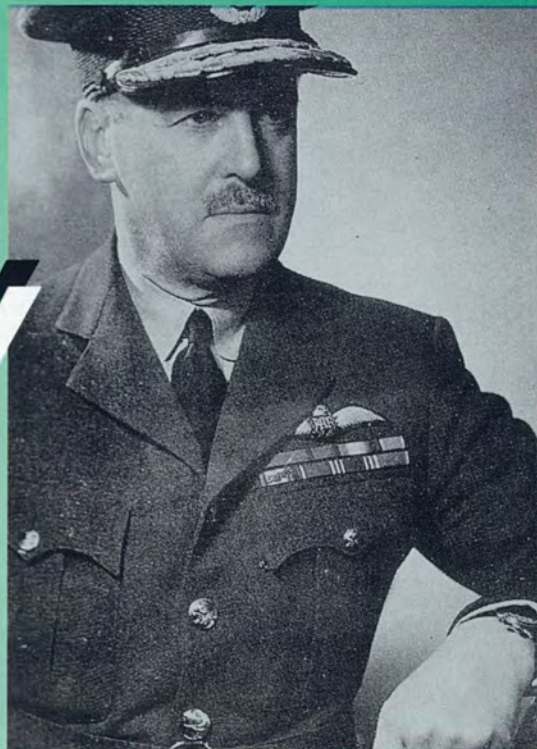


# Leigh-Mallory



“Leigh-Mallory’s two greatest obstacles were his personality and his poorly defined command role”<sup>1</sup>

To what extent did doctrinal and personal functions limit the effectiveness of a joint high command and air-land co-operation?

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**T**he appointment of Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory as Commander in Chief Allied Expeditionary Airforce (AEAF) at the Quebec conference in August 1943 gave him, in theory, command of the largest air armada ever assembled.<sup>2</sup> His role was to exercise operational command of the entire Allied air effort, an impressive fleet of over 10,000 aircraft, in direct support of Operation OVERLORD. However, Leigh-Mallory’s place in history is not famous nor are his exploits well known. He had a reputation for being difficult to work with and the fact that he was not replaced as C-in-C AEAF has encouraged some to suggest that joint high command and air-land co-operation for OVERLORD was ineffective.



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This paper will assess joint high command and air-land co-operation by considering the extent that doctrinal and personal functions limited effectiveness. It will use Leigh-Mallory and the creation of the AEF as the central themes. It will examine how Leigh-Mallory came to be in command but not control the AEF in June 1944 and consider the part that air-land co-operation had to play in the campaign. It will argue the case that while personal functions were indeed major influences on the limited effectiveness of joint high command, it was a doctrinal disagreement concerning the strategic use of air power that was the root cause of problems concerning air-land co-operation. The paper will also make the case that Leigh-Mallory's contribution to the campaign has been under valued and that he deserves a better place in history.

## **JOINT HIGH COMMAND**


The Joint High Command structure for OVERLORD was first discussed at the Quadrant Conference in Quebec in August 1943. It was originally thought that General George Marshall would be the supreme commander. However, Roosevelt did not wish to lose his key strategist, so General Dwight D Eisenhower was appointed to lead the operation on 6th December 1943. Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder was subsequently appointed his deputy along with Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsey as the naval commander and General Sir Bernard Montgomery as the land commander for the assault phase.

Leigh-Mallory had lobbied for some time for a single air commander modelled on Tedder's role in the Mediterranean, partly in response to his own belief that he was languishing in Fighter Command after the Battle of Britain. In March 1943 (after earlier being told that he might be the air commander

for OVERLORD) Leigh-Mallory visited the Mediterranean in order to study the control of air power in that theatre, with a view to making recommendations as to how to organise air forces for the invasion. Following his return he concluded: "All the air forces, tactical and strategic, should be placed under the Supreme Allied Commander who would exercise his authority through a single commander in C-in-C of AEF."<sup>3</sup>

Leigh-Mallory was of the opinion that "all air forces must be centralised under one Commander-in-Chief. The headquarters of British and American staffs must be amalgamated."<sup>4</sup> In effect Leigh-Mallory had created his own appointment. At that time the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal was of the view that the main role for air power in the support of the landings would be to gain air superiority over the beaches. Leigh-Mallory as C-in-C Fighter Command was therefore an obvious candidate for the post. Furthermore, Leigh-Mallory's experience and advocacy for Army Cooperation between the Wars seemed to reinforce his suitability. Not only had he commanded an Army Cooperation Wing and the School of Army Cooperation, he had served as a member of the Directing Staff at the (Army) Staff College, Camberley. He therefore had an intimate knowledge of the way that air power could be used to support a land campaign.

The formal appointment of Leigh-Mallory suggested that the recommendation for a single air commander had been agreed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. However, the directive that Leigh-Mallory received in November 1943 was only a general and partial statement of his powers and responsibilities.<sup>5</sup> OVERLORD was still at an early planning stage and there was little urgency to clarify the arrangements. However, there was also a significant flaw in the analogy that Leigh-Mallory used comparing the Mediterranean and Europe; in Europe 2 concurrent campaigns were planned: the invasion; and the continued strategic Combined Bombing Offensive (CBO) against Germany. Neither London nor Washington wished their strategic bomber forces to be dedicated totally to Op OVERLORD. Furthermore, General H H (Hap) Arnold, Chief of Staff USAAF, believed that while the AEF would have control over operations and training responsibility for 9th Air Force (the US tactical airforce for OVERLORD), administrative responsibility would remain with the senior US Air Force Officer in the UK.<sup>6</sup> In addition, while Leigh-Mallory was to have operational control of 9th Air Force, he was directed to exercise it in such a manner as to lend maximum support to the strategic air offensive.<sup>7</sup>



*...while Leigh-Mallory was to have operational control of 9th Air Force, he was directed to exercise it in such a manner as to lend maximum support to the strategic air offensive*

*Leigh-Mallory has been described as a difficult man; aggressive, bluff, forceful, ambitious and dogmatic as well as aloof, distant and determined to have everything his way*

Therefore at the beginning of the new year in 1944, possessing no more authority than the feeble directive issued in November, Leigh-Mallory bore the major responsibility for the preparation of the air plans for OVERLORD. While he was responsible for the success or failure of the air plan, he in fact had no control over the air forces nominally under his command.<sup>9</sup> The one element of the RAF he did have full command was over Fighter Command, his own command before his appointment as C-in-C AEF. Even this command was not straight forward as Fighter Command was to be re-named Air Defence of Great Britain and Leigh-Mallory as C-in-C AEF retained responsibility for the fighter defence in UK.

Not everyone agreed that a C-in-C AEF was required. Tedder believed that he had been appointed deputy commander so that he could take responsibility for the air forces.<sup>9</sup> Both C-in-Cs of the strategic bomber forces (Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris in Bomber Command and Lieutenant General Carl A Spaatz in 8th Air Force) were against the post because of the threat that a powerful C-in-C AEF could divert their forces away from the strategic bombing of Germany. Spaatz originally supported the creation of "an air commander"<sup>10</sup> but rapidly changed his mind when he realised the potential conflict between the strategic use of air power in the CBO and the operational role of air power in support of OVERLORD. A theme that will re-emerge later. Spaatz was further against the post when a British officer was appointed, particularly one with the personality of Leigh-Mallory.

## **PERSONALITIES**

The post of C-in-C AEF was therefore both controversial and ill defined. These initial problems were made worse by Leigh-Mallory's own personality and manner. Leigh-Mallory has been described as a difficult man; aggressive, bluff, forceful, ambitious and dogmatic as well as aloof, distant and determined to have everything his way. These were not qualities that endeared him to fellow British officers nor their American allies. "As a headquarters (the AEF), was any thing but happy... In fact, in the first 2 or 3 months of 1944, the AEF was not integrated at all."<sup>11</sup> Eisenhower had his own doubts about Leigh-Mallory and considered him particularly lightweight.<sup>12</sup>

In February 1944 Spaatz told Eisenhower "I have no confidence in Leigh-Mallory's ability to handle the job and... I view with alarm any set-up that places the Strategic Air Force under his control"<sup>13</sup> However, Spaatz was reflecting a more general USAAF policy, developed by Arnold, of refusing to subordinate Bomber forces in order that the strategic use of air power could be used to justify an independent air force to Congress. Furthermore, the use of the air force to support OVERLORD would emphasise its supporting role in the invasion. Therefore the USAAF was at best lukewarm about Leigh-Mallory's post, but when filled by a British officer like Leigh-Mallory, positively against it. However, the clash between Leigh-Mallory and Spaatz was about more than differences of personality. It was nothing less than a conflict between two wholly opposed strategic views, centred on radically different estimates of the importance and prospects of Operation OVERLORD.<sup>14</sup>

In a similar way, the relationship between Tedder and Leigh-Mallory was never going to be easy as they both thought that they were to do the same job, but Tedder was the senior and had greater authority. At one stage Leigh-Mallory considered resignation: "Either I am allowed to direct, if necessary, the whole air forces available to the full and immediate support of the Army, or I will resign on that issue"<sup>15</sup> but he backed down.

*...the clash between Leigh-Mallory and Spaatz was about more than differences of personality. It was nothing less than a conflict between two wholly opposed strategic views*



Leigh Mallory

Spaatz

While the problems of joint high command have tended to focus on Leigh-Mallory he was not the only "difficult" character. Montgomery was well known for his arrogance and dogmatic character. There was friction between him and Air Marshal Sir Arthur "Mary" Coningham, the Commander of the British Second Tactical Air Force (2<sup>nd</sup> TAF), stemming from their experience in North Africa. Coningham thought Montgomery unfairly gained all the glory and Montgomery was sensitive to criticism emanating from Coningham regarding the speed with which 8th Army chased Rommel. Neither would work with each other and Leigh-Mallory had a major role to play ensuring that 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group received the air support it required. Harris was well known for his virtual insubordination during the CBO and his selective interpretation of his orders. Tedder's high intelligence has often been praised yet his arrogant self-assurance matched that of Montgomery. He shared many of the views on air power held by the "bomber barons".<sup>16</sup>



This situation was made worse by the differing national perspectives and a growing mistrust between the allies. The British were losing their dominance in the alliance as US force levels built up, while some elements of the USAAF seemed less concerned with the war rather a determination to ensure an independent air force after the war. Allied Joint High Command, particular the air elements, were dominated by "difficult" characters, many of whom were determined to follow a doctrine to demonstrate the importance and independence of air power through strategic bombing, in some cases, ahead of winning the War.

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## AIR LAND CO-OPERATION

Against this back drop it is surprising that the primary purpose of the AEF, to support the invasion, was actually achieved. Much of the credit for this should go to Leigh-Mallory. His attitude towards the army was markedly different from most of his colleagues:<sup>17</sup>

I have always taken the view that the Army should be given all the air support it desires. After all, it is a citizen Army, composed for the most part of men belonging to every walk of life, to whom soldiering is neither natural nor easily learned... What I have been up against more or less since D-Day is the school of thought which takes the view that air support given to the Army should be the minimum rather than the maximum, on the principle that if you give an inch, it will take a mile.<sup>18</sup>

This view probably reflects not only his own experience working with the Army between the wars, but also his experience as an officer in the Lancashire Fusiliers during the First War.

This view on Army Co-operation was significantly different from the views of the two "Bomber Barons" who dominated air force strategic thinking. In the USAAF, the strategic bombing school was led by Spaatz, who saw the use of air power to support land forces as wasteful and a diversion. Spaatz was supported in this view by the USAAF bomber theorists using the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) doctrine of "key node" targeting to further their argument for an independent air force. In Bomber Command, Harris was initially equally reticent about the use of Bomber Command to provide direct support to OVERLORD, but when he was eventually ordered to support the campaign his commitment and support was whole hearted.

This dismissal of Army Co-operation is exemplified by the fate of the RAF's own Army Co-operation Command. As a direct result of the lessons learnt in France in 1940, the RAF formed this specialised Command (based in Ramslade House, Bracknell) to develop air-land co-operation. However, Portal saw this as an unnecessary diversion of scarce resources at a time when Bomber Command were alone in taking the war to Germany. Furthermore, at that time major land warfare seemed fanciful. With regard to any advocates of Army Co-operation, "as much as possible the air staff preferred to push them into a corner, or disregard them".<sup>19</sup> The result was that while the Command did experiment and develop techniques, the relatively poor level of Army Co-operation during the early stages of OVERLORD is a reflection of how the Command had been effectively starved of resources and side lined as a result of its low priority.

To be fair, the difficulties of balancing resources are easy to underestimate. By 1944 Britain was short of manpower and resources. The formation of 2<sup>nd</sup> TAF was problematical and other Commands had to be trawled in order to provide the aircraft and crews for Normandy. An example of this was the fact that HQ Army Co-operation Command was merged into HQ AEF, possibly reducing focus on Army Co-operation, in order to provide the staff for 2<sup>nd</sup> TAF.

Leigh-Mallory saw 3 roles for the AEF: To gain and maintain air superiority; to give direct support to the land assault; and to prevent enemy reinforcement.<sup>20</sup>

## AIR SUPERIORITY

As far as establishing air superiority, Leigh-Mallory and Portal both underestimated the effect of the Pointblank initiative in the Combined Bomber Offensive and believed that they would have to fight a decisive fighter battle before the landings could proceed. In the event, the 8th Air Force attacks on



*...the P-51 Mustang long range fighter, had been very effective and there was therefore no major fighter battle over Normandy*

the Luftwaffe through offensive counter air in Germany, supported by the introduction of the P-51 long range fighter, had been very effective and there was therefore no major fighter battle over Normandy. In his appreciation of the situation on 11th June 1944, Rommel wrote:

"Our operations in Normandy are moreover rendered exceptionally difficult, and in part impossible to carry out, by... the exceptionally strong and in some respects overwhelming superiority of the enemy air force... the enemy has complete command of the air over the battle area up to 100km behind the front."<sup>21</sup>

## **DIRECT SUPPORT**

It was planned to provide direct support to the Armies in Normandy through the provision of tactical airforces affiliated to each army, modelled on the system used in the desert. 2<sup>nd</sup> TAF led by Coningham would support Montgomery's 21<sup>st</sup> Army Group and 9th Air Force led by General Lewis Brereton would support Bradley's 1<sup>st</sup> US Army. Results during the early stages were mixed. Hostility between Coningham and Montgomery compounded by Coningham's unwillingness to deploy to a joint headquarters in France limited the 2<sup>nd</sup> TAF's role. In addition, a shortage of forward air controllers in both Armies caused problems, despite the role of forward air controllers being proven in France in 1940, the Middle East and Italy. There was virtually no joint training in close support by the allies prior to the landings.<sup>22</sup> Additional tensions, caused by the delay in capturing forward enemy airfields in the area of Caen-Falaise, particularly between Coningham and Montgomery, worsened the situation. The airforce considered the airfields essential in order to move more aircraft onto the continent.

*...recent studies have suggested that the effect on enemy morale of air attack, rather than their destruction was the decisive factor in the use of air power in Normandy*

antipathy, the level of co-operation did improve rapidly and the eventual degree of intimacy, at the operational level, remained high – astonishingly high – throughout the remainder of the Battle of Normandy; it was then that the once neglected art of Army Co-operation reached its peak of effectiveness.<sup>24</sup>

As the Allies enjoyed almost complete air superiority during the landings, the effect of the early lack of co-operation was masked. The most important direct air support to the Allied armies in Normandy was therefore that given in support of the breakout battle. As early as 14 Jun 44, Leigh-Mallory was anxious to find some method whereby the air force could assist Montgomery in breaking loose around Caen.<sup>25</sup> Leigh-Mallory proposed that to “unfreeze the situation, an air bombardment might be launched by medium and heavy bombers in front of, say, 5,000 yards, behind which the Army might advance”<sup>26</sup> This was only the second time (after Monte Cassino in

Feb 44) that it had been proposed to use strategic bombers in direct support of land forces and it received Montgomery's strong support. Although this plan was not implemented it paved the way for the eventual use of bombers in this role. While the effectiveness of the use of bombers in this way, for example during EPSOM and GOODWOOD, has been questioned; the fact that air power was readily made available demonstrates the high level of air-land co-operation achieved and Leigh-Mallory should take the credit for this. This is particularly so as the strategic airmen were doctrinally opposed to close air support and this meant that such support was provided reluctantly.<sup>27</sup> The use of bombers in support of ground forces was Leigh-Mallory's “brain-child” which was now coming to life.<sup>28</sup>



*The use of bombers in support of ground forces was Leigh-Mallory's “brain-child” which was now coming to life*

## THE PREVENTION OF REINFORCEMENT – THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The third role of air power in support of the land campaign was in the prevention of enemy reinforcement, in what was eventually to become known as the Transportation Plan. As early as December 1943, the problem of the German reserve formations was being considered by planners. The use of Allied air forces to redress the strategic imbalance between the enemy moving to the battle by land and the allies reinforcing by sea became Leigh-Mallory's personal cause. When his newly attached scientific advisor, Solly Zuckerman, proposed a large-scale plan to attack French, Belgian and German railways using strategic bombers, Leigh-Mallory enthusiastically embraced it.<sup>29</sup> Of course, the strategic bomber commanders, Harris and Spaatz, were equally against the use of the bombers to support the land campaign. However, Eisenhower declared himself in support of the Transportation Plan, Harris was ordered by Churchill to help and Spaatz also fell into line, albeit his bombers often were "unavailable" for the transportation plan.

Leigh-Mallory's view of the importance of the Transportation Plan and his own role in it is illustrated in his diary note for the 5th June 1944:

My main task has been to delay the movements of the German Army in order to prevent it from carrying out the oldest maxim of War – it is the General who concentrates the largest number of men in the shortest possible time at the vital point who wins the battle. I believe that our progress across the beaches will be necessarily slow and I look to the Air Forces to redress the balance which is against us, in so far as the problem of building up is concerned... I must redress that balance and I will never be deflected from this purpose.<sup>30</sup>

Leigh-Mallory was not alone, Tedder also strongly supported the Transportation Plan, albeit with differing slants on the strategic to tactical balance of targeting. Tedder was more disposed to broad long term disruption of the entire German rail system, while Leigh-Mallory pressed for more immediate isolation of the Normandy beaches.<sup>31</sup> But Tedder brought authority over the strategic bomber forces and was therefore an important ally. Roderick Ower, Tedder's biographer comments on Leigh-Mallory and the Transportation Plan: "For his single minded devotion to it, Leigh-Mallory has never yet been given enough credit."<sup>32</sup>

The overall effectiveness of the Transportation Plan is still the subject of debate, some are critical of its limited destructive effect on the German reinforcements. However, von Rundstedt had no doubt about its immediate impact:

The main difficulties which arose for us at the time of the invasion were the systematic preparations by your airforces; the smashing of the main lines of communications, particularly the railway junctions... that all came to nothing or was rendered impossible by the destruction of railway communications, railway stations, etc.<sup>33</sup>

The Transportation Plan not only stopped German reinforcement (and compelled the Germans to make greater use of congested roads, which were then targeted by fighters), but also starved German home industry of fuel, coal and other raw materials. For example, steel industries in the South of Germany were forced to stop production in December 1944 because of raw material shortages brought about by the Transportation Plan.<sup>34</sup>

## LEIGH-MALLORY, JOINT HIGH COMMAND AND ARMY CO-OPERATION

The level of air-land co-operation improved steadily as the Normandy campaign progressed. Leigh-Mallory fought for air power to be used in support of the land campaign at every stage. Air power, particularly in relation to the transportation plan, proved highly effective. Why then does Leigh-Mallory have a reputation as a poor C-in-C? Clearly his command role was ill defined. Tedder coveted his role and the failure to gain command of the bomber forces disappointed Leigh-Mallory. However, this did not restrict in a major way their subsequent employment in Northern France. Leigh-Mallory's death in November 1944 in an air crash while on his way to his new appointment of Allied Air C-in-C, South East Asia, has prevented Leigh-Mallory's own version of events being known. That he was again appointed as Allied Air C-in-C, would suggest that he had been successful during OVERLORD. The fact that he was not replaced in Europe was more to do with the growing direct links between the Tactical Air Forces and the Armies and the reducing requirement for a centralised command, rather than any feeling of failure.

It would be wrong to conclude that Leigh-Mallory always agreed to Army demands or that he was never critical of the Army. On 2 separate occasions he was unwilling to support airborne assaults. He thought that the US airborne landings on D-Day would be too costly but had the good grace to admit that he had been wrong when it was successfully mounted. Leigh-Mallory subsequently refused to support Montgomery's plan to use 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division to capture Caen. Although this did not take place, this did not prevent Montgomery describing Leigh-Mallory as "a gutless bugger who refuses to take a chance and plays for safety on all occasions"<sup>35</sup> Although Montgomery was to subsequently change his views on Leigh-Mallory when Leigh-Mallory undertook to acquire heavy bombers to support the breakout. He subsequently wrote: "Leigh-Mallory is a very genuine chap and will do anything he can to help win the war."<sup>36</sup>

Leigh-Mallory was not averse to criticising the Army. As early as 15 Jun 44 he was highly critical of Montgomery for not "getting on" and exploiting the advantage provided by air support. It would also be wrong to suggest that Leigh-Mallory was alone in advocating greater Army Co-operation; others such as Air Vice Marshal Harry Broadhurst, AOC 83 Group and Major General "Pete" Quesada, Commander IXth Tactical Air Command were other strong advocates. Of note is that these two officers were the only senior air force officers to wade ashore and set up their forward headquarters in France during the actual landings. They were also responsible for developing the tactical integration that proved increasingly successful as the campaign progressed and was so dramatically demonstrated at Falaise.

It has been suggested with the change in direction for air power following the landings from fighter effort to bomber support, that Leigh-Mallory, with his fighter background, was not qualified for the task. But this ignores the lack of any common bombing theory between the 2 major allies and forgets that Leigh-Mallory was a senior air commander with a wealth of experience in the use of air power in general and Army Co-operation in particular. It was the primacy of the Army in Normandy that necessitated a "ground minded" airman in charge of the air effort. Leigh-Mallory was ideally placed and qualified to argue the Army's case for air support against that of Trenchard and Arnold of Air Power's strategic primacy. In his role Leigh-Mallory was operationally successful but at great personal cost.



It has also been suggested that Leigh-Mallory was a redundant commander and the wrong person for the job<sup>37</sup> but this underplays the advocacy the Leigh-Mallory was able to bring to the Allied high command for the use of air power in support of the ground campaign in Normandy. Any suggestion of failure should be assessed in the context of Eisenhower's revised view on Leigh-Mallory written to Portal in July 1944:

You may recall that when I came to this country to take charge of Overlord I entertained some doubts as to the qualifications of Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory for the post that had been given him. In justice to him I want to tell you now that I've liked the way he has operated and co-operated... I am extremely happy to have him.<sup>38</sup>

*Leigh-Mallory was not averse to criticising the Army. As early as 15 Jun 44 he was highly critical of Montgomery for not "getting on" and exploiting the advantage provided by air support*

This advocacy on behalf of the Army did not endear Leigh-Mallory with his air force colleagues. Tedder believed that Leigh-Mallory was "insufficiently firm in explaining to the Army authorities the limitations of air-power in direct support of the Army... I could not help feeling that Leigh-Mallory's large assurances to Montgomery encouraged the unhealthy tendency of the Army to rely on air power."<sup>39</sup> Here then could lay the root cause of Leigh-Mallory's difficulties. The RAF viewed him with suspicion because he was advocating a doctrine which emphasises a supporting role for air power: the USAAF were downright against him because any supporting role would undermine their claim for inter-service independence. Add a "difficult" personality to the equation and we see the reasons why Leigh-Mallory's contribution has received so little recognition. This was further exasperated because Leigh-Mallory was unable to argue his case in memoirs and so he is left on a shelf in history rarely visited.

*Tedder believed that Leigh-Mallory was "insufficiently firm in explaining to the Army authorities the limitations of air-power in direct support of the Army..."*

## **LESSONS FOR TODAY**

### **Single Air Commander**

The formation of AWEF with a single Air C-in-C would appear to link directly with NATO's CJTF concept and with the requirement for a single air component commander. This was the successful model used in the Mediterranean but it failed in Europe because there were two competing campaigns for the heavy bomber forces. Leigh-Mallory, a commander operating at the operational level, did not recognise the importance of the concurrent strategic bombing campaign. He would have been wiser from the outset to recognise these conflicting demands. However, the concept of a single air commander must surely be correct.

### ***Staff Integration***

There is however, a danger for the future of air-land co-operation in the creation of the Joint Force Air Component. It concerns the distancing of the Air Force from the Army as the Air Force concentrates on strategic roles in a combined environment. The removal of Brigade Air Liaison Officers from Army brigade headquarters and the lack of a Corps Air Operations Centre in HQ ARRC may be symptomatic of this weakening of the tactical links between the services. Some will argue that when air support is required, that it will be there; but without integrated staff in an era where the Air Tasking Order dominates the process, it is not easy to have confidence. Dislocation at the tactical level should be resisted at all costs.

### ***Joint Training and Understanding***

The poor air-land co-operation during the initial stages of the campaign, despite lessons learnt in France in 1940, in North Africa and Italy was due directly to poor relationships between air and ground commanders. The lesson here is that joint training and understanding are pre-requisites for operations. Strong personalities must not undermine the common good and strong leadership from high command is essential if the full benefits of unity of effort in a joint campaign are to be achieved.

### ***Single Service Priorities***

Personal bias and the determination of senior air commanders to carve out a strategic role for air power led to the subordination of air-land co-operation in their priorities. Individuals such as Leigh-Mallory were effectively side lined when they argued against this doctrine. The air-land and air-sea debates continue today. Perhaps the lesson is that any single service which puts its own individual needs against that of the other services is in danger of undermining the operational capabilities of the armed forces as a whole – and deserves to be exposed as such

Joint High Command, particularly in relation to the AEF, for Op OVERLORD, was confused, lacked direction and suffered poor clarity. These factors, along with tension between the Allies over the conduct of the CBO, made allied air command in Europe disjointed. The "national" element had won a complete victory over "Allied" structures<sup>40</sup> and the position of Leigh-Mallory in history was one casualty.

The invasion of Europe in June 1944 took place at a time when the high command of both the USAAF and the RAF still advocated a doctrine based on the fundamental belief that air power alone, through the use of strategic bombing, could defeat Germany. They were unable to perceive that the war against Germany could only be won by the defeat of the German army on the battlefield, an enormously difficult task to which all other operations by sea and air must be subordinated.<sup>41</sup> To do so would reduce the strategic importance of air power and threaten the very existence of independent air forces. The result was that bomber forces were always kept independent of the operational chain of command and the subordination of command or role of air assets to ground forces was refused. This doctrine was ruthlessly pursued by determined characters such as Portal, Tedder, Harris, Arnold and Spaatz without regard to the corrosiveness that this had to the chain of high command or the operational difficulties this presented to air-land co-operation. Airmen such as Leigh-Mallory who challenged this philosophy were bypassed and ignored and this, perhaps explains his poor place in history.

There were doctrinal, organisational and personal failings in the Joint High Command for OVERLORD. These led to a reduced level of air-land co-operation and had the potential to undermine operational success. One historian wrote:

The fundamental difficulty overhanging all Allied air support of operations in Normandy was that... senior airmen remained obsessed with their conviction that it was not the major function of the air forces to serve as flying artillery for the Army.<sup>42</sup>

It is this simple tension that explains many of the inter-personal difficulties and the confused command and control position of the AEAF. Joint high command and air-land co-operation suffered doctrinal flaws brought about by "difficult" personalities but it was the doctrinal tension, between strategic independence and support to the other services, that was the cause of Leigh-Mallory's difficulties. His epitaph may be included in his obituary in *The Times*:

"Leigh-Mallory... was one of the most talented and capable air commanders of the war. On the question of air co-operation with mechanized forces... he was a leading authority."<sup>43</sup>

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