

The Normandy Campaign

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Outline

Thesis: The extensive allied planning coupled with aggressive execution was critical to the success of the Normandy invasion and the allies' defeat of the Germans in France.

I. Tactical Planning Process for the Normandy Campaign

Airborne Landings

Amphibious Assault

Multinational Forces

II Theatre Planning Process for the Normandy Campaign

The invasion force

Deceptive force

III. Execution Process for the Normandy Campaign

Amphibious

Airborne

Multinational Force

IV. Dissention – It was not critical

Background

German Actions

The extensive Allied planning coupled with aggressive execution was critical to the success of the Normandy campaign and the Allies defeat of German forces in France. The contributions of the ground forces were vital to the ultimate success of the operation. The United States assault forces were led by Lt. General Omar Bradley commander of the First US Army. He was responsible for two assault areas. The VII Corps commanded by Major General J. Lawton Collins would land one division just north of Utah Beach (Omaha Beached 5) while the V corps commanded by Major General Leonard T. Gerow would attack at Omaha Beach. Once the initial beachheads were secured the first US Army would maneuver to cutoff the Cotentin peninsula and capture the Port city Cherbourg in order to establish a major supply channel for future operations (O.B.5).

The 1st Infantry Division was a veteran unit that had seen action in campaigns of North Africa and Sicily. Maj. Gen Clarence R. Huebner commanded the Division (O.B. 10). The pride of the US Army the Big Red One was selected for the invasion due to their success in amphibious operations (Disaster at D-Day 4). The objective of the 1st Infantry Division was to land the beach on the Calucdos coast code named Omaha and attain a lodgment through which follow on forces could advance (O.B. A flawed victory 257).

The elite 82nd Airborne Division commanded by Major General Matthews Ridgeway played a critical role in the invasion. The objective of the 82nd Airborne Division was to become a human shield and stop the German counter attacks while the 4th ID came ashore and secured its lodgment. They were also to seize the communications hub at Ste-Mere-Eglise through which ran the Atlantic Walls major landline cable which would degrade the Germans ability to communicate during the invasion. The Division would also seize the bridge over Merderet River to close them from counter attacks from the Germans.

The 101st Airborne Division commanded by Major General Taylor was to drop between the 82nd and the coast to pry open beach exits from the rear as well as block the German counter attacks from the south by securing Carentan to the west of Vire River (Disaster at D-Day 22). Every paratrooper was a volunteer and had gone through a rigorous training course, as tough as any in the world. The experience had bonded them together. The men were superbly conditioned, highly motivated, experts in small arms.

The US forces were supported by a very capable British force led by General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery. General Montgomery had a vast expanse of military experience in training, leading, and commanding troops at all levels. From the battlefields in France in World War I he was wounded and left for dead after leading his company on a charge at the Somme. For his bravery he was awarded the second highest British award the Distinguished Service Order. His success continued in World War II in the North Africa, Sicily, and Southern Italy campaigns and it was for these reasons he was transferred to command the 21st Army and lead the ground forces during the invasion. His troops would assault in three main areas with there overall objective to seize and control the cities of Bayeux, Caen, and Cherbourg.

The objective of the British 3rd Division was to assault Sword Beach and pass through Ouistreham to capture the Caen and Carpiquet airfields. The 7th Armored Division who were better known as the Desert Rats were transferred from the Mediterranean Theater where they experienced great successes in Africa and Sicily. Their objective was to follow the units to Gold Beach and then link up with Americans coming out of Omaha Beach. The Red Devils of the British 1st Airborne Division also had earned a reputation in North Africa and Sicily. Their mission was to seize two bridges crossing the Orne River Canal and the Orne River south of Caen. They would thwart any German counterattack launched into the flank of the 2nd Army. In

addition they were to capture the gun battery at Merville and destroy four bridges over the Dives River.

The Canadian 3rd Divisions objective was to push across Juno Beach and continue on until it advanced to the Caen-Bayeux Highway. Strategic deception is recognized as an essential component of any major military operation. The D-Day invasion was no exception. The Allied Forces had to convince the Germans that the attack was coming from a different direction. The deception conducted by allied forces ranged across a broad spectrum of activities. The Allied forces deployed dummy landing craft all along the Atlantic wall. Before the invasion there were more than 255 craft displayed across the coast which when viewed from aerial reconnaissance resembled the real thing. This led the Germans to believe that there was a larger force than anticipated. During the initial phase of the assault the allies dropped hundreds of paratroop decoys made of straw. While the real paratroopers dropped onto their objective with little resistance. By the time the Germans realized what was going on it was too late to launch a counter attack.

The training that the troops conducted was all geared toward getting ashore. This was the objective of the D-Day assault. The Airborne troops that were formed in 1941 and 1942 trained for the purpose of landing behind the Atlantic wall. Their training consisted of jump, assembly and attack maneuvers which were conducted throughout the South. Initially the ground forces training focused on containing a German offensive but the situation changed to that of training an assault force. The American ground forces would make the first landings. By the time the Allied forces would make it to Europe the Germans would have built fortified bunkers to withstand the bombardment of Allied artillery and heavy weapons. These pillboxes would have

to be stormed and seized. The Americans spent months practicing to assault these positions from the squad to battalion level.

The Battle of Normandy was fought between the German forces occupying Western Europe and the invading allies. Sixty years later, the Normandy invasion, codenamed Operation Overlord, remains the largest sea borne invasion in history, involving almost three million troops crossing the English Channel from England to Normandy in occupied France on June 6, 1944, better known as D-Day. Although the allied nations suffered mass and horrific casualties on D-Day, the execution was critical to the success of the Normandy invasion and the allies' defeat of the Germans in France.

The execution was to occur as follows; on the night before the invasion, the U.S. 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions would land by parachute and glider near the town of Ste. Mere-Eglise, securing the roads that led from the shoreline and obstructing enemy efforts to reinforce beach defenses. The next morning Bradley's First Army would arrive.

The VII Corps would put the U.S. 4th Division ashore on UTAH Beach near les Dunes de Varreville. To the east, the V Corps composed of the U.S. 1st and portions of the 29th Infantry Divisions would land on OMAHA Beach near the town of Vierville-sur-Mer. With a foothold secure in Normandy, V Corps would expand the beachhead to the south while VII Corps cut across the Contentin Peninsula and then wheeled north to capture Cherbourg. With the seaport in hand, VII Corps was to turn south and move toward the town of St. Lo. Once Bradley held the town and the St. Lo-Periers Road, he would have his army on dry ground suitable for offensive operations by mechanized forces. Patton's Third Army would then take to the field. Advancing into Brittany, it would seize Brest and other ports and cover the south flank when the First Army began an attack to the northeast toward Paris.

To the east, the Second British Army would operate in the region between Bayeux and Caen, an area that possessed suitable sites for airfields and that offered a relatively unimpeded route to Paris. As in the American sector, an airborne division, the British 6th, would secure the northeastern flank of the operation, dropping during the hours before dawn near Caen and the mouth of the Orne River. At H-hour, the British 50th Division under the British 30 Corps would come ashore on GOLD Beach, near Bayeux and the American zone, while 1 Corps conducted a two-pronged attack farther to the east. There, the 3d Canadian Division would cross JUNO Beach near the town of Courseulles and the British 3d Division would come ashore at SWORD, near Lion-sur-Mer.

The invasion itself gave prominence to land forces but provided major roles for air and sea components. Allied air forces carried three airborne divisions into battle, protected the force as it crossed the English Channel, and attacked targets throughout the invasion area before and after the landing in support of the assault forces. More than 5,000 ships--from battleships to landing craft--carried, escorted and landed the assault force along the Normandy coast. Once the force was landed, naval gunfire provided critical support for the soldiers as they fought their way across the beaches. In the invasion's early hours, more than 1,000 transports dropped paratroopers to secure the flanks and beach exits of the assault area. Amphibious craft landed some 130,000 troops on five beaches along 50 miles of Normandy coast between the Cotentin Peninsula and the Orne River while the air forces controlled the skies overhead. In the eastern zone, the British and Canadians landed on GOLD, JUNO and SWORD Beaches. The Americans landed on two beaches in the west--UTAH and OMAHA. As the Allies came ashore, they took the first steps on the final road to victory in Europe.

Pointe-du-Hoc was located to the west of Omaha Beach. The beach at Pointe-du-Hoc was only ten meters in width. The 2nd Ranger Battalion was tasked the mission of Pointe-du-Hoc under the leadership of LTC James Earl Rudder. The rangers were to Destroy six 155 artillery pieces on the top of the point and their secondary mission was to move inland and cut the coastal highway that connected Grand Camp and Vierville. The US 116th Infantry from Omaha Beach was scheduled to relieve the 2nd Ranger Battalion at noon on the 6th June. Once linking up with 116th Infantry force, they were then to move on Grand Camp and Marsy to the west in order to attempt to link up with the forces that were to land at Utah Beach (Ambrose 45). H-hour was scheduled for 0630 on 6 June 1944. Due to confusion and stormy tides, they approached the beach near Pointe de la Percee, three miles east of their objective. LTC Rudder soon realized his mistake and headed west toward the point. This mistake was costly because the rangers were behind their scheduled time. The rangers were on the eastern side of the point and the plan called for landing on both sides of the point. After several attempts, the rangers struggled to the top of the cliff and incurred 15 casualties. The rangers found enemy guns and destroyed them. The rangers were the first unit of the D-day invasion to accomplish their primary mission.

The 4th ID was assigned to conduct the initial D-Day landings on Utah Beach, at the western most end of the invasion area on the Cotentin Peninsula. The 8th Infantry Regiment of the division was to conduct the initial assault, reinforced with an attached battalion of the 22nd Infantry Regiment. Its mission was to occupy the high ground along the road running between Sainte-Marie-du-Mont and Les Forges, then push westward across the Merderet River. The remaining units of the 22nd Regiment and the 12th Infantry Regiment were to be the follow-up forces and were to assist in the seizure of the causeways exiting Utah Beach and occupation of the surrounding high ground. On D-day the 4th Division also had attached one other regiment,

the 359th Infantry, of the 90th Infantry Division, the first follow-on division in its sector. The 4th Division had surprisingly little difficulty in the initial assault, taking only light casualties and quickly gaining a lodgment. The assault forces were erroneously landed some 2,000 yards south of the intended beach, but this mistake proved valuable because much stronger German defenses were in position at the designated landing site. After gaining control of the beaches, the 4th Division's lead regiment crossed the flooded areas on existing causeways and moved west to establish contact with the airborne units. Follow-on forces attacked northwest to enlarge the beachhead. By dusk most of the division had gotten ashore and pushed some 4 to 7 miles inland. The next day, the 4th Division broke through to Sainte-Marie-lise, and relieved elements of the 82nd Airborne Division. The 4th Infantry Division had been the first unit to land and cross the Normandy beaches. It had also made the largest gains of the attacking forces on D-Day, while suffering only light casualties. The seizure of the westward invasion area was crucial in the success of Operation Overlord and enabled the American forces to subsequently take the entire Cotentin Peninsula by the end of June. The 4^{ID} only suffered 197 casualties out of 23,000.

29th ID – Best known for assaulting Omaha Beach with the 1st Infantry Division on D-Day, taking massive casualties. Teamed with the 1st Division, a regiment of the 29th (116th Infantry) was in the first assault wave to hit the beaches at Normandy on D-day, 6 June 1944. The 29th Infantry Division was the vanguard of the Allied attack on the hostile shores of Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944. The 29th Division had been sorely disappointed every time the D-Day invasion was postponed and felt almost a sense of relief when they finally loaded the landing craft, even though the conditions were adverse. The attack to begin the liberation of France will long be remembered as the beginning of the Allies' "Great Crusade" to rekindle the lamp of freedom and liberty on the continent of Europe. Landing on Omaha Beach on the same

day in the face of intense enemy fire, the Division soon secured the bluff tops and occupied Isigny, 9 June. After taking St. Lo, 18 July 1944, the Division joined in the battle for Vire, capturing that strongly held city, 7 August. Turning west, the 29th took part in the assault on Brest, 25 August-18 September 1944. After a short rest, the Division moved to defensive positions along the Teveren-Geilenkirchen line in Germany and maintained those positions through October. (In mid-October the 116th Infantry took part in the fighting at the Aachen Gap.) On 16 November the Division began its drive to the Roer, blasting its way through Siersdorf, Setterich, Durboslar, and Bettendorf, and reaching the Roer by the end of the month. Heavy fighting reduced Julich Sportplatz and the Hasenfeld Gut, 8 December. From 8 December 1944 to 23 February 1945, the Division held defensive positions along the Roer and prepared for the offensive. The attack jumped off across the Roer, 23 February, and carried the Division through Julich, Broich, Immerath, and Titz, to Munchen-Gladbach, 1 March 1945. The Division was out of combat in March. In early April the 116th Infantry helped mop up in the Ruhr area. On 19 April 1945 the Division pushed to the Elbe and held defensive positions until 4 May. Meanwhile, the 175th Infantry cleared the Klotze Forest. The 29th suffered 5,570 (KIA-787) on D-Day, however, its success beyond D-Day was vital in the overall success of the Normandy Campaign.

The First Division assaulted Omaha Beach on D-day, 6 June 1944, some units suffering 30 percent casualties in the first hour, and secured Formigny and Caumont in the beachhead. The Division followed up the St. Lo break-through with an attack on Marigny, 27 July 1944, and then drove across France in a continuous offensive, reaching the German border at Aachen in September. The Division laid siege to Aachen, taking the city after a direct assault, 21 October 1944. The First then attacked east of Aachen through Hurtgen Forest, driving to the Roer, and

moved to a rest area 7 December for its first real rest in 6 months' combat, when the von Rundstedt offensive suddenly broke loose, 16 December. The Division raced to the Ardennes, and fighting continuously from 17 December 1944 to 28 January 1945, helped blunt and turn back the German offensive. Thereupon, the Division attacked and again breached the Siegfried Line, fought across the Roer, 23 February 1945, and drove on to the Rhine, crossing at the Remagen bridgehead, 15-16 March 1945. The Division broke out of the bridgehead, took part in the encirclement of the Ruhr Pocket, captured Paderborn, pushed through the Harz Mountains, and was in Czechoslovakia, at Kinsperk, Sangerberg, and Mnichov, when the war in Europe ended.

The US 82nd Airborne Division's mission was to protect the far right flank of the invasion in the Cotentin peninsula. It hoped to accomplish this by destroying bridges over the Douve River and by securing the Merderet River by occupying both sides. It also had the mission to capture Ste. Mere-Eglise from the German garrison stationed there. The capture of Ste. Mere-Eglise was important because it straddled the main road between Carentan and Cherbourg. The main objective for the 82nd on D-Day was to secure the bridges over the rivers behind Utah Beach. The division was to land by the Merderet River and seize, clear, and hold its area of operation. After destroying all crossings over the Douve River, the 82nd was to be prepared to move west on order. The 82nd Airborne division had designated over 6,000 paratroopers for the parachute assault and almost 4,000 glidermen for the glider assault. Together, with the 101st Airborne Division, the 82nd was scheduled to begin landings in the early morning hours of June 6th. Gen. Eisenhower's air operations officer had predicted casualties to be greater than 70%. The 101st and 82nd took a route by the German held Islands of Jersey and Guernsey. The C-47's turned when the submarine, which was given the name

Hoboken, sent a radar beacon out to the planes. Cloud cover and heavy anti-aircraft fire made the air transports deviate from course, which resulted in wide-spread scattering of the paratroops. Many of the aircraft were flying too fast and some too low, often giving the green-light jump signal over the wrong drop zones. Of the 6,396 paratroopers of the 82nd who jumped, 272 or 4.24 percent were killed or injured as a result of the drop. The 505th generally landed in the vicinity of its drop zone, but the 507th and 508th were both widely scattered. Many troopers landed in the center of the village of Sainte-Mère-Église, as a fire raged out of control. German soldiers, already alerted by the fire, shot many of the paratroopers before they hit the ground. In spite of this, the 82nd adapted to the situation and achieved all its primary objectives. Sainte-Mère-Église was secured by dawn of 6 June, the first French village to be liberated.

The US 101st Airborne Division's mission was to secure four exits across the marshland near the coast for the invading US 4th Infantry Division at Utah beach. These causeways needed to be secured because on each side of the exits, it was flooded several feet deep in places. The 101st also were tasked to destroy two bridges over the Douve and to capture the La Barquette lock just north of Carentan. The lock controlled the water height of the flooded areas and it was essential that it be captured. At 10:15 pm, June 5, 1944, 6,600 soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division began taking off aboard 1,432 C-47 transport aircraft from England. Shortly after midnight, the C-47s were over UTAH and the 101st Paratroops began hitting the silk. Problems began immediately. Because of heavy enemy fire, many of the transports had taken evasive action and could not find the proper drop zones. In addition, dense fog blanketed the area. The Pathfinder teams which had dropped an hour before had done their best but could not mark all of the drop zones in time. By the time the paratroops were on the ground, 1,500 had been killed or captured. About 60% of their equipment had been either dropped into swamps or dropped into

enemy hands. Despite these problems, the remaining soldiers began to rally around their leaders. MG Taylor managed to scratch together a force mainly comprised of officers and set about capturing one of the causeways leading to UTAH. Throughout the area, small groups of soldiers began forming ad-hoc units to carry out their objectives. LTC. Robert Cole, commander of the 3rd Battalion 502nd PIR managed to scrape together a force of roughly 75 men. Most were from his unit but several were from the 506th PIR and even the 82nd Airborne. Once assembled, the force marched for the northern exits from UTAH. Along the way, they encountered a German convoy and attacked it. 10 Germans were captured and many more killed. Upon reaching St. Martin de Varreville, Cole sent a reconnaissance party forward to check the coastal battery. Discovering that the position had been destroyed and deserted, Cole split his force to seize the 2 exits from UTAH. Once his troops were in place, they dug in to wait for the 4th Infantry Division. South of 3rd Battalion, LTC Patrick Cassidy was rallying his men from 1st Battalion, 502nd PIR. Like, Cole, Cassidy put together a combined force of some of his men and others separated from their units. A patrol was sent forward to check the other northern exits from UTAH. These had also been heavily damaged and deserted and Cassidy reinforced it. Still further south, the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 506th PIR were fighting to secure the southern exits from UTAH. Despite missing their drop zones, these units had not been as widely dispersed as the 502nd. The men of the 506th had to fight through several small villages on their way to the exits. As they approached their objectives, the exits were under attack already from the 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division. The paratroops joined the fight and the exits were secured. Germans began surrendering en-masse at the southern end of UTAH.

Gold Beach was the code name for the center of the landings on the Normandy coast. The British 50th (Northumbrian) Infantry Division of the 2nd Army under Lieutenant General

Miles Dempsey was to land at H-Hour+1 (0730), seize Arromanches and drive inland to capture the road junction at Bayeux. Its additional objectives were to make contact with the US forces to the west at Omaha Beach and the Canadians to their east at Juno Beach. In addition to the 50th, the 47th Royal Marine Commandos were to land on sector Item and to attack south of Arromanches and Longues and take Port-en-Bessin from the rear. the early hours of June 6th 1944 a small detachment of the The British 6th Airborne, D company of the Ox and Bucks regiment Under the command of Maj John Howard carried out one of the most daring and vital raids of WWII. Their mission was to capture and hold the Caen Canal and the River Orne Bridges until relieved. Just a hand full of men stood before an unsuspecting German force and Panzer unit. If the Germans would have got past those men on Pegasus Bridge, they would have followed the path to the beaches of Normandy and steam rolled there way through the Allied troops. The bridge was renamed in honor of the troops. Pegasus Bridge was the first engagement of D-DAY and the turning point of WWII, If they wouldn't have succeeded our Future would be very different today.

Canadian Forces - Determined to end four years of often-brutal German occupation, on 6 June 1944, Allied forces invaded Western Europe along an 80-kilometre front in Normandy, France. Of the nearly 150,000 Allied troops who landed or parachuted into the invasion area, 14,000 were Canadians. They assaulted a beachfront code-named "Juno", while Canadian paratroopers landed just east of the assault beaches. Although the Allies encountered German defenses bristling with artillery, machine guns, mines, and booby-traps, the invasion was a success. Other Canadians helped achieve this victory. The Royal Canadian Navy contributed 110 ships and 10,000 sailors in support of the landings while the R.C.A.F. had helped prepare the invasion by bombing targets inland. On D- Day and during the ensuing campaign, 15 R.C.A.F.

fighter and fighter-bomber squadrons helped control the skies over Normandy and attacked enemy targets. According to "Preliminary Numbers on Normandy/D-Day," RCN the Canadian allies also provided 126 vessels on D-Day and ~11,000 sailors. The RCN only had seven wounded casualties. On D-Day, Canadian Army suffered 1074 casualties, including 359 killed.

Allied losses had been high: 2,500 men at OMAHA alone, another 2,500 among the American airborne divisions, almost 1,100 for the Canadians, and some 3,000 for the British—more than 9,000 men in all, one-third of who were killed in action. Even so, the number was less than Allied planners had expected. By the evening of 6 June 1944, Allied power had prevailed all across the Normandy beachhead.

Though the planning for the Normandy invasion was extensive, and the execution of the campaign was aggressive, it should be considered that the key to success of this campaign was not solely due to these two points. As a matter of fact, the in-depth planning for Operation Neptune (the official name of the operations on Normandy) may have been too concise, thus leaving little room for flexibility when things went wrong. Case in point was the American forces debacle on Omaha Beach during the early hours of the invasion. The Operation Overlord planners did extremely well in planning bombing raid that slowed down the reinforcement of German forces at Normandy. They did this by destroying the southern French rail and road infrastructure, and German air defenses in the region. However, shoddy allied intelligence failed to pick-up on the extent of German defensive preparations at Omaha Beach, the American invasion forces ran into rugged bluffs, numerous pillboxes and larger number of German defenders than had been predicted by allied (James and Wells 83).

Three other counter-points are just as important, if not more important than the extensive planning and aggressive execution of the Normandy invasion. These three additional points are:

1) The lack of sufficient German armor forces in the immediate areas of the Normandy beach invasions, 2) The absence of key German high commanders during the first twenty-four hours of the invasion, and 3) Planning interference from the German high command on tactical operations matters.

At the strategic theater level, neither Field Marshall Rommel, nor Field Marshall von Rundstedt could move the German Army's powerful armored reserves without the express approval of Hitler. Though Rommel had recently bolstered the defense posture of Normandy, he placed more emphasis on the Pas de Calais area, since German intelligence indicated that this would be the most likely point of entry for an Allied forces invasion. Rommel's personal assessment after doing a site survey of the Atlantic Wall sector led him to agree with that of German intelligence. This faulty assessment led to a distinct lack of German armored support further west. Additionally, Rommel wanted to position the German armored divisions as he wanted, and von Rundstedt wanted to hold the armored divisions back as a reserve. Rommel warned von Rundstedt and Hitler that allied aircraft would have the ability to destroy the armored reserve forces as they advanced into the Normandy area, and so he wanted them to be placed closer to the beaches. Hitler intervened in the dispute and made matters worse by allotting some divisions to Rommel and some to von Rundstedt, and keeping others under his own command. Thus, the German response during the critical first hours of the Normandy invasion was half-hearted and uncoordinated. Had the German Army's armored forces been concentrated further forward near the Normandy beaches on the day of the invasion, it is quite possible that the Allied invasion would have been thwarted. On June 6, 1944 (the day of the invasion) and the days leading up to the invasion, the weather in the Normandy region was

overcast and stormy, and forecasts indicated that much of the same weather would cover the area for some time. Field Marshall Rommel

was so certain that an invasion by the Allies would not occur during this weather, that he flew back to Germany for a conference, and was unable for more than twenty-four hours to directly command the German forces in France that were defending the Atlantic Wall.

The German high command's interference with tactical operations decisions was a key cause of the German forces defeat at Normandy. Though Hitler had a decent ability for operational creativity (that is, he was good at coming up with creative ideas), he had a matching inability to understand the operational realities at the tactical level. Referring back to Hitler's decision to split the armored divisions up in three ways is an example of this inability of his to understand the realities of operations on the ground. There were also numerous rivalries within the German high command; the most well know being the rivalry between Field Marshall von Rundstedt and Field Marshall Rommel. Though von Rundstedt was the commander of all enemy forces in the west, his nominal subordinate Rommel had just as much, if not more leverage with Hitler (Davis 466). Von Rundstedt had no faith in the efficacy of the so-called Atlantic Wall. He believed that the supremacy of Allied naval gunfire and air forces would eventually allow Allied forces to gain a foothold in Normandy. Von Rundstedt suggested to the German high command that a large mobile reserve force be created and held back in the interior to act as a strike force once the Allies came ashore. This mobile strike force would be able to react in any of several directions and could be used to fight the decisive battle, and not at the time and place of the initial landings. This force would strike at the British and American forces when enough troops and material were ashore to make their destruction catastrophic. Rommel disagreed with von Rundstedt's assessment based on his belief that because of Allied air supremacy, any German striking force

that attempted to enter the invasion area would be destroyed from the air. Rommel not only disagreed completely with von Rundstedt's strategic ideas, he had also obtained Hitler's approval of his own to ignore orders from his immediate supervisor (von Rundstedt) if the former's operational concepts did not jibe with von Rundstedt's. Rommel believed that the best positioning of strategic reserve forces was immediately behind the coast, ready to be thrown at any invasion force while the invaders were still straddled and vulnerable between the two elements of earth and water. Rommel declared that the war will be lost or won on the beaches during the first twenty-four hours.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY
FORT BLISS, TEXAS 79918

ATSS-BAR

18 March 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR Faculty Advisor, Group Room R09, ATTN: SGM Moore, United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas 79918

SUBJECT: Normandy Campaign

1. Thesis Statement. The extensive allied planning coupled with aggressive execution was critical to the success of the Normandy invasion and the allies' defeat of the Germans in France.
2. Discussion. The Normandy Campaign resulted in the largest planning, buildup, and execution of a single mission during World War II. This operation was critical to the overall success of the allied campaign to regain the European Theater and bring the war to a end.
3. Conclusion. The allies could have continued to execute war in Europe for many years without the Normandy Campaign. The campaign was critical in the defeat of the Germans and gaining a foothold in Europe.
4. Counterpoint. The allies' invasion at Normandy saw the loss of many lives. The invasion could have been much worse had the German high command had their forces in the right places and had given their subordinate commanders more control.
5. Haines Award. We (do/do not) request that the Haines Award Selection Board consider this paper for the General Haines Award for Excellence in research. *Writing Research Papers*, Tenth Edition by James D. Lester and James D. Lester, Jr., is the Guide used in the preparation of this research paper.

CLYDE GLENN
SGM, USA
Chairperson

SGM Keith McMillan
SGM Allison Smith
SGM Samuel Stewart
SGM Keith Brown