



# ***Air-Land Co-operation in Normandy: High-level petulance and intransigence coloured campaign execution***

**By Commodore I Moncrieff**

**T**o what extent did personality clashes and poorly defined command roles affect Air-Land co-operation in Normandy, and to what extent does current doctrine and command training equip the Joint Force for today's Air-Land battle?

D-Day was the fulcrum of decisive Allied offensive operations into Europe five years into a six year war of national survival. Yet disagreement at the Strategic/Operational level concerning preparatory OVERLORD shaping operations almost drove the Supreme Allied Commander to resign. Once underway, high-level petulance and intransigence amongst Allied Air Officers and between them and

Land Command continued to colour campaign execution. Air-Land lessons learned in earlier campaigns, involving several of the same Operational Level commanders, were relegated below self-opinion and a poorly designed command structure. Allied Air Superiority and the FORTITUDE deception plan constrained the German response, but they were able to defend and counter-attack at key Allied objectives such as Caen and St Lô. Given the difficulties at the higher level, it is a paradox that these were overcome by joint and combined Air-Land operations. Overwhelming force and a more balanced view in delivering effect at tactical air/land command levels were instrumental in this achievement.

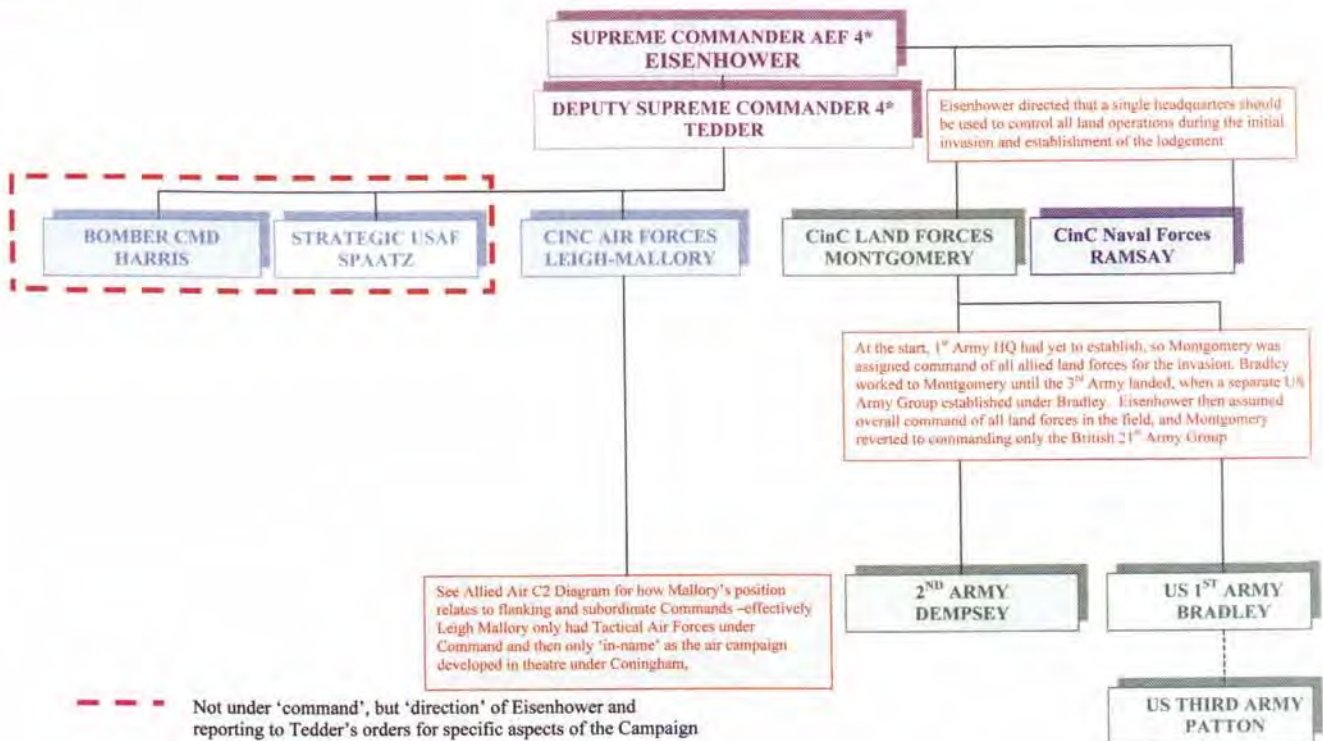


Figure 1: Operation Overlord — higher level C2 arrangements

The strategic climate is now more opaque. Wars are fought largely in coalition by choice rather than for national survival. The precision firepower, simultaneity, surprise and tempo required to deliver the philosopher's stone of manoeuvre warfare, demand unequivocal co-operation at and across all levels of command. Doctrine, command structures and training now acknowledge this, but as recent campaigns in the Gulf have shown, this is a subject that needs continual omni-directional work and astute monitoring by the higher levels of Joint Command. Some lessons identified have yet to become lessons learned and Project CONINGHAM-KEYES shows an appetite to do this that needs to be encouraged.

*'The well-run group is not a battlefield of egos'<sup>1</sup>*

Iterative debate stimulated by the intuition and experience amongst those in High Command

must feature in all aspects of campaigning. Such officers will invariably be strongly self-willed, but where this is tainted by rampant egotism then there is grave danger of undermining unity of effort and command. Military history is replete with examples of senior personality clashes. This paper examines the impact of personal conflicts that reverberated between Allied air and land commanders in the joint, expeditionary operations of the Normandy campaign. Herein egos and previous experience between these commanders from earlier campaigns coloured mutual trust at the fulcrum of a war for national survival.

Inevitably there was a cost to this, although strong overall leadership by the Supreme Commander General Eisenhower and his deputy Air Chief Marshal Tedder over the more obdurate episodes, together with overwhelming air superiority, ensured that the end-state was unaffected.

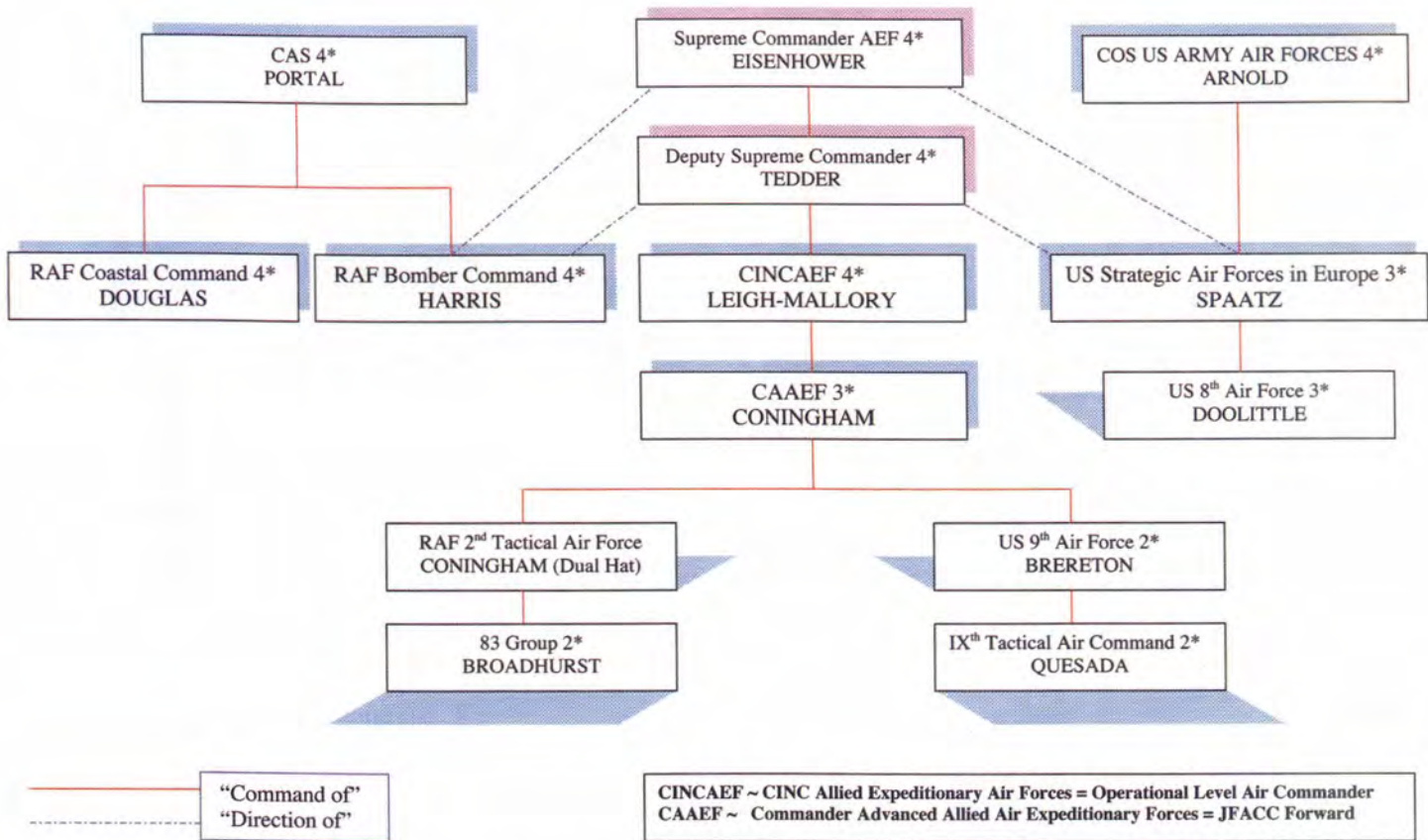


Figure 2: Operation Overlord — Allied Air C2 for Normandy campaign

The lessons for Air-Land co-operation endure in the present strategic environment. Whilst doctrine, staff training, war-fighting exercises and experimentation now recognise many of these, there remains no cause for complacency.

#### Command and control

*‘There were too many senior Air Force commanders, Tedder, Leigh Mallory, and Coningham, all in a sense treading on each other’s heels.’<sup>2</sup>*

The C2 structure was complex. The Allied Air C2 is shown at **Figure 2** and should be read alongside the combined OVERLORD C2 at **Figure 1**. This section describes the nuances that rendered this unwieldy.

Clarification sought by Tedder of his portfolio as Deputy Supreme Commander, through ACM Portal to Churchill<sup>3</sup>, established that he, rather than Air Marshal Leigh-Mallory, held responsibility for

the overall air plan for approval by the Supreme Commander, and ratification by the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS). However, this was not as clear-cut as in the Mediterranean, where ‘Supreme Command’ had meant authority over all Allied forces in the region. For OVERLORD, capabilities such as ACM Harris’s Bomber Command under the POINTBLANK Directive,<sup>4</sup> and ACM Douglas’s Coastal Command continued to have other work to do under Portal. Although Eisenhower won the argument that when required for OVERLORD, elements of these forces would be made available to Tedder, for the Air C2, the axiom of centralised control of air power was not being followed. Thus despite his CAAEF title, Leigh-Mallory only commanded the tactical air forces, which were then further delegated to Air Marshal Coningham. Leigh Mallory’s and Coningham’s HQ’s were also physically dislocated, at Bentley Priory and Uxbridge respectively.



Air Marshal Leigh Mallory

*Much to Leigh Mallory's chagrin, Eisenhower's ruling was that Coningham would be the only Air Commander with whom Montgomery would normally have to liaise*

General Montgomery's HQ was at Fort Southwick. His earlier much vaunted advocacy of co-location<sup>5</sup> was lost. The dual-hatted role of Montgomery at the campaign start initially set him on a par with Leigh-Mallory and later with Coningham, who also started with a dual-hatted role between the 'operational' and 'tactical' levels.<sup>6</sup> Much to Leigh Mallory's chagrin, Eisenhower's ruling was that Coningham would be the only Air Commander with whom Montgomery would normally have to liaise<sup>7</sup>. As will be shown, Montgomery tried to press this to his personal advantage in marginalising Coningham, preening Leigh-Mallory's ego by dealing directly with him on



Air Chief Marshal Tedder

*The choice of Tedder to frame strategic guidance as his deputy was equally prescient; he was the ideal grit in this particular oyster*

bomber support, as well as with AVM Broadhurst<sup>8</sup> on tactical air matters. Arguably Tedder should have intervened earlier than he eventually did to make plain that Coningham and Montgomery were to be equal partners. Tedder certainly had to battle with the consequences of the unorthodox C2 structure and tried to simplify it during the campaign without success, having to settle for making it work by managing the egos of the characters. However, it is clear that he was attuned to the issue on 20 April 1944 when he met with Portal and Leigh-Mallory and 'the command set up of the AEF was batted around again'.<sup>9</sup> It is possible that Tedder had to accommodate Leigh-



The then Air Vice Marshal Coningham and General Montgomery during the Western Desert Campaign

*Coningham who, along with Tedder, also felt that Montgomery faltered in making use of the air forces*

Mallory, who was a Portal appointee. The records of this meeting<sup>10</sup> indicate that Tedder acceded to Leigh Mallory's representations of the latter's role in the structure and the title and role to be adopted by Coningham. The same records make it plain that Tedder foresaw the ramifications at the time. One might conclude that Tedder consented because he did not wish to push the matter with Portal and believed he could make it work.

This complex command structure was driven by the joint and combined nature of the battle ahead and with better mutual acceptance and support could have been made to work. However, undermined by character flaws and cross-cutting personality feuds from their past, both the Inter-Air and Air-Land aspects proved dysfunctional.

#### **Dramatis personae**

'Obviously he [Leigh Mallory] is a gutless bugger who refuses to take a chance and plays for safety on all occasions I have no use for him'.<sup>11</sup>

The CCS selection of Eisenhower as Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Forces reflected shrewd perception of Ike's potential<sup>12</sup> to mitigate the more extreme aspects of subordinate rivalry and petulance amongst the considerably strong Allied military personalities in Europe.

The choice of Tedder to frame strategic guidance as his deputy<sup>13</sup> was equally prescient;<sup>14</sup> he was the ideal grit in this particular oyster. Both placed the overall campaign above individual

interest. Significantly, Tedder's war record in promoting Air-Land Co-operation in the Western Desert matched his abiding commitment to overall combined operations. Tedder had won the army's confidence as evidenced in General Auchinleck's letter to Churchill in the prelude to Op CRUSADE.<sup>15</sup>

Coningham was at that time an AVM commanding the Western Desert Air Force. He supported Tedder in shaping the application of air power in support of land forces and identified lessons in C2, targeting, ground force identification and timeliness. These were implemented successfully at the Battle of Alam Halfa, the 'pinnacle of WWII Land / Air co-operation' and 'crucible of jointery',<sup>16</sup> in Aug/Sep 1942. Co-located with the then Lt General Montgomery commanding the 8th Army, at his Army Advanced HQ, Coningham re-established the art of air support to the army, which had been forgotten between the wars.<sup>17</sup> This set landmark procedures and organisation that were to deliver the combination of battle-winning air support and air superiority at the 'Second Alamein' and later into Sicily and Italy. With his distinctively trenchant, clarion enunciation of doctrine Montgomery subsequently set out the 'great principles' of air and land co-operation in 1943.<sup>18</sup> Later on the eve of Normandy in May 1944, he stressed in writing to his subordinate Lt Gen Dempsey that air and land commanders should 'get to know each other, and get that understanding of each other's problems which will be the firm foundation of mutual confidence and trust when we begin fighting'.<sup>19</sup> No one today would cavil with any of Montgomery's precepts here, which chime with our joint command doctrine. Unfortunately his behaviour in Normandy ran counter to his rhetoric, but the system was fortunately robust enough to survive. In the latter stages of the war in the

desert, Montgomery's boastfulness alienated Coningham<sup>30</sup> who, along with Tedder, also felt that Montgomery faltered in making use of the air forces in pursuit of Rommel across North Africa after Alamein.<sup>31</sup> Their disquiet over Montgomery's hesitancy was to re-surface over the securing of Caen with its implication for airfields needed to support the campaign continuance. Tedder and Coningham also harboured bitter memories of Montgomery's failure to appreciate the "war for aerodromes" in Sicily.<sup>32</sup> The judgements of the official British historians of the Mediterranean and Middle East campaigns<sup>33</sup> substantiate Coningham's practical Air-Land co-operation pedigree and commitment to its furtherance. Sadly, the progressively corrosive nature of the personality clashes meant that successful lessons of co-operation in one campaign were not transferred to another.

Elsewhere, Coningham, supported by Tedder and Portal, had little regard for Spaatz's professional abilities having had occasion to brusquely challenge his interference in Coningham's Command in Italy in 1943.<sup>34</sup> Although it is not apparent in other works, D'Este<sup>35</sup> records that Broadhurst felt Coningham's 'personal and vehement anti-Montgomery attitude adversely affected air operations and [Broadhurst] resented being in the middle of a personal squabble'.

Leigh Mallory's background was in fighters. A cautious pessimist, he held little trust or popularity amongst his British or US aviation peers. In his defence, at heart he was fully behind the main campaign effort. However, his judgement and relationship with Park in the Battle of Britain had been questionable<sup>36</sup> and his manner with Allied colleagues fostered resentment to the extent of their seeking his removal.<sup>37</sup> In chairing an OVERLORD Allied Air conference on targeting and strategic/tactical effort allocation on 23 May 44, he declared that British operational methods should have primacy and called for the immediate relief of all US officers in the War Room.<sup>38</sup> Together with the vague mandate of his ill-defined command role, these factors made him

an invidious 'fifth wheel on the wagon'<sup>39</sup> in the command structure.<sup>40</sup>

But it was not all sour. In the Middle East, Tedder and Coningham established command and confidence building relations with Major General Brereton<sup>31</sup> who was to work under Coningham in Normandy. In Coningham's presence, and in response to a question on Army air support availability by Eisenhower during planning, Major General Quesada is also recorded as stating that co-operation between US and British TAF was so close that somebody would be found to help.<sup>32</sup>

### The Allied air campaign

'The attainment and maintenance of an air situation in which the German Air Force would be incapable of interfering with the Allied landings.'<sup>33</sup>

In his directive of 17 April 1944,<sup>34</sup> Eisenhower listed the tasks for the Allied Air Forces: to assist the Allied armies in establishing a lodgement; to maintain the combined bomber offensive; to secure and maintain air superiority; and to attack rail communications in the OVERLORD area. From these, the Allied air campaign was drawn in three phases. The first two phases were essentially independent air actions. In the first Allied fighters were to gain air superiority.<sup>35</sup> This was tied to the POINTBLANK Directive in attacking the German fighter forces and their support and was largely achieved by the end of February 1944.<sup>36, 37</sup> The second phase started in March and aimed to shape the battlespace in support of the land campaign. Named the 'Transportation Plan', it was linked into the deception plan Operation FORTITUDE. It isolated northern France by interdicting all German reinforcement<sup>38</sup> transportation links to Normandy while masking the invasion location. The wider air contribution to deception had a number of other facets.<sup>39</sup> The third phase sought to exploit the lodgement and assault and called for Air Forces to provide the Army with Air Support. It sorely tested air/land co-operation. However, disagreements started with the allocation and application of Air Power to interdiction under the Transportation Plan.



B-17s on a bombing run over Germany

*The Transportation Plan depended on bombers, first to destroy infrastructure and then to interdict the movement of German troops once the invasion started. Tedder, its strongest advocate, supported by Leigh-Mallory and Coningham, convinced Eisenhower of its necessity*

**Command discord — indirect support<sup>40</sup> (interdiction)**

“Now listen Arthur [Tedder], I am tired of dealing with a lot of prima donnas. By God, you tell that bunch that if they can’t get together and stop quarrelling like children, I will tell the Prime Minister [Churchill] to get someone else to run this damn war. I’ll quit”.<sup>41</sup>

Disagreement on interdiction centred on the interpretation of the Centre of Gravity. With relative autonomy over their separate strategic bomber commands, both Harris and Spaatz retained an absolute belief in the power of the bombing offensive<sup>42</sup> to the extent that they believed such lines of operation would eliminate the need for what they saw as a risky OVERLORD

plan. Harris remained fixed on bombing German cities and Spaatz considered that his ‘Oil Plan’ could best contribute to a German surrender through the destruction of oil and fuel production sites by his forces. Whilst they eventually saw a responsibility to support the invasion, their agenda still made them reluctant to be brought under Eisenhower’s direct command.

However, invasion success hinged on preventing the movement of reinforcements to the Normandy area — it was a decisive point in our parlance. The Transportation Plan depended on bombers, first to destroy infrastructure and then to interdict the movement of German troops once the invasion started. Tedder, its strongest advocate, supported by Leigh-Mallory and Coningham, convinced Eisenhower of its necessity. It was opposed initially on strategic and political grounds by inter alia the bomber commanders and Churchill.<sup>43</sup> The bomber commanders did not want to make the prolonged commitment required and offered a more limited pre D-Day interdiction programme. In inclining more towards the bomber commanders, Churchill was also alive to the unintended *jus in bello*

ramifications.<sup>44</sup> Eisenhower lobbied Churchill, Roosevelt, General Hap Arnold, Portal, and even the French Committee of National Liberation<sup>45</sup> to try and gain approval for the plan and the assets to achieve it. Portal and Arnold were particularly reluctant to reassign OPCOM of their bomber forces. The decision ultimately lay with the CCS and he felt strongly enough to threaten to resign his post if the plan was dismissed. Mindful of the debate on both sides, the CCS took a median line and assigned him ‘direction’ rather than command of strategic air forces. This achieved the aim, albeit adding a further dimension to the already complex Allied Air C2 structure that Tedder had to manage. Even after the war debate ran on the efficacy of this plan.<sup>46</sup> However, statements from the German command indicate that the interdiction campaign

had ruined their counter-offensive plans<sup>47</sup> before the Allies waded ashore. In effects-based terms, and in the words of Rommel and von Runstedt, it 'paralysed'<sup>48</sup> German mobility and thus reduced their tempo. The plan met its aim and all the evidence supports Tedder's assertion that it was a decisive point along the campaign lines of operation.<sup>49</sup>

#### Command discord — direct<sup>50</sup> air support

The third phase brought the combined maladies of poor C2 and personality clashes into sharp focus. This paper illustrates the effect of personality and C2 problems in respect of arguments that arose over Caen and airfields, and poor co-ordination with resulting fratricide in Operation COBRA

#### The question of airfields

'If our strongest card, overwhelming air-power, was to be played effectively and promptly, we had to have airfields in France . . . We must, therefore, have enough airfields around Caen and areas west of Paris to operate over the Seine in strength'.<sup>51</sup>

There was no carrier support and a need to shorten the air transit time from England after securing the lodgement. Resurrection of the Op HUSKY lesson on provision for the speedy capture of airfields brought Tedder and Coningham into conflict with Montgomery. Their frustration, shared by Leigh-Mallory,<sup>52</sup> largely centred on his ambivalence rather than the over-caution they felt he had shown at El Alamein.<sup>53</sup> Montgomery's statements at his first Ground Commander's conference at St Paul's School in January 1944 stressed the need for five British brigade-landing groups because of the 'urgency of securing airfields in the British sector'.<sup>54</sup> As planning progressed, the immediate post-invasion mission assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army was to take Caen, which he predicted boldly by Day 1. This chimed with the airmen's airfield objectives since ideal open flat airfield country lay to the south and east of the Caen-St Lô line, beyond the highly unsuitable constrained bocage. Montgomery's statement 'so we get increased air support — so everything becomes easier'<sup>55</sup> made as late in the planning as March and April indicates that he understood precisely the significance of this for operational tempo. Dempsey certainly

cascaded this as Main Effort in his intent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army.<sup>56</sup> All this would be consonant with our modern manoeuvrist approach to shape, attack, protect and exploit, but it did not transpire this way

Post-lodgement, the air commanders became increasingly perturbed with Montgomery's lack of progress towards their immediate objectives around Caen. Every day without it denied in-theatre availability of tactical air forces and diluted the leverage of their overwhelming aerial advantage. Without the airfields, cross-channel transits and long supply chains added to the burden of maintaining air superiority from a distance. Six days after the invasion only three landing strips in the lodgement had been made available for Coningham's TAFs and Leigh-Mallory raised his concerns that advantages of early surprise would be lost as the Germans gained time to consolidate. The Germans certainly understood the significance of Caen and defended it fiercely for weeks. There was therefore understandable delay in taking the objective and better relationships would have brought better mutual understanding. However, Montgomery only showed insensitivity and condescension towards his air colleagues, typified in his statement that 'Coningham wanted the airfields in order to defeat Rommel, whereas I wanted to defeat Rommel in order, only incidentally, to capture the airfields'.<sup>57</sup>

Coningham was openly blunt in expressing his exasperation to his fellow commanders<sup>58</sup> and considered that Montgomery had once again been prevaricating if not remiss in delivering his intent and even suggested that Montgomery tried to deny the existence of the plan.<sup>59</sup> Whatever the truth, Montgomery certainly fuelled discontent with the airmen in running to a form they had seen before and remaining obdurately insistent that everything was running to his 'master plan'.<sup>60</sup> Matters became further strained when Leigh-Mallory, following a blast from Montgomery on being 'gutless' in failing to support an airborne assault, and seeking a way to assist, visited Montgomery without consulting Tedder or Coningham. He proposed using strategic bombers

in direct support of ground operations around Caen. Montgomery was most enthusiastic,<sup>61</sup> but Dempsey demurred - perhaps he was mindful of the lessons of Cassino. Having become aware of the proposal, Tedder and Coningham broke up a meeting at Dempsey's HQ to overrule this plan. Leigh-Mallory was chastened, and Montgomery reminded by Tedder that Coningham not Leigh-Mallory was his opposite number and Broadhurst was Dempsey's. Montgomery acknowledged this but paid scant attention to obeying it.<sup>62</sup> The fact that Montgomery was absent when Tedder and Coningham visited was indicative of his condescending line that he was too busy to discuss Air/Land matters, which should be dealt with by his subordinates. Unfortunately many of his staff lacked the experience in this arena. So with no daily contact between Coningham and Montgomery, and Montgomery continuing to deliberately avoid Coningham in favour of Leigh-Mallory, there was neither mutual trust nor confidence.

Recriminations continued well into July with Eisenhower having to step in and remind Montgomery to work with Coningham; Montgomery lobbying Eisenhower, Tedder and even General Alanbrooke, to sack Coningham; and Tedder, backed by Portal, advising Eisenhower, if necessary, to sack Montgomery.<sup>63</sup> Whilst Portal eventually eased Leigh-Mallory from his post; in respect of others, as one historian has observed, 'He whom propaganda has made mighty no man may readily cast aside';<sup>64</sup> High profile commanders at the pinnacle of their careers, and especially those who have achieved a cult hero status of national significance cannot be cast aside easily or quietly. The wider interest of Service as well as national morale rendered Montgomery and Harris impossible to remove. However, the result within the higher command was a breeding ground for suspicion<sup>65</sup> and Air/Land co-operation was at its nadir with no supported/supporting commander ethos at the operational level. Coningham did, however, get co-operation from the Army airfield construction groups who worked to their limits in the circumstances and allowed him to take risk to his own forces by concentrating more aircraft on each airfield than was originally planned.<sup>66</sup>

### Close Air Support — Operation COBRA

'When you read of all the great glamour of our flying friends, just remember that all that glitters is not gold!'<sup>67</sup>

Poor Air/Land co-ordination caused fratricide in Operation COBRA. This was an American southerly breakout operation in the St Lô area. General Bradley and Leigh-Mallory were the key commanders involved. The plan was for bombers to precede ground operations on 24 July by opening up a gap for the US VII Corps in the German defences in front of the ESE line of the St Lô-Periers road. Bradley personally attended the conference at Leigh-Mallory's HQ to outline his intent and gain agreement to approach limitations for the safety of his people close to the objective. Bradley insisted that the bombers must attack east-west, out of the sun and parallel to the road.<sup>68</sup> As his forces would be north and parallel with the road, the risk from Allied 'short-bombing' errors would be reduced. The air commanders favoured a perpendicular approach for bombing accuracy and time to sequence their bombers through the area on a broad front, which could not be achieved in a limited corridor approach in the one hour allocated. Bomb craters had stalled Montgomery's advance in Operation GOODWOOD, so Bradley asked for small fragmentation ordnance. The safety distance for own-troops was also debated and a close 1,500 yards was eventually agreed. Bradley believed that he had agreement from Leigh-Mallory on an attack direction parallel to the road. However, the orders issued to the 8th Air Force were ambiguous; 'routing and altitudes of air formations were to be coordinated directly between commands'<sup>69</sup> and 'bombardiers were not to drop short' which could be interpreted as an instruction to adopt a perpendicular approach.

Despite an unfavourable meteorological forecast, the air forces took-off on 24 July but were then recalled by Leigh-Mallory as the forecast proved accurate. Over 1,500 were airborne and several hundred had dropped their ordnance on a perpendicular approach before the recall order was received. The fratricide amongst US ground troops was considerable and eventually totalled 101 dead and 463 wounded.<sup>70</sup> Bradley was furious



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when the bombers appeared from the north behind his troops rather than from their flank, and regarded this as a serious breach of good faith by the air forces.<sup>71</sup> Bradley was unable to talk the air commanders into changing their plans at short notice, and did not want to delay or cancel COBRA. Therefore he allowed the operations to continue on 25 July. Again, mistakes added to casualty numbers, although General Lightening Jo Collins in command of US VII Corps sensed German culmination and launched his infantry and then armoured reserve to deliver the breakout. Subsequently US Army commanders remained pessimistic about the ability of heavy bombers to provide tactical support, although airmen including Leigh-Mallory remained enthusiastic.<sup>72</sup> Whilst the official investigation did not lay particular blame; poor integration and co-ordination in air and ground planning were undoubtedly decisive factors leading to 'short' bombing and fratricide.

Lack of adequate liaison, mutual understanding, or even sympathy between air and ground staffs, led to misunderstandings on such basic planning presumptions as the bombers' approach to their targets.<sup>73</sup> This remains a lesson for today.

**So, to what extent did personality clashes and poorly defined command roles affect air-land co-operation in Normandy?**

'History insists that the last word, in regard to the Battle of Normandy, must be that the quarrels did not, finally, matter. . . But let us be quite clear . . . what made the ultimate victory possible was crushing air power. It is not pleasant to think what might have happened without it'.<sup>74</sup>

Object lessons in pitfalls for 'inter-component' cooperation endure from this campaign. It is true that success was achieved, but co-operation was certainly emasculated by personal aggrandisement

at the Operational Level, and the execution of a difficult campaign was made unnecessarily harder by failure to implement the co-operation and co-location lessons learned in the Western Desert. Direct Air Support took two months to match the standard achieved in North Africa in mid-1942. When bound in with an unwieldy C2 structure, personality clashes brought inexcusable, and at times disgraceful, internal fighting that had an incredibly destructive impact on 'inter-component' co-operation. It takes two to quarrel and there was bad behaviour on the part of senior Air and Land Commanders alike, coloured by previous experience between them that corroded mutual trust. However, as senior Allied air commanders wrestled with their role in Montgomery's scheme of manoeuvre, evidence marks the latter as bellicose, Machiavellian and arguably reckless, given that this was a pivotal campaign on which the war hinged. He relegated the air commanders to the role of advisors not equals.<sup>75</sup> Fortunately, tactical Air/Land relationships proved more harmonious. Broadhurst, working alongside Dempsey's 2<sup>nd</sup> Army in the British sector; and Quesada, responsible for providing air support to Bradley's American armies, worked hard to keep their respective land commanders aware of the air situation. There is evidence too of fixation on planning for the invasion at the expense of follow-on operations; this was a lesson seen elsewhere such as Guadalcanal. Montgomery ran his campaign planning in a linear fashion and so failed to synchronise land operations and airfield provision that was, by his own earlier statements, critical to achieving tempo in expeditionary operations.<sup>76</sup>

It is inevitable that some high-value air assets will not be permanently allocated to the joint task force commander. The lessons here show that when they are, then one air component commander should centrally control them.

Personal egos can undermine a campaign's main effort and hence, the supported/supporting command relationships. It was fortunate that the Supreme Commander and his deputy exercised consummate strong and politically astute leadership; however, they should not have had to

intervene to prioritise and adjudicate on issues to the level brought about by personally motivated differences of opinion. Liaison officers also lacked experience and this was a weak link, since their employment and effective communication was crucial. This was especially so in Normandy where the commanders were not listening to each other.

Finally, COBRA and its aftermath is a reminder that 'mistakes and 'blue on blue' cast very long shadows, and trust can take generations to rebuild.<sup>77</sup>

#### **To what extent does current doctrine and command training equip the joint force for today's air-land battle?**

'There is not a clear and commonly agreed view of how land and air components interact in a joint campaign. We assume interaction and synergy; but such concepts are not adequately described in joint or land doctrine, despite many detailed descriptions of mechanisms...The Army and RAF need to define and make explicit how land and air operations interact, and how they contribute to campaign success'.<sup>78</sup>

Commanders' personalities will always produce an influence on operations; after all, leadership characteristics are in part drawn from personality. However, there is now a healthy emphasis in developing joint capability and personal and mutual understanding of inter-component contributions, capabilities and requirements. These are now fostered at the staff level by education at ACSC, and at the operational level by the HCSC reinforced by the CJO led Joint Force Command Group (JFCG) and J7 training.

This is just as well, since the UK now has an increasingly expeditionary focus in coalition operations of choice. These demand, inter alia, more flexible use of Air Power with a responsive C2 organisation and technology that can integrate in a networked environment for joint effect.

At the operational level, lessons from the 1991 Gulf War<sup>79</sup> and Allied Force (1999),<sup>80</sup> that are not dissimilar from the Normandy campaign in terms of co-ordination problems, identified the



EA-6B Prowler takes off during Operation Northern Watch, enforcing the no-fly zone in Northern Iraq

*Organisational structures are improving and we are becoming more sophisticated in our ability to use all forms of air power in support of land forces*

need for a core deployable UK JFAC HQ and not just a CAOC. Training and development in this capability with the aim of delivering centralised C2 at the highest practicable level is now fast maturing. This will plan, task and execute the theatre joint air mission and through apportionment recommendations to JTF, deliver the best utilisation and de-confliction of air assets in a campaign. However, there remains much to be done. Common doctrine is not fully developed or understood; some equipment is inadequate, with poor interoperability; and critical structures within the ORBAT are missing or undermanned. Project

CONINGHAM-KEYES, (PC-K) is a tri-Service initiative set up in late 2003 to address these issues.

As an example, at the tactical level,<sup>61</sup> Op TELIC Lessons and the DOC Offensive Air Support Audit identified a requirement for better Air/Land integration to restore tactical interoperability. There is a noticeable gap in the ability of UK forces to provide an effective C2 system for tactical air. The inadequacy of current Joint Air Support Organisation (JASO)<sup>62</sup> provision within formation headquarters was highlighted by the requirement for a USMC-supplied Air Support Element (ASE)

which augmented HQ 1 Div in order to provide the necessary C2 interface with their supporting air elements. PC-K has recommended the creation of a Tactical Air Control System (TACS) to re-establish the Tactical level air C2 lost at the end of the Cold War. Concurrently it also sees development of the JASO into the Joint Air Land Organisation (JALO) to provide a more powerful FLC Joint Focus Organisation and a more robust Tactical Air Control Party (Forward Air Control) structure. It is proposed that the JALO should have specific responsibilities across the all the Lines of Development and that to have maximum effect in the areas of greatest weakness, it should be within HQ LAND, possibly under the LWC.

In tandem, training must be adapted for likely operations with more air/land joint emphasis. In particular, more land training is required with US air forces (Marine and USAF) since it is likely they will support UK land forces as during Op TELIC. Exercise JOINT VENTURE in Nov 04 has also demonstrated the value of reintroducing the Air Support Operations Cells (ASOCs) into the C2 structure.

#### Envoi

'There is no place in the battlespace areas where land air forces operate without air forces, although there are places where air forces operate without land forces. Therefore at this tactical level, activities should be integrated in time and space wherever they interact; and co-ordinated where they do not'.<sup>83</sup>

Broadhurst and Quesada would have understood the quote above. Reinforced by more positive shared experiences and better training in recent times, strategic and operational Air/Land commanders are now more attuned to each other's concerns and share trust and a developing common taxonomy. Many of Tedder's, Coningham's; and even Montgomery's pronouncements in his more co-operative moments, are relevant for us today. Healthy debate must also continue about the achievement of required effects, but organisational structures are improving and we are becoming more sophisticated in our ability to use all forms of air

power in support of land forces. Precision-guided weapons delivered by B-52 and B-1s close to our own forces in recent operations demonstrate that we have the techniques to lay the ghosts of COBRA to rest. However much remains to be done, and the appetite to address the Air/Land lessons under PC-K must be encouraged.

#### Notes

1 Lao Tzu, Chinese Taoist philosopher, b.600 BC

2 Hamilton (1983) p 745

3 Tedder (1966) p 607 Although as we no know, it was not quite as 'simple' as Churchill surmised.

4 POINTBLANK - June 1943 Anglo-American Directive priority commitment of Strategic Air Forces against the Luftwaffe and industrial targets sustaining them. SHAEF and AEF were seen by Spaatz and Harris as a problem to their POINTBLANK authority.

5 Terraine (1985) p612

6 Both were to revert to single-hatted roles once forces were ashore.

7 D'Este (1983) p219

8 Commanding 83 Group and working with Lt General Demsey's 2<sup>nd</sup> Army

9 Orange (1990) p 187 drawing on the records of Scarman, Tedder's diarist.

10 *ibid*

11 *ibid* p166 Montgomery writing to his COS, de Guingand

12 Cook (1976) p514 describes this as a 'deep, visceral dedication and determination to make Anglo-American co-operation a living and working reality'

13 Foxley Norris (1976) 'Eisenhower's own relationship with Tedder was perhaps the most closely integrated of all'.

14 Richards and Saunders (1974) Vol ii p227 state that in earlier operations as AOCinC Middle East, 'Inter-allied relationship was Tedder's forte'

- 15 Terraine op cit p355-356
- 16 Dr Christina Goulter presentation to HCSC 05 - Historical Perspective of the Air Power Component
- 17 Although lessons, implemented by the Germans, had been evident during the Spanish Civil War.
- 18 Reproduced at p380 Terraine op cit
- 19 D'Este op cit Appendix A has a full photocopy reproduction of this letter dated 4 May 1944.
- 20 *ibid* p218. Coningham believed Montgomery had 'stolen recognition away from himself and his air force after Alamein'.
- 21 Terraine op cit p386-387
- 22 *ibid* p569-570
- 23 Orange op cit p178 includes: 'he never for a moment forgot the land forces' and devised for them methods of providing a tremendous direct support which applied familiar principles in a new and most effective way'... 'never to be bettered... until the end of the war'
- 24 Orange op cit p173
- 25 D'Este op cit p219
- 26 Terraine op cit p203-205
- 27 Orange op cit p198
- 28 *ibid* p192
- 29 *ibid* p214
- 30 Both Terraine op cit p 609 and D' Este p217 draw on a quote from Professor Solly Zuckerman, which, sympathises with Leigh-Mallory's plight, but concludes it was 'simply not his world'.
- 31 Terraine op cit p 384.
- 32 Orange op cit 186
- 33 Craven and Cate (1983) vol 3, p138. Primary mission in the air plan for OVERLORD
- 34 Rostow (1981) p6-7
- 35 Lessons of Salerno and Anzio defined as that degree of dominance in the air battle of one force over the other which permits the conduct of operations by the former and its related land, sea and air forces at a given time and place without prohibitive interference by the opposing force.
- 36 On D-day, the Allies flew 14,000 sorties as opposed to 100 the Germans managed to put in the air.
- 37 Vogel (1994) 'If its white, it's American, if its black, it's British, if you can't see it, it's Luitwaffe' — quote by German soldiers
- 38 There were 58 German divisions in the west. Their strategy was to counterattack against any invasion with a mobile reserve under Rommel's command.
- 39 Goulter (2000) p195 describes the '2-for-1' strategy in which two targets outside the invasion area would be struck for every one inside the invasion area.
- 40 Support given to Land forces against objectives other than enemy forces engaged in the tactical battle, ie Air Interdiction
- 41 Irving (1981) p81 Eisenhower Telecon to his Deputy on 6 March 1944, as reported by General Patton visiting at Bushey Park.
- 42 Terraine op cit p 608
- 43 Pogue (1954) p127
- 44 Tedder op cit p530 Churchill was concerned about collateral French casualties: 'You will smear the good name of the Royal Air Force across the world'. This was a powerful moral issue and potential German propaganda opportunity.
- 45 Ambrose (1994) p97
- 46 *ibid* p98 Quotes official US Army Air Force historians, Craven and Cate, 'Long after D-Day, there remained the sobering question as to whether the results of the plan were commensurate with the cost in air effort and the ruin inflicted on French and Belgian cities'.
- 47 Pogue op cit p 132
- 48 Warden (1988) reproduces evidence of von Rundsted, von

- Kluge, Rommel and Colonel Hoffner, in charge of railroads in von Rundstedt's area.
- 49 Ambrose op cit p99
- 50 Air support intended to have an immediate effect on current land operations
- 51 Tedder op cit p549-550
- 52 Lamb (1985) p 80
- 53 Terraine op cit p 615
- 54 *ibid* p65
- 55 Terraine op cit p 614
- 56 Terraine op cit p616
- 57 Terraine op cit p618
- 58 Orange op cit p199
- 59 Orange op cit p198
- 60 Terraine op cit 619
- 61 D'Este op cit p226
- 62 Orange op cit p199
- 63 Orange op cit p203-207 catalogues the correspondence in this degenerative squabbling.
- 64 Hastings (1984 ) p 243
- 65 Terraine op cit p619
- 66 Orange op cit p198
- 67 Hastings op cit p254 quoting Brigadier General William Harrison of 30<sup>th</sup> Division.
- 68 *ibid*. Also Hallion (1994) (Internet source) has a good map of this.
- 69 Sullivan(1988) p101
- 70 Gooderson (1998) Appendix Tables p251
- 71 D'Este op cit p 401
- 72 *ibid* p 403
- 73 Gooderson op cit p150
- 74 Terraine op cit p 619
- 75 Terraine op cit p611 quoting Chester Wilmot
- 76 Goulter(200) op cit p197
- 77 Dr Christina Goulter presentation to HCSC 05 - Historical Perspective of the Air Power component
- 78 DGD&D/2/400 dated 20 NOV 03
- 79 No effective deployable air C<sup>2</sup> capability - Ineffective air/land / maritime coord at theatre level - Limited understanding of air warfare at all levels - Poor understanding of the military planning process Source: JFAC presentation on HCSC05
- 80 Ineffective ad-hoc augmentation - 'Flying programme' approach to air ops - Ad-hoc, 'target-centric' air ops planning- Day 40 before coherent air strategy produced - Failure to integrate Information Ops - Failure to co-ordinate between components Source: JFAC presentation on HCSC05
- 81 'Tactical level Air/Land issues' sit below the JFAC effort and concern air operations within the airspace of the LCC and in direct support of land forces, and specifically the integration of CAS/ AI into Land operations. GBAD except in their impact on Airspace Management
- 82 The C2 and responsibilities of the JASO are in DCI JS 72 2003 The JASO is a functional grouping of the maritime, land and air force elements involved in the provision of inter-component Air Support at the tactical level. The main elements are: Divisional Air Liaison Officers (DALO); Brigade Air Liaison Officers (BALO); Ground Liaison Officers (GLO); Tactical Air Control Parties (Forward Air Control) (TACP(FAC)); the Joint Forward Air Control Training and Standards Unit (JFACTSU); a Forward Air Control Standards and Evaluation officer (FAC STANEVAL); and a small headquarters element (HQ JASO) which is responsible for ensuring that the JASO is suitably resourced to meet its remit. This includes responsibility for manning, FAC training, standardisation, co-ordination of resources and

specialist equipment for ground FACs. In addition, HQ JASO can offer specialist advice on ALOs, GLOs and FACs, including on operational employment, continuation training and currency matters.

83 British Army Doctrine Publication – Land Operations – Post ADC Draft Dec 04 p 4-11

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