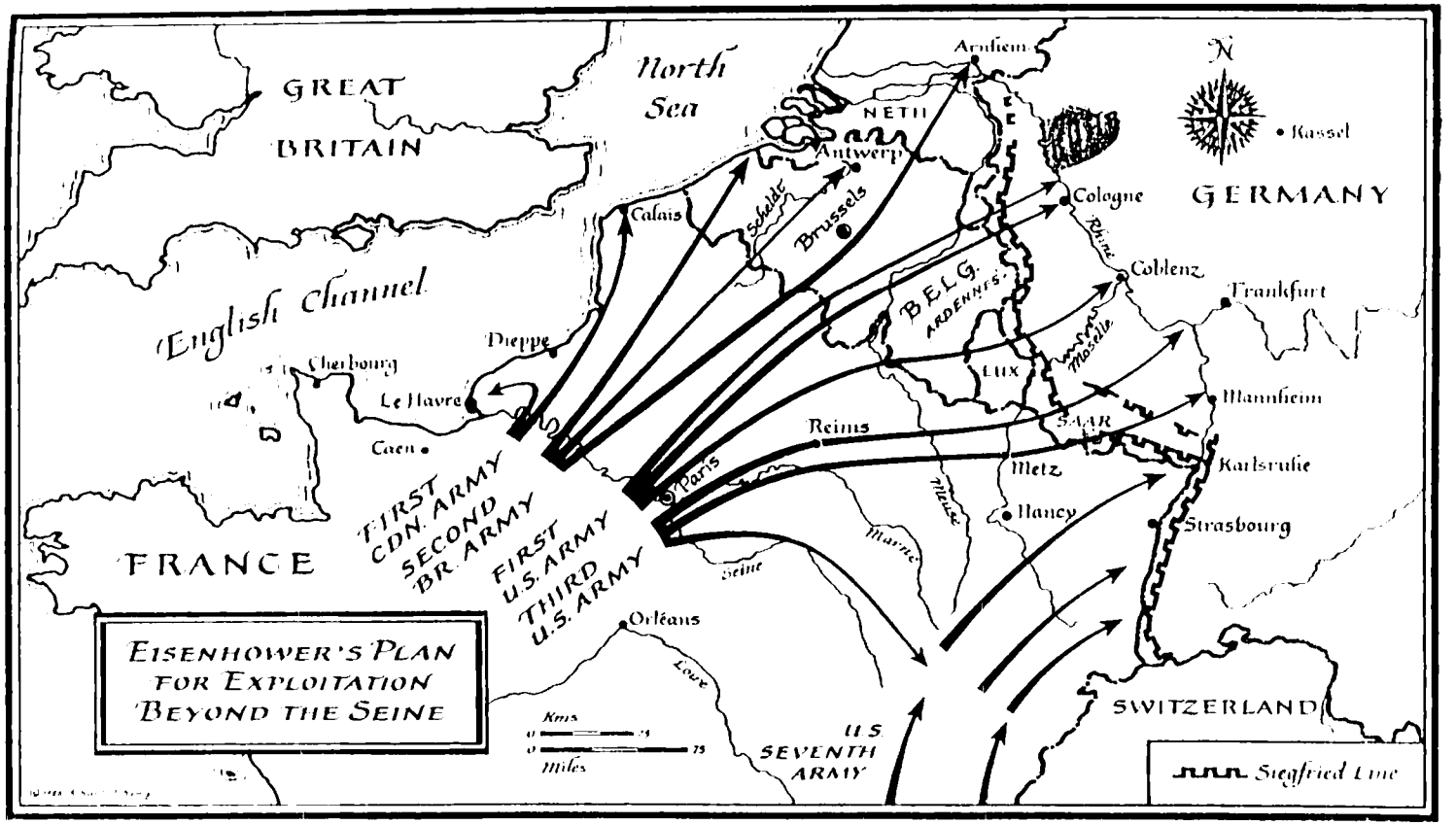
[97] David Eisenhower Eisenhower At War p 422 quote in Montgomery Memoirs p 241

[98] Montgomery Memoirs p 240 for quote Horne The Lonely Leader pp 263-264 Bradley A General's Life p 315


GREAT BRITAIN
North Sea
English Channel
FRANCE
GERMANY
SWITZERLAND
Arnhem
NETH
Antwerp
Brussels
Calais
Dieppe
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Caen
Paris
Reims
Orléans
Cologne
Coblenz
Frankfurt
Mannheim
Karlsruhe
Strasbourg
Metz
Nancy
LUX
BELG.
ARDENNES
SAAR
Kassel
Rhine
Moselle
Meuse
Marne
Seine
Loire
Schelde
FIRST CDN. ARMY
SECOND BR. ARMY
FIRST U.S. ARMY
THIRD U.S. ARMY
U.S SEVENTH ARMY
Kms
Miles
Siegfried Line
EISENHOWER'S PLAN FOR EXPLOITATION BEYOND THE SEINE

the next day, Eisenhower recapitulated his decision. Twenty-First Army Group, with the Canadian First Army positioned along the coast and the British Second Army to its right, would seize the Pas de Calais area and then secure a base at Antwerp; "its eventual mission will be to advance eastward on the Ruhr." Hodges' army, of three corps, would operate to the right of the British Second Army to ensure the attainment of Twenty-First Army Group's objectives. Montgomery would have the "authority to effect the necessary operational coordination between your advancing forces and Bradley's left wing. Mechanical details for effecting this will be left to you and Bradley." Eisenhower then stated that Patton's army would continue driving east toward the Saar, though American First Army would have top priority in supplies.[99]

Neither the British leaders nor the American generals fully embraced this decision. The same day he received Eisenhower's orders, an upset Montgomery wrote Brooke: "Ike proposes to split the force and to move American portion eastwards from Paris and into Germany via the Saar. I do not (repeat not) myself agree what he proposes to do."[100] After hearing the news, Brooke recorded in his diary that Eisenhower's strategy would "add another three to six months on to the war."[101] Even before the meeting on 23 August, Bradley according to Patton, "was quite worried, as he feels that Ike won't go against Monty...and wondered aloud 'what the Supreme Commander amounted to.'"[102] After

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99 Chandler (ed.). The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol. IV. pp 2090-91.

100 Montgomery to Brooke. August 24 1944 in Ellis. Victory in the West Vol. I. pp 463-64.

101 Diary. 28 August 1944 in Bryant. Triumph in the West. pp 262- 63.

102 Diary. August 23 1944 in Blumenson (ed.). The Patton Papers. p 526.

the decision Bradley and Patton felt slighted by Eisenhower, since their advance to the Saar would be without the American First Army. Though Bradley later expressed a more diplomatic view in his memoirs, agreeing with Eisenhower's decision, he always considered Montgomery too cautious; "but why three additional corps? That's two more than he will need."[103]

In accordance with Eisenhower's orders, the four armies continued their advances towards the German border. American and French forces secured Paris on 25 August; a week later Patton's army reached the World War One battle field of Verdun, some seventy miles from the Saar. That day, American Third Army ran out of gas. Since the fall of Paris, logisticians had supplied the two American armies through a makeshift truck system, called the Red Ball Express. Truck convoys, driving 25 miles per hour with their lights on along a highway devoid of other traffic, covered 700 miles a round-trip. Unfortunately, the convoys, themselves burning over 300,000 gallons of gas daily, could only bring the two armies a meager 7,000 tons a day, half of the needed amount. Thus Patton found his army, receiving the fewest supplies and the farthest advanced, stranded on 1 September.[104]

On that day, Montgomery, his armies speeding across France and into Belgium, learned that Churchill had promoted him to field marshal. By doing so, the Prime Minister avoided another command controversy, consoling the "British nation with whom Montgomery's name is a household word."[105] Neither Montgomery's replacement nor

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103 Bradley A Soldier's Story p 399

104 Omar Bradley and Clay Blair A General's Life (New York Simon and Schuster 1983) pp 320-21 Ruppenthal Logistical Support of the Armies Vol I p 503 Bradley A Soldier's Story p 402

105 Churchill to Eisenhower 31 August 1944 (authors document)

his promotion stopped his advancing armies. On 3 September, Dempsey's army captured Brussels, as joyous Belgians, finally liberated, danced in the streets. The next day, British Second Army captured intact an even greater prize, the port of Antwerp.[106]

"Enemy resistance along the whole front shows signs of collapse," Eisenhower noted in a new directive, dated 4 September, which outlined his thoughts on ending the war. The "best opportunity of defeating the enemy in the west [,Eisenhower asserted,] lies in striking at the Ruhr and the Saar." Not yet knowing of the fall of the great Belgian port, Eisenhower ordered the Montgomery to "secure Antwerp, breach the sector of the Siegfried Line covering the Ruhr and then seize the Ruhr." Hodges's army, along with the FAAA, would continue assisting Montgomery, but Eisenhower, desiring to restart Patton's drive towards the Saar again, equalized the supply distribution between the two American armies.[107]

For whatever reasons, Montgomery disregarded Eisenhower's order to "secure" Antwerp. The great port lay sixty-five miles inland, connected to the sea by the Scheldt Estuary. When Dempsey's soldiers entered the city, the German Fifteenth Army held both banks of the estuary. As long as they did so, Allied ships could not reach Antwerp. In a major mistake, Montgomery, instead of directing Dempsey to clear the Scheldt, ordered, on 3 September, the British Second Army to begin advancing to the Ruhr

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106 Lamb. Montgomery in Europe p.200. Twenty-First Army Group had its own logistical difficulties, namely the loss of 1400 trucks to defective pistons, but it operated next to the coast and had relatively shorter lines of supply; see Wilmot. The Struggle for Europe. p. 472 and Van Creveld. Supplying War. pp.321-22.

107 Eisenhower to Montgomery and Bradley. 4 September 1944 in Chandler (ed.). The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower. pp.2115-18. esp.2116. The Siegfried Line, a system of pillbox fortifications, defended Germany's western border.

three days later. When Eisenhower's directive reached the field marshal on 4 September, it fell on deaf ears, for the Briton considered it possible to end the war without the harbor of Antwerp.[108]

Montgomery's decision to rest his men allowed the Germans time to recover from their pell-mell retreat. The capture of Antwerp electrified the German High Command to action. Hitler ordered the *Wehrmacht* to defend the Siegfried Line, a series of pillboxes and fortifications running the entire length of Germany's western border. He also ordered the German Fifteenth Army to defend the Scheldt Estuary, something it had not been capable of doing on 4 September. To provide a symbol for his troops to rally behind, Hitler ordered Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt to assume command of Germany's western front. With these measures in place, three days after the fall of Antwerp German resistance increased dramatically, halting the spectacular Allied advance.[109]

Before the Germans had begun the miraculous recovery, the field marshal replied on 4 September to his superior's message, which had called for a two-pronged thrust, via the Saar and the Ruhr, into Germany. Montgomery disagreed vehemently, stating that "if we attempt a compromise solution and split our maintenance resources so that neither thrust is full-blooded we will prolong the war." Instead, Montgomery insisted, "one really powerful and

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108 Montgomery orders, 3 September 1944 in Lamb, Montgomery in Europe, pp.200-205, esp.203-204. Historians differ on who bore the blame for the delay in opening Antwerp. Keegan, The Second World War (p 437); Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants (p 350); David Eisenhower, Eisenhower: At War (pp 432-33); MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor (p 332) contend that Montgomery was to blame, though Lamb, Montgomery in Europe (p.201) and Horne, The Lonely Leader (p.277), argue that Eisenhower shares the blame for not overtly emphasizing Antwerp.

109 MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor, pp 333-336

full-blooded thrust towards Berlin is likely to get there and thus end the German war." But, he emphasized, Eisenhower had to choose at once. In the field marshal's opinion, the assault through the Ruhr offered "the best and quickest results." Allied possession of the Ruhr would cripple the enemy's war industries, ensuring victory in 1944.[110]

Eisenhower responded to Montgomery on 5 September, restating his decisions from the previous day. Eisenhower said, while agreeing with Montgomery's "conception of a powerful and full blooded thrust toward Berlin, I do not repeat not agree that it should be initiated at this moment to the exclusion of all other maneuver." Instead, the Allies "must immediately exploit our success by...seizing the Saar and the Ruhr...This will give us a stranglehold on two of Germany's main industrial areas and largely destroy his capacity to wage war." Eisenhower, planning for a definitive victory in 1945, then told Montgomery to "[open] the ports of Havre and Antwerp which are essential to sustain a powerful thrust deep into Germany. No re-allocation of our present sources would be adequate to sustain a thrust to Berlin." Though Eisenhower well knew that the Germans still blocked the use of Antwerp, he concluded his cable to Montgomery, not with an order emphasizing the importance of Antwerp, but with a request; "Please let me know at once your further maintenance requirements for the advance to and occupation of the Ruhr.[111]

On account of the incomplete communications at SHAEF,

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110 Montgomery to Eisenhower, 4 September 1944 in Lamb, Montgomery in Europe, pp.207-208. Montgomery's assault on Berlin would first have to breach the Siegfried Line, capture the Ruhr, and then traverse another 400 miles, with its flanks unprotected.

111 Eisenhower to Montgomery, 5 September 1944 in Chandler (ed.) The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, p 1935; David Eisenhower, Eisenhower: At War, p 448

Eisenhower's cable reached Montgomery in two parts. After receiving the second half on 7 September, the field marshal replied that his logistical situation prevented him from capturing the Ruhr. He then reiterated his single thrust strategy: "I submit that...a reallocation of our present resources of every description would be adequate to get one thrust to Berlin." But, Montgomery claimed in conclusion that "it is very difficult to explain things in a message like this. Would it be possible for you to come and see me?"[112]

On 10 September, after conceding to his subordinates demands, Eisenhower arrived at Montgomery's headquarters to discuss future plans. The meeting started poorly. Eisenhower, unable to leave his airplane because of an injured knee, brought with him Deputy Supreme Commander Tedder and Lieutenant General Humfrey Gale, head of SHAEF Administration. Montgomery, accompanied by de Guingand, demanded that Gale leave. With that the meeting began. Tedder wrote the same day to Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Charles Portal, discussing the meeting. He thought that "the advance to Berlin was not considered as a serious issue...the real point is the degree of priority." The field marshal "insisted that...the word implies absolute priority, to the exclusion of all other operations if necessary." Eisenhower disagreed, saying that the "fight must be with both hands at present, the moment for the left hook had not come."[113]

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112 Montgomery to Eisenhower, 7 September 1944 in Montgomery Memoirs, p.246. Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants (pp.281-82); Van Creveld, Supplying War (pp.225-230); Willmott, The Great Crusade, (p.362) feel that the logistical situation would have allowed an advance on the Ruhr, but not Berlin. Wilmot, The Struggle for Europe (pp 458-476, esp. p 476); Bryant, Triumph in the West (pp.281-285) consider that the capture of Berlin was possible

113 Tedder to Portal, 10 September 1944 in Tedder, With Prejudice, p.591.

Though Eisenhower rejected Montgomery's plan for a strong "left hook," he did want Twenty-First Army Group to reach the Rhine. Montgomery's forces could not clear the Scheldt until they were protected from German attacks; a line on the Rhine would provide this security.[114] This meshed well with Montgomery's daring plan to employ airborne forces to secure a bridgehead over the Rhine, which he presented to Eisenhower during the meeting. But the field marshal had greater aspirations for Operation Market-Garden, which, he believed, offered "the last chance to end the war in 1944." He thought that once British Second Army crossed the Rhine the Ruhr would be vulnerable. Seeking to gain support for the operation, Montgomery informed his superior that his plan offered the quickest way to open Antwerp. The plan would also isolate Holland from the Germans, Montgomery pointed out, and save Britain from the threat of Hitler's newest vengeance weapon, the V-2 rocket.[115] Eisenhower agreed that the Allies had to end the menace of Hitler's vengeance weapons that inflicted great terror on civilians and soldiers alike. As early as 17 August, Eisenhower wrote that elimination of these weapons "would have the most tremendous moral effect, for ourselves, and adverse for the enemy."[116]

Although the Supreme Commander concurred in Montgomery's views concerning the need for Market-Garden, he also consented to

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114 Dwight Eisenhower. Crusade in Europe. p.307.

115 Montgomery. Memoirs. pp.246-47. The V-2, first launched on 8 September 1944 near the Hague, was the first ballistic missile. Reaching five times the speed of sound, it could not be seen, heard or intercepted. The only way to end the threat lay in capturing the launch sites in northern Holland; see Churchill. Triumph and Tragedy Vol. VI. pp.49-56, esp. pp.51-53. Weigley. Eisenhower's Lieutenants. pp.257-259, esp. p.259.

116 Dwight Eisenhower. Crusade in Europe. p.260. Eisenhower to Marshall, 17 August 1944 in Chandler (ed.). The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower Vol. IV. pp.2071-2072, esp. p.2072.

the plan because of enormous pressure to utilize the elite airborne forces. Marshall had continuously asked Eisenhower to attempt a deep envelopment with airborne divisions. He wanted the airborne units dropped forty or fifty miles behind German lines, disrupting the defenders and enabling Allied ground forces to advance rapidly through the enemy's rear areas. Marshall had pressed Eisenhower to employ the Allied airborne forces in this manner during the cross-channel invasion. Eisenhower demurred, however, worried that the airborne troops might become isolated and destroyed if the advancing land units failed to reach them.[117] Eisenhower eventually caved into this pressure, approving Montgomery's Market-Garden, which was such an envelopment.[118] Even the airborne men themselves clamored to join the battle before the war ended. Not in combat since Overlord, the men had prepared for eighteen different drops, all of them scratched for one reason or another. Market-Garden would provide Eisenhower with an operation to send these elite units into battle (see map, p.57).[119]

The Allied need to reach the Rhine, the V-2 menace, and the pressure to use the airborne troops, all registered with Eisenhower during the meeting on 10 September. Further, the supreme commander may very well have remembered Churchill's words about the United States disregarding "British views" and leaving Britain to hold an "empty bag." He agreed to Market-Garden. Montgomery would have the airborne operation on which he had pinned his hopes: to gain glory for himself, to save his people

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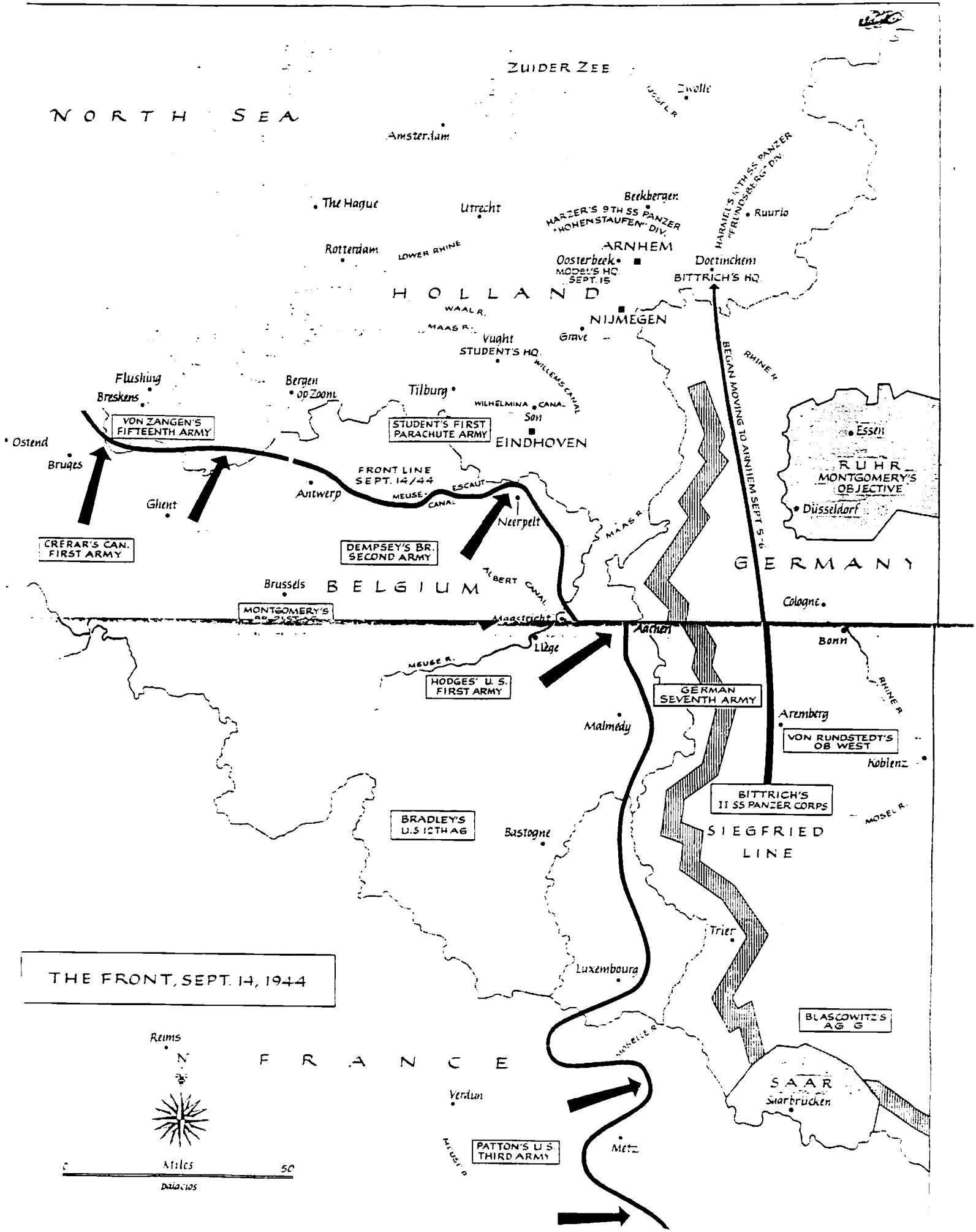
117 Ibid. 381

118 Pogue George C. Marshall Vol III pp 379-383

119 Diary 16 September 1944 in Lewis Brereton, The Brereton Diaries The War in the Air in the Pacific Middle East and Europe (New York William Morrow and Company, 1946), pp 342-343



THE FRONT, SEPT. 14, 1944

from further suffering, and to end the war in 1944, which would restore British primacy.

The Aftermath

Though the field marshal would later claim that "the battle of Arnhem was ninety percent successful," since the Allied forces failed to capture only one water-crossing, Market-Garden was a complete disaster.[120] If the airborne plan had seized a Rhine crossing, the Allies, especially Twenty-First Army Group, could invade the Ruhr. The Market-Garden disaster prevented Montgomery from ending the war in 1944, which would have saved his nation from further suffering and would have reestablished it as a world power. Instead, Britain, already stretched to its manpower limits, would have to rely upon the United States' military to defeat Germany; the failure of Market-Garden doomed Britain to a secondary role in the defeat of Germany and in the following peace accords. Though Montgomery would have two opportunities, one during the Belgian Battle of the Bulge and the other a campaign for a bridgehead over the Rhine in March 1945, to redeem himself and Britain, his performance was ineffectual on both occasions.[121]

On 22 September, Eisenhower convened a meeting to discuss future strategy with his commanders. Montgomery declined to attend, ostensibly because the battle for Arnhem still raged, but he sent de Guingand as his representative. Though the supreme

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120 Bernard Montgomery. El Alamein to the River Sangro Normandy to the Baltic (New York: St Martin's Press, 1974), p.324.

121 Historians are divided over whether Market-Garden could have lead to the capture of the Ruhr. Charles MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor (pp.338-340 esp. p.340), David Eisenhower, Eisenhower: At War (pp 456-59 esp. p 459), and Lamb, Montgomery in Europe (p.251) feel that the German recovery early in September and Allied logistical problems precluded any possibility of success; the Allies should have concentrated on opening Antwerp instead. Other historians, Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants (pp. 281,317-319 esp. pp.281,318), Willmott, The Great Crusade (p.362), Van Creveld, Supplying War (pp.225-30) believe that the logistical situation could have supported an attack on the Ruhr, though only Weigley feels that Market-Garden could have succeeded.

commander had catered to Montgomery's demands as much as he dared without risking military or political upheavals, that day he began deciding consistently for the broad-front strategy. Eisenhower realized from Market-Garden's failure that the Germans had recovered from their disarray of late August and early September, reinforcing his conviction that the war could not be won by a single stroke in 1944. The Allies now had to concentrate on perfecting their logistical situation -- clearing the Scheldt -- and pushing forward in various sectors before advancing into Germany on a broad front in the spring of 1945.[122]

During December 1944, the Germans launched a daring counterattack through the Ardennes forest of Belgium. Hitler, realizing that a defensive strategy could only delay an inevitable defeat, hoped to prevent such an eventuality by isolating Twenty-First Army Group and capturing Antwerp. The Germans launched their massive assault on 16 December (see map, p.61).[123] This unexpected attack split Bradley's Twelfth Army Group in half, isolating two of his armies from his headquarters and destroying the lines of communication between them. German divisions poured into this newly formed gap, which divided Anglo-American forces to the north and south of the German bulge. The Germans' Ardennes offensive was to provide Montgomery with an opportunity to redeem himself and his country. Eisenhower, recognizing the organizational problems posed for the Allies by the German attack, ordered Montgomery to assume temporary command over the American first and ninth armies north of the German salient, which were

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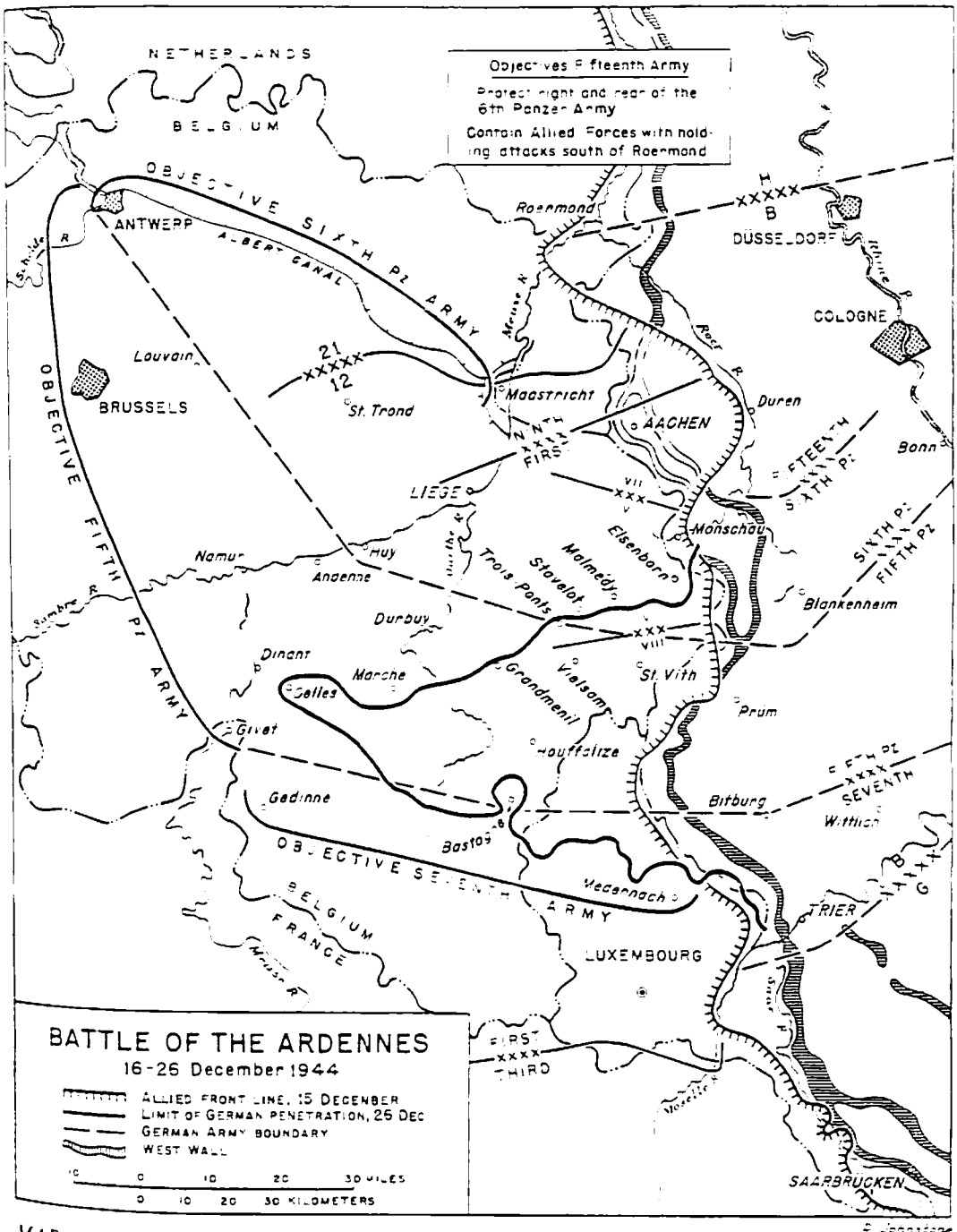
122 Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp.348-50; Pogue, The Supreme Command, p.294; Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, p.310

123 Willmott, The Great Crusade, pp.433-34; Bryant, Triumph in the West, p.355


NETHERLANDS
BELGIUM
Objectives Fifteenth Army
Protect right and rear of the 6th Panzer Army
Contain Allied Forces with holding attacks south of Roermond
OBJECTIVE SIXTH PZ ARMY
ANTWERP
ALBERT CANAL
Roermond
DÜSSELDORF
COLOGNE
Louvain
BRUSSELS
St. Trond
Maastricht
AACHEN
Duren
Bonn
LIEGE
Monschau
Eisenborn
Malmedy
Stavelot
Trois Ponts
Huy
Namur
Andenne
Durbuy
Dinant
Marche
Celles
Givet
Grandmenil
Vielsalm
St. Vith
Prum
Houffalize
Gedinne
Bastogne
Bitburg
Wittlich
TRIER
OBJECTIVE SEVENTH ARMY
Wedernach
BELGIUM
FRANCE
LUXEMBOURG
SAARBRUCKEN
OBJECTIVE FIFTH PZ ARMY
BATTLE OF THE ARDENNES
16-26 December 1944
ALLIED FRONT LINE, 15 DECEMBER
LIMIT OF GERMAN PENETRATION, 26 DEC
GERMAN ARMY BOUNDARY
WEST WALL
30 MILES
30 KILOMETERS

MAP 5

adjacent to his own army group, to ensure adequate control of the northern front during the counterattack. This shift temporarily left Bradley commanding only Patton's Third Army.[124]

Bradley protested the necessity of the command change, but he quickly realized that it represented the logical solution and assented to the shift.[125] On 20 December, Montgomery, receiving word of his new command, immediately began to appraise the situation, as one of his staff members noted, "like Christ come to clean the temple."[126] The field marshal finally felt vindicated -- his strategy would never have allowed this reversal to occur -- and now the American generals had turned to him to save the situation. The next day, Brooke wrote Montgomery that "events and enemy action have forced on Eisenhower the setting up of a more satisfactory system of command. I feel it is most important that you should not even in the slightest degree appear to rub this fact in."[127]

Montgomery ignored his superior's advice. When the field marshal and Bradley met to discuss the battle on 25 December, Montgomery talked only of past mistakes. Summarizing the meeting to Brooke later that day, Montgomery reported having told Bradley that "the Germans had given us a real 'bloody nose;' it was useless to pretend that we were going to turn this quickly into a great victory." The field marshal continued, rather undiplomatically, that the whole situation was entirely "our fault" (i.e., the Americans'); "we had tried to develop two

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124 Weigley Eisenhower's Lieutenants p 503

125 Bradley A Soldier's Story pp 476-77

126 Quoted in Wilmot The Struggle for Europe p 592

127 Brooke to Montgomery, 21 December 1944 in Bryant, Triumph in the West, p.367

thrusts at the same time, and neither had been strong enough to gain decisive results...now we were in a proper muddle."[128] This diatribe infuriated Bradley, though he remained silent during the meeting, except to urge the sulking Montgomery to attack.[129]

The Germans had presented the Allies, as Brooke noted in his diary on 18 December, with a "Heaven-sent opportunity" to destroy them and end the war quickly.[130] Eisenhower, too, realized that the Allies could trap and destroy the Germans in their own salient, repeating the victory at Falaise; "by rushing out from his fixed defenses the enemy has given us the chance to turn his greatest gamble into his worst defeat."[131] In a cable to Montgomery on 29 December, Eisenhower implored the field marshal "to plan to start driving on January first if the enemy does not make a prior attack...we must break him up while he is out in the open."[132]

Montgomery, however, appeared less interested in defeating the Germans, then in rubbing in the Americans' alleged mistakes -- exactly what Brooke warned him not to do. On 29 December, Montgomery sent Eisenhower the most audacious letter of his career. In no uncertain terms, Montgomery blamed Eisenhower for the disaster:

> "...6. I suggest that your directive should finish with this sentence...'From now onwards full operational direction, control, and co-ordination of these operations is vested in the C-in-C. 21 Army Group, subject to such instructions as may be

128 Montgomery to Brooke, 25 December 1944, in ibid, p.367-368.

129 Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p 481.

130 Bryant, Triumph in the West, p 357

131 Eisenhower to Troops of the AEF, 22 December 1944 in Chandler (ed.), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, p.2195.

132 Eisenhower to Montgomery, 29 December 1944 in ibid, pp.2383-84. Eisenhower statement p.2384.

> issued by the Supreme Commander from time to time.'
> 7. I put this matter to you again only because I am so anxious not to have another failure..."[133]

After receiving the letter, Eisenhower's closest advisers urged him to force a showdown with Montgomery. In such a situation, the British field marshal, owing to the United States strength, would be fired. Only the timely intervention of de Guingand, and a conciliatory letter, saved Montgomery.[134]

Despite the incident, the field marshal managed to compound the situation. To avoid another press debacle, like the one in mid-August, Montgomery delivered a press conference on 7 January to inform the British public of the temporary nature of his command over American First Army. The field marshal made it seem as if he had saved the Americans from a disaster; "As soon as I saw what was happening [in the Ardennes] I took certain steps to make sure that *if* the Germans got to the Meuse they would certainly not get over that river...I was thinking ahead." The field marshal continued, asserting that he had "employed the whole available power of the British Group of Armies." To the American leaders, this sounded as if the British soldiers had done large portions of the fighting -- something completely untrue. Montgomery finished by saying that "the battle has been most interesting; I think one of the most interesting and tricky

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133 Printed in Montgomery Memoirs pp 284-85

134 Ellis Victory in the West Vol II pp 199-203 Weigley Eisenhower's Lieutenants pp 542-544 de Guingand Generals at War pp 106-112

battles I have ever handled."[135]

Montgomery's conference succeeded in completely destroying his relationships with all the American generals for the remainder of the war. It also gave away that Montgomery never really attempted decisively to defeat the Germans during the Belgian Bulge, for he considered the battle to be over on 7 January. Montgomery, believing that the American soldiers had not recovered from the shock of the German attack, preferred to reduce the Bulge slowly. Once the German threat had subsided, he could focus on crossing the Rhine.[136]

After the Americans beat back the German counterattack, the Allies spent the remaining winter months planning to capture a bridge over the Rhine River. On 20 January, Eisenhower informed the CCS that "a crossing of the Rhine...will be a tactical and engineering process of the greatest magnitude...I foresee the use of airborne forces and strategic air support on a large scale."[137] Eisenhower gave Montgomery's Twenty-First Army Group, still astride the northern and more favorable route to the Ruhr, priority in staging a Rhine crossing. Montgomery was to have one

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[135] Montgomery's press conference, 7 January 1945 in Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp.564-566, esp. p.564. The Ardennes counter-offensive was fought almost solely between the Americans and the Germans. Though the German attack began strong, American soldiers managed to defend key road junctions furiously, slowing down the advance. On 23 December, the weather cleared and Allied planes began to strafe German panzer divisions; on 25 December, the Americans halted the Germans and began counterattacking; on 16 January 1945, the German bulge had been pushed back to its original line on 17 December 1944. For more on the Battle of the Belgian Bulge see Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp.465-556; Willmott, The Great Crusade, pp 430-436; Keegan, The Second World War, pp 439-447; Dwight Eisenhower, Eisenhower At War, pp.554-613; MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor, pp.357-405.

[136] Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp 544-47. Montgomery's poor battle conduct has been attributed to cautiousness by MacDonald, The Mighty Endeavor (pp.393-94), and Lamb, Montgomery in Europe (p.326). Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants (pp.544-47) and Wilmot, The Struggle for Europe (p.604) feel that Montgomery, obsessed with crossing the Rhine, cared little about decisively defeating the Germans.

[137] Eisenhower to the CCS, 20 January 1945 in Chandler (ed.), The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, pp.2450-54, esp. p.2454.

last chance to redeem himself from the military disaster of Market-Garden and his lackluster performance during the Belgian Bulge.

The field marshal had begun to prepare for a set-piece crossing of the Rhine as early as October of the previous year. The set-piece battle, a precisely planned military operation against a fortified position, was Montgomery's trademark. During the North African campaign, he had used this type of battle to defeat field marshal Rommel at the battle of El Alamein; now he could plan another set-piece that would lead to the capture of the Ruhr -- seven months later than he had hoped. It would involve 37,000 British and 22,000 American engineers, 250,000 tons of supplies, as well as units of Twenty-First Army Group and the American Ninth Army. On 9 March, Montgomery, having finally closed to the Rhine, ordered the Rhine crossing to begin on 24 March; even Churchill wished to attend the last great spectacle of Britain's military might. scheduled to begin on 24 March.[138]

Unfortunately for Montgomery, the Americans had captured an intact Rhine bridge at Remagen over three weeks earlier. Eisenhower, maintaining his broad front policy, ordered his other armies to prepare for a crossing if Montgomery's attempt failed. On 7 March, the hard-driving men of Hodges' American First Army reached the town of Remagen. They saw that the Germans had failed to destroy the Ludendorff Bridge and immediately seized the span. The Americans had seized the first crossing over the Rhine. A day before Montgomery's colossal operation, Patton ordered a division, without any lavish preparations, to cross the Rhine. They

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138 Lamb Montgomery in Europe p 354

succeeded. Montgomery's grand plan had become moot, upstaged by two spontaneous American crossings.[139]

Three times the field marshal bungled opportunities to regain British prestige and status within the Grand Alliance. But only his first attempt, Market-Garden, represented a realistic chance to accomplish these tasks. The Market-Garden disaster ensured that his nation, stretched to the utmost, succumbed to the overwhelming military and industrial power of the United States.

Churchill, Brooke, and Montgomery always pictured Britain at the height of its power. These leaders could never fully accept that the world had changed; that Britain no longer possessed the might and influence she once wielded. Their loss of the Anvil debate signaled to Churchill and Brooke that the United States had surpassed Britain. In a letter to the Mediterranean Supreme Commander on 2 August 1944, Brooke expressed it best: Americans, due to their preponderance in men, industry, money, and weapons now "look upon themselves no longer as apprentices in war but as full blown professionals. As a result they are determined to have an ever increasing share in the running of the war in all its aspects."[140]

Unlike Churchill and Brooke, who pored daily over economic and political reports, as well as military, Montgomery never understood this shift in power; he was simply a military man. Unconcerned with these potent forces and with a reclusive personality, he could never function satisfactorily within the

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[139] Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, pp.626-630, 641-644.

[140] Brooke to General Maitland Wilson, 2 August 1944 in Bryant, Triumph in the West, pp.260-61.

coalition. But, as a military man in total war, Montgomery wielded enormous power. The field marshal used this influence to obtain Market-Garden -- an attempt to rescue the power and prestige of his nation as they declined under the growing economic and military weight of the United States, Great Britain's closest Ally. It failed. Only after the war, during the Suez Crisis of 1956, did Great Britain formally recognize the United States' hegemony. The disaster of Market-Garden, however, signaled its inevitability.

Glossary

Allied Expeditionary Force (AEF) - The combined British, American, Canadian, and French armies that invaded France and finally Germany.

Anvil - The operation to invade the French Riviera; later renamed Dragoon.

Arnhem - The town that held the bridge over the Rhine, which the British First Airborne Division attempted to capture. Most Britons refer to the fighting during Market-Garden as the battle of Arnhem.

British Chiefs of Staff (BCS) - Comprising the heads of the three British armed services (army, navy, and airforce), they met with Churchill to plan Britain's long term policies.

Lieutenant General Omar Bradley - The commander of the American First Army, later the commander of Twelfth Army Group.

Field Marshal Alan Brooke - Chief of the British Army and leader of the BCS.

Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) - Brooke's title as head of the British Army.

Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) - The merging of the JCS and the BCS into one body that made joint decisions on the conduct of the war.

General Henry Crerar - The commander of the Canadian First Army.

General Miles Dempsey - The commander of the British Second Army.

First Allied Airborne Army (FAAA) - Used during Market-Garden to capture the various water-crossings on the road to Arnhem.

Major General Francis de Guingand - Montgomery's chief of staff.

General Courtney Hodges - The commander of the American First Army after the formation of Twelfth Army Group.

Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) - The combination of the heads of the three American armed forces, which decided the United States' policy.

General of the Army George Marshall - Chief of Staff for the American Army, and leader of the JCS.

General George Patton - The commander of the American Third Army after the formation of Twelfth Army Group.

Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith - Eisenhower's chief of staff.

Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) - Eisenhower's command post that coordinated land, air, and naval operations.

Wehrmacht - The German army.

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