US - SECRET
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20th November, 1943

APPENDIX 'Y'
to COSSAC (43) 28

OPERATION 'OVERLORD'

COVER OPERATION - (PAS DE CALAIS)

APPRECIATION

INTRODUCTION

1. In the Outline Plan (Part II, para 7) it is laid down that a diversionary operation on the general lines of Operation 'STARKEY' should be staged in the PAS DE CALAIS commencing about D minus 14, and that this operation should form part of the general air plan for the reduction of the GERMAN fighter force.

2. The intention of this diversionary operation was to contain GERMAN ground and air forces for as long as possible away from the main assault area; this would involve the maintenance of a continuous threat against the PAS DE CALAIS until our main forces were firmly established.

3. It would obviously be desirable at the same time to wear down the GERMAN air forces in the PAS DE CALAIS by bringing on air battles. The experience of Operation 'STARKEY' has shown, however, that we are unlikely to be able to bring the GERMAN air force to battle without carrying out an actual landing. Landing craft at present available for the Operation do not permit the mounting of any such diversionary landing except at the expense of the main assault and, even if additional craft could be made available it is unlikely that we could mount an operation on a larger scale than one assault division. The GERMANS would very soon realise that the landing of such a force without a follow-up was only a diversion. The threat to the PAS DE CALAIS could not then be maintained and the GERMAN air and ground forces would be available to reinforce the main assault area. As this is clearly to our disadvantage, all idea of making a diversionary landing with the object of bringing on air battles has been omitted.

4. This operation, which may be called the COVER operation, has therefore been based on the necessity for retaining GERMAN ground and air forces in the PAS DE CALAIS area. Further, the operation includes other measures which may be employed to conceal our real intentions.

OBJECTS

5. The objects of the COVER operation are:

(a) To induce the GERMAN command to believe that the main assault and follow-up will be in or EAST of the PAS DE CALAIS area, thereby encouraging the enemy to maintain or increase the strength of his air and ground forces and of his fortifications there at the expense of other areas, particularly of the CAEN area.

(b) To keep the enemy in doubt as to the date and time of the actual assault.

(c) During and after the main assault to contain the largest possible GERMAN ground and air forces in or EAST of the PAS DE CALAIS for at least fourteen days.

CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING DIRECTION OF THREAT

CONCENTRATIONS AND PREPARATIONS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

6. The real concentrations and preparations will indicate to the GERMANS an operation against the area BOULOGNE - BREST, the most likely objective being the CHERBOURG - CAEN - HAVRE area. It will therefore be necessary by deceptive means to make it appear that the centre of gravity of our preparations is in the South-East, so as to threaten the PAS DE CALAIS - BELGIUM area. As the interception of our wireless traffic is one of the principal methods by which the enemy obtains information about our concentrations and preparations, all simulation must be supported or represented by the appropriate wireless activity. In the case of the naval forces, however, all available wireless personnel are wholly absorbed by the assault forces; deceptive wireless activity could only be obtained at the expense of these assault forces, with a corresponding effect on their tactical efficiency.

NAVAL

7. During the winter 1943/44, five naval assault forces will be forming simultaneously in the ROSYTH, NORE, PORTSMOUTH and PLYMOUTH Commands and in the MILFORD HAVEN area. Map 'ML' shows how these dispositions threaten a wide area from DEN HELDER to BREST and, to a lesser degree, how the ROSYTH force threatens Southern NORWAY. Map 'MM' shows the situation about a fortnight before D Day, that is after the ROSYTH force has reached the SOUTHAMPTON - NEWHAVEN area. In this case the naval dispositions still threaten a wide area extending from OSTEND to BREST, but considering such factors as the suitability of beaches and their capacity for maintenance, the location of the main ports and the strength of the defences in the PAS DE CALAIS, the enemy may well select the CHERBOURG - CAEN - HAVRE area as the most likely objective for our assault.

8. In order to threaten specifically the PAS DE CALAIS - BELGIUM area, it will be necessary to represent substantial assault, as well as follow-up forces, in the DOVER and NORE Commands. Owing to the navigational difficulties off the EAST coast and ease with which our operations could be interfered with by mine-laying, it will be necessary for the sake of plausibility to confine such assault forces to the THAMES ESTUARY - RAMSGATE - HASTINGS area. Similarly, owing to the proximity of enemy long-range guns it would be necessary to confine follow-up forces to the THAMES ESTUARY - GREAT YARMOUTH area.

9. In order to threaten the PAS DE CALAIS - BELGIUM area, therefore, short-range craft should be assembled in the area RAMSGATE - HASTINGS, the follow-up force in the THAMES ESTUARY should be augmented with any available craft and dummy craft so that it represents an assault division, and the maximum possible number of craft and shipping should be assembled in the area THAMES ESTUARY - GREAT YARMOUTH. The presence of these additional assault craft on the EAST and South-East coasts, combined with the real follow-up and build-up preparations, should indicate a specific threat to the PAS DE CALAIS - BELGIUM area. (See Map 'MM').

MILITARY AND CIVIL

10. It will be necessary at the same time to ensure that the apparent size of the military and air forces, and preparations, in EAST and South-East ENGLAND are enlarged by discreet display and other deceptive methods on a scale commensurate with the display of craft in that area and that the visible preparations in the WEST and South-West are correspondingly reduced. Some of the methods which could be employed are listed below and, with the exception of wireless activity, are discussed in Annexure I.

(a) Wireless deception.

(b) Camouflage and concealment: The visible preparations in the WEST and South-West which do not threaten the PAS DE CALAIS could be concealed to the maximum degree possible, whilst those in the EAST and South-East are discreetly displayed so as not to rouse the enemy's suspicion.

(c) Movement preparations: Additional movement and accommodation preparations could be made under formation arrangements in the Eastern area to support the apparent concentration of craft and shipping.

(d) Restricted Areas: Suitable restrictions and bans on visitors could be imposed.

(e) Lighting of ports, harbs and troop concentrations: Deceptive lighting could be provided at harbs, assembly and transit areas.

(f) Anti-Aircraft concentrations could be simulated in the EAST and South-East.

(g) Patriot forces: Sabotage in the PAS DE CALAIS - BELGIUM area, particularly nearer the target date, could be increased.

(h) Civil: Preparations such as voluntary evacuation and reinforcement of civil defences consequent on the military preparation could be made.

AIR

11. The progressive build-up of short-range aircraft in the South-West and SOUTH of ENGLAND after the New Year, will be an increasing indication of impending operations threatening the CHERBOURG - CAEN - HAVRE area. Due to the unlikelihood of being able to conceal this concentration of aircraft in the SOUTH and South-West, particularly from enemy Radar, it will be necessary to lead the enemy to believe that this force is in fact a "cover" to those squadrons which will operate from the South-East. In addition, it should be indicated to the enemy that the squadrons in the SOUTH and South-West will be used to augment the squadrons in the South-East. Possible methods of indicating these intentions are outlined in paragraphs 29 and 30.

CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING TIMING

12. In order to achieve surprise, cover activities should normally lead the enemy to believe that the main operation is not due to be launched until about D plus 30. In this operation, however, the arrival of naval forces in the SOUTH coast from ROSYTH about D minus 14 will make the imminence of the operation difficult to conceal. Further, as the intensity of our preparations, concentrations, and training activities increased during the winter and spring, so is the intensity of the enemy air reconnaissance likely to increase. We must count, therefore, on the enemy being on the alert for a long period before the target date. In addition, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to conceal the final loading of the assault forces as this must be done by day as well as by night.

13. In view of these considerations, the measures most likely to deceive the enemy as to the time and date of the assault are:-

(a) Manipulating wireless activity to conceal the loading of the assault and follow-up forces and the movement of the build-up forces towards the coast; simulating by wireless activity the training and preparation of forces in the EAST and South-East and phasing this activity to conform with a target date later than D Day.

(b) Carrying out large scale combined exercises in the normal course of training, and maintaining active seaborne and air reconnaissance during the winter and spring in order to make the enemy think that the final preparations are possibly only further exercises. (See Annexure I).

(c) Taking increasingly active measures to reduce enemy air reconnaissance during the spring with a view to preventing any reconnaissance during the last few days before the operation.

THE CONTINUATION OF THE THREAT

14. As pointed out in paragraph 5(c) above, it is essential that GERMAN ground and air forces should be retained in the PAS DE CALAIS - BELGIUM area during and after the assault. It will thus be necessary to continue the threat from EAST and South-East ENGLAND immediately after the main forces have sailed. To have any appreciable effect this threat should be represented by an assault force of at least one assault division and appropriate follow-up and build-up. The naval and military forces required for the assault force could be represented by locating two divisions and, as far as possible, the craft necessary to lift them in the area HASTINGS - HARWICH. These craft would be made up of dummy landing craft and any types of craft and shipping, in particular short-range craft, which for any reason were not being used in the main operation. It is emphasized, however, that very few real craft will be available and, that the force will be in the main made up of dummy craft. The necessary deceptive wireless traffic to make the concentration of dummy craft appear real must be provided.

15. In order to simulate the follow-up forces it will be necessary to replace the formations which move overseas and which were concentrated in EAST and South-East ENGLAND, by US formations not immediately required overseas and by BRITISH formations not forming part of the Expeditionary force. The simulation should be supported and in part represented by the appropriate wireless traffic.

CONCLUSIONS

16. It is considered that:

(a) Prior to the assault we should be able to create a plausible threat to the PAS DE CALAIS and the BELGIUM area by representing substantial assault and follow-up forces in Eastern ENGLAND and by concealing, as far as possible, the real proportions in the South-West.

(b) It should also be possible by accustoming the enemy, over a long period, to large scale invasion preparations to keep him in doubt about the date and time of the assault.

(c) After the assault it should be possible to continue to threaten this area, but in the main, the naval component of this threat will be limited to dummy forces.

OUTLINE PLAN

COMMAND AND CONTROL

17. The Command and Control of the COVER operation (PAS DE CALAIS) will be the same as the Command and Control of Operation 'OVERLORD'. (COSSAC (43) 38 Final).

PHASES

18. The COVER operation falls naturally into three phases, namely:

Preliminary Phase - from NOW until the sailing of the ROSYTH force.

Preparatory Phase - from the sailing of the ROSYTH force until the touchdown of the assault (zero hour D Day)

Post-Assault Phase - zero hour D Day until our forces are firmly established in FRANCE.

PRELIMINARY PHASE

GENERAL

Combined Training

19. During the later stages of combined training, exercises will, whenever possible, include all three services and be accompanied by such administrative arrangements as will make them as realistic as possible. The narratives will avoid focusing attention on the real objective.

Security

20. 'MULBERRY': Every possible precaution will be taken to maintain the security of the projects for the development of 'MULBERRY'.

21. Restricted areas: Restrictions, including bans on visitors, will be imposed periodically within the regulated area WASH - BRISTOL CHANNEL. All areas involved in large scale exercises and other activities requiring special security will be protected by the imposition of restrictions. Full restrictions will be imposed in the area WASH - BRISTOL CHANNEL at least two months before the target date.

22. Seaborne and air reconnaissance and raiding will, in general, be evenly spread except that the intensity of seaborne reconnaissance should be slightly increased in the area PAS DE CALAIS - BELGIUM/DUTCH frontier.

23. Information to participating forces and civil authorities: (See Annexure III). The deceptive aspect of the COVER operation will be divulged to as few as possible. Commanders and civil authorities will give their subordinates only that amount of information necessary for the efficient execution of any task, and this information will be the same for all participating forces and civil authorities. Misleading information will NOT be issued.

WIRELESS (NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR).

24. Training: The training of at least two additional amphibious forces will be simulated by deceptive wireless activity.

25. Combined Headquarters: Wireless activity will be carried out to represent one additional combined headquarters in South-East ENGLAND, e.g., at CHATHAM.

26. Order of Battle: Wireless nets which disclose the chain of command within the expeditionary force will be controlled so that they do not coincide with the order of battle.

27. Assault technique: The amphibious forces will carry out a proportion of deceptive wireless exercises using varied tactical methods, to conceal the true character of their training.

28. Wireless silence: From about November, 1943, intermittent and varied periods of wireless silence will be imposed on US and BRITISH ground forces and naval assault forces. Appropriate measures, not necessarily involving complete silence, will also be taken by the air forces concerned.

29. Enemy Radar Intelligence (Air): The concentration of fighter squadrons in the SOUTH and South-West, and the fact that these squadrons are carrying out intensive training and endeavouring to gain operational experience in the EAST and South-East, will be discreetly revealed by controlling practice and operational flying taking place in the South-East. The method by which this is revealed should make it appear that steps have been taken to conceal this flying, but at the same time we should ensure that the enemy become aware of it.

30. Wireless Deception (Air): As squadrons move into advanced landing grounds, sufficient R/T discipline will be imposed in the South-East to indicate that an attempt is being made to conceal the concentration in the South-East, e.g., large formations flying just within Radar range will maintain the strictest silence and call signs not previously used in the South-East, will be introduced as though by accident.

Camouflage and Concealment

31. The policy outlined in Annexure II will be applied to all naval, military and air preparations.

NAVAL

Concentration of Craft and Shipping

32. Any short range craft which can be released from training or experimental establishments will assemble in the area RAMSGATE - HASTINGS; this assembly will be supported by the appropriate wireless activity.

Minelaying

33. Normal routine minelaying operations will be taking place. They will be such as not to draw attention to any particular area.

MILITARY

Movement preparations.

34. The apparent capacity of the sector exclusive THAMES ESTUARY - inclusive YARMOUTH should be increased to one-and-a-half divisions per day. The additional construction which may be necessary, such as tented camps, road widening, hards, etc., should be completed before the target date. This construction should proceed in conjunction with similar preparations in other sectors but will be given a lower priority.

Lighting of Ports and Hards

35. Deceptive lighting will be installed at all hards and in assembly and transit areas to represent the presence of vehicle or other lights which would be concentrated there during loading. This lighting and the existing lighting at ports and hards will be displayed periodically from February, 1944, onwards, and should on occasions coincide with the periods of wireless silence.

CIVIL

36. Civil preparations, which are necessary as a result of real military preparations, will be extended to include the South-Eastern and Eastern Counties so as not to emphasize any particular sector within the BRISTOL CHANNEL - WASH area. In addition, the scope of existing constructional projects, in particular those projects involving road and railway construction, will be exaggerated in the Eastern Counties.

PREPARATORY PHASE

NAVAL

Dummy Forces

37. During the period that the ROSYTH force is passing the YARMOUTH - HASTINGS area, the dummy landing craft, required to turn the NORE follow-up force into an assault force and to turn the concentration of MT ships and coasters into a follow-up force, will be moored in this area, the short-range craft being confined to the RAMSGATE - HASTINGS sector. The launching will be done at night and not under cover of smoke, and will be supported by the appropriate wireless activity.

Minelaying

38. Minelaying operations will be taking place in the coastal areas both EAST and WEST of the real objective. The entrances to the ports of CHERBOURG and HAVRE will be mined shortly before D day. In the PAS DE CALAIS area at least one port, preferably BOULOGNE, will be left un-mined. To the Eastward of CAP GRIS NEZ the main effort will be confined to general protection against surface craft and U-boats moving from the NORTH SEA.

Minesweeping

39. If adequate minesweeping forces are available, deceptive operations will be carried out near the BOULOGNE area starting about D minus 7.

Wireless

40. The following provision for wireless activity will be made:

(a) Cover for the sailing of ROSYTH force.

(b) Increase of deceptive wireless activity in the NORE area (probably to the extent of one assault force and associated craft). In the HASTINGS - RAMSGATE sector, however, owing to the proximity to the enemy shore, the bogus wireless activity will do no more than match the visual picture. It is assumed that very little, if any, exercising would in fact be carried out in that particular area.

MILITARY

Dummy Craft

41. Dummy craft will be erected, maintained and handled while afloat as detailed in paragraph 37.

Movements

42. Large scale movements will be carried out with formations not immediately required overseas into the EAST and South-East sectors, to full capacity of these sectors, to simulate the movement of these forces overseas. These movements will be synchronised with the concentration and movement of the expeditionary force in other sectors.

Anti-Aircraft

43. Concentrations of dummy landing craft will be protected by adequate anti-aircraft defences. The anti-aircraft defence of the concentration, assembly and transit areas in the EAST and South-East will be augmented with dummy artillery on the scale of one dummy gun to every real gun. Dummy guns will be located within supporting distance of real guns.

Patriot Forces

44. The general sabotage in and around the PAS DE CALAIS - BELGIUM area will be increased and specially briefed organisers will be sent to this area to spread rumours and to initiate certain limited action by resistance groups shortly before the target date. This action must in no way prejudice the potential value of resistance groups to the operation as a whole.

Wireless

45. Deceptive wireless activity will be carried out to cover the move of the military components of the ROSYTH force. Arrangements will be made to disclose by means of wireless the presence of formations constituting notional assault and follow-up forces in the South-East. The final assembly and embarkation of the real assault and follow-up formations and the movement of the build-up formations will be covered by wireless silence.

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AIR

Training

46. During the concentration of squadrons in the SOUTH and South-West, and after the final move into advanced landing grounds, training will be carried out and operational experience will be obtained, whenever possible, in the EAST and South-East.

Enemy Air Reconnaissance

47. Special arrangements will be made to prevent enemy air reconnaissance, including high reconnaissance, during the loading of the assault forces.

Dummy Fighter Aircraft

48. The number of fighter aircraft on airfields in the South-East will be augmented with dummy BRITISH aircraft to a total of at least fifty fighter squadrons, dummy and real, or until all airfields are occupied to their maximum capacity. Similarly fighter squadrons based in ESSEX will be augmented by dummies in the proportion of one dummy to two real aircraft. The presence of these squadrons will be supported by the same R/T activity as detailed in paragraph 30 above. If it is found necessary to move AMERICAN fighter squadrons from the ESSEX area about March, 1944, their absence will be covered by dummy AMERICAN aircraft and appropriate W/T and R/T deception.

Wireless

49. In order to avoid breaking the continuity of the quality of W/T and R/T point-to-point traffic during the period of embarkation, ground equipment should be duplicated and additional operators provided to enable the mobile equipment to be packed and loaded without arousing undue suspicion.

CIVIL

50. As far as practicable Fire Services and Civil Defence organisations will be reinforced in the EAST and South-East areas, and voluntary evacuation of certain populated places will be encouraged.

POST-ASSAULT PHASE

NAVAL

51. Immediately the real forces leave the LOWER and MORE Commands, any craft and shipping not being employed, including those types not normally used in amphibious operations, will be concentrated in these Commands, short-range craft being confined to the area MARGATE - HASTINGS. If the resultant concentration does not represent at least a one divisional lift, it should be further augmented with dummy craft.

Minesweeping

52. If adequate minesweeping forces are available, deceptive operations will be continued in the PAS DE CALAIS - BOULOGNE area.

Minelaying

53. Operations will be confined to reinforcing minefields already laid during the preparatory phase.

Wireless

54. The appropriate contribution to the simulation of amphibious training of the assault and follow-up forces indicated in paragraph 55 below will be provided. Provision will also be made for activity appropriate to the dummy craft as in paragraph 51 above.

MILITARY

55. For about 14 days after D Day, a force of not less than one assault, one follow-up and four build-up divisions will be represented in Eastern and South Eastern commands. As far as possible, this force will be made up of real formations as follows:

(a) Formations not required overseas during the first 14 days, including two US divisions carrying out normal field training in EASTERN Command.

(b) Formations not forming part of the expeditionary force.

That part of the force which cannot be represented by real formations will be simulated by deceptive methods, including wireless and the use of dummy equipment.

Wireless

56. The wireless resources of the force representing one assault, one follow-up and four build-up divisions will be further augmented to allow this force to simulate amphibious and normal field training.

AIR

57. Consideration will be given at the time to the possibility of diverting part of the bomber force to assist indirectly the operations in the CAEN bridgehead after the assault, by intensifying or culminating the threat by air operations against the PAS DE CALAIS which are normally indicative of any immediate assault. These operations would include:

(a) Attacks on enemy airfields and communications.

(b) Intense air bombardment of selected points or areas in the enemy beach defence system.

(c) Harassing enemy ground forces in the area.

Such action might be appropriately phased from D Day to D plus 7.