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RESTRICTED

TELEPHONE LOG OF THE GERMAN 7TH ARMY

FROM JUNE 6 TO JUNE 30, 1944

TRANSLATED BY

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GLOSSARY

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Full term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
A.K.	Armeekorps	Army Corps
A.N.F.	Armee-Nachschubfuehrer	O.C. army supply services
AOK	Armee-Oberkommando	Army H.Q.
A.Pi.Fue.	Armee-Pionierfuehrer	Senior Engineer Officer
A.K.K.	Admiral Kanalkueste	Admiral in Command, Channel Coast
Chef		Chief, commander
Chef Befh.	Chef Befehlshaber	C.-in-C.
Chef d. G.	Chef des Generalstabes	Chief of the General Staff
Div. Stab z. b. V.	Divisionsstab zu besonderer Verwendung	Divisional staff for special duties
E Transport	Eiltransport	Fast transport; usually express trains
Fl.K.	Fliegerkorps	Operational command approximately equal to R.A.F. Group
Gen.Kdo.	Generalkommando	G.H.Q.
Gen. der Flieger	General der Flieger	G.A.F. rank equal to Air Marshal
Gen.St.Off.	Generalstabsoffizier	General Staff Officer
H.Gr.	Heeresgruppe	Army Group
Ia.		Operational Staff
Ia-Luft		Air Operational Staff
Ic		Intelligence Staff
J.K.	Jagdkorps	Fighter Corps
Kdt.	Kommandant	Commandant
Lfl.Kdo.	Luftflottenkommando	H.Q. of G.A.F. territorial command
Mar.Gr.Kdo.	Marinegruppenkommando	Naval Group Command
O.B.	Oberbefehlshaber	C.-in-C.
Obkdo	Oberkommando	Supreme Command; G.H.Q. Staff
OKH	Oberkommando des Heeres	Army Supreme Command
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht	Supreme Command of the Armed Forces
O.Qu.	Oberquartiermeister	Chief of all supply and administration services at Army Group

GLOSSARY (Contd.)

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Full term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Pz. Gr.	Panzergruppe	Armoured group
Pz. Gr. Kdo.	Panzergruppenkommando	Armoured group H. Q.
See-Kdt.	See-Kommandant	Sea defence commander
Stohi	Stabsoffizier der oestlichen Hilfsinfanterie (?)	Staff officer for eastern volunteers.

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June 6, 1944

- 0120 hrs. Chef. d.G. LXXXIV A.K. reports:
Parachute landings from 0030 hours onwards in area east and north east of Caen, St. Marcouf, Montebourg, both sides of the Vire and on the east coast of Cotentin.
- 0130 hrs. Chef d.G. contacts O.B. and Chef H.Gr.B.
- 0200 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. AOK 7:
Further landings in the 716th Infantry Division sector. Battle area in east coast of Cotentin seems to extend from St. Marie du Mont to Montebourg. Fighting near Le Ham. Strong air formation approaching east of Cherbourg and further west in the sea area Jersey. Nothing yet known of air landings in the north and west coastal areas of Cotentin. Two strong points can be recognised in the 716th Infantry Division sector and east coast of Cotentin.
- 0205 hrs. Ia AOK 15 contacts Ia, reporting further parachute landings near Pont L'Eveque.
- 0215 hrs. Chef d.G. contacts Chef H.Gr.B :
Further landings from the air, mainly in the 716th Infantry Division sector, on the southern part of the Cotentin east coast, at Carentan. Small groups already destroyed. Sound of engines can be heard coming from the sea to the eastern Cotentin coast. As yet nothing heard about activities on both sides of Cherbourg. Admiral Kanalkueste reports shipping activities in the sea area Cherbourg. Nothing more known.
Chef d.G. proposes that the 91st Airborne Division should be placed under his command.
Chef H.Gr.B considers the operations at the moment to be still only local encounters. Chef d.G. believes that the activities point to a greater action coming.
- 0230 hrs. Chef d.G. informs O.B.:
Strong points both sides of Orne estuary, east coast of Cotentin, air landings as far as Pont l'Abbe. Nothing happened from sea as yet.
- 0235 hrs. Chef d.G. in cooperation with O.B. orders that the 91st Airborne Division should be under the command of LXXXIV A.K.
- 0240 hrs. Ia H.Gr.B to Chef d.G. AOK.7:
Ia H.Gr.B reports: O.B. West does not consider this to be a major operation. Chef d.G. replies that in LXXXIV A.K. area a number of British and American prisoners have already been taken. Also landings well within this area show this to be a major operation.
- 0245 hrs. Request from O.Qu. concerning removal of Todt Organisation workers from Cotentin Peninsula refused by Chef d.G. as developments in Cotentin Peninsula uncertain.
- 0245 hrs. Ia H.Gr.B. reports that shortly after midnight considerable parachute landings were made in area of 711th Infantry Division from troop-carrying gliders.
- 0250 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. to Chef AOK.7:
Further parachute landings near Azeville and to westward. Artillery group 621 brought in on the east coast Cotentin. One reinforcement company landed from the air on Lessay airfield. Admiral Kanalkueste reports sea targets located 35 km. north of Jobourg. Wireless interference makes details unknown. Similar

reports from area 716th Infantry Division. Dummies only known to be used in one instance. 10 troop-carrying gliders landed in open field south of Carentan. 12 others south-west of Marais des Gorges.

0300 hrs. Captain Kunxmann to Ia.

Enemy troop-carrying gliders also reported south of Le Havre.

0330 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. to Chef AOK 7.

1. Continual heavy landings since 0325 hrs. in the region Breville, east of Orne estuary and Grandcamp.
2. Position near Grandcamp on the Vire estuary still uncertain. Landing craft being used.
3. Landing craft at estuary of the Orne. Heavy firing from land and sea.
4. Battle headquarters 91 Area attacked by enemy battalion. Counter-measures being taken.
5. Communications with St. Mere Eglise cut off.
6. Riva Bella battery partly damaged in air attack.

0345 hrs. Situation report from Chef AOK 7 to Chef H.Gr.B. Increased air landings east of Orne estuary. On the whole, Chef AOK 7 abides by his earlier opinion that a major operation is in progress.

0400 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. to Chef AOK 7.

1. Everywhere preliminary skirmishes.
 2. Two concentrations at Orne estuary (Caen) and St. Mere Eglise of parachute troops and glider troops.
 3. New air landings near La Pernelle, near Barfleur. Fighting in progress. Landing craft sailing quickly to Orne estuary. Heavy air activity.
 4. Gen.Kdo. has sent reserve regiment 915 to left flank of 325nd Infantry Division, with orders to establish and maintain communications with Carentan.
- 21st Panzer Division given alarm by H.Gr.B and units sent to air-landing area in the Orne estuary.
- In the main, the plan seems to be to cut the Cotentin peninsula at the narrowest point.

0440 hrs. OI LXXXIV A.K. reports:

- 1/and 3/Artillery Regiments 1716 attacked by airborne troops.
- 1st Battery in close fighting. No communication now with 3rd Battery.

0445 hrs. Report from Ia 716th Infantry Division:

Bridge near Benouville (Orne Estuary) occupied by the enemy. Attack started against it with the front to the east.

0500 hrs. Ic LXXXIV A.K. reports:

Enemy forces west of the Orne estuary mopped up. Position eased. Parachute landings in Falaise-Mezidon area. Gliders flown over Caen. British 1st Airborne Division on right flank. At present sea landings only at Vire estuary and Port en Bassin. Orne estuary not definite.

0515 hrs. Chef d.G. gives following clarification of position to H.Gr B.: Large-scale enemy assault indicated by depth of enemy airborne landings up to 20 km. on Orne sector and in south-east of Cotentin Peninsula, and by capture of crossings over the Carentan - Pont l'Abbe causeway, taken in conjunction with radar-located targets at sea off the Orne mouth, between Port en Bassin and the mouth of the Vire and to the north of Cherbourg and the Jobourg Peninsula.

- 0520 hrs. General Feuchtinger, O.C. 21st Panzer Division informs Chef. d.G.: Confirmation that enemy parachutists landed south-east of Bretteville, but Falaise still quiet. 21st Panzer Division has made many reconnaissances and is attacking on both sides of Orne estuary. Strong point east of Orne estuary.
- 0535 hrs. Ic LXXXIV A.K. reports:
1. Sea landings Vire and Port en Bassin unconfirmed. Till now no British soldier entered this area from the sea.
 2. Ships heading south-east reported abreast of Marcouf Island and St. Vast. Near Marcouf about 15 large landing craft and near St. Vast 6 small craft leading with 3 large craft behind. Course south-east.
 3. Heavy bombing attacks on defence points 28 and 35 (Courselles-Asnelles district). No air landings behind there however.
 4. Dummies dropped by parachute on Carpiquet airfield.
 5. Quiet in Granville area. Landings from sea in Pont l'Eveque area and south of Le Havre.
- 0600 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef AOK 7:
1. Strong naval units have opened fire on the coast near the Orne estuary, near Bernieres s.M.-Arromanches - Colleville, - Grandchamp. Landing craft approaching Bernieres s.M.
 2. Position at base of Cotentin peninsula still uncertain. Communications re-established near Carentan.
 3. New air landings south of Bernieres s.M., with enemy advancing northwards in conjunction with attack from sea.
 4. Enemy repulsed near Bernelle and Barfleur.
 5. Gen.Kdo. requests permission to use 21st Panzer Division with reinforcements to clear enemy airborne troops east of Orne estuary.
- 0645 hrs. H.Gr.B has placed 21st Panzer Division at the disposal of AOK. Units of the 21st Panzer Division were sent in under the command of O.C. 125th Panzer Grenadier Regiment to clear enemy airborne troops from both sides of the Orne Estuary. Chef. d.G. suggests that the following morning report be sent to H.Gr.B. Depth of enemy parachute landings in Orne area and southern part of Cotentin indicates a large-scale attack. Purpose of coastal bombardments not yet apparent. It appears to be a covering attack in conjunction with attacks to come later at other points. Air and sea reconnaissance have brought no further news since daybreak. O.B. orders immediate elimination of the enemy from areas east of Orne estuary.
- 0700 hrs. Chef. d.G. instructs G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. that 21st Panzer Division is to be put under the command of LXXXIV A.K. with orders to wipe out airborne troops east of the Orne. 12th SS Panzer Division to go into action in the Lisieux area. General Marcks reports that air landings have taken place from Carentan to north of Valognes, and that the 91st Airborne Division is to be brought in to restore the situation. 234rd Infantry Division is to be regrouped so that it can operate to the east, leaving a covering force in the west.
- 0707 hrs. AOK submits morning report to H.Gr.B, containing report of counter-measures adopted, situation in the air, and assessment of the over-all position.
- 0900 hrs. LXXXIV A.K. reports:
From 0715 hrs. onwards stronger landings made from the sea on both sides of the Orne estuary, especially to the west of Bernieres, Asnelles, Meuvaines, Grandcamp, with infantry and armoured forces. Number of ships not known. Near Bernieres, roughly 100; near Grandcamp, about 60.

/Total

Total strength of the airborne troops engaged, about 3 divisions.
No enemy operations from the air reported on Guernsey and Jersey.

- 0835 hrs. Colonel Metzke AOK 15 to Colonel Helmdach:
Near AOK 15 enemy landings in the Beaumont area.
Nothing yet known of landings on the coast.
- 0845 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports:
East of Asnelles landing with 35 tanks. Around St. Mere Eglise
enemy about one division strong, deployed between Montebourg and
Carentan.
- 0905 hrs. Chef H.Gr.B.
Chef AOK 7 reports on situation and requests forces in the Bayeux
area for counter-operations in Calvados.
- 0915 hrs. Ia - Chef XXV A.K.:
Ia demands urgent action to prepare battle groups from 275th Infantry
Division and then from 265th Infantry Division. Armoured units of
both divisions and 353rd Infantry Division should be sent forward.
- 0925 hrs. Chef d.G. - Chef LXXXIV A.K.:
Chef promises a mobile battle group.
LXXXIV A.K. requests reinforcements in the threatened area between
Asnelles and Ver s.M. Actual zero hour cannot yet be fixed.
Marcouf battery now out of action. General Marcks explains that the
position on the left bank of the Orne is dangerous and that enemy
tanks have reached the artillery positions.
LXXXIV A.K. has no mobile reserves with anti-tank weapons. General
Marcks urgently requests mobile reserves for the west of
Caen; the 21st Panzer Division is needed to the right of the
Orne. He would like the 12th SS Panzer Division. The forward
positions in the area of the 352nd Infantry Division have also
been penetrated, but the position is not so critical as in the area
of the 716th Infantry Division.
- 1005 hrs. Ia LXXXIV A.K. reports:
Large scale air activity with troop-carrying gliders over the area
of the 77th Infantry Division, moving south-west. Nothing to
report yet from the sea. Gen. Kdo. are still on No.1 alarm. Chef
orders No.2 alarm to be given as a result of the latest observations.
- 1015 hrs. Chef d.G. reports to H.Gr.B. (Lt.Colonel Staubwasser) on new developments
and requests that 12th Panzer Division be moved further forward.
- 1025 hrs. Ic reports that Carentan has been cleared of the enemy since
1000 hrs. All bridges intact.
- 1035 hrs. General Marcks reports that he intends to put the 21st SS Panzer
Division into the field west of the Orne because of the altered
situation there. This rearrangement can take place at once,
as they lie so far back. Focal point of enemy shipping
concentration is off the Orne estuary.
- 1055 hrs. Admiral Kanalkueste reports:
Enemy ships engaging 6th Battery of 1261 Artillery Regiment.
About 30 small craft landing troops at Ravenoville. Landing
craft under fire from 2nd Battery of 1261 Artillery Regiment,
which is still intact. Roughly 600 parachute troops dropped
near Tocqueville.
- 1040 hrs. Admiral Kanalkueste reports:
Landings expected near Ver s.M. because about 200 landing craft
are patrolling the coast under cover of continual heavy air
attacks. Further landings near Asnelles, where 35 enemy tanks

/have

have been destroyed up till now. Defensive activity by our own artillery.

Enemy landing craft entering Vire estuary.

- 1100 hrs. Ia informs Chef Befh.SW. as to present situation and requests continual reports on situation in security zone and the reaction of the civilian population.
Chef Befh.SW. reports civilian population quiet at the moment.
- 1145 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G.
1. Enemy has established bridgehead in area of 716th Infantry Division west of Orne estuary, and advanced units have reached a line Colleville - Tailleville - Reviers - St.Croiz s.M. - Asnelles.
2. No reports of position in area of 352nd Infantry Division.
3. In Madelaine area units of I/Grenadier Regiment 919 surrounded by airborne troops.
4. Counter-attack being made towards St.Mere Eglise from Emondville in the north and Pont l'Abbe in the south to wipe out airborne troops who have taken up position there. Montebourg and Pont l'Abbe in our hands.
5. New airborne landings one company strong near St.Jacques (NW of St. Sauveur le Vicomte).
6. Observations from east coast of Cotentin show powerful naval forces off the Calvados sector disembarking under powerful fighter protection.
7. No reports from the east coast available, as communications are at the moment broken.
8. Assault battalion AOK 7 has started to move up to engage enemy airborne forces near Azeville to the south-east of Montebourg.
- 1200 hrs. Chef d.G. informs H.Gr.B as to situation in area of LXXXIV.A.K. and requests deployment of parts of 711th Infantry Division on east bank of the Orne, since 21st Panzer Division has been diverted to engage enemy on the west bank.
Chef H.Gr.B replies that he wishes to wait for the time being.
Chef d.G. requests that a decision may be arrived at as soon as possible.
Chef LXXXIV.A.K. requests Chef d.G. for permission to transfer 30th Motorised Brigade to 716th Infantry Division sector, as the situation there is particularly critical. Approval given by O.B.
Chef d.G. thereupon informs LXXXIV.A.K. that they can count on 12th Panzer Division to reinforce 716th Infantry Division. Time not yet fixed. General Marcks reports that sea landings have been entirely repulsed except in the Madelaine sector, and the only place where the situation is critical is west of the Orne estuary, where help from the army is urgently requested.
- 1210 hrs. Chef d.G. orders Chef d.G.XXV.A.K. to withdraw battle group 275th Infantry Division immediately.
- 1230 hrs. Because of enemy penetration in area of 716th Infantry Division, Chef requests H.Gr.B that XXXVII Panzer Corps assume command in the area, to eliminate bridgehead. He also requests that 711th Infantry Division be put in on the east bank of the Orne and 12th Panzer Division made available for action in 716th Infantry Division area. Chef.H.Gr.B. announces that the Panzer Corps will not be used, but that AOK request for 12th Panzer Division will be forwarded to O.B. West.
- 1335 hrs. Ia 352nd Infantry Division reports:
Division has thrown back invaders into the sea, and only near Colleville s.M. are counter-attacks still going on.
Chef d.G. informs Obkdo.H.Gr.B that the position is now restored in 352nd Infantry Division area.

- 1550 hrs. 12th SS Panzer Division and Panzer Training Division will be placed under the command of AOK immediately as reinforcements against bridgehead in 716th Infantry Division sector. Thereupon AOK issues following order through Pz.Gr.Kdo.:
1. 12th SS Panzer Division to be sent immediately north of a line excluding Alençon, including Carouges, and excluding Flers in the area on both sides of Evrecy, and will come under command of LXXXIV AK. Their task will be to join forces with the 21st Panzer Division on the west and to wipe out enemy forces that have penetrated west of the Orne.
 2. Panzer Training Division goes into action immediately south of this line, to capture in the first instance the Flers-Vire area.
- 1530 hrs. Chef LXXXIV.A.K. reports that the enemy to the west of the Orne estuary have reached Beauville and action on the beach in this sector has ceased.
- 1540 hrs. Chef H.Gr.B. reports that I SS Panzer Corps with all its forces will be placed under the command of AOK.
- 1600 hrs. Ia informs I SS Panzer Corps in reply to query: AOK intends to concentrate 21st Panzer Division, SS Panzer Division "Hitler Youth", Panzer Training Division, and 716th Infantry Division under I SS Panzer Corps in the right of LXXXIV A.K. sector. It is suggested that the wood 20 km. north-west of Falaise be selected as the battle headquarters.
- 1620 hrs. Chef d.G. reports to Chef H.Gr.B that 21st Panzer Division has reinforced 716th Infantry Division, and advance units are already north of Caen. Contact with the enemy is expected shortly. Chef d.G. reports over-all view of the situation: Strong enemy forces are concentrated at the point of breakthrough. At the moment there is nothing operational to fear, as there are not the necessary troops on the east coast of Cotentin to cut off Normandy. It will probably be possible to clear Cotentin with our own forces. It is to be noted that parachute troops have landed there without support from the sea. This indicates possibility of diversionary operation intended to draw off our forces.
- 1640 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports strong reinforcement landings by sea in the Madelaine sector and in the Vire estuary, fresh air landings north of Valognes and near St.Mesnil. Own artillery at Grandcamp in action against landings at Madelaine, but inadequate.
- 1650 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports civilian population still quiet, otherwise nothing special to report.
- 1655 hrs. At request of Ia O.B.West, Chef d.G. gives brief summary of events. Ia O.B. West points out desire of OKW that the enemy in the bridgehead be destroyed by the evening of June 6 as there is a danger of fresh landings by sea and air. According to General Jodl's orders all available forces must be diverted to the point of penetration in Calvados. The bridgehead must be cleared today. Chef d.G. declares this to be impossible. Chef H.Gr.B. reports that 21st Panzer Division must attack immediately with or without reinforcements. OKW has commanded that the bad weather conditions must be utilised to the full for bringing up reserves during the night of June 6-7.
- 1800 hrs. As a result of a report by Ia 352nd Infantry Division, Chef d.G. draws attention to the fact that developments in their sector are definitely unfavourable. The enemy has infiltrated through pockets of resistance, and their forward armoured units have

reached a line Colleville s.M. - Louviers - Asnieres. The apparent objective is an attack on Bayeux from sectors of the 716th and 352nd Infantry Divisions. On the right flank of the 352nd Infantry Division the enemy has taken Ryes. Counter-attack was beaten off by strong enemy forces. Heavy losses caused. 352nd Infantry Division has launched a counter-attack from the Manvieux area against Ryes towards the east.

- 1820 hrs. O.B. asks AOK 15 for support in the clearing of the territory east of the Orne estuary. General von Salmuth promises this support for June 7, providing there is no change in the position at AOK 15.
- 1825 hrs. Ia 716th Infantry Division reports:
1. Depth of breakthrough: on east bank Troarn - Ranville, on west bank Blainville - Beauville - Mathieu - Colomby - south of Aublie - St. Gabriel.
 2. Heavy barrage and dropping of special bombs on minefields considerably decreased.
 3. Enemy landed at ebbside and thus avoided beach obstacles which were then visible. Very heavy naval artillery on the coast.
 4. New methods of attack being used, in that strong points are being bypassed and strong armoured units with infantry and cyclists are infiltrating, and then turning and attacking coastal installations from the rear.
- Chef d.G. reports to Chef H.Gr.B. on position in area of 716th Infantry Division and on enemy's new method of attack.
- 1800 hrs. Airborne troops in the St.Mere Eglise - Carentan area have linked up with forces landed from the sea, and are being continuously supplied from the sea. Counter-attacks started: by an assault battalion of AOK 7 from the north, from the west by reinforced 1057 Grenadier Regiment, and from the south by Paratroop Regiment 6, with III/1058 Grenadier Regiment.
- 1830 hrs. Admiral Kanalkueste reports on Normandy situation:
1. Strong naval concentrations off the Seine estuary. Our battery south of Le Havre exchanges fire with the naval guns.
 2. The enemy pushing forward on both sides of the Orne estuary north of Blainville have established bridgeheads, and our troops are retiring slowly.
 3. Arromanches cut off, and guns have been blown up.
 4. New landings constantly taking place to the north-west of the Vire estuary.
 5. Marcouf is under heavy fire from 38 cm. naval guns. 2 guns have been put out of action by direct hits. One gun still intact and firing. New type rocket missiles being fired from the sea. Airborne enemy forces are now between battery and Ravenhill.
 6. 6 heavy battleships and heavy cruisers, 20 destroyers, and 30-50 transport ships have been sighted off the Grandcamp-Barfleur line.
- 1900 hrs. AOK orders the immediate withdrawal of 275th Infantry Division battle group; to be moved up in E transports from 1900 hrs., to Lison-Bayeux area. When they arrive in the new area, they will be under the command of Gen. Kdo. LXXXIV A.K.
- 2100 hrs. Conversation between Ia, Chef des Gen. Stabs and G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. New parachute landings in the Theville-Brillevast area. Strong breakthrough in area of 915th Grenadier Regiment, east of Bayeux, over the Bayeux-Caen road, towards the south. Attack by 21st. Panzer Division rendered useless by heavily concentrated airborne troops.

2240 hrs. O.B. reports to Fieldmarshal Rommel:

1. Attack by 21st Panzer Division halted by renewed air landings.
2. Further breakthrough south of Ryes as far as Bayeux - Caen road. Counter-attack by 12th SS Panzer Division expected. Location of the division not yet known at AOK.
3. AOK has again vainly requested air support at Riva Bella. To this, Fieldmarshal Rommel replies that Luftwaffe units are now being moved.
4. New air landings on Cotentin from Madelaine to Quineville. Mopping up operations very difficult because of the many hedges in the countryside. Up till now, one reinforced regiment of the 243rd Infantry Division, an assault battalion of AOK 7 and the 6th Paratroop Regiment are being used in this area to oppose the enemy air landings. Also 275th Infantry Division is being brought in.

O.B. requests permission to evacuate all other troops. Fieldmarshal Rommel decides that the 266th and 77th Infantry Divisions can be prepared for movement and 265th Infantry Division battle group can start moving out.

With the agreement of O.B. West, Luftflottenkommando 3 instructs Gen.Kdo. Fliegerkorps II (Buelowius) to cooperate directly with AOK 7.

Conversation with Chef des Gen.Stabs on June 6, 1944.

1. With O.C. Panzer Training Division, General Bayerlein. The division under the command of AOK is to move further forward into an assembly area along a line Thury Harcourt - Aunay - Caumont. For this reason, the division is directed to the north-west, and will most probably be used in the Caen area. It must link up with I Panzer Corps and will probably come under the command of this Corps.
2. With O.Qu. AOK 7:
Area where Todt Organisation is at work to be moved back as far as is necessary to ensure mobility. Reserves will remain to withdraw foreign Todt workers in the Cotentin peninsula; they will be transferred during the night of June 6 - 7 to the assembly area previously prepared.

2325 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports:
For the projected counter-attack on the bridgehead in the 716th Infantry Division sector:
I SS Panzer Corps is preparing for an attack on June 7, in which the Panzer Training Division will cooperate with the 21st Panzer Division.
Disposition: 21st Panzer Division east, and 12th SS Panzer Division with Panzer Training Division west of Caen.
Chef d.G., after communication with O.B. orders that Panzer Training Division be placed under the command of the 1st SS Panzer Division for the attack on June 7, and preparations can be made in accordance with proposals of LXXXIV A.K. Gen.Kdo. LXXXIV A.K. is to communicate these announcements to Panzer Training Division.

2400 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Ia H.Gr.B about report from G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K.: that troops have suffered heavy losses especially from preliminary bombardment from naval guns, also all defence guns on land have been put out of action by direct hits. Counter-attacks were made on all fronts, but these also suffered heavy losses because of enemy air superiority and gunfire. Chef d.G. remarks that the behaviour of the troops is to be highly commended.
Telephone conversation Chef d.G. with O.C. 21st Panzer Division and O.C. 716th Infantry Division.
(a) 21st Panzer Division had counter-attacked and gained a narrow corridor to the coast, but because of large-scale air landings they had to give ground, and on the command of Gen.Kdo. LXXXIV A.K. went over to the defensive.

(b) 716th Infantry Division still holding out in strong points. There is no more communication between divisional, regimental and battalion headquarters, so that nothing is known of events, or which strong points are still intact. Counter-attack on June 7 must at all costs reach the coast, as the defenders of strong points are expecting this of us. Ia informs Ia H.Gr. about the situation in sector of 716th Infantry Division.

June 7, 1944

- 0130 hrs. Transmission to I SS Panzer Corps of the order to attack was interrupted by disturbances. Telephone communication with Falaise is not now possible.
- 0400 hrs. Fieldmarshal Rommel telephones and calls for a report by Chef d. Gen. St. on the position: Chef reports that the 3 panzer formations are operating in line abreast, and that the attack is going on ruthlessly with all available forces. Fieldmarshal Rommel mentions that the formation on the right will be ready to attack by 1000 hrs., to cooperate from the east. Regarding Cotentin, Chef reports on the continued landings by the enemy, who is landing tanks at the rate of one a minute. Fieldmarshal Rommel demands the concentration of all forces and the harassing of all landing parties by artillery, from the east as well. Everything possible must be done to ensure that the enemy does not get a firm foothold.
- 0705 hrs. Ia reports to Ia H.Gr.B that telephone communication has now ceased, and that nothing new can be said about events during the night. H.Gr.B. still knows nothing about the landings in the AOK 15 area.
- 0710 hrs. Ia AOK 15 announces that an unconfirmed landing is supposed to have taken place in their area.
- 0730 hrs. Chef d.G. reports to Chef H.Gr.B. that the position is unchanged, and that the rumour of air landings near Argentan is unfounded, and also it is believed that there has been no attack on Falaise by airborne troops.
- 0740 hrs. Ia Fliegerkorps II reports that during the night 22 aircraft in all have made attacks on shipping in the whole area, and requests instructions where attacks should be made during the morning. The removal of 275th Infantry Division battle group took place during the night. 265th Infantry Division battle group should be withdrawn after 1200 hrs. Panther detachment of Panzer Training Division is on the move. 18 - 22 convoys are moving up in E transports apparently towards Alencon.
- 0750 hrs. LXXXIV.A.K. reports parachute landings from 300 aircraft between Lessay and Coutances. No further landings have taken place from the sea.
- 0850 hrs. Fieldmarshal Rommel says that 17th Panzer Grenadier Division is to move up to Villedieu in order to attack the parachute troops reported in the Coutances area. He also commands that 77th Infantry Division be brought out immediately and sent as quickly as possible to guard the coastline in the same area. 17th Panzer Grenadier Division will not be in the assembly area before June 8 at the earliest. Fieldmarshal Rommel believes that the probable intention of the enemy is to cut off completely Cherbourg and the whole of Cotentin, and therefore it is of the utmost importance that all available troops be sent to that area. To the objection of O.B. that if the 77th Infantry Division is withdrawn there remains a possibility of renewed air landings in Brittany, Rommel replies that he believes there is no chance of a further landing, as the enemy is already too firmly established in Normandy.

Forces from II Parachute Corps are to be brought in to protect the coastal defence area "A.1".

0915 hrs. Chef d.G. therefore commands Gen.Kdo.LXXXIV.A.K. that 77th Infantry Division be withdrawn at once and that the right battalion should proceed on foot without dispersal towards Granville. Detachments of the 77th Infantry Division to remain in the fortress of St.Malo, and a battalion in coastal defence area. All other units to be replaced by detachments of the 5th Paratroop Division, in conjunction with II Parachute Corps.

Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports that in place of the 77th Infantry Division he will require 2 - 3 battalions.

1010 hrs. AOK issues following orders to II Parachute Corps:
5th Paratroop Division is to send immediately 2 - 3 battalions, if LXXIV A.K. agrees, to the coastal defence area "A.1" to replace the 77th Infantry Division. II Parachute Corps to go into action under command of LXXXIV.A.K. to clear up position on the west coast of the Cotentin peninsula. With the approval of O.B.H.Gr.B. the following will be subordinated to II Parachute Corps: 3rd Paratroops Division, 77th Infantry Division, and 17th Panzer Grenadier Division. Chef d.G. informs G.O.C. II Parachute Corps, Gen.d. Flieger Meindl. of these new orders. The route of the units on the march is to be right round the curve of the Bay of Mont St. Michel, in order to be available on the west coast of Cotentin immediately.

1200 hrs. Chef d.G. informs H.Gr.B. of new report from I SS Panzer Corps:
(a) 12th SS Panzer Division has arrived at a line Caen - Villers-Bocage and have been held back by heavy air attacks.
At the same time Panzer Training Division has arrived in the Toury - Harcourt area.
(b) Air reconnaissance over Coutances has revealed no troop-carrying gliders, so it is to be presumed that only parachute troops with light weapons are in this area.
(c) Off the eastern coast of Cotentin 5 destroyers are lying and firing at the coast, otherwise there are only scattered landing craft. About 30 landing craft in the Vire estuary.
(d) At the breakthrough point west of the Orne estuary there are now fewer heavy landings, possibly because of bombing attacks.
(e) 21st Panzer Division has sent no reports through, so it seems that they have been temporarily cut off.

1210 hrs. O.B.Pz.Gr.West, General Geyr von Schweppenburg, reports to O.B. that Pz.Gr.West has been placed under the command of AOK 7.

1510 hrs. Railway Transport Officer reports to Ia that the moving of Div. Stab z.b.V. 136, which has arrived at Rennes, requires too many locomotives and too much transport room, and therefore hinders all action. He requests permission to divert this express train. Ia agrees.

1515 hrs. Ia LXXIV A.K. reports that the 77th Infantry Division moved off with its first units at 1400 hrs.

1525 hrs. Ic reports that over Le Mans leaflets have been dropped which advised the population to clear out of the town. The Prefect intends to calm the people by the use of loudspeaker cars, and to threaten punishments for the spreading of rumours. Only the evacuation of children, which has already begun, will be carried out.

1740 hrs. Chef d.G. contacts H.Gr.B. about the situation in Normandy:
1. Because of strong armoured formations north-east of Caen, I SS Panzer Corps has announced the following dispositions:
21st Panzer Division on the right, and Panzer Training

Division on the left, rather more to the rear. The intention is to destroy the enemy and to regain the coastal positions.

I SS Panzer Corps intended to attack at 1600 hrs. but were hindered in their preparations by air attacks.

2. East of the Orne estuary from 1500 hrs. onwards, one battalion of the 711th Infantry Division and units of the 346th Infantry Division have been attacking Caen from the direction of Merville - Veraville and Troarn.
3. The front line of the 716th Infantry Division has altered in the west, and since 1200 hrs. single enemy tanks have penetrated into Bayeux.
4. We are holding the coastline from Arromanches - St. Honorine. Behind the line there is fighting with paratroops. Grandcamp has been retaken in a counter-attack.
5. New parachute landings near Neuilly, south of Isigny and both sides of Carentan.
6. The situation on the peninsula is still not quite clear, as it is very difficult to engage the enemy in a countryside full of hedges.
7. First units of the 275th Infantry Division have arrived in the Avranches area.
8. Army has ordered that all available mobile anti-tank forces in other divisions are to be put at the disposal of the Normandy fronts.
9. At the request of O.B., Chef d.G. wishes to know whether:
 - (a) more artillery can be obtained.
 - (b) what forces other than those already prepared for service in this army sector can be removed from other sectors and diverted here.

Obkdo H.Gr.B orders that AOK 7 should prevent the cutting off of the Cotentin Peninsula by destroying the enemy airborne troops in the Coutances - Lessay area. To this end II Parachute Corps, with the 3rd Paratroop Division, the 77th Infantry Division, the 17th Panzer Grenadier Division and the Training Battalion at Tours are to be used. The corps is to advance into the attack on both sides of Coutances in the direction of St. Symphorien after it has assembled south of a line Villedieu - Granville.

Report from G.O.C. Fliegerkorps II, General Buelowius, to O.B. and conversation about air power of the Corps. O.B. desires air support for the attack by I SS Panzer Corps in the central sector Orne-West. General Buelowius says that the movements of units in the army area is very difficult and is hampered by air attacks, and can therefore only be effected in the next few days.

2000 - 2010

hrs. Vigorous air operations in the 265th Infantry Division area and repeated air attacks on the airfield at Lorient. Gliders flying in over the whole of Brittany. At present, they have only dropped dummies. 300 paratroops landed on eastern side of Bay of St. Brieuc, near Hillion. Apart from parachute landings near Hillion, no more air landings confirmed as yet.

2110 hrs. Kdt. Nantes area, General Reinhardt reports continued air attack on Nantes since 1900 hrs. In agreement with AOK 7 Alarm signal No.2 was given.

Alarm signal No.2 was given for LXXXIV and XXV A.K. as well as for the 5th Paratroop Division.

As air landings near Coutances have not been confirmed, AOK requests H.Gr.B that the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, which is proceeding towards Villedieu, be diverted to St. Lo, so that the division can be used at some other point as the situation may demand.

According to a report from Ia H.Gr.B to Ia AOK 7, O.B. H.Gr.B refused this request.

June 8, 1944

- 0640 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Ia H.Gr.B of British operational plan which has been recovered from the water. Contents will be communicated by teleprinter.
- 0810 hrs. On the orders of Fieldmarshal Rommel Ia urgently requests situation report, as report telegraphed in the morning has not yet come through.
- (a) Ic H.Gr.B gives extract from the operation order, VII American Corps. According to this, the following troops are being used:
 - Right Flank:
VII American Corps, with 4 divisions.
Instructions: Attack towards north from Carentan - Quinville headland, and take Cherbourg from the land.
 - Left flank
V British Corps, with 4 British infantry divisions, 1 British airborne division and 2 American divisions in the Calvados area.
Instructions: Take Bayeux and seek contact with VII American Corps near Carentan.
 - (b) Own position:
Bayeux in enemy hands. Approximate course of own front line: 5 km. north of Caen in the west, in a north-westerly direction to south of Bayeux, and across towards Russy.
 - (c) Parachutists dropped near Russy and south west of Bayeux. Enemy is pushing to the west to approach the coast from the rear.
 - (d) Carentan in our hands. Further attacks being made to the north-east.
 - (e) Continued heavy air attacks on St. Lo and Vire area, where traffic dispersal points are destroyed.
 - (f) Attack by I SS Panzer Corps could not begin until today, because of the position in the air. Direction of the attack is north and north-west of Caen in the direction of the coast. Fieldmarshal Rommel telephones and commands I SS Panzer Corps with all its 3 divisions to begin a main attack on the left.
- 0830 hrs. Chef d.G. reports to Fieldmarshal Rommel that the west coast of Cotentin is completely free of enemy forces, and therefore it is necessary for II Parachute Corps to be sent either in the Bayeux direction or to Cherbourg. Fieldmarshal Rommel orders that the right flank of II Parachute Corps with 2 divisions be sent towards St. Lo, but care must be taken that II Parachute Corps maintains contact with all its units.
- Chef d.G., answering a question, states that there is still no communication established with II Parachute Corps and the divisions, and therefore nothing is known of the position of the units of the corps. The corps has orders to contact AOK by telephone immediately.
- The establishment of communications seems to have been delayed by air attacks, especially on Avranches.
- 1030 hrs. Alarm signal No.2 lifted for Nantes area, XXV and LXXIV A.K. and 5th Paratroop Division. O.B. has left for the sector of Pz. Gruppen Kdo. West.
- 1105 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef LXXIV A.K. that the movement of the 77th Infantry Division is also to take place during the day. The division is to be further dispersed and to proceed to the area directed.
- Chef LXXIV A.K. announces that the movement is going on according to plan.
- 1415 hrs. Chef sends LXXIV A.K. following message via 363/Reporting Centre II Parachute Corps (Lieutenant Ormanský).

/Chef

G.169141

Chef requests situation report. General Meindl proceeding towards St. Lo. AOK is setting everything in motion in the direction of St. Lo.

1455 hrs. Chef XXV A.K. informs Chef AOK 7: 265th Infantry Division is assembling for movement. Chef AOK urges necessity for punctuality of transport.

1520 hrs. Chef AOK to Chef H. Gr. B:
Chef AOK informs Chef H. Gr. B of present situation. No report yet arrived concerning position with I SS Panzer Corps. O.B. AOK 7 and Fieldmarshal Rommel are there in person. The enemy using newly brought in armoured forces, have attacked north of Caen, but have been repulsed. The enemy have forced their way into Port en Bassin, but apparently this is only a commando operation. Near Carentan the enemy have made a new thrust forward from St. Mere Eglise, which is again in their hands. H. Gr. B orders that the bridgehead near Carentan must be held at all costs. Chef AOK requests that something be done to ensure the use of all available shipping and aircraft space for the transporting of the 3rd Paratroop Division. As it is known that all enemy forces are coming from the western parts of England, Chef d.G. assumes that the enemy will not attack in any other sector at present, and that this operation will take many days yet to complete.
Both Chefs are of the opinion that the enemy have chosen the Normandy coast for political reasons, and also because they intend to use Cherbourg as a base for future operations. Chef AOK requests a strong air cover for the troops on the march, so that they will not be too greatly weakened by air attacks on the long journey to the front. Chef H. Gr. B states that all available air strength has been placed at the disposal of AOK 7.

2400 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Lt. Colonel Enneccerus, liaison officer with Fliegerfuehrer West that according to the experience of the O.B. when he went to battle H.Q. I SS Panzer Corps, although there was much air activity on the part of the enemy, there was no trace of German fighters in the sky.
Lt. Colonel Enneccerus replied that up till now all available fighters were mainly being used as fighter-bombers with 500 kg. bombs, against the enemy landing-fleets, so that no aircraft were available for actual fighter work.

June 9, 1944

0125 hrs. O.B. informs Chef H. Gr. B of his opinion and requests permission of Fieldmarshal Rommel to use the units of Pz. Gr. West in the Caen area, and push towards the north with them, and so clear the situation on the whole eastern flank of the invasion area.

0630 hrs. Fieldmarshal Rommel informs O.B. that he is in agreement with the suggestion for operations in the Caen area. Point of concentration on left, as well as the point of concentration on the right as before.

1035 hrs. General Marcks informs O.B. and Chef d.G. of the position in the sector of his Corps, and of his intentions:

(a) Isigny occupied by the enemy, who advanced further to the east and south this morning. Enemy tanks reported on Lison - St. Lo road, so G.O.C. considers that the intended journey of O.B. to St. Lo should not be made until reconnaissance has been carried out.

G.O.C. is of the opinion that the enemy hopes to push westwards from the Isigny area, so as to obtain control of the Vire crossings. At present the corps has no more forces available to put in there.

352nd Infantry Division now only consists of small units, and it seems that the 726th Grenadier Regiment is no longer amongst them. The first units of II Parachute Corps reached the area south of Balleroy during the night.

- (b) Intentions: To withdraw our own line behind the Vire, thereby frustrating enemy attempts at a crossing. II Parachute Corps is to assemble so that it will be able later to stage a counter-attack in close cooperation with I SS Panzer Corps. Chef d.G. maintains that a withdrawal behind the Vire would be out of the question. General Marcks considers that the 77th Infantry Division should be brought up immediately as he is of the opinion that the units of the 709th Infantry Division would gradually be pushed back by the concentration of enemy forces. More anti-tank and mobile artillery are urgently needed. But still General Marcks hopes that the 77th Infantry Division will be able to stop any further advances to the north from the St.Mere Eglise headland. General Marcks further suggests that II Parachute Corps be subordinated to Pz.Gr.West, and that Gen.Kdo.LXXXIV A.K. have complete control over the battle for Cotentin. For this he wishes the 77th Infantry Division to be under his direct command.
- (c) O.B. agrees that the 77th Infantry Division should advance towards Valognes, but orders that the operations in the whole sector of the Corps will, as at present, continue to be controlled by Gen.Kdo.LXXXIV.A.K.

1100 hrs. Ia forwards to Lt.Colonel Enneccerus (with Fliegerfuehrer West), a request from the army that twin-engined and single-engined fighter operations be carried out on targets north of the Vire and east of Montebourg.

1550 hrs. Ia AOK - Ia H.Gr.B.

1. AOK renews the request made in the daily report of June 8 concerning the subordination of the 346th Infantry Division to Pz.Gr.West so that the situation east of Caen may be cleared with the aim of soon setting free units of the 21st Panzer Division and the 716th Infantry Division for the battle west of the Orne.
2. The order of H.Gr.B. on the bringing in of new forces has again been altered. Ia H.Gr.B affirms that there will be no further alterations.
3. Explanation as to which unit reports under the covering name of "Erika" (Major Schmitz).
4. Ia requests that Ia H.Gr.B check up on the following telephone conversation which has been picked up:
"Concentration tractors spraying poison gas."

1715 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. gives the following situation report to Chef d.G.:

1. The enemy has not succeeded in pushing further south from Isigny. However, another attack is in progress near Trevieres, which the 353rd Infantry Division believe they can hold.
2. The enemy has started an attack to the north from St.Mere Eglise headland towards Montebourg and to the west across the flooded areas. Apparently the breakthrough has succeeded near Montebourg; this has been made possible by the exceptionally heavy fire from the naval guns which are being trained on the attack area from the sea. The position here is particularly grave. Because of this serious situation General Marcks requests permission to send two battalions in Cherbourg to the front south of Montebourg. O.B. gives permission for this.
3. General Marcks finally makes an urgent demand that the Luftwaffe should go into action in the Montebourg battle area. For the whole day there was no sign whatsoever of the Luftwaffe. (Bad weather!)

1730 hrs. Conversation of Fieldmarshal Rommel in A.H.Qu. with O.B. and Chef d.G. in the presence of Ia.

1. Chef d.G. speaks on the situation at Cotentin Peninsula as reported from G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. The gist of it is that the enemy has not succeeded in his attack to the west from Isigny, nor in establishing contact with the bridgehead at Carentan. 6th Parachute Regiment, who have fought far better than all expectations, have been ordered to defend Carentan to the last man.
2. Powerful attack from the St.Mere Eglise headland towards Montebourg has necessitated the removal of 2 battalions from Cherbourg to the battle area south of Montebourg. Fieldmarshal Rommel says that this has his approval and orders that the following must be prevented:
 - (a) Capture by the enemy of the fortress and harbour of Cherbourg.
 - (b) Linking up of the two bridgeheads west of the Orne and west of the Vire.
3. Chef d.G. expresses the opinion that the enemy, finding strengthened resistance south of Montebourg, will drop more parachute troops in this area, in order to take Cherbourg very quickly. Fieldmarshal Rommel does not share this opinion as OKW are expecting further large-scale landings on the Channel coast in the next few days, and therefore the enemy will have no more air landing troops available for Cotentin.
4. O.B. informs them that as all the building material in the Calvados sector has been used for the construction of special buildings, the army are finding their attack hampered seriously by the shortage of building materials in this area. For the further conduct of the battle, O.B. is of the opinion that the counter-attack should not begin until II Parachute Corps are completely prepared, so that the success of the attack can be assured by a counter-attack by I SS Panzer Corps. Fieldmarshal Rommel agrees to this, and orders that there should be a return to the defensive in the area between the Vire and the Orne, and the attack should be postponed until all preparations for attack have been completed. Independently of that, everything should immediately be brought in for the defence of Cherbourg.
5. Finally, Fieldmarshal Rommel expresses the conviction that as soon as all units have been assembled, the attack will achieve the success expected.

1800 hrs. Chef d.G. informs G.O.C. II Parachute Corps that on the orders of Fieldmarshal Rommel and in accordance with the Army plans, the Corps with all its units is to proceed towards the Isigny region as quickly as possible. Independently of this, the 77th Infantry Division are to place themselves at the disposal of LXXXIV A.K. in the Valognes area. The order has been given for the desperately needed fuel to be brought up.

2400 hrs. General Marcks reports to Chef d.G. about the unfavourable developments in the St.Mere Eglise headland. The enemy has penetrated from there to the west across the floods and reached Pont l'Abbee, and to the north towards Montebourg, where he has crossed the Montebourg - Quineville road.

G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. names the following day as the decisive one in the battle for Cherbourg. He has given strict orders that the enemy must be stopped at the line they have reached during the evening. General Marcks issues two orders:-

1. Considerable strengthening of the Luftwaffe to counter enemy air superiority.
2. The greatest possible quantity of armour piercing weapons to be brought up.

He maintains that units recently brought up had completely inadequate equipment and also that the weapons for use against enemy tanks were only effective at a range of a few yards.

Chef d.G. stresses to G.O.C. II Parachute Corps the need for haste, especially in the case of the 77th Infantry Division.

June 10, 1944

- 0145 hrs. G.O.C. II Parachute Corps enquires of Chef d.G. what has happened to the fuel which is supposed to be coming.
Chef d.G. is informed that the fuel convoy left at 1700 hrs. and must now be in the Avranches region.
- 0825 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr.B about the enemy's obvious intention to concentrate his forces in the Montebourg - Quineville area, directed towards Cherbourg.
Gen. Kdo. LXXXIV A.K. have sent all their strength there. Chef d.G. reports that the chief duty of II Parachute Corps is to stop the enemy linking up his bridgeheads east of Vire estuary.
- 0840 hrs. O.Qu. reports to Chef d.G. that Pz.Gr.West could only receive 50 cubic metres of fuel as no more was available.
Another 300 cubic metres will be available this evening at the earliest.
Chef d.G. commands that O.Qu orders sufficient fuel for all the scattered armoured units in the army sector at once, and that the transport of the fuel by rail is forbidden.
- 0900 hrs. Chef d.G. informs LXXXIV A.K. that II Parachute Corps are to assemble south of the Vire estuary on the command of O.B.
H.Gr.B. Everything that comes from the holding units is to be sent into the St.Lo area.
Chef LXXXIV A.K. announces that it is to be presumed that the main body of the 77th Infantry Division is now in the Avranches district. O.C. 77th Infantry Division is already in St.Lo.
Chef d.G. asks Chef H.Gr.B. to ensure that sufficient quantities of fuel are provided as the supply of fuel is decisive in the battle on the coast.
- 1100 hrs. G.O.C. II Parachute Corps reports to Chef d.G. that the 3rd Paratroop Division must be moved up in sections owing to the shortage of fuel and that about one regiment is still east of St.Lo. The major part of the division is still in Brittany.
The advanced units of the 77th Infantry Division are, according to General Meindl's belief, in the Valognes area already, while the rest are in the Avranches area. Fuel for the movements has to be brought to Brecay by a shuttle traffic service, and this causes serious hindrance to movement. After hearing a long report from Chef II Parachute Corps on the type of countryside south of the Vire estuary, Chef d.G. with the sanction of O.B. gives the order for the Corps to go into action.
(a) The 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division south-west of Carentan to go west of the western canal, with orders to prevent at all costs the cutting off of the Cotentin Peninsula.
(b) The 3rd Paratroop Division to go at once to the St.Lo area.
- 1210 hrs. Air Liaison Officer reports to Chef d.G. that air formations of Fliegerkorps II could not get off the ground because time bombs blocked the two airfields on which the aircraft were concentrated.
- 1245 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. that the advanced units of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division are held up in the St.Lo area by the shortage of fuel.
Chef d.G. decided that LXXXIV A.K. must find their own fuel.
Units of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division can remain where they are for the time being, and defensive unit 700 is to be moved immediately from the St.Lo area to the district south-west of Carentan in order to present a defensive front against the enemy troops forcing their way from Neuilly on the west bank of the Vire.

Chef d.G. particularly emphasises that it is not only a question of preventing a link-up between the two enemy groups in the Bayeux and Carentan areas; the chief necessity is to see that the enemy do not cut off the Cotentin Peninsula by further advances to the south or south-west. Gen.Kdo. at once report their opinion about this: the important point is not to prevent the enemy having possession of a road, but to hit back and destroy him.

1500 hrs. Ia 352nd Infantry Division reports to Ia the first impression of the enemy's method of warfare. The enemy are attacking fortified positions by firing from heavy tanks at gaps and entrances in the rear.

Ia 352nd Infantry Division does not consider it probable that many of the forward positions can still be holding out.

1700 hrs. Ia informs Ia H.Gr.B that Pz.Gr. West have beaten off enemy attacks and are now counter-attacking. It appears from the reports that the original orders of the Pz.Gr. West could not be carried out. Chef d.G. is on the way to clarify matters. Ia points out that according to orders the control of roads in the event of battle should take place under the orders of O.B. West. It has been proved that this could only be done smoothly and efficiently by AOK. AOK requests:-

- (a) Permission for the control of roads and traffic to be done by AOK.
- (b) The field commanders to be placed under the authority of AOK.
- (c) A.Pi.Fue. to be in charge of roads.

Ia H.Gr. are given further information on the latest battle developments as reported by the 352nd Infantry Division. Ia H.Gr. announces the opinion of OKW concerning the battle on the Cotentin Peninsula and in Normandy, that there can be no question of fighting a rearguard action or of retiring behind prepared lines, but that every man must fight and die where he is.

Ia points out that this idea has been drilled into the troops along with their other instructions.

1830 hrs. O.Qu reports to Ia: Slight improvement of the fuel situation.

2330 hrs. Ia orders O.Qu. to remove 65% of the anti-tank close range weapons (Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck) from the 265th, the 266th, and remaining elements of the 275th Infantry Divisions, as well as from the 5th Parachute Division, and send them as quickly as possible to the St.Lo area (Michel Camp) to be used by LXXXIV A.K.

June 11, 1944

0520 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. inquires of Ia when the 17th SS Panzer Division and the 3rd Paratroop Division will be ready, as the situation on the right flank is serious. The 352nd Infantry Division is still of very little use in battle and the gap between it and its neighbouring unit on the right flank is constantly increasing.

Engineer Battalion Angers has not yet been found.

The battle group of the 265th Infantry Division is coming up little by little.

The 77th Infantry Division is coming up and will be in action shortly.

General Marcks stresses the importance of adequate supply communications as the supply bases are too far away.

Transport for the removal of the wounded is still scarce.

0630 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Ia that there is no longer any communication with the 352nd Infantry Division.

At 0200 hrs. the enemy were reported to be south-west of Balleroy and near Berigny.

0920 hrs. Ia informs Ia H.Gr.B.:

1. Quiet night on I SS Panzer Corps front with only heavy nuisance fire. Enemy concentrations north and west of Caen. Parachute landings not confirmed. The 3rd Parachute Division, who have been brought to St.Lo, are to remain behind in this area as protection.

AOK have given orders that the Elle sector is to be held whatever happens.

Position has been held in south-eastern Cotentin, push to the west has been stopped, and own troops have counter-attacked in the north. Nothing definite is known about enemy communications across the Vire, to the west.

2. Pz.Gr.West have been put out of action by direct hit by bomb on headquarters. Command was taken over by I SS Panzer Corps.

3. Naval guns protect the enemy advance on the east coast of Cotentin.

4. The control of the roads must be regulated absolutely by AOK, by the appointing of road commanders.

Ia again requests a decision by H.Gr.B. H.Gr.B. must control the roads to the east of our army boundary and south of the Chartres - Le Mans railway. AOK will take over responsibility for the road from a line Caen - Alencon - Laval to the sea.

1145 hrs. Ia - Chef LXXXIV A.K.

The 352nd Infantry Division comes under II Parachute Corps, who will be under the command of LXXXIV A.K. in the area, because of the special knowledge of General Marcks. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports that the movement of the units is almost finished, as II Parachute Corps were moved from Bayeux into the area south of the Vire estuary.

Engineer Battalion Angers has now been found and will come to the rear of the 352nd Infantry Division as reinforcement in an attack.

O.B. commands that the units of 17th SS Panzer Division which are not being used should remain mobile south-east of Carentan, so that they may be used either to the east or the west of the Vire as required. Also the units at the front should remain mobile.

1315 hrs. Ia informs Chef H.Gr.B.:

1. Fliegerfuehrer West and Fliegerkorps II should work in conjunction with the Army.

2. Suggestion for the communication lines in the battle area: AOK to have absolute authority over all traffic: army boundary on the right Mamers - Laval - Fougères.

3. Convoy space for the transport of the greater part of the 3rd Parachute Division out of Brittany was still not provided by O.B. West.

4. A.A. defences urgently required.

5. Signals equipment, especially transmitters also required.

1830 hrs. Conversation between Ia and Chef d.G.III A.A. Corps, Colonel Roehr:

H.Gr.B has put III A.A. Corps at the disposal of AOK 7 to support the counter-attack to be made by 1st SS Panzer Division. The corps consists of four A.A. regiments (Nos. 32, 79, 37, 36: each with 3 battalions, except No.36, which has 4). These units were attached to the mobile forces, and must first be reassembled.

As all signals communication has failed, it cannot definitely

be said when they will arrive.
A.A. Regiment 32, which was brought into the army sector as a mobile unit, seems to have been totally destroyed.

1900 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. to Ia.:

1. Permission is requested for a parachute corps to drop ammunition, light cannon with ammunition, also 10.5 and 8 cm. mortars with ammunition, for II Parachute Corps. This is especially urgent in the case of the 6th Parachute Regiment, who have completely run out of ammunition.
 2. Situation: very heavy attacks against Carentan, enemy forced way into north-western area. Defence force has assembled all available forces, but is unfortunately short of ammunition. Enemy demands for the surrender of the garrison have been refused. Attack on Pont l'Abbe petered out; east of Montebourg, the enemy have regained the Montebourg - Quineville road by using massed artillery and tanks. Counter-attack in progress. Forward battalion of the 77th Infantry Division remained at the Merderet stream, to ensure the safe arrival of the main part of the division.
 3. Battle group of the 265th Infantry Division remains in the Domfront area, owing to the fuel shortage. C.O. arrived. It is the intention of Gen.Kdo. to drive the enemy troops near Pont l'Abbe back to the eastern extremity of the flooded area with the help of this division.
 4. The 265th Infantry Division is still at the lower reaches of the Vire.
 5. The assault battalion AOK 7 has fought exceptionally well and is proposed for mention in the next High Command communique.
- 1940 hrs. Stohi AOK 7, Colonel Coretti reports to Chef d.G. that the battalions on the eastern side have fought so well that they are fully entitled to be mentioned in the High Command communique. In the Georgian Battalion 797, the commander was murdered, but this is an isolated incident.
- 2115 hrs. Chef H.Gr.B informs Chef d.G. that apparently a new Gen.Kdo. will be brought into the Normandy area and then an "Army Group Marcks" will be formed, which will have under it II Parachute Corps and the new Gen.Kdo.

June 12, 1944

- 1000 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. informs Chef d.G. that according to reports which have come in but have not been confirmed, it seems that the large-scale attack on Caen is about to start. He stresses again the difficulty of bringing up reinforcements, and the crisis which is bound to arise if convoys do not come up in time. General Marcks also requests the necessary reinforcements of personnel.
- 1040 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr.B on the position of I Panzer Corps. Still quiet at the moment, but on account of the reports of tanks assembling, it can be expected that the full-scale attack on Caen will begin at mid-day or in the evening at the latest. He communicates an urgent request from the 21st Panzer Division that units on the east bank of the Orne should be relieved by the 364th Infantry Division, and removed to the west bank; he is sure that the main point of effort is definitely Caen. Air cover with focal point at Caen required. General Speidl asserts that air cover at Cotentin is no use because the air bases are too far away. To this, Chef d.G. replies that the air force on Cotentin is not so necessary, but is desirable at least at Carentan. The northern front is well protected by now. The enemy is attempting to push further to the north and west with his heavy tanks. As it is obvious that the enemy intend to capture

Cherbourg, Chef d.G. considers it most likely that the enemy are withdrawing the airborne units, which will later be used in fresh air attacks.

Carentan has been taken by the enemy, owing to the shortage of ammunition. Paratroop Regiment 6 have used up every scrap of ammunition. To the statement by Chef d.G. H.Gr.B., that the supplying of ammunition was a matter for the army, Chef d.G. replies that it is the duty of the higher command to bring the munitions from the rear as quickly as possible so that the limited room in the army convoys is not overtaxed.

Contrary to the expressed views, there is absolutely no organisation in the issue of munitions and supplies at AOK.

1250 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. informs Chef d.G. that General Marcks has been killed in a fighter-bomber attack, while on the way to the front line. Chef d.G. refers to the enemy push to the east of St. Lo with the aim of taking St. Lo and using it as a headquarters and communications centre. Gen. Kdo. should take the necessary counter-measures.

Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr.B. of the death of G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. It is suggested by the Army that until the new G.O.C. arrives, General Fahrmbacher should take over the post of G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. At present he is G.O.C. XXV A.K. G.O.C. 343rd Infantry Division could take over the leadership of XXV A.K. General Meindl will assume command of LXXXIV A.K. until General Fahrmbacher arrives.

1445 hrs. Chef d.G. to Chef LXXXIV A.K.
Chef d.G. gives information that LXXXIV A.K. will be taken over by General Fahrmbacher, who will arrive today.

1455 hrs. Ia to Ia Field H.Q. Le Mans (Captain Rhoenfeld): In connection with the news of a landing by parachute troops to the east of Alencon, Ia requests Field H.Q. to have ready a mobile security unit.

1540 hrs. Ia - Chef I SS Panzer Corps:
Chef I SS Panzer Corps informs Ia about the situation. It is expected that an attack in the Caen area will begin today. He suggests that the right wing of the 3rd Paratroop Division should be moved forward to Cormolain as the left wing of the 1st SS Panzer Division is in a wood 10 km. north-west of Caumont. Chef 1st SS Panzer Division requests of Chef d.G. that tank and anti-tank ammunition be brought up immediately, perhaps by Junkers transport planes.

1605 hrs. Chef d.G. command O.Qu. to use all possible means of transporting the required munitions from Germany to the 1st SS Panzer Division.

1610 hrs. Ia - Chef LXXXIV A.K.:
Ia expresses the desire that the right wing of the 3rd Paratroop Division should be moved forward.

1715 hrs. Ia sends report on situation to Ia H.Gr.B:
Heavy bombing attack on Caen. Enemy tank attack expected. Attack to the south (Tilly - Lingevres) started at 0900 hrs., south of Bayeux.
Enemy reconnaissance in Caumont and to the north; 352nd Infantry Division east of St. Clair.
Cotentin noticeably quiet; enemy pressing along the coast. Counter-measures in Carentan area postponed until expected fresh units arrive.
Ia H.Gr.B. announces that O.B. West has ordered the gap at Caumont to be closed and will expect a report on this.
Ia affirms that there is no need for anxiety there.

1850 hrs. Ia I SS Panzer Corps:

Tank preparations are being made behind the front where the 12th SS Panzer Division and Panzer Training Division are engaged, which implies that an attack is coming.

Ground reconnaissance reports that enemy columns were leaving Caumont at 1200 hrs. and moving south and south-east. Counter-measures are being taken. At the same time, south of Balleroy, enemy armoured forces, which included 6 light and 8 heavy armoured patrol cars and a few tanks were seen heading east. There are no German troops in Caumont.

General Fahrmbacher reports to O.B. and has conversations with Chef d.G. about taking over command of LXXXIV A.K.

Ia 12th Panzer Division reports to Ia that the division has already lost 60% of its strength.

2400 hrs. I SS Panzer Corps reports to Ia that tank preparations at the points already named have been confirmed.

Small reconnaissance units of Panzer Training Division have retired after meeting heavy resistance.

June 13, 1944

0320 hrs. O.C. 709th Infantry Division, General von Schlieben, makes an urgent request to Chef d.G. that the Luftwaffe should put the naval guns out of action. In reply to a question by Chef d.G., the air liaison officer announces that all available planes are to be used in a night attack on naval artillery.

0830 hrs. Chef H.Gr.B demands an explanation as to why the Army had not established communications with XXXXVII Panzer Corps. The Corps arrived at their new battle headquarters two days ago, and are urgently requesting orders.

Chef explains that XXXXVII Panzer Corps has not yet established communications with AOK. AOK will see that Gen.St.Off. clarifies the position at once. He points out that it was the duty of the Panzer Corps to establish communications with the Army. Therefore the rebuke of H.Gr. was unjustified.

1000 hrs. Chef d.G. informs O.Qu. that the 7th Mortar Brigade is to be supplied with the fuel necessary to render it mobile immediately.

1045 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. gives report on situation to Chef d.G. Montebourg in German hands; the front follows the railway line to Quineville.

The enemy have broken through on the front guarded by the Panzer Training and Reserve Unit between Apperville and Etienville, with focal point at Beuzeville. Tanks being used. Airborne troops reported to have landed near Les Moitiers. At the moment Gen.Kdo. has no troops at its disposal to close the gap, and the 265th Infantry Division has not yet arrived. Also nothing can be spared from the 91st Infantry Division as this division is urgently needed to stop the enemy at Montebourg.

No units can be withdrawn from the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division as they are required to counter an enemy breakthrough west of Carentan.

Chef d.G. commands the LXXXIV A.K. close this gap at all costs. Counter-attack on Carentan has not succeeded, and the enemy has managed to occupy Hill 30, to the west of the town.

The 1st American Division is known to be engaged in an attack north-east of St.Lo, so it seems that the 29th Division must have been badly knocked about and must have been withdrawn. The enemy have forced their way into St.Clair, and have occupied Couvains. The position at the front in that sector is very serious.

Villers-Bocage has been taken by enemy reconnaissance units. They have also broken through at Berigny. Counter-measures are

being taken by units of the 3rd Paratroop Division.

1115 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr.B. on the position at LXXXIV A.K.

1210 hrs. I SS Panzer Corps reports to O.B.

Strong enemy forces this morning attacked units of the 21st Panzer Division east of the Orne. Reinforcements are being sent there. SS Panzer Corps requests that LXXXIV A.K. be directed to start an attack with the 346th Infantry Division immediately.

Apart from heavy artillery fire, the northern front at Caen is quiet. The Panzer Training Division reports enemy movements from north to south in the area to the east of Balleroy, and enemy tanks and infantry in Villers-Bocage. Nothing can be seen of the 2nd Panzer Division. Panzer Reconnaissance Detachment 2 are not in Caumont, which is occupied by the enemy.

1330 hrs. Chef LXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. that I/Grenadier Regiment 1050 (77th Infantry Division) has moved out, and will remain in Dol until tonight.

1435 hrs. G.O.C. I SS Panzer Corps announces:

Cannot understand action of 2nd Panzer Division this morning. Reply of Ia (Major Johannes):

This action was taken to cut off the enemy and assure the safety of our own concentrations. The division have orders to attack, and are doing so.

G.O.C. I SS Panzer Corps states:

I request immediate clarification of the position as regards commands. I have been made responsible for the whole sector, and appointed temporary commander of Pz.Gr.West. At the moment XXXXVII Panzer Corps or rather 2nd Panzer Division are receiving orders from no less than three separate units.

Ia says, under directions of Chef d.G.:

Written reply following, the gist of which is that Chef d.G. has already told the Ic XXXXVII Panzer Corps that XXXXVII Panzer Corps will operate completely independently of the 2nd Panzer Division who will come under the command of AOK.

1610 hrs. No longer any communication with I SS Panzer Corps.

1640 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. informs Chef d.G. of the present position and reports that 265th Infantry Division have been found and will be operating during the evening.

Chef d.G. demands that the two following movements be carried out immediately.

- (a) The gap between Beauville and Les Moitiers to be closed, and advance to line of defence.
- (b) 1049th Battalion have been ordered by the Fuehrer to withdraw and defend the fortress of Cherbourg.

1715 hrs. Chef d.G. informs O.Qu. that Ia 2nd SS Panzer Division are coming to O.Qu. about fuel, which is urgently needed. As much as possible should be issued to them. O.Qu. reports that the nearest fuel dump which still has supplies is at Nantes.

1755 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Ia H.Gr.B of the present situation.

Enemy tanks in Villers-Bocage destroyed.

The Panzer Training Division advancing from Villers-Bocage towards Anctoville.

The line Anctoville - Caumont - La Vacquerie - Vidouville is being held by Panzer Reconnaissance Unit 2 and the Panzer Training Division, whilst the 2nd Panzer Division is closing up in the rear so that it may move further north and close

up the gap.

Ia H.Gr. refers to the order of O.B. West that the front in the Caumont - Balleroy area is to be shortened as soon as possible. 20 cubic metres of fuel will be flown to the 2nd Panzer Division this evening.

Situation unchanged at Couvains and Carentan.

At the breakthrough point in the St. Mere Eglise headland the enemy has advanced as far as Pretot and is already building bridges across the flooded defence line. As a counter-measure, LXXXIV A.K. sent in the battle group from the 265th Infantry Division and the battalion of the 77th Infantry Division which was intended for Cherbourg.

Nothing fresh from the northern front.

Ia H.Gr.B announces that I SS Panzer Corps, although they are expecting an attack on Caen, will have to spread out east of the Orne as far as Troarn. The attack to the east of Caen had to be stopped, because of heavy enemy air superiority.

Chef d.G. asks H.Gr. to bring up the 2nd SS Panzer Division and also the units of LVIII Panzer Corps which were held back.

Splitting up of the division is impossible.

2215 hrs. Ia informs Ia H.Gr. about his conference with XXXXVII Panzer Corps. There is reason to believe that if 2nd Panzer Division are brought into the gap between the Panzer Training Division and the 352nd Infantry Division, which at the moment is only being held by weak reconnaissance units, the gap could be properly sealed off, and in an attack to shorten the front, the whole line could be pushed further north.

The outstanding development of June 13 is that the enemy is attempting with heavy tank forces to break out of the St. Mere Eglise area and force his way to the west coast of Cotentin, thereby cutting off the peninsula. It is also important to note that the enemy is hoping to push to the south through the weakly held gap south of Bayeux.

June 14, 1944

0810 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports to Ia that all is quiet in this sector; there are no enemy troops in Aunoy and only weak enemy forces around Villers-Bocage.

0820 hrs. Chef acquaints Chef H.Gr.B with the situation west of Carentan. O.C. 6th Parachute Regiment gave an order to his men to ease the strain by withdrawing the line east of Baupre, and so far knows nothing more about it. LXXXIV A.K. have orders to regain the old line at all costs. They will be helped in this by the 17th Panzer Grenadier Division.

0835 hrs. O.B. to O.B. H.Gr.B:
Fieldmarshal Rommel orders that in view of the situation west of Carentan everything in the north is to be thrown into the gap, to ensure that the Cotentin peninsula is not cut off. It is not necessary to keep 3 divisions in the peninsula, 2 are sufficient for Cherbourg. The neck must be kept open at all costs. The main point of attack has shifted to the western part of the bridgehead. The 77th Infantry Division must occupy the area of the breakthrough.
On being asked about it by O.B., O.B. H.Gr.B. decides that the battalion of the 77th Infantry Division which had been removed to Cherbourg, could also be brought in. General Hellmich must use the forces that were available to him for the defence of Cherbourg.

0930 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr.B that the enemy have been cleared from Villers-Bocage.
The withdrawal of the 6th Parachute Regiment is very unfortunate, and can apparently be blamed on the local commander. The gap will

naturally be closed, and the 265th Infantry Division is already advancing on this front.

Chef H.Gr.B says that H.Gr. are especially worried about the breakthrough at Beuzeville.

1000 hrs. Chef XXXXVII Panzer Corps acquaints Chef d.G. with the situation. Considerable artillery fire on the front held by the 2nd Panzer Division. Villers-Bocage in German hands, but completely destroyed.

1150 hrs. Ia instructs A.N.F. that tight control must be kept on all telephone and radio installations, to prevent open discussion of secret matters.

1200 hrs. Chef d.G. I SS Panzer Corps reports on situation to Chef d.G. All quiet north of Caen, tank preparations being made at Norrey to the west. (50 enemy tanks). Enemy attack in depth on left flank of the Panzer Training Division, which is at the moment at Villers-Bocage. The town is still in our hands, and fighting is in progress. Attack repulsed near Tilly. 7th Mortar Brigade has moved out, and one regiment will arrive in the new area tonight.

1215 hrs. Ia informs Ia H.Gr.B of the new position of I SS Panzer Corps. XXXXVII Panzer Corps have orders to attack to the right in the general direction of Livry, keeping their units close together. 2 proposals to H.Gr.B concerning organisation:
(a) Permission to submit situation reports at noon.
(b) Detaching of a liaison officer for employment with anti-aircraft units of AOK.
According to a message from Ia-Luft H.Gr.B, a liaison officer is on his way.

1300 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports on situation to Ia. No important alterations as yet. Cooperation with I SS Panzer Corps not yet complete. The 352nd Infantry Division have suffered heavy losses and the men are physically exhausted, and so will not be able to offer any resistance to further enemy attacks. Nothing can be done until the 353rd Infantry Division arrives. In the Montebourg area the enemy still have not attacked, but the wearing-down process by continuous heavy fire from naval guns and heavy fighter-bomber attacks continues. Chef XXXXVII Panzer Corps informs Ia that the attack on the right flank between Villers-Bocage and Amaye was beaten off. The present confusion in the enemy ranks should be made use of for an immediate counter-attack.

1400 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. informs Ia that the situation of 709th Infantry Division would be extremely precarious if 353rd Infantry Division were sent to II Parachute Corps instead of to the northern front.

1510 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. informs Ia that 265th Infantry Division are being used west of Baupre. The enemy has penetrated north of Hauteville, and the bridge is being blown up.

1610 hrs. Situation report by Chef I SS Panzer Corps to Ia. O.C. 12th SS Panzer Division killed by artillery fire at front line. Enemy tank attack with strong artillery support north of Tilly. Line now $1\frac{1}{2}$ km. further back. Tilly still in German hands.

1840 hrs. Chef d.G. discusses the latest developments in LXXXIV A.K. area with G.O.C., by telephone.

1. General Hellmich proposes that Machine Gun Battalion 17 be used in the front to the north of the bridgehead.
2. Report on situation. Front south of Pont l'Abbe has been stabilised by the 265th Infantry Division. Pretot still in German hands (1st Battalion, 77th Infantry Division). Coloured troops first made appearance in enemy attack south-east of Monte-martin. Heavy attack on St. Georges d'Elle began at 1830 hrs.
3. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. again stresses that the situation would be very serious if the 353rd Infantry Division were sent to the area guarded by II Parachute Corps. Chef replies that the use of the division must be considered with respect to the front as a whole.

2000 hrs. Situation report from Chef d.G. to Chef H.Gr.B. Chef d.G. does not consider enemy attack round Tilly to be a major operation.

June 15, 1944

0900 hrs. Chef d.G. informs O.Qu. that LXXXIV A.K. is urgently requesting the fuel which is required for the movements to Cherbourg, which will have to be undertaken next. O.Qu. replies that 60 cubic metres have been allotted, and it is impossible to supply any more at the moment.

1000 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. informs Ia of situation. Chef d.G. rings up and commands that everything is to be prepared for Cherbourg as ordered. However, the present line must be held at all costs, and the question of a delaying action cannot be considered. Chef d.G. informs G.O.C. in reply to a question that it is of first importance for the 77th Infantry Division to be brought in to close the gap east of St. Sauveur le Vicomte, as one battalion of this division is already there, and another battalion is on its way there from St. Malo. An effort should therefore be made to assemble the whole division on this front. The movement of the 353rd Infantry Division to LXXXIV A.K. depends on permission being granted by H.Gr. who wish to use this division elsewhere.

1030 hrs. Chef d.G. gives situation report to Chef H.Gr. and mentions that from a strategic point of view the task of the Panzer Training Division is to push back both the flanks and then break up the front. The enemy hopes to attack our left wing and push it back to the Orne. As new units are arriving in the meantime, there is not so much danger of this as there was. Chef d.G. declares that the 353rd Infantry Division will arrive in the LXXXIV A.K. area tonight, and that the situation there demands that it be sent into action at once. Chef H.Gr. points out that Fieldmarshal Rommel had planned to use that division on the right flank of I SS Panzer Corps. Chef d.G. replies that the situation of LXXXIV A.K. gives cause for great alarm, and the cyclist units of the division must be sent at once to the St. Lo area, to stabilise the front there. The 77th Infantry Division probably could not be completely removed from the northern front as all their units are being used there, and the whole front would collapse. It has therefore been decided to take some of the forces required to hold the enemy back from this division, and the rest from the 91st Infantry Division. The commander of the new unit should be the new O.C. 91st Infantry Division, Colonel Kuhn.

1300 hrs. Chef d.G. communicates to Chef H.Gr. the results of O.B.'s visit to LXXXIV A.K.

1. Absolutely necessary to transfer 353rd Infantry Division to LXXXIV A.K. The position is like a bow bent to breaking point.
2. 352nd Infantry Division have been completely defeated and will have to be withdrawn.

3. On the whole O.B. considers it will be necessary for a new infantry division to be sent to AOK, to build up a mobile panzer reserve for later on, or to occupy the area captured by tank attacks.

Request from the army: 353rd Infantry Division to be transferred to LXXXIV A.K. and one infantry division to the 352nd Infantry Division sector.

Chef H.Gr. requests information as to which divisions can no longer be considered as battle groups.

Chef d.G. replies that 709th and 716th Infantry Divisions no longer form battle groups.

O.B. rings up and points out that this immense changing round of all the units is dangerous, and is a further reason for the bringing in of 353rd Infantry Division.

1600 hrs. Chef d.G. reports to Chef H.Gr. that General von Choltitz has arrived as successor to General Marcks. AOK suggests that General Fahrmbacher retains command of LXXXIV A.K. and General von Choltitz takes over XXV A.K.

Fieldmarshal Rommel is in agreement with this suggestion.

1800 hrs. O.C. Fortifications Engineers 19 informs Ia that he is prepared to release Colonel Winter from the post of officer in charge of road traffic for other duties.

2100 hrs. Ia H.Gr. receive situation report from Ia.
Quineville taken by the enemy. Also Orglandes on the western front occupied by the enemy.
Ia again reports that the 21st Panzer Division with Panzer Grenadier Regiment Mempel, one panzer unit, reconnaissance unit, assault gun unit, two companies of engineers and one grenadier battalion are in action east of the Orne.

2130 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Ia that the situation east of St. Sauveur has become very grave because of the complete lack of artillery ammunition. A.K. have no convoy facilities available to fetch more, and AOK must help. Ia orders O.Qu. to provide transport to send munitions to LXXXIV A.K. at once. Halting of the enemy advance on St. Sauveur is dependent on whether the ammunition arrives quickly or not.

2150 hrs. Fieldmarshal Rommel asks about II Parachute Corps. Chef d.G. reports continuous heavy pressure on St. Lo. The units of the 3rd Paratroop Division which are coming on foot have not yet arrived there. Convoy vehicles all needed for supplies. One reinforced regiment will arrive at St. Lo in the evening of June 16. It is requested that this unit be used in the St. Lo area, as it seems that the enemy intend to begin a new push south of Carentan. In such a serious situation this unit could not be sent to the east.
Fieldmarshal Rommel announces that the 3rd Paratroop Division should be sent further east, in the direction of Caen. If nothing else is possible the front must be altered and Normandy evacuated. It is far more dangerous if the enemy push towards Paris than towards Brittany.
The newly arrived regiment can be used for the time being at St. Lo but must be prepared to be sent somewhere else at any time.

2245 hrs. O.Qu. reports to Ia that according to a conversation with Chef LXXXIV A.K. all transport space must be put to tactical

uses, and so O.Qu. wishes to know whether the army transport available is to be used for bringing up munitions or fuel. It is impossible to do both at the same time. If munitions are brought up, then there could be no new supplies of fuel for a few days.

2250 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Ia that there is a sufficient supply of munitions and supplies in the Cherbourg fortress for the garrison intended, but if the garrison is to be strengthened, then the supplies will not hold out.

2310 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps requests Ia to bring divisional headquarters of the 716th Infantry Division up to strength. It is intended to form 2 battalions out of the remaining units of the division, and after 21st Panzer Division have cleared up the situation east of the Orne, it would be possible to build up a mobile corps reserve on the right bank of the Orne.

June 16, 1944

0845 hrs. Chef d.G. instructs Chef H.Gr. that according to the situation reports of this morning the starting of the movement towards Cherbourg does not seem so urgent. It depends, however, whether this movement can be carried out so quickly as to confuse the enemy, so that we will gain sufficient time to plan future moves.

1035 hrs. Telephone conversation between G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. and Chef d.G. and Ia.

It is reported that on the northern front the Hellmich and Schlieben groups have been separated.

The Hellmich group are so completely exhausted and so tightly hemmed in, through heavy enemy pressure and the inadequacy of their supplies (the enemy have superiority in materials) that an enemy breakthrough to the west can be expected. It can only be a matter of hours before resistance in this sector crumbles.

The Schlieben group are in a more favourable position. Even so, it will be impossible to prevent the front breaking up between the two groups. As Cherbourg has not sufficient ammunition and supplies for the intended garrison, General Fahrmbacher suggests that only the 709th Infantry Division go to defend the inner ring of the fortress, and the 77th Infantry Division come further south. O.B. agrees.

Chef d.G. points out that all units intended for mobile fighting, as well as artillery which is not being used, should be brought further south.

General Fahrmbacher replies that if the units being used were brought down just now, this would certainly lead to the disintegration of the front, and the enemy breaking through. He reports however that according to naval reports, there are no means available for the destruction of Cherbourg harbour.

Chef d.G. orders that the mobile regiment of the 353rd Infantry Division which has already arrived can be used to support the front line, as requested by LXXXIV A.K.

The corps must expect however that when the whole division arrives, H.Gr. will require its services elsewhere.

1050 hrs. Chef H.Gr. informs Chef d.G. of the new order of the Fuehrer that the movement towards Cherbourg is forbidden, and the line must at all costs be held as it is. In these circumstances H.Gr. is in agreement with the 353rd Infantry Division being used with LXXXIV A.K.

1100 hrs. Chef d.G. communicates to G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. the Fuehrer's new order that there must be no movement towards Cherbourg, and the

/positions

positions are to be held. The 353rd Infantry Division can be used for this purpose. To this General Fahrmbacher says that the collapse of the front in the north cannot be avoided.

1300 hrs. General Fahrmbacher informs Chef d.G. that the enemy have broken through north of Etienville in the direction of St.Sauveur le Vicomte. The front between Etienville and Orglandes has been broken for a width of 5 km. At the same time there is a heavy attack against the 3rd Paratroop Regiment sector. The newly arrived regiments of the 353rd Infantry Division are at Luzerne, and will launch a counter-attack.

1310 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr.B of the situation.

1. Attack on both sides of the St.Lo - Bayeux road, in the direction of St.Lo started at 0700 hrs.
2. North of this a local attack between the Vire and the Taute. Forward posts have been withdrawn to a favourable main line of defence on the Taute canal.
3. Enemy breakthrough in the direction of St.Sauveur le Vicomte on a 5 km. front.

LXXXIV A.K. have no forces available to improve the situation. Units of the 77th Infantry Division are to be withdrawn to protect the front here and then to effect the necessary movement towards Cherbourg.

1400 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports to Chef d.G. that since 1130 hrs. there has been terrific bombardment along the whole of the front guarded by 12th SS Panzer Division and the Panzer Training Division as far as Longaye. Large-scale attack is expected. The last reserves of I SS Panzer Corps have been thrown against tanks which have broken through near Longaye.

1535 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. that St.Sauveur le Vicomte has been taken by the enemy.

1545 hrs. Telephone conversation between Ia and Colonel Adomeit at the main transport office.

In reply to suggestions from AOK about repair of railway lines and bridges:

- (a) It would be too dangerous an experiment to use the Russian methods of travel in France.
- (b) In France the experience gained in Italy must be made use of; the maintenance of a net of communications, for the repair of which units from the rear must be responsible.
- (c) The authorised transport officer is the liaison officer between AOK and the officer in charge of transport. According to orders from AOK he can make use of the local transport offices, the Todt organisation, and the railway engineers.

1640 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps sends situation report to Ia. Own troops captured Herouvillette in an attack. Enemy pushing closer in on the left flank of 2nd SS Panzer Division and right flank of the Panzer Training Division. Left flank of the Panzer Training Division has been in combat with relatively weak enemy forces, which have broken through. Enemy landing of supplies at Riva Bella being hampered by heavy artillery of the corps.

1650 hrs. O.B. reports to Fieldmarshal Rommel at the battle headquarters LXXXIV A.K. that the Fuehrer has forbidden the movement towards Cherbourg.

In reply to a query by O.B. as to whether LXXXIV A.K. may transfer some troops from the north to the gap which has been torn open, Fieldmarshal Rommel orders that units of the 77th Infantry Division may be moved south, but only with small forces.

1700 hrs. Ia LXXXIV A.K. sends situation report to Ia: Apart from the breakthrough in the direction of St.Sauveur, the front is being held.

The enemy have pushed into St.Sauveur from the south-west, and their forward units have reached the railway lines.

The Schlieben group is defending a line Le Ham - Urville - Colomby. The 265th Infantry Division are to make a stand 3 km. south of St.Sauveur.

Tonight fresh forces will arrive north of Periers.

1730 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr. of the situation with LXXXIV A.K. Apart from breakthrough at St.Sauveur there is also considerable reconnaissance reported on the west coast.

Chef H.Gr: The order of the Fuehrer will still be observed. Chef d.G. expresses the opinion of AOK that the movement towards Cherbourg must be effected tonight. The more troops there are in the garrison, the fewer days can the supplies and ammunition hold out.

1745 hrs. General Fahrmbacher informs Chef d.G. of the position on the western front and of the conversation with Fieldmarshal Rommel. As a result of this conversation the 77th Infantry Division is to be incorporated in the Hellmich group, and put into action west of St.Sauveur, to counter any breakthrough to the west or south. By this, the front west of Montebourg is laid open. Therefore the Schlieben group will have to move back on Cherbourg to avoid being cut off. Chef d.G. refers to the Fuehrer's order, and requests precise information, whether Fieldmarshal Rommel has given his sanction to these movements. According to the Fuehrer's commands, the Schlieben group are to make a stand, and break through if possible.

General Fahrmbacher replies that Fieldmarshal Rommel did not exactly give his express permission for these movements, but discussed the moves as if he was in agreement with them. Therefore it would be desirable if the Army could reach a decision tonight, and say what is to be done.

At St.Sauveur le Vicomte the enemy have approximately one motorised division against two German companies.

1915 hrs. Chef H.Gr. again stresses to Chef d.G. the Fuehrer's order forbidding the movement on Cherbourg.

2000 hrs. Chef d.G. transmits this report to G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. Express instructions will be given after the conference with Fieldmarshal Rommel, which is to take place at the Army headquarters.

General Fahrmbacher reports that the only remaining communication with the Schlieben and Hellmich groups is by telephone. If the necessary move to the south does not begin immediately General Fahrmbacher considers it will be impossible to break through to the south.

At St.Sauveur there are at present only two reinforced companies of the 91st Infantry Division and small units of 243rd Infantry Division.

Ia H.Gr. informs Ia that 2nd SS Panzer Division "Das Reich" are not to be put into the battle, but should be preparing to be in action later in the II SS Panzer Corps area.

Conversation of Chef d.G. on June 16 with:

1. General Obstfelder, G.O.C. LXXXVI A.K.

LXXXVI A.K. with the 276th Infantry Division who are to be

sent up and the 16th Field Observation Division will be placed under the command of AOK and will take over the conduct of battle between the Seine and the Orne. The Army boundary will be the Seine.

2. O.Qu.West, Colonel Eckstein.

O.Qu.West describes the whole matter of supplies. In all the different supply branches there are gaps to be filled, which cannot be filled easily. However O.Qu.West promises to do everything in his power to help the Army.

2120 hrs. O.B. and Chef d.G. in conference with Fieldmarshal Rommel in Army Headquarters with Ia. present.

Fieldmarshal Rommel discusses the situation in Cotentin on the telephone with Chef H.Gr.B and Chef H.Gr.G and acquaints O.B. West, Fieldmarshal von Rundstedt, with the new measures which have been decided on after considering the position in the peninsula. If the Fuehrer's order is interpreted too narrowly and all forces in the peninsula remain where they are at the moment, then the enemy will push forward along undefended roads to the rear of our troops at Cherbourg. The mobile forces must have freedom to operate. If we make a stand at our present line without being able to use the mobile units wherever they may be needed, Cotentin will be lost to us much more quickly than if we are allowed to operate freely.

We must certainly send some troops against the Americans near St.Sauveur; otherwise the collapse in Cotentin will happen at once; because in that case there would be no strong German forces either in Cherbourg or south of the flooded areas.

Fieldmarshal Rommel therefore decides:

Units of the 77th Infantry Division must be transferred to St.Sauveur at once, to stop the enemy forcing a way along the road to Cherbourg. Naturally reserves may be moved, but there must be absolutely no question of a rearguard action, and on no account must the garrisons of the defences leave their posts. Similarly the 77th Infantry Division must remain in the positions it now occupies.

Chef d.G. informs General Fahmbacher of the latest orders:

Everything must remain where it is, but what troops can be spared from the Schlieben group and from the 77th Infantry Division must be transferred at once to St.Sauveur to guard the Cherbourg road. The front must be held whatever happens, and no rearguard actions are to be started.

As the position is difficult east of St.Lo, units of the 2nd SS Panzer Division may be sent to stabilise things there. However, the division must remain east of the Vire.

Conference between Chef d.G. and General Grassmann, O.C. 309 Artillery Company, concerning the movement of units.

309 Artillery Company will remain for the time being with II Parachute Corps. 474 Artillery Company will remain at the disposal of the Army, and will eventually be under the command of LXXXVI A.K.

/Review

Review of operations on June 16, 1944

The most significant event on June 16 was the enemy breakthrough to St. Sauveur le Vicomte.

The following developments are to be feared:-

- (a) Our strong forces in North Cotentin might be split up, and
- (b) those forces engaged in the defence of Cherbourg may have their lines of supply with the fortress area cut.

Both these developments are possible if a purely defensive policy is pursued as an alternative to mobile operations.

The civilians remaining in the fortress area reduce the ability of the fortress to withstand a siege, and will have an adverse effect on the Army's ability to conduct further operations in Normandy.

Recent developments suggest that it is now more likely than ever that there will be a combined sea and air landing on the west coast of Cotentin.

The enemy attack in the direction of St. Lo is particularly dangerous; if he is able to advance in the direction of Coutances, the Army units fighting to the north of this line would be cut off. Therefore the 2nd SS Division should take up positions in the defence of St. Lo.

On the instructions of Fieldmarshal von Rundstedt, a final decision on whether the battle in the Cotentin peninsula shall be fought entirely on the defensive or as a mobile operation will be taken at a conference on the morning of June 17.

/June 17,

June 17, 1944

- 1030 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G.:
Breakthrough into area St.Lo, south-east of Cavigny blocked by II/Panzer Grenadier Regiment/38 (17th SS Panzer Division). General Meindl considers operational breakthrough probable here. Chef d.G. orders 2nd SS Panzer Division to be held in reserve in the area south east of St.Lo.
- 1035 hrs. Ia H.Gr.B reports to Chef d.G. new order from the Fuehrer: "The fortress of Cherbourg must be held at all costs. Retreat of the northern group to Cherbourg under enemy pressure is approved. Action is not to be broken off. The possession of Cherbourg is decisive."
- 1100 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. informed of the new order from the Fuehrer by Chef d.G.
Gen.Kdo. to report by teleprinter execution of order.
Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports fighting at St.Sauveur and only under pressure will movement to the south be carried out.
- 1115 hrs. Chef d.G. requests that Chef Luftflotte 3 put every possible plane into action over the Cotentin Peninsula, as decisive movements must be carried out there today.
- 1345 hrs. Ia - Chef I SS Panzer Corps:
Report on situation by Chef I SS Panzer Corps.
Harassing gunfire, enemy shock troop activity, re-grouping of 21st Panzer Division. I SS Panzer Corps has not yet received orders to withdraw remnants of the 716th Infantry Regiment, and is against this withdrawal as these forces are needed to bring them up to strength.
- 1430 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. informs Chef and Ia on situation:
Enemy on both sides of St.Lo - Bayeux road beaten off. Former line retaken. Enemy (28th American Division) suffered heavy losses (1,000 dead) and withdrew slightly. The sections of the 353rd Infantry Division used fought well. Our line runs from St.Andre l'Epine - Villiers - La Meauffe, between two plains where artillery fire and movements are being observed. Our weak defences have been strengthened at St.Sauveur towards the west. From there to the north-east only small covering parties in the direction of Golleville. Own defences there. 9th American Division observed opposite. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. reports that an officer was sent to the fortress with instructions in code and instructions were sent thence by W/T message. Chef reports that all units equipped for mobile warfare are to be withdrawn. (Also the two motorised detachments, 468th and 417th and assault battalion AOK 7).
- 1520 hrs. Ia reports to Ia H.Gr.B on situation with LXXXIV A.K.
- 1800 hrs. Fieldmarshal Rommel instructs O.B. that more exact orders on the defence of Cherbourg are arriving. At all costs the flanks are to be held and a fighting withdrawal is to be carried out. O.B. reports great success of defence at St.Lo. In a few days the 353rd Infantry Division, completely assembled, will go into action as a whole in this area.
Fieldmarshal Rommel orders that papers of casualties at St.Lo are to be identified at once for propaganda purposes.
- 1830 hrs. Ia H.Gr.B reports to Chef d.G.:
According to the latest order from OKW, the line St.Vaast

de la Hougue - le Theil with the southern edge going as far as Vauville must be held at all costs.

Chef d.G. remarks that the possession and holding of the high ground round Brix is decisive, as the enemy advancing from the west must be met there. Execution must be left to General von Schlieben as the speed of retreat will be determined by the enemy. The suggestion of the Army is that General von Schlieben take over responsibility of execution of the movement, with the instruction that his group hold the high ground of Brix as long as possible before making a fighting retreat towards Cherbourg.

2100 hrs. General Fahrmbacher reports to Chef d.G. that according to reports received, the retreat towards the north front has not yet begun, and General von Schlieben seems to have the situation well in hand. Enemy artillery activity is heavy in places; our air activity is at a minimum.

2150 hrs. Conversation with Colonel Tempelhof.

Naval commander in Cherbourg has reported that General von Schlieben wishes to fall back on Cherbourg, and has prepared for the demolition of artillery on the western coast of the peninsula and the withdrawal of the troops. This must not happen in any circumstances.

Ia directed that from midday General von Schlieben be given a free hand.

Colonel Tempelhof replies that only a delayed withdrawal has been spoken of, and not a full retreat in one movement. Fieldmarshal Rommel orders that the break-up of the front with the relinquishment of both flanks must only take place when directed by him. Ia points out that the defenders must reach the final defence line before the enemy.

Colonel Tempelhof repeats the order to hold firm at all costs.

2200 hrs. Chef d.G. informs General Fahrmbacher that the report just received from H.Gr. emphasises that the orders are quite clear and that a fighting retreat will be carried out. According to the last report, the retreat must only go as far as the line of St. Vast - Vauville. General Fahrmbacher reports that the retreat has not yet begun. Signal from See-Kdt. does not reveal much. General von Schlieben has had exact instructions as to the orders issued. Full-scale retreat must not take place. Assault battalion AOK 7 will remain with the Schlieben group, as its strength is hardly 100 men. Ia informs Ia H.Gr. about the report of G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. Ia also reports that it is quite clearly stated in a new order from the Fuehrer that Cap de la Hague must be included in the Cherbourg defence front.

2215 hrs. Ia informs Chef d.G. that according to an order from Fieldmarshal Rommel, General von Choltitz will take command of LXXXIV A.K. at once and General Fahrmbacher will take over XXV A.K. again.

2300 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. that General Hellmich has been killed in a fighter-bomber attack. Colonel Klosterkaemper takes over command of the group.

2320 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr. of the hero's death of General Hellmich.

With reference to the battle for Cherbourg, O.B. suggests that the line must be held as long as possible.

General Speidel instructs that this defence was ordered by the Fuehrer and must not be altered.

O.B. replies that it will result in the line being penetrated.

2345 hrs. Chef d.G. informs G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. of newly arrived instructions for the defence of Cherbourg; operation is to be carried out so

/that

that the enemy is held up as long as possible in his advance, and is worn down in the fighting retreat. Details of plan: the Schlieben group will fall back from present positions only under heavy enemy pressure, and must hinder the advance of the enemy by road blocks, mines, and every kind of deceptive tactics. The line Vauville - le Theil - Cap de la Hague must be defended. East and west flanks to be abandoned only by express orders of H.Gr. Where units are withdrawn, they must be replaced immediately, to restore the defences of the western spearhead. As regards withdrawal, O.B. lays special stress on deployment in depth, with point of main effort on the right. Effectiveness of the batteries towards Cherbourg must be assured. General Fahrmbacher agrees that the only thing to do is to withdraw, fighting astride the road, deployed in depth to the greatest possible extent, with the point of main effort on the right. Holding the present line he considers to be out of the question.

/Review

Review of operations on June 17, 1944

Today the battle for the fortress of Cherbourg entered its decisive phase. Following the enemy breakthrough to St. Sauveur on June 16, it was to be expected that the enemy would take advantage of his superiority in this region and attempt to advance quickly on Cherbourg. But there were no large-scale operations on either the northern or western sector. The enemy did not undertake any surprise moves, and our commanders were therefore able to institute the necessary counter-measures.

All other decisions have been taken in accordance with the Fuehrer's order which was forwarded by H.Gr. during the morning. The Schlieben group is to be permitted to fight its way back to the fortress in an attempt to slow down the enemy's advance. But the fortress itself is to be held at all costs. For this purpose, the Army has been supplied with all the ammunition it requires. Orders have been given to H.Gr. which limit the local commander's freedom of action, but which still conform to the Army's over-all plan of operations.

The eastern and western tips of the peninsula are only to be given up on the express orders of H.Gr.

The Army suggests that General von Schlieben shall be responsible for directing the move to take up new defensive positions; he is to hold out as long as possible in the hilly country of Brix. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. advises Chef d.G. that O.B. is strongly in favour of deployment in depth, with the main concentration on the right.

This move is not to be undertaken before evening, but it is possible that it will begin on June 18.

The 3rd Paratroop Division was able to achieve a notable defensive victory against the enemy troops attacking towards St.Lo. In fierce fighting the enemy was driven back with heavy losses.

/June 18,

June 18, 1944

1000 hrs. O.B. instructs General Fahmbacher that as from today General Choltitz takes over command of LXXXIV A.K. Simultaneously, LXXXIV A.K., II Parachute Corps and the Schlieben group to come under the command of AOK.

Defence front formed to the north of St. Sauveur to Portbail and occupied by the Klosterkammer group, (one reinforced battalion of the 243rd Infantry Division, and units of the 77th Infantry Division). On the front south of Montmartin, relatively strong artillery group has been built up (15-20 batteries). 309 Artillery Command is coming into the area behind the 3rd Paratroop Division. O.B. points out the special importance of the front on both sides of Pretot, which must be held at all costs.

General Fahmbacher refers to the difficulty of defending flanks on both sides of Cherbourg when troops and material have already been withdrawn on Field Marshal Rommel's orders. O.B. orders that not too many units should be sent into the front line of St. Lo, as the 353rd Infantry Division must be held together. 2nd SS Panzer Division will be behind them in reserve.

1030 hrs. Chief d.G. informs Chief H.Gr. that the new defence front west of St. Sauveur has been occupied by units of the 243rd and 77th Infantry Divisions, using the best positions the peninsula affords.

General von Schlieben is placed directly under AOK and is conducting operations with his own division, units of the 77th and weak units of the 243rd Infantry Divisions.

H.Gr. has agreed that II Parachute Corps shall come under the direct command of AOK. Suggestion of the Army on areas of command:

LXXXIV A.K. west of the Vire, II Parachute Corps east of the Vire as far as XXXXVII Parachute Corps, with point of concentration east of St. Lo. The 2nd SS Panzer Division will be behind II Parachute Corps, so that there is no danger of a strategic breakthrough. The 352nd Infantry Division has been completely defeated, and must be withdrawn.

At the suggestion of the Army, General Jung will not succeed General Hellmich as commander of the 243rd Infantry Division, since the remaining elements of the division would be better left under the command of Colonel Klosterkammer.

1040 hrs. General Meindl informs Chief d.G. that withdrawal of the 352nd Infantry Division is imminent, but the commander should not be relieved of his duties.

2030 hrs. Chief I SS Panzer Corps reports enemy tank attack without artillery preparation at 1630 hrs. on both sides of Tilly, between Cristot and Longraye.

2120 hrs. Chief LXXXIV A.K. informs Chief d.G. on situation.

2130 hrs. Chief LXXXIV A.K. informs Chief H.Gr. B on situation. According to radio message from von Schlieben, the enemy is passive on the northern front, but is advancing towards the west and north-west. Enemy in Bernville, St. Jacques and in confined area west of St. Sauveur. Vain attempts to break through to the south by two battalions of the 77th Infantry Division, whose commander, General Stegmann, was badly wounded. Artillery Regiment 621 has broken through to the south with both of its companies. In the south our front is held only by weak forces (17th Reconnaissance Detachment and two companies). One battalion of the 77th Infantry Division and a battalion drawn from the eastern occupied territories may come up during

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during the night.

Towards the east we have stronger forces both sides of Pretot (3 battalions).

2155 hrs. G.O.C. II Parachute Corps requests that Chef d.G. propose strengthening 3rd Paratroop Division by the newly arrived section of the 2nd SS Panzer Division. Chef d.G. replies that he has no authority over the 2nd SS Panzer Division at present, and that the 3rd Paratroop Division will be reinforced by battalions arriving later.

2230 hrs. Chef XXV A.K. gives Ia details of fight with partisans. It seems that an organised revolt is developing. As many men as can be spared are to be withdrawn from the front.

2400 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports attack in three groups of approximately regimental strength. Enemy losses high. Enemy has relieved his troops, but is still exerting pressure.

/Review

Review of operations on June 18, 1944

On June 18 the enemy made no attempt to break through to Cherbourg from his positions between Montebourg and Quineville. A report that the enemy is digging in seems to suggest that he does not intend to take Cherbourg by a frontal attack, but that he will attempt an advance on the right flank, taking in the town of Bricquebec.

The situation around Barneville is obscure, as it is not known whether units of the 77th Infantry Division under General Stegmann have been successful in their attempt to break through to the south.

The Schlieben group was put under the immediate command of the Army. It remains responsible for the conduct of operations for as long as it is possible to hold a long stretch of the coastal front without endangering the fortress, i.e. until the main line of defence is formed. The north-western part of the peninsula, including Cap de la Hague is to be considered as part of the main line of defence. The ability of the Schlieben group to hold out depends on the enemy being thrown back on the right flank. It is particularly important that General von Schlieben should maintain his strength on the right flank, so that, whatever else happens, the enemy shall be prevented from breaking through to Cherbourg.

A report has been received during the evening that an attempt to break out to the south has not been successful.

The arrangement under which the II Parachute Corps was subordinated to LXXXIV A.K., with General von Choltitz in command, has been cancelled where it applies to operations on both sides of the Vire and in south Cotentin.

The following formations were engaged:-

(a) II Parachute Corps, between the rivers Vire and Drome, as part of the active defence measures in the St.Lo area.

(b) LXXXIV A.K., between the Vire and the west coast of Cotentin, to provide protection in the north and east, with the focal point in the area of Pretot.

General Fahrmbacher has resumed command of XXV A.K.

June 19,

June 19, 1944

- 1715 hrs. Ia reports situation to Ia H.Gr.B:
Enemy air activity was limited owing to bad weather.
- 1850 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Ia H.Gr. that radio communication with von Schlieben is now only possible through the fortress.
Chef d.G. does not think that enemy will exert pressure towards the south. Pressure is rather to be expected from the east (confirmed by the report of Chef LXXXIV A.K. to Ia at 2045 hrs., of enemy breakthrough to Vindefontaine and crossroads to west).
Nothing known of situation of Schlieben group. General von Schlieben has however been ordered so to act that his forces reach the fortress before the enemy.
- 1925 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. gives situation report to Chef d.G.:
General Stegmann, O.C. 77th Infantry Division badly wounded and missing. I/Grenadier Regiment 1050 (77th Infantry Division) arrived on north front and put into defensive action. A group of the 77th Infantry Division of 1,200 - 1,400 men has broken through to the south.
Night reconnaissance near Les Moitiers.
For the first time, no enemy air activity.
Enemy preparations for attack on both sides and east of Carentan.
New command organisation in effect since 1400 hrs.
- 1930 hrs. Ia situation report to Ia H.Gr.B.

/Review

Review of operations on June 19, 1944

The activities of the Schlieben group cannot be clarified as no reply has been sent in answer to our signals. It seems, however, that the enemy has not yet begun to attack in the Montebourg area and is only feeling his way carefully forward in the west. General von Schlieben will probably be successful in establishing a strong defensive line here with the forces at his disposal, the strength of which cannot yet be estimated. The view of the Army that the enemy would exert pressure not to the south, but from the east is confirmed in a report this evening from LXXXIV A.K. of an enemy attack on the east front at Vindefontaine.

/June 20,

June 20, 1944

0710 hrs. Ia.H.Gr.B. informs Chef d.G. of radio message from the Schlieben group, received at 0525 hrs., to the effect that withdrawals have begun.

0900 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. informs Chef d.G. on the situation: attack on the west front; Pretot taken from the enemy. Mopping up difficult as no available reserves, except units of the 77th Infantry Division which broke through on June 19. These cannot be put into action as they have been badly hit and need to be reorganised. At the moment there are only units of the 353rd Infantry Division (staff and engineer company, artillery, and two troops of the anti-tank battalion). Chef d.G. stresses that this position must be held at all costs, and that the Huber Battalion of troops drawn from the eastern occupied territories and the 353rd Infantry Division are to be brought up by LXXXIV A.K. Heavy artillery fire at Carentan; no attack yet reported. Large-scale attack expected, on the "Prairie's Marecageuses". Command: Eitner at Pretot, to the north as far as St. Nikolas Jaeger, and continuing to the west, Klosterkaemper. One company of the 797th Georgian Battalion withdrew from positions at St. Germain after putting artillery out of action.

0915 hrs. Colonel Coretti reports to Chef d.G. an incident which took place in the 797th Georgian Battalion. The 2nd Company was concerned. The case was connected with the murder of the battalion commander by the 4th company commander, as the 2nd and 4th company commanders were Georgians. Colonel Coretti suggests that the battalion be withdrawn and severe measures taken with respect to the 2nd Company. The 4th Company, with the exception of 13 unreliable men, is to be dispersed among the other companies.

0945 hrs. Chef d.G. reports on situation to Chef H.Gr.B. Chef d.G. estimates that the general intention of the enemy will be an attack from the flank in an approximately south-westerly direction. It is important that the flank positions of Pretot and the hill positions to the west be held. Corps received instructions yesterday.

1030 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. taking over command and requests aerial photographs of the front, as ground reconnaissance is impossible.

1040 hrs. Discussions by O.B. and Chef d.G. with Fieldmarshal Sperrle: The Army requests:
1. More 2cm. flak, and amongst other things, light and medium flak from St. Nazaire and Florient.
2. Fighter action on Cotentin, especially for the support of the Cherbourg movement.
3. Unified command of air units, so that AOK does not have to work with several different Luftwaffe departments at once.
Fieldmarshal Sperrle says that there is no 2 cm. flak available in the area of O.B. West and this must be obtained from Germany. Fighter action on Cotentin difficult owing to bases being further away. Lt. Colonel Enneccerus is to be called in as Luftwaffe liaison officer.

1115 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. reports difficulties in ammunition supply of corps and requests speedy aid from the Army. After 47th Artillery Command has been brought up, 118th Artillery Command will be at the disposal of AOK.

1220 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps urgently requests Ia for replacements for the Panzer Training Division. The division has already lost 2,000 grenadiers. If replacements do not come soon, the front cannot be held in the event of an attack.

Two full-strength British divisions are placed opposite this division. Ia remarks that alterations of the demarcation line between the two Panzer Corps are still being considered.

1230 hrs. Telephone conversations of Chef d.G. with G.O.C. XXXXVII Panzer Corps, and O.C. 2nd Panzer Division:

Army requests that 500 men be withdrawn from the Field Replacement Battalion of the 2nd Panzer Division and transferred to the Panzer Training Division because of its heavy losses.

G.O.C. reports that only one company of 100 men is available at the moment, and they will be transferred at once. The greater part of the Field Replacement Battalion is far to the rear, and must first be brought up.

1245 hrs. Telephone conversation between Chef d.G. and Chef LXXXIV A.K.:

1. Ammunition supply: Army transport cannot be sent up to the front as before. A.K. must use all possible means to fetch ammunition from the dump at Michel themselves. Chef LXXXIV A.K. is responsible for overcoming the munition problem.

LXXXIV A.K. and II Parachute Corps can draw what they need from the Minna store as required.

Chef LXXXIV A.K. points out that only 200 tons are available, whereas 600 tons are urgently required.

2. Chef d.G. refers to AOK's intention to transfer the 353rd Infantry Division from II Parachute Corps to LXXXIV A.K.

3. Settlement of the 797th Georgian Battalion affair by Colonel Bunjatschenko.

1400 hrs. Ia instructs Chef LXXXIV A.K. that the Channel Islands are to be excluded from the LXXXIV A.K. area and incorporated in that of LXXXIV A.K. because of questions of supply. Supplies via St. Malo.

Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports that both 456th and 457th Heavy Artillery Detachments are without ammunition.

1600 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports that breakthrough at Hottot has been blocked and will be mopped up by the Panzer Training Division after arrival of reinforcements.

Ia replies that XXXXVII Panzer Corps and the 2nd Panzer Division will do everything possible to furnish reinforcements.

1610 hrs. Lt. Colonel Ennecerus reports to Ia that a Luftwaffe liaison officer is on his way to LXXXVI A.K.

1850 hrs. Chef d.G. requests O.Qu. West to send to AOK, as quickly as possible, 120 single-seater fighters, which have been promised for 5 weeks and are still in Regensburg.

Ia discussions:

1. Colonel Schmidtke, Propaganda Detachment, France, and

2. Lt. Colonel von Lersner, National Socialist Indoctrination Officer with OKH, concerning propaganda questions. Army and infantry are to be brought more into the foreground; propaganda deals too much with Navy.

3. O.C. Engineers and O.C. Fortress Engineers concerning division of the battle area into combat and communication zones.

4. Employment of road commanders; traffic regulation in connection with original traffic organisation of Military Governor and O.C. Fortress Engineers.

(Advance of II SS Panzer Corps).

June 21, 1944

0955 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. that the stores commander at Michel sent a convoy of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division back empty, as the demand was no longer valid. It is urgently requested that this will not be allowed to happen again.

G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. requests that Colonel Bacherer remain in command of the 77th Infantry Division and suggests presentation of Oak Leaves. Colonel Bacherer is making an excellent impression and apart from this, it is only because of his energy that the battle group of the 77th Infantry Division forced its way from north to south, through enemy territory. General von Choltitz reports on the situation in the area east of St.Lo.

The enemy seems to have discovered the presence of paratroops and has removed his point of concentration elsewhere. As the battle group of the 266th Infantry Division comes in at the boundary of II Parachute Corps area, and also the 2nd SS Panzer Division is in the rear as a reserve, there is no cause for anxiety here.

Chef d.G. replies that the thrust along the St.Lo - Coutances road should not be regarded as dangerous, because:-

1. The Vire lies in between;
2. it is the longest way; and
3. the 2nd SS Panzer Division is between as reserve for the Army.

1030 hrs. Chef orders O.Qu. to examine the munition supply of LXXXIV A.K. on the spot.

O.Qu. replies that he can supply the troops with only one fifth of the ammunition requested.

1040 hrs. Ic informs Chef d.G. that another division (49th American) has appeared at Montebourg and that altogether six and a half divisions lie in front of Cherbourg.

1130 hrs. Ia discusses with Chef Parachute Corps the replacement of small arms through XXV A.K.

1230 hrs. Chef d.G. discusses the following questions with Chef d.G. H.Gr.B, by order of O.B.

1. Transport:

proposes to Chef d.G. that supply columns be formed with transport available in the fortress and also in Nantes, so that everything which is not needed in the fortress may be placed at the disposal of the Army.

Chef d.G. replies that the proposal of the Army that AOK 15 should give up transport must however be rejected.

2. Situation in Brittany:

altogether the situation is as follows: since June 6 the forces have suffered 62 fatal casualties and a corresponding number of wounded through terrorist attacks and guerilla fighting. Specific recruiting areas can be observed and there is a general movement towards the centre of Brittany. If no forces are made available, then units of the coastal defence troops must be withdrawn to combat this. It is thought that this situation will grow worse.

3. Replacements for the Panzer Training Division:

it is authorised that the Field Replacement Battalion of the 2nd Panzer Division should release the necessary men.

4. The Army considers it significant that the enemy has sent in no airborne troops at Cherbourg. Chef H.Gr. presumes that airborne troops are needed for another large-scale operation.

5. Still nothing has been heard from the Schlieben group, with the exception of what was reported to H.Gr. yesterday. Chef d.G. explains that the required strength reports are passed on as soon as they arrive.

1245 hrs. Telephone conversation between Chef d.G. and General von Schlieben:

1. Attack repulsed early today at Le Theil. Reconnaissance patrols by enemy tanks in some strength are in progress in the south-west corner of the front. The Schlieben group has formed four regimental sectors and is placing its units.
2. More supplies have arrived by air. Petrol should be delivered in the next consignment. Mortar and anti-tank weapons as requested are urgently needed. Chef d.G.: Mortars are on the way by sea route via St.Malo.
3. Von Schlieben asks for one battalion of paratroops or airborne troops as reinforcements, and requests situation reports by naval radio.
4. City centre occupied by emergency units from outside the town. There are still approximately 6,000 - 8,000 civilians in the fortress. General Stegmann is not in the fortress and must be presumed missing.
5. Chef d.G. reports on air situation and says that our fighters could not come so far north as their bases were too far away. Measures being taken to make fighter cover possible.

1315 hrs. Ia informs Ia H.Gr. about the von Schlieben report and points out that by now the strength of the enemy is six and a half divisions.

Army estimation of situation: the enemy is covering the area of St. Sauveur de Pierrepont and the south, and is assembling his strength opposite the Schlieben group.

Adequate fighter cover was requested to safeguard airborne supplies.

Ia H.Gr. reports that on the basis of repeated assurances from General Blumentritt and General Warlimont, General von Schlieben takes full responsibility for the fortress of Cherbourg.

1400 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports to Ia that regrouping of the enemy has been observed, especially opposite the Panzer Training Division sector. Possible reason could be heavy losses. Air reconnaissance is requested.

Ia states in answer to a question that the narrow sector allocated to the 267th Infantry Division is commensurate with the strength of this division. I SS Panzer Corps is to report the most favourable position as regards combat possibilities and terrain.

1420 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports again to Ia on corps' lack of fuel and munitions.

Enemy reconnaissance north-west of La Haye du Puits near Baudreville.

Our aircraft have dropped ammunition over Channel Islands instead of on Cherbourg, and one of our aircraft was shot down by one of our own M.T.B's.

1445 hrs. Ia orders O.Qu at O.Qu West to issue clear instructions for air supply of the fortress, so that supplies are dropped at the right place.

1610 hrs. Ia instructs Chef LXXXIV A.K. that to justify the paratroop reserves requested by the von Schlieben group, a report of the condition of the troops in the fortress is required.

/1635 hrs.

- 1635 hrs. On enquiry, Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports that the withdrawal of troops and regrouping on the part of the enemy can indicate both that he has suffered heavy losses and that he intends to make new moves.
I SS Panzer Corps is ready for attack and has reinforced the left wing of the Panzer Training Division. It is requested that the 2nd Panzer Division be reinforced on the right, especially in the Torteval wood area.
- 1700 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef XXXXVII Panzer Corps of the attack expected in the Panzer Training Division area and requests reinforcement of the right wing of the Panzer Training Division. XXXXVII Panzer Corps is to take over a section of the front from the Panzer Training Division in the region of Torteval wood.
Chef XXXXVII Panzer Corps reports that after investigation the sector of the front as far as the small wood north-west of Torteval will be taken over by the 2nd Panzer Division. The enemy has become more active on the left flank of the 2nd Panzer Division during the afternoon.
Suggestion of XXXXVII Panzer Corps regarding the new demarcation line.
- 1930 hrs. Ia H.Gr. informs Ia of telephone call from O.B. West, to the effect that a new enemy operation is possible tonight.
Ia reports that during the day the whole front has been unusually quiet. Very little enemy air activity, withdrawal opposite the 12th SS Panzer Division. It is possible that the enemy is withdrawing for concentrated bombardment with artillery and aircraft, or it is possible that because of heavy losses, he may be regrouping at Tilly, to move his main point of concentration there.
- 2310 hrs. O.C. Fortress Engineers reports to Ia that only 2/Fortress Engineers 158 can be placed at the disposal of LXXXIV A.K. for road construction near Coutances. The remainder of the 3/Fortress Engineers 11 will not be sent in, as it consists of only a few men.

/Review

Review of operations on June 21, 1944

Throughout the day the entire front was surprisingly quiet. Local enemy attacks made with light forces against the Cherbourg fortress area were repelled.

According to Army reports, the situation at the three main centres of activity is as follows:

1. The sector held by I SS Panzer Corps

The enemy is regrouping his forces, after having withdrawn some of his forward posts. It is assumed that these movements have been caused by the heavy losses which the enemy has suffered in recent fighting. It may however be that the enemy is withdrawing to enable him to concentrate his forces for a future attack with support from his artillery and Air Force.

2. The St.Lo area

The enemy concentrations along the road from St. Lo to Coutances suggest that a further enemy thrust is imminent. St.Lo and Coutances are expected to be the objectives.

3. The fortress of Cherbourg

The enemy has six and a half divisions at his disposal for an attack on Cherbourg. It is assumed that the enemy has a screen of forces to the south of the area St.Sauveur de Pierre Pont, and an attack on the Schlieben group is expected.

Our forces are undertaking an attack in defence of the fortress.

/June 22,

June 22, 1944

- 0945 hrs. Chef d.G. reports situation to Ia: the Klosterkaemper group's section of the front is slowly settling down. Main pressure of the enemy is however expected on the Mahlman line. Ia instructs that after the arrival of the battle group of the 266th Infantry Division, the battle group of the 353rd Infantry Division is to be withdrawn and brought back to the division.
- 0950 hrs. Chef II SS Panzer Corps informs Ia that G.O.C. and Chef II SS Panzer Corps will arrive at Army battle headquarters during the evening of June 23.
- 1000 hrs. Chef XXXXVII Panzer Corps reports on situation to Ia: situation cannot be clearly estimated: the front is quiet. Aircraft were observed, flying slowly above the clouds, and it is presumed that they were taking infra-red photos.
- 1010 hrs. Ia informs Ia H.Gr. on situation. Absolute lull on I SS Panzer Corps, XXXXVII Panzer Corps and II Parachute Corps sectors. South-west of Carentan, heavy harassing artillery fire. Presence of new enemy airfields confirmed behind the front south of Bayeux. Enemy infra-red photography suspected. Unusual quiet intimates expected enemy attack. Ia H.Gr. informs on request that nothing new is known about enemy shipping movements near Le Havre. Enemy troop movements towards south-east England confirmed. The bombardment of London with flying bombs seems to have caused a certain easing of the situation in the air, as the enemy has sent up fighters to combat these.

Conversations on June 22.

1. General Pickert, G.O.C. III Flak Corps. Concentration of flak forces remains as before. Units have been withdrawn to support our attack on the east bank of the Orne.
2. General Badinski, O.C. 276th Infantry Division is advancing and is approaching Domfront. Only units in the rear are making use of transport. Final training is not yet completed, mobility of the division not yet perfect. Morale of troops excellent. Division will take over a sector 10 - 12 km. wide, after the 21st Panzer Division has been withdrawn.
3. General Praun, O.C. 277th Infantry Division. Division sent in.
4. General Thomale, Chef d.G. with Inspector General of Tank Forces.
 - (a) Putting into action of panzer units within Army command, and intentions. Replacements for the Panzer Training Division.
 - (b) The following are being brought up to the Army area:-
 - (1) Tiger unit 503, consisting of 33 Tiger I's, and 12 Tiger II's. The best Tiger unit with the most battle experience in the Army will arrive shortly.
 - (2) Panther Unit 654, with altogether 25 Panthers. Both units use 8.8 cm. artillery.
5. Chef d.G. H.Gr. B, General Speidel:
 - (1) Fieldmarshal Rommel thinks that an immediate retreat to the Lessay Line should take place, if Army believes that the present line on the peninsula on the height La Haye du Puits - Portbail cannot be held.
 - (2) Panzer divisions, with the exception of the 12th SS Panzer Division are to be relieved by infantry divisions.

- (3) The 2nd SS Panzer Division will be ready for immediate action if the situation around St. Lo renders this necessary.
- (4) Chef d.G. declares that the land front of Cherbourg can presumably be broken but the city centre offers a good defensive position.
- (5) O.B. describes it as regrettable that his suggestion to destroy the harbour was not carried out immediately.
- (6) III Flak Corps sent into action.
- (7) Nominations by the Army for the Knight's Cross.

1230 hrs. H.Gr.B informs Ia of the battalions moving up to the front.

1. One infantry battalion can be in the Argentan area early on June 25.
2. One infantry battalion started from Germany; left on June 21, and may be in Paris area on June 26.
3. Another 2 infantry battalions from Germany, time of arrival not known.
4. Probably 2 or 3 Panzer Grenadier battalions, but not until July.

The panzer divisions must have picked replacements.

Note: The Panzer Training Division has had 2,300 casualties up till now and the 2nd Panzer Division a similar number.

1930 hrs. Telephone conversation between Chef d.G. and Chef LXXXIV A.K. regarding the breakthrough of the 77th Infantry Division to the south.

The Hellmich group, including the 77th Infantry Division, had been ordered to pivot to the south if a breakthrough occurred at Valognes, or if Cotentin was in danger of being cut off. Before this movement could be carried out, the 243rd Infantry Division front was broken by the enemy at St. Sauveur, and the 77th Infantry Division was cut off. Thereupon, units of the 77th Infantry Division, after giving up some battalions as ordered to the von Schlieben group, made their own decision and, under the leadership of Colonel Bacherer, broke through to the south. Colonel Bacherer had to decide whether to attempt to link up with the Schlieben group - a movement which could have been carried out quite easily, or to break through to the south.

He chose this way, although it was by far the more difficult. General Stegmann had wanted to move up to the support of the front to the west of St. Sauveur le Vicomte, but was killed. The decision to break through was taken by Colonel Bacherer. Strength of the units which broke through was roughly 1,200 men, including units of the 91st, 243rd, and 77th Infantry Divisions. Total number who broke through from 243rd Infantry Division roughly 800 men;

1940 hrs. Telephone conversation between Chef d.G. and General Fahrmbacher to clarify breakthrough of the 77th Infantry Division for direct report to the Fuehrer. General Fahrmbacher reports that to the north of the enemy breakthrough there were only three battalions of the 77th Infantry Division with divisional staff. Of these, one battalion was given to the von Schlieben group in accordance with instructions, while the remaining battalions broke through to the south according to the original order, with the intention of reinforcing the west front. As one battalion from St. Malo and the Eitner Battalion were south of the breakthrough line, it cannot be described as a breakthrough of the whole division. Only the Bacherer regimental group (2 battalions of the 77th Infantry Division, with units of the 91st and 243rd Infantry Divisions) and divisional staff broke through.

Situation in Brittany: General Fahrmbacher requests that some units of troops drawn from the eastern occupied territories be brought up as they are urgently needed for guerilla warfare. Chef d.G. replies that the corps must help itself.

/2215 hrs.

- 2215 hrs. Ia O.B. West reports to Ia that the first replacements will arrive in Argentan on June 25. Year group '06 and younger combed out. Some of the year group '06 and older of 2nd Draft Conducting Battalion in O.B. West's area will be exchanged for younger year groups.
- 2330 hrs. Ia orders Major Hahn to get into contact with II Parachute Corps and LXXXIV A.K. because of the parachutists reported on the south, east and west of Coutances. Communication between AOK, Gen.Kdo. LXXXIV A.K. and Gen.Kdo. II Parachute Corps interrupted.
- 2345 hrs. General von Schlieben reports the strength of the fortress garrison as 21,000 men. This strength does not prove anything, as the fighting ability can only be described as inferior because of the lack of officers and the inclusion of lower grade men whose power of resistance is not great.
- 2350 hrs. Colonel Kessler, O.C. Special Duties Regiment 752, reports that reconnaissance patrols were sent out to clarify the reported landing of paratroops. In the opinion of the regiment, the report is not correct as regards numbers. These were apparently only aircrews who had baled out. Everything available (Panzer Unit 100, 3/Engineers' Battalion 319, one construction company, one H.Q. company, and 60 men from a collection point for stragglers) was sent in for observation and investigation of the terrain.
- 2400 hrs. Report LXXXIV A.K. to Ia that the enemy has been attacking in unknown strength west of St.Lo and Ourville under heavy artillery cover. Counter-measures are being taken. Another attack at Varengebec repulsed. Bombing attack on battle headquarters LXXXIV A.K.
- 2415 hrs. G.O.C. II Parachute Corps informs Chef d.G. that reconnaissance had been in operation since 2345 hrs. against the reported enemy airborne troops. The 2nd SS Panzer Division was being held in readiness. Ia reports to Ia H.Gr. the reconnaissance measures against the reported paratroop landings.

/Review

Review of operations on June 22, 1944

The enemy was surprisingly quiet along the entire front. Increasing air and artillery activity and movements on the enemy airfields opposite the I SS Panzer Corps suggest that the enemy is preparing another attack. Large-scale bombing and strafing raids were directed by the enemy against the now more tightly compressed fortress area of Cherbourg. In the course of the day the following conferences were held:-

1. G.O.C. III Flak Corps,

The centre of concentration of flak on the sector of I SS Panzer Corps remains as before. Some units to be disposed on the east bank of the Orne.

2. G.O.C. 276th Infantry Division to discuss the replacement of the 21st Panzer Division by the 276th Infantry Division.

3. G.O.C. 277th Infantry Division to discuss the use of this division, which is superior in equipment and training to the 246th Infantry Division.

4. Chef d.G. with the Inspector General of Tank Forces to discuss the use of panzer units within the Army Command, replacements for the Panzer Training Division and the bringing up of the 503rd Tiger Detachment (equipped with Tiger 2) and the 654th Jagd-Panther Detachment.

5. Chef d.G.H.Gr.B to discuss general problems arising from the conduct of operations, with particular reference to our own offensive operations.

In order that an immediate report may be sent to the Fuehrer an explanation was received from LXXIV A.K. and General Fahmbacher concerning the breakthrough of units of the 77th Infantry Division from Montebourg to the south. It appears that only half of the 77th Infantry Division is in Cotentin and that the break-out was only undertaken by a battle group of the strength of two battalions.

Attacks were made at numerous points along the Cherbourg front. Fighting is still in progress.

June 23,

June 23, 1944

- 0900 hrs. Chef d.G. in reply to question from OKW as to whether U-boats should leave Cherbourg because of the enemy push into the Cherbourg land front, informs Ia H.Gr. that AOK does not know the function of the U-boats. The situation is serious, but not as serious as See - Kdt. thinks.
- 0935 hrs. Ia LXXXIV A.K. reports to Ia that a penetration has been made in the Luck group sector (east of the Orne) and two replacement battalions are urgently requested. Ia promises that the first draft conducting battalions to arrive will be sent up to the 364th Infantry Division.
- 0940 hrs. Ia informs Ia H.Gr. that the parachute landings reported yesterday at Gavray will presumably prove to have been baled-out aircrews. Exact reconnaissance account is not yet available.
- 1010 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Ia that an attack at St. Nicolas was repulsed. It was a very strong reconnaissance movement in company - battalion strength. Heavy artillery fire to the west of Carentan. No confirmation of enemy at Coutances; reconnaissance still without result.
- 1050 hrs. Colonel Kessler reports to Ia that reconnaissance of parachutists reported yesterday is still without result. Presumably munitions and supplies had been dropped for terrorists in the area of Cerisy - Lasalle and to the north, east and west of them. Nothing has been found in the whole area by emergency units. Ia reports this to Ia H.Gr.
- 1130 hrs. On report of Chef II Parachute Corps that the search at Coutances was without result, Chef d.G. orders that the reconnaissance be discontinued. Chef II Parachute Corps also reports artillery fire during the whole of the night. This increased to such an extent towards 0430 hrs. that an attack was expected, but so far this has not happened. The enemy has retired in front of the 352nd Infantry Division and is bombarding villages and road junctions. On the suggestion of Chef d.G. that such enemy withdrawals should be used to improve our own position, Chef II Parachute Corps replies that this would incur heavy losses, owing to the hard ground and the necessity of digging in immediately. II Parachute Corps considers itself strong enough to meet enemy attack in its present positions with the forces at its disposal.
- 1330 hrs. Ia 709th Infantry Division gives Chef d.G. short situation report:
The enemy has broken through the land front and is advancing in four wedges. Hand-to-hand fighting is proceeding at some of our artillery positions and battle headquarters. Positions which have not been destroyed are still holding out. Road demolitions being carried out. Outer defences being prepared, owing to obvious weakening of sea front. Navy considers harbour destroyed for good. Regiments have been ordered to fight in the rear of the enemy. Jobourg peninsula in our hands after action against enemy reconnaissance units.
- 1415 hrs. Chef d.G. reports on Cherbourg situation to Chef H.Gr.
- 1550 hrs. Further situation report from the fortress of Cherbourg. General von Schlieben has put all his remaining forces into action, including headquarters and supply personnel.

- 1635 hrs. Ia 709th Infantry Division sends a further situation report on the battle round Cherbourg.
- 1445 hrs. Chef d.G. asks Luftflotte 3 (Colonel Mettich) why fighter support has not been sent to Cherbourg.
- 1615 hrs. Luftflotte 3 gives following reasons:-
(a) Bad flying weather at Cherbourg,
(b) The 21st Panzer Division demanded more fighter protection against enemy attack, whereupon Jagdkorps II on its own responsibility sent in fighter forces for the 21st Panzer Division and II Parachute Corps.
Chef d.G. repeats his urgent request for support for the fortress
- 1730 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports to Ia that shipping has been observed on the west of the Orne estuary, moving in a south-easterly direction.
Landing on east and west of Orne presumed and air reconnaissance requested.
- 1735 hrs. Ia passes this report on to H.Gr.B and LXXXVI A.K.
- 1900 hrs. Conversations between G.O.C. and Chef d.G.I SS Panzer Corps (General Hauser)
Intention of sending corps into action.
General Hauser estimates that the 9th and 10th SS Panzer Divisions will be in the assembly area ordered around Alencon and to the south on June 25th.
Supply as before through O.Qu. West.
- 2000 hrs. H.Gr.B reports to Ia that the 15th Paratroop Regiment must be made ready to move from St.Malo to Cherbourg because of the OKW order. Also new Fuehrer order: harbour and town must be defended to the last man.
- 2010 hrs. OKW order is made known to II Parachute Corps. By order of AOK, the 15th Paratroop Regiment is to be stopped immediately and sent back to St.Malo.
- 2020 hrs. Ia suggests to H.Gr. that instead of the 15th Paratroop Regiment, the 13th Paratroop Regiment from St.Malo be made ready, as it can still be embarked today.
- 2025 hrs. Ia gives warning order to Chef LXXIV A.K.: the 13th Paratroop Regiment to be held in St. Malo for possible sea transport. As replacement, the 15th Paratroop Regiment would be transferred to the fortress.
- 2055 hrs. H.Gr. passes on following decision of OKW to Ia:
Transport to Cherbourg can no longer be considered.
See - Kdt. at Cherbourg has already a free hand to close the harbour.
Orders already issued by AOK are not to be obeyed.
Sending of infantry and paratroops to Cherbourg is no longer possible.
- 2103 hrs. Chef LXXIV A.K. is instructed by Ia that everything will remain as before.
- 2110 hrs. Ia instructs Ia II Parachute Corps that movements of the 15th Paratroop Regiment should continue.
Orders previously issued are not to be obeyed.
Inquiry of Chef d.G. to Chef LXXXVI A.K. on situation.
LXXXVI A.K. reports no particular movements or shipping activity in area of the 711th Infantry Division.
Report on paratroop landing between Dives and Orne is passed on

with reservations.
Report not yet confirmed.

2150 hrs. Inquiry of Chef d.G. to O.C. 21st Panzer Division, as to whether report of paratroop landing east of Caen is correct. General Feuchtinger declares that this is absolutely impossible, but considers enemy activity tonight possible. Replacements of men and artillery ammunition urgently necessary.

2200 hrs. Ia instructs Ia H.Gr. that report of airborne landings at Caen is not correct.

2210 hrs. Ia instructs Chef LXXXIV A.K. that the infantry of Flak Regiment 32 must be withdrawn, but will remain available for air defence in the LXXXIV A.K. area. Conversation with G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. on former employment of and criticism of 118th Artillery Commander, (Colonel Hamann), placed at the disposal of the Army. General von Choltitz describes the present 474th Artillery Commander as far superior, and wishes to retain him.

/Review

Review of operations on June 23, 1944

Harassing fire from the enemy's artillery, coupled with reconnaissance patrols along the entire front confirmed the view that the enemy intended to attempt to break through to Cherbourg with his armoured forces, which would be supported by covering fire from naval forces and mass air attacks. It is therefore to be assumed that the enemy will take advantage of the deep penetration he was able to achieve on June 23 and that he will begin his planned attack on June 24.

The enemy is likely to be helped by the fact that our fighter aircraft have not put in an appearance in the Cherbourg area; this, in spite of requests to Luftflotte 3 and personal representations to Fieldmarshal Sperrle.

An order received during the evening from OKW, saying that the 15th Paratroop Regiment should stand by to be transported by sea to Cherbourg was later withdrawn; and the plan to move in infantry units or paratroops to the fortress area was abandoned.

/June 24,

June 24, 1944

1100 hrs. Report of General von Schlieben:

General von Schlieben thinks that the enemy is regrouping his artillery today.

Communication with battle headquarters of several battalions no longer possible. Heavy bombing of Fort de Roule. 8 batteries shot out of action. General von Schlieben expects heavy attacks tomorrow. Port railway station destroyed. Whole harbour affected. Bombardment from sea has not as yet occurred.

1130 hrs. Amplifier station has just been forced to surrender. A new circuit must now be established. (Information from exchange).

Knight's Cross award to Captain Simoneit must have been an error, according to report from General von Schlieben. Captain Simoneit was not recommended. Message that the award to Captain Simoneit is to be set aside for the time being has not gone through, owing to breakdown in communications.

General von Schlieben recommends Lt. Colonel Keil for the Knight's Cross in the following announcement.

"Lt. Colonel Keil, as leader of a fighting group in constant action, made a decisive contribution to the 709th Infantry Division's effort in holding the enemy in the St. Mere Eglise bridgehead and during the withdrawal into the Cherbourg fortress land front."

1740 hrs. Ia requests Ia H.Gr. to give H.Gr. air support, which must be effected today.

AOK is encountering difficulties in obtaining fuel to bring up infantry units into the area in compliance with orders. O.Qu.H.Gr. is asked to help.

1800 hrs. Ia instructs Chef II Parachute Corps that Parachute Flak Company 2 is to be sent up to the 6th Paratroop Regiment at the request of O.C. 2nd Paratroop Division.

Chef of II Parachute Corps declares that the 352nd Infantry Division has greatest need of the flak company. On suggestion of II Parachute Corps that regrouping be carried out on the front of the Parachute Corps by bringing in the 6th Paratroop Regiment to make their front especially stable, Ia replies that the central group of the 353rd Infantry Division will be withdrawn in any case, and O.B. has also decided that the 6th Paratroop Regiment will remain in its present position.

1825 hrs. Telephone conversation between General Meise, H.Gr.B, and Ia on use of engineers.

1830 hrs. Report of Lt. Colonel Hoffmann, O.C.III/Grenadier Regiment 919 to (Schlieben group), on the struggle of the Schlieben group in the
1950 hrs. Cherbourg fortress.

General description of the course of the fighting, from the battle on the defence line at Montebourg up to the retreat to Cherbourg, and the battle performance and spirit of resistance of the troops: During the battle at Montebourg, the troops were worn down by the incessant bombardment by enemy naval artillery, and by air attacks. The appearance of defeatism made decisive action necessary. Even some leaders were demoralised by the material superiority of the enemy. The retreat to Cherbourg under heavy enemy pressure exhausted what remained of our troops' energy. In consequence shirking is increasing and is particularly easy because of the surrounding country. Also countless cases of men deserting to the enemy have occurred. Contrary to the express command of General von Schlieben, several fortified positions were evacuated under pressure of enemy artillery fire. Lack of sufficient training owing to urgent requirement of troops had an unfavourable effect.

/The

The estimate that the artillery fought better than the infantry may be right, but it is limited by the fact that the infantry had more air and artillery bombardment to bear. The total absence of the Luftwaffe had a depressing effect on the troops and encouraged shirking. The harbour has been damaged to such an extent that the constructed part is unserviceable. In spite of this, the enemy will probably find other landing places for his troops. The port railway station has been absolutely destroyed. The enemy demand to surrender the fortress and give an answer to the demand by June 22 was left unanswered by General von Schlieben.

Questions and answers

1. What is General von Schlieben's estimate of the port railway station as a defensive position?

Doubtless a line of defensive positions which would hold for some time. If bombarded by heavy naval artillery the further defence of these positions would be difficult. As yet bombardment only from land side.

2. How effective is air supply?

Filters, first aid packets, etc., nothing but things which cannot be used.

3. The ammunition brought by sea from St.Malo cannot be used as there are no field guns of this calibre available.

Machine guns 42 and anti-tank weapons are needed urgently. Equipment with French, Polish and other machine guns against the modern equipped enemy insufficient.

4. How is cooperation between Generals von Schlieben and Sattler and See Kdt., Admiral Henicke?

Very good; they are determined to hold out although the defence can only be for a short time.

5. Would the 2 or 3 battalions of the 77th Infantry Division, which were put into action at Montebourg and which broke through to the south have been decisive in the holding of the Cherbourg land front?

By no means. The speed of the retreat dictated by the enemy could not have been influenced by battle-weary battalions. Only a fresh regiment could have helped.

6. The retreat began only under pressure of an attack of the enemy. Would an earlier withdrawal to reorganise the land front for the fortress battle have been more advantageous? An earlier withdrawal would doubtless have had a favourable effect, as time would have been gained by it to bring troops up from the fortress and deploy them on the land front. Units were too mixed to allow a successful reorganisation in the time given. Even company commanders had no idea of the number of their men or where they were.

7. How have the strong points been held on the east coast, to the south of Quineville?

Strong point units have done well, but have suffered heavy losses owing to air attacks. Some units are reported to have broken through to the south.

2110 hrs. On question of Chef d.G., O.Qu. states that apart from the unusable field howitzer ammunition, some anti-tank ammunition, flak ammunition and anti-tank weapons were sent to Cherbourg by M.T.B's.

Review of operations on June 24, 1944

On June 23 the enemy penetrated the front covering Cherbourg and on June 24 so extended these penetrations that the stage now seems to be set for the final attack, which is expected on June 25. The early fall of the fortress is to be expected.

AOK therefore demands, in an order to Gen. Kdo. LXXXIV A.K. and II Parachute Corps, that special measures be taken to strengthen the northern front in the Cotentin Peninsula. The line between Prairies Maracageuses de Gorges and Portbail is only to be given up under strong enemy pressure; in this event, the new line will be Le Plessis - St. Germain.

Lt. Colonel Hoffmann, O.C. III/Grenadier Regiment 919 reports personally on the situation in the fortress of Cherbourg, on behalf of General von Schlieben. In view of the low morale and confusion of the troops, and their inferior material it can only be a short time before the fortress falls. General von Schlieben has ordered that all pockets of resistance, including those already over-run by the enemy, are to fight to the last man.

It is noteworthy that, according to the report of Lt. Colonel Hoffman, an additional force of two or three battalions of the 77th Infantry Division has not had any effect on the fortress's ability to hold out. The will to resist of the forces in the Montebourg area, which had been subjected to heavy pressure, was so low that only the arrival of a new regiment could have brought some relief. If, however, additional troops could have been sent in earlier, the result would no doubt have been favourable, since time would thus have been gained to transfer units out of the fortress area and incorporate them in the land front without undue enemy interference.

/June 25,

June 25, 1944

- 0940 hrs. Chef LXXXVI A.K. reports to Ia that the enemy is probing our line with steadily increasing forces of shock troops. A penetration into the sector held by troops drawn from the eastern occupied territories was sealed off by a German reserve company.
- LXXXVI A.K. requests Army's permission to send in the advance battalion of the 16th Field Observation Division on the right wing of the Luck group, so that a reserve may be formed with units which are to be relieved.
- Ia gives Army's permission at 1100 hrs. LXXXVI A.K. is to send a written report regarding allegedly inadequate battle strength.
- 1010 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps sends situation report to Ia: Effect of own measures against enemy attack remains unknown. Engagements characterised by intense enemy bombardments and by the use of smoke screens, especially in the ravines of Tilly and district.
- 1215 hrs. Colonel Oemich reports to Ia that O.Qu. is ordering 11,000 smoke shells and the distribution of these to the troops should remain under Ia's supervision.
- 1230 hrs. Order of Chef d.G. to O.C.XIX Fortress Engineers to secure movement of II SS Panzer Corps within the assembly area. By order of H.Gr., II SS Panzer Corps is to be brought forward into the St. Symphorien area, and the 1st SS Panzer Division into the Thury - Harcourt area tonight. In order that this movement may be carried out, all traffic to and from the front must be suspended.
- Detailed orders of Chef d.G.:
1. No supply traffic to and from the front will be permitted tonight.
 2. The 276th and 277th Infantry Divisions are not to cross the line Pre en Pail - Domfront. These two divisions are to proceed quickly northwards on foot and in transport.
 3. Traffic control and repairs to be organised by Colonel Stiotta.
 4. For the time being, units coming up from Brittany must not cross the line Villedieu - Ceresy.
- Simultaneously Chef d.G. orders O.Qu. that all supply traffic must stop tonight. Everything on the ordered route of march must remain where it is, and O.Qu. must forgo his supply tonight.
- 1420 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps makes urgent request that a unit be brought up to clear up the situation east of Tilly. An attempt must be made to march by day if necessary. In the opinion of Ia, the risk may be taken as the Luftwaffe concentration point is near I SS Panzer Corps.
- Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports that the enemy is already south of the Juvigny - Fontenay road.
- 1445 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps wishes the forces promised to be brought up to Villers-Bocage, to which Ia agrees.
- 1615 hrs. Further discussion between Ia and Chef I SS Panzer Corps on bringing up the 1st SS Panzer Division. Chef I SS Panzer Corps points out that infantry is urgently needed, and must be at Villers-Bocage tomorrow morning. Afternoon arrival will be too late.
- 1650 hrs. Chef d.G. discusses with Colonel Coretti the withdrawal of rear parties from the training area Coetquidan and the use of these foreign troops as flying detachments with

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XXV A.K. XXV A.K. needs 10 flying detachments of 20 men each.

- 1700 hrs. Ia informs Ia H.Gr. of the situation with I SS Panzer Corps and adds that according to I SS Panzer Corps the situation of the Panzer Training Division is serious and that the division has been badly depleted. Ia transmits the urgent request of I SS Panzer Corps that 2 battalions of II SS Panzer Corps be held ready tomorrow morning to clear up the situation at Juvigny. The strength of the enemy there is estimated at one regiment.
- 1840 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps asks Chef d.G. again to send up units of II SS Panzer Corps or of the 21st Panzer Division as well as the 7th Mortar Brigade, since reinforcements have already arrived on the right bank of the Orne. Chef d.G. replies that according to H.Gr. neither units of II SS Panzer Corps nor forces on the right bank of the Orne may be withdrawn. However an infantry battalion and the 276th Engineer Battalion will be brought up tonight, so that I SS Panzer Corps may count on their going into action on June 26.
- 1900 hrs. Chef d.G. thanks Chef XXV A.K. and Chef LXXIV A.K. for the quick execution of the withdrawal and bringing up of troops destined for action in Normandy, and for their timely arrival there. Both generals agree that the partisan groups seem to be in a state of quiet expectancy.
- 1920 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Ia that according to the statement of a prisoner, the enemy intends a landing on the west coast of Cotentin. Ia wishes to discuss with O.C. Grenadier Special Duty Regiment 752 the rounding up of shirkers in the south of Cotentin. If necessary units of the 2nd SS Panzer Division may be used for this purpose.
- 1940 hrs. Ia H.Gr. gives consent of H.Gr. that two battalions of the 1st SS Panzer Division may be sent into action in I SS Panzer Corps' sector.
- 2000 hrs. Ia H.Gr. notifies Ia of W/T message from the Schlieben group stating that the last battle for Cherbourg is raging.
- 2100 hrs. Ia requests that Ia H.Gr. make an effort to bring up the panzer grenadier battalion which should have been in Versailles on June 23. According to report received it has not even left Nancy yet.
- 2220 hrs. Lt.Colonel Keil, defender of the Jobourg peninsula describes the situation to Ia.
Pressure not yet strong on the south front. Line runs from Vauville through strong point 482 to 431. On the north coast as far as the Landemeer battery. Division headquarters in Cherbourg is within close combat zone.
- 2310 hrs. Ia notifies Ia H.Gr. about Lt.Colonel Keil's report. Ia Schlieben group reports that the first attack on the arsenal has been repulsed. Troops are exhausted but it is thought that we can hold out tomorrow and the next few days. Communications on the peninsula maintained mostly by Reich Labour Service, naval and artillery personnel without guns to use.
- 2320 hrs. Chef d.G. orders O.Qu. to make every attempt to bring supplies to the fortress today.
- 2400 hrs. O.Qu. informs Ia that mines make supply by sea impossible, and that the only remaining possibility is supply by air.

2415 hrs. Lt.Colonel Keil makes further report on situation to Ia. General von Schlieben reported at 2215 hrs. that the situation remains unchanged. According to previous experience the enemy will not be active at night. The arsenal and Fort Roule are presumably still in our hands. Many units are presumably surrounded and continuing to fight at various places. The enemy is undoubtedly in Noianville and since this evening he has scaled hills 176 and 180, and is probably in Tonneville. The enemy is presumably in Octeville, but does not seem to have reached Querqueville yet. According to Ia the road near Querqueville has been blown up and mined. The tunnel has also been blown up. Enemy in western part of Cherbourg. Ia gives permission of AOK for Iron Cross awards by Lt.Colonel Keil. Strength cannot be determined exactly.

/Review

Review of operations on June 25, 1944

After days of preparation, the enemy went over to the offensive against that part of the front held by the Panzer Training Division. As a result of his immense superiority in numbers and materials, he broke into our line between Tilly and Fontenay. To reinforce those units engaged in heavy fighting it was ordered that the Infantry and Engineer Battalion 276 should be moved up during the night of June 25-26 so that on the night of June 26 they will be available to I SS Panzer Corps for a counter-attack. The situation in this sector is viewed with some anxiety by I SS Panzer Corps, as the Panzer Training Division has been considerably weakened - especially in infantry - in the heavy defensive fighting in which it has been engaged. Moreover, those replacements which were to bring the division up to full strength again have not so far arrived.

In the fortress of Cherbourg the enemy made further penetrations of our positions and was able to cut off the Jobourg Peninsula from our main defence area. While the remnants of von Schlieben's forces continue the fight in the arsenal and Fort Roule (though they are rapidly tiring) it is the intention of Lt. Colonel Keil to regroup the forces under his command during the night of June 25-26 and to continue fighting on a shorter line to the west of Cherbourg, in the defence of the Jobourg Peninsula. The Army's plan to keep von Schlieben's forces supplied, particularly with machine guns which are urgently needed, has not proved practicable; naval reports state that supplies cannot be transported to the garrison by sea because of mines. It is equally impossible to fly in supplies as the enemy's air superiority in the Cherbourg area is absolute. Thus, the early fall of the fortress is to be expected.

While in Normandy the battle for the fortress of Cherbourg is drawing to a close, and while the enemy has begun a new attack to the west of the Orne, partisan activity in Brittany has slackened. There is obviously some connection between these events, and, as supplies and officers to lead the partisans continue to be flown in, it must be assumed that the resistance movement is taking this opportunity to collect its strength while we are preoccupied elsewhere.

/June 26,

June 26, 1944

- 1010 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps describes situation to Ia. Deep enemy penetration in the direction of Cheux and Rauray. Both localities and also St. Manvieu are held by the enemy. Our own air support has not yet arrived. Strong enemy low-level attacks. Ia gives information that the Luftwaffe has been ordered to concentrate on I SS Panzer Corps area today. Reinforcement of the east bank of the Orne by order of H. Gr. is impossible.
- 1120 hrs. Chef d.G. describes situation in the I SS Panzer Corps sector to Chef H. Gr. AOK proposal that one regiment of the 7th Mortar Brigade may be withdrawn from the east bank of the Orne. Chef H. Gr. gives permission for transfer of the whole of the 7th Mortar Brigade and 1 battalion of the 21st Panzer Division to the west bank of the Orne to reinforce the Panzer Training Division front. With regard to Cherbourg, Chef d.G. states that General von Schlieben's excellent leadership, giving of orders and estimate of the situation is apparent from the war diary of the 709th Infantry Division. On the basis of the orders issued it can be confirmed that General von Schlieben's conduct of operations was absolutely correct.
- 1135 hrs. Chef d.G. transmits to Chef LXXXVI A.K. the order to transfer the 7th Mortar Brigade to I SS Panzer Corps. The battalion of the 21st Panzer Division will only be used in an emergency. Chef d.G. informs Chef I SS Panzer Corps that the 7th Mortar Brigade is being attached to him. Chef Panzer Corps explains that the brigade will probably come too late and will also be insufficient. He urgently needs infantry, one regiment, if possible. Chef d.G. replies that the infantry required will arrive in the Villers area tonight. As they are meant for the Panzer Training Division they should not be mixed with other divisions. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports intended commitment of the Panzer Training Division on the right wing.
- 1200 hrs. Ia describes situation east of Tilly to Ia H. Gr. The enemy has a total of 5 infantry and 3 armoured divisions in this area.
- 1215 hrs. II SS Panzer Corps informs Ia that during the past night the move has progressed only a short distance.
- 1230 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. informs Chef d.G. of his anxiety regarding a possible enemy landing in the Granville - Coutances area and inquires what AOK intends to do if this happens. Chef d.G., basing his opinion on past experience of Anglo-American battle tactics, which have often failed to exploit opportunities of airborne landings, does not think a seaborne landing probable, although the possibility has been taken into consideration by AOK. The further one goes from north to south the more unfavourable tide conditions become. The port of Granville is entirely dependent on tides, and can be made immediately unserviceable by blowing up the locks. Furthermore, the Army can only be prepared for one of the enemy's many possible courses of action. As the 2nd SS Panzer Division is in the neighbourhood, the situation is not so dangerous.
- 1315 hrs. Lt. Colonel Keil reports on the situation in the fortress of Cherbourg to Ia. The situation in Cherbourg remains unchanged. Keil has no contact with the enemy at the moment and reconnaissance patrols have been sent out. Many scattered units are

still fighting on without means of communication with each other. Last night on the Jobourg peninsula advanced artillery was successfully withdrawn.

- 1600 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps describes situation to Ia. Battle headquarters withdrawn 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ km. further south, as former battle headquarters were under enemy artillery fire from both land and sea. Enemy observation aircraft are operating without interference, as our fighters are not to be seen.
- 1610 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports to Ia:
Order for round-up was transmitted to the 2nd SS Panzer Division. Corps requests the withdrawal of the whole 797th Georgian Battalion, as it is untrustworthy, and parts of it have deserted to the enemy along the coast. As this will allow the enemy insight into our coastal positions, the occupation of the coastal sector must be reorganised.
- 1615 hrs. Lt. Colonel Keil reports to Ia that there is no contact with the enemy. No more news has come in from Cherbourg.
- 1645 hrs. Ia informs the 276th Infantry Division that Engineering and Infantry Battalion 276 must march to the south-east of Aunay tonight.
- 1730 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. that the 1,000 replacements for the Paratroop Regiment arrived in blue uniforms, without camouflage and without weapons. Corps urgently requests immediate delivery of rifles, machine guns, and above all, machine-gun belts 42 and spare parts for machine guns.
- 2010 hrs. Chef d.G. discusses with Chef XXV A.K. and Chef II Parachute Corps the question of clothing and equipping the replacements for the 6th Paratroop Regiment.
Chef II Parachute Corps replies that the Reichsmarschall has already ordered Parachute AOK to equip the men as quickly as possible. As this is a question of supply, and the weapons and clothing are still in Germany it is impossible to foresee when the men will be equipped. Corps can be of no assistance.
Moreover, Parachute AOK is responsible for initial issue, and the Army for replacement.
Chef I SS Panzer Corps continues description of situation to Ia. Enemy penetration between St. Manvieu - Tessel - Bretteville towards the south; advanced units were in Grainville two hours ago. Our troops are still on both sides of Cheux.
If more replacements are not sent up tonight, a breakthrough on both sides of Cheux cannot be prevented.
The 1st SS Panzer Division advance units are in the St. Germain area, but are however without fuel. The 7th Mortar Brigade can be sent in on June 27.
Ia explains that reinforcements are not within reach. The infantry being brought up cannot be in the Villers-Bocage area for two nights. I SS Panzer Corps must try to get help from the 2nd Panzer Division.
- 2100 hrs. O.B. reports to Fieldmarshal Rommel enemy breakthrough to the east of Tilly sur Seules. It seems that the enemy intends to turn east in the direction of Caen, and then to extend his attack further east. At the moment there is only one tank battalion of the 2nd Panzer Division available. The 7th Mortar Brigade will not be effective until tomorrow, with one battalion. O.B. suggests that II SS Panzer Corps be sent in.
Fieldmarshal Rommel orders that the encirclement of the 12th SS Panzer Division and the 21st Panzer Division must be prevented at all costs. The 8th Mortar Brigade will join with marching columns

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of the 2nd SS Panzer Division. Request by O.B. to bring up a battle group of the 2nd SS Panzer Division is agreed to by O.B.H.Gr.B.

Fieldmarshal Rommel orders that everything that can be assembled by General Hauser, namely the 8th Mortar Brigade, tank battalion of the 2nd Panzer Division, and a battle group of the 2nd SS Panzer Division, must be thrown into the fight.

Review of operations on June 26, 1944

In the course of June 26, the enemy was able to increase the depth and breadth of his penetrations east of Tilly. By throwing in numerous infantry divisions and strong armoured forces he obviously hoped to break through to Caen. Preparations for an enemy offensive are likewise reported from the area north of Caen.

At midday on June 26, enemy spearheads reached the railway at Crainville sur Odon. In view of this development, the situation on the front held by I SS Panzer Corps must be regarded as grave. The corps is urgently requesting help.

After consultation with Fieldmarshal Rommel, and with the consent of H.Gr., AOK has ordered II SS Panzer Corps to go into action immediately and attack those enemy units advancing to the south or east. The 7th Mortar Brigade has been put under the command of I SS Panzer Corps, and to consolidate the flank AOK has ordered the following formations into action: a panzer detachment of the 2nd Panzer Division and armoured units of the 2nd SS Panzer Division.

Fighting in the fortress of Cherbourg is drawing to a close. Only isolated pockets of resistance are holding out, and they are not in contact with one another. This afternoon all communications with General von Schlieben were cut.

Meanwhile, those units under the command of Lt.Colonel Keil were able to regroup without enemy interference on the Jobourg Peninsula, where they now await the enemy's attack.

/June 27,

June 27, 1944

0950 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps describes situation to Chef d.G. The enemy has not begun his expected tank attack at Carpiquet. Strong enemy reconnaissance activity east of the Orne. Prisoners state that reconnaissance was to discover whether our troops were about to advance or retreat. Chef d.G. believes that the enemy is momentarily holding back north of Caen, as his attack further west has not proceeded according to plan.

1010 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr. of the situation with I SS Panzer Corps.

Reviewed as a whole, yesterday's battles can be described as a defensive victory. The 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitlerjugend" distinguished itself especially. The division suffered heavy casualties through incredibly heavy artillery fire and concentrated bombing.

North and north-west of Caen the enemy is very close to the main defence line, and an attack must be expected here. Apparently the enemy is still holding his forces back after our defensive victory east of Tilly. Even the tank formation has not attacked.

We have begun a counter-attack in the direction of Cheux.

II SS Panzer Corps is already turning off. AOK requests that units of the 2nd SS Panzer Division be stopped by H.Gr. Also the 1st SS Panzer Division is not to cross the Orne or proceed west. Chef H.Gr. agrees with this. Facilities for the 1st SS Panzer Division to cross the Orne are to be investigated. II SS Panzer Corps is not to proceed further than the heights of Aunay.

1130 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps proposes that the 12th SS Panzer Division should be mentioned in the Wehrmacht communique as follows :

"In the severe fighting to the west of Caen on June 26, the SS Panzer Division "Hitlerjugend", under the leadership of General Meyer, distinguished itself and caused the enemy heavy casualties. 60 enemy tanks were badly damaged in close combat. The battle groups of SS Obersturmbannfuhrer Wunsche and SS Sturmbannfuhrer Olboeter, which were the cornerstones of the tank battle, distinguished themselves especially."

The situation: At the moment we are making a counter-attack with 80 tanks from the Noyers area in the direction of Cheux.

1250 hrs. O.B. informs General Hauser on the situation of I SS Panzer Corps, which did not develop as expected. On the whole we have scored a good defensive victory there, and at the moment a counter-attack led by our tanks is in progress.

It is therefore not necessary for II SS Panzer Corps to participate, as was ordered yesterday. The corps must be deployed as far as possible to the left, so that it can turn off again in the direction of the original operation.

New battle headquarters requested to communicate with AOK immediately.

General Hauser reports that only slight deployment to the left is possible. The corps will for the time being close up and assemble for either possibility.

1200 hrs. Ia H.Gr. informs Ia that according to a call from Ia O.B. West, the transmitting station at Jobourg has sent through the following W/T message to Mar.Gr.Kdo.West:

"Keil surrenders today at 2100 hrs., terms of surrender will follow."

O.B. West inquires who is in command of the arsenal, and if the BBC report that General von Schlieben and General Sattler are already prisoners is correct.

Ia H.Gr. requests Ia that the Army investigate the report and take action if necessary.

G.169141/IF/6/48

/1220 hrs.

1220 hrs. Ia informs Lt.Colonel Keil of this intercepted W/T message, and emphasises again that the task of the Keil group is to continue the defence of the Jobourg peninsula. The order is transmitted to Lt.Colonel Keil and is confirmed by him.

Lt.Colonel Keil answers that the W/T message was sent out neither by him nor by Lt.Colonel Mueller. He understands that the Fuehrer's order regarding the fortress of Cherbourg applies to him in the defence of the Jobourg peninsula. The situation:

Nothing further is known from Cherbourg, except that the naval battery under Captain Wist is continuing to defend itself on the mole. It seems that the enemy has entered the arsenal. General Sattler was in the arsenal during the night and must have directed the defence from there. Batteries 'Hamburg', 'York', and 'Rommy' are presumably still in our hands.

At the moment everything is quiet on the Jobourg peninsula except for enemy artillery fire.

Ia announces that Lt.Colonel Keil is in command on the Jobourg peninsula, and Lt.Colonel Mueller (battle headquarters Beaumont-Hague) is his subordinate.

1315 hrs. Chef H.Gr.B informs Chef d.G. that it would be in accordance with the general plan if the divisions of II SS Panzer Corps were deployed more to the north.

Chef d.G. points out that this corresponds with Army orders. However II SS Panzer Corps has been instructed to withdraw its left flank slightly. When asked by Chef H.Gr. whether the 8th Mortar Brigade can relieve the 7th Mortar Brigade, Chef d.G. replies that the 8th Mortar Brigade is in action with II Parachute Corps.

Chef H.Gr. orders that the 8th Mortar Brigade be withdrawn immediately to relieve the 7th Mortar Brigade with I SS Panzer Corps, and that the 7th be kept ready to be sent in on the east bank of the Orne.

Chef d.G. points out that the 7th Mortar Brigade cannot be relieved at the moment, and that the situation on the I SS Panzer Corps sector must be settled first. Chef H.Gr. reserves right of decision.

1330 hrs. Ia transmits new report to Ia Panzer Training Division that the battle group of the 2nd SS Panzer Division has not been released for action.

1600 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports that the rounding-up operation could not be carried out as the companies of the 2nd SS Panzer Division detailed for the task were removed.

1605 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports that it is intended to push back the enemy, who has advanced to the Mondrainville-Tourville line, during the night. Two battalions of the 2nd SS Panzer Division will be needed in addition to the forces of the 1st SS Panzer Division.

1645 hrs. Chef d.G. describes situation of I SS Panzer Corps to Chef H.Gr., and proposes that two battalions of the 1st SS Panzer Division and two battalions of the 2nd SS Panzer Division be sent in as reinforcements for the counter-attack. This is approved by Chef H.Gr.

1700 hrs. Chef transmits to Chef I SS Panzer Corps AOK permission regarding request.

1745 hrs. Chef d.G. orders Chef II Parachute Corps that the 8th Mortar Brigade must be withdrawn tonight for transfer to the east. More detailed instructions follow.

Reconnaissance Detachment 1194 has arrived on the right wing of the corps, and cannot be sent up to the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division sector, as planned. Panzer Artillery Detachment 130 of the Panzer Training Division is then to be withdrawn. (Note: This unit is at present with the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division).

- 1800 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef Pz. Gr. Kdo. West of movement of the 8th Mortar Brigade. Meeting place will be arranged with II SS Panzer Corps.
- 1945 hrs. After conversation with Chef H.Gr. (1920) Chef d.G. informs Chef II SS Panzer Corps of the move of the 8th Mortar Brigade into the area north of the line Vire-Thury-Harcourt, which is to be carried out tonight and so precede the movement of II SS Panzer Corps.
- 2045 hrs. Chef d.G. discusses with G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. the formation of a regiment composed of the two battalions of troops drawn from eastern occupied countries still in the LXXXIV A.K. area and of other remnants under the command of Colonel Bunjatschenko.
- 2300 hrs. Chef I SS Panzer Corps reports to Ia that the enemy has penetrated as far as Baron, and that the counter-attack will be launched early on June 28.
- 2350 hrs. Chef d.G. describes the situation with I SS Panzer Corps to Chef H.Gr. In contrast to what seemed appropriate this morning, Chef d.G. is now inclined to answer enemy pressure with more troops. Chef H.Gr. points out that reinforcements have been granted, and that the main object now is to assure that the reinforcements from II SS Panzer Corps arrive in time.

/Review

Review of operations on June 27, 1944

The enemy attack east of Tilly, which began on June 25, resulted in a breakthrough to and beyond the Caen - Villers-Bocages road at Mondrainville on June 27. Enemy preparations suggest that, after taking Caen, he plans to extend his offensive to the east bank of the Orne.

The Army has always been of the opinion that the main enemy attack west of the Orne would be accompanied by an attack to the east of the river - this attack beginning at the same time as, or slightly after the main thrust. Therefore the Army does not consider it advisable so to weaken the front east of the Orne that the enemy, by an attack to the south and to the open country south-east of Caen, would be given an opportunity to develop his main attack.

On June 26 the enemy was able to make a deep penetration in the area of Cheux; but in general it was a day of successful defensive fighting, in which the 12th SS Panzer Division 'Hitlerjugend' particularly distinguished itself. It was therefore not necessary for II SS Panzer Corps to take that part in the battle originally allocated to it. This unit was therefore ordered to assume echelon formation, and to return to its original plan of operations.

By continuing his attack, the enemy was able to gain more ground on June 27. In order to set up a firm line, and in preparation for a counter-attack on the night of June 27-28, I SS Panzer Corps will be joined by battalions of the 1st and 2nd SS Panzer Divisions and armoured units of the 2nd SS Panzer Division. At the same time, the 8th Mortar Brigade, on the orders of the H.Gr., is being withdrawn from its previous positions where it has been fighting with II Parachute Corps; it is now to come under the command of II SS Panzer Corps and to be sent into action at once in the area north-east of the Vire. The Heavy Artillery Detachment 1194, which is moving up to join II Parachute Corps is to take up positions on the right flank of the corps. When this rearrangement has been effected, the 130th Panzer Artillery Detachment of the Panzer Training Division will be withdrawn and returned to the Panzer Training Division. The 130th Panzer Artillery Detachment is at present engaged in the sector held by the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division.

Since 1600 hours on June 26 there has been no contact with the garrison in the fortress of Cherbourg. The units under Lt. Colonel Keil have however been able to consolidate their positions without interference from the enemy. In accordance with the Fuehrer's orders, they were instructed to defend the Jobourg Peninsula to the last man.

/June 28,

June 28, 1944

- 0810 hrs. Chef d.G. announces to II SS Panzer Corps that the old order is still in force. The corps must move up immediately to clean up enemy penetrations south of Cheux.
II SS Panzer Corps reports that the corps has not moved up yet.
The 8th Mortar Brigade will arrive tonight.
General Hauser reserves his view on the situation.
- 0830 hrs. Chef d.G. describes the situation of I SS Panzer Corps to Chef H.Gr.
Fresh tank attack to the north of Caen (east of Cambes). Position there not clear. Further attacks at Baron, Juvigny, and on the left wing of the Panzer Training Division. The 9th SS Panzer Division has arrived from II SS Panzer Corps, but the 10th SS Panzer Division and the 8th Mortar Brigade have not yet arrived.
General Hauser proposes to wait until all the units have arrived.
O.B. wishes to attack.
- 1220 hrs. Chef XXXXVII Panzer Corps informs Chef d.G. of intercepted radio messages:
"Enemy advance in the direction of Gavrus is to be prevented with every means available, and by attacking with the Meyer group (the 12th SS Panzer Division) at Mondrainville."
"Pay attention to the right flank, attack from line Gavrus-Boyers in the direction of Le Rocheur." (presumably from SS Panzer Corps to the Panzer Training Division).
- 1230 hrs. Major Hahn informs Chef d.G. that no penetration has occurred at Cambes. Breakthrough at Baron.
Chef d.G. reports that the 21st Panzer Division operations remain unchanged.
- 1300 hrs. Chef II SS Panzer Corps reports to Ia that preparations will be complete tonight, and that the attack will begin tomorrow morning. Parts of the 8th Mortar Brigade will be included. Very intense air activity.
- 1330 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. suggests to Chef d.G. that Regimental Staff 894 be brought up to the two battalions of the 265th Infantry Division which are both from Grenadier Regiment 894. The new C.O. must bring his staff with him so that a proper battle group may be finally formed.
- 1335 hrs. Chef H.Gr. informs Chef d.G. that General von der Chevallerie has been given command of the Army.
- 1445 hrs. Chef XXXXVII Panzer Corps transmits request of Chef I SS Panzer Corps to Ia that the bringing up of reinforcements be speeded up as the enemy is exerting heavy pressure at Baron.
- 1500 hrs. Ia H Gr. reports to Ia that the Fuehrer has nominated General Hauser to O.B. AOK 7.
- 1507 hrs. Owing to a recent request of G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K., Chef d.G. orders Chef XXV A.K. to detach a regimental adjutant with a liaison officer and a small regimental staff for the purpose of forming a new regimental staff 894 with LXXXIV A.K.
- 1545 hrs. Major Hahn describes situation to Chef d.G.:
Enemy pressing on past Baron to the east and south-east. Caen-Evrecy road reached.
- 1630 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef II SS Panzer Corps of nomination of SS General Hauser to O.B. AOK 7.

G.169141/IF/6/48

/1635 hrs.

- 1635 hrs. Ia H.Gr. reports that until the two Fieldmarshals return from the Fuehrer, SS General Hauser will command the Army sector. Chef d.G. considers it advisable that SS General Hauser should remain at the front to ensure that units of II SS Panzer Corps will be used to the best advantage in the present situation.
- 1735 hrs. Chef Pz.Gr. West, General Gause reports to Ia, that I SS Panzer Corps can no longer hold the front with their own forces, and considers intervention of the whole of II SS Panzer Corps necessary.
Ia replies that the Army has already issued an order to this effect.
Chef Pz.Gr. asks whether the 2nd SS Panzer Division can be attached to him.
Ia points out that the 2nd SS Panzer Division is H.Gr. reserve.
- 1750 hrs. Ia H.Gr. replying to Ia's query, states that the 2nd SS Panzer Division will remain H.Gr. reserve. If it is urgently required, permission must be obtained from O.B.
SS General Hauser's absence tonight agreed to by H.Gr.
Ia reports that SS General Hauser was requested by the Army tonight for new command organisation (subordination of Pz.Gr. West).
H.Gr. agrees.
- 1800 hrs. Chef Pz.Gr. West inquires of Chef d.G. if the order for II SS Panzer Corps to attack towards the north-east is still effective.
Chef d.G. confirms this.
Chef Pz.Gr. West reports that Pz. Gr. intends to establish the following new command organisation:
LXXXVI A.K. with the 21st Panzer Division.
I SS Panzer Corps with the 12th SS, 9th SS and 10th SS Panzer Divisions.
XXXXVII Panzer Corps with the Panzer Training Division and the 2nd Panzer Division.
Pz.Gr. requests that the 2nd SS Panzer Division be attached to it.
General von Geyr points out that Pz. Gr. has already been eliminated by orders issued, i.e. is not strong enough to influence course of events. He wishes his request for the attachment of the 2nd SS Panzer Division to be brought to the attention of O.B.
General von Geyr requests that approval of new command organisation be decided.
- 1810 hrs. Chef d.G. instructs Chef II SS Panzer Corps that SS General Hauser will be needed tonight with the Army, as AOK will have to take over the whole sector again.
II SS Panzer Corps will be attached to I SS Panzer Corps for the attack.
Pz. Gr. West will issue instructions.
- 1820 hrs. Chef d.G. instructs Chef Pz.Gr. West that organisation of command may be carried out as proposed.
Upon inquiry, Chef d.G. states that, owing to the situation in the air II SS Panzer Corps must launch a large-scale attack tonight. Execution is left to Pz. Gr.
Chef d.G. presumes that II SS Panzer Corps will be able to carry out this order, especially with the 9th SS Panzer Division.
Deployment in depth is necessary, and in the meantime XXXVII Panzer Corps must hold out.
- 1900 hrs. Chef Pz. Gr. West instructs Chef d.G. that II SS Panzer Corps cannot attack before tomorrow morning. Daylight attack will be difficult owing to threat of enemy air activity.

/General

General von Geyr requests that the Luftwaffe take part in tomorrow's Pz. Gr. attack, even if it should be costly.
Chef d.G. requests that he be informed of zero hour for the attack so that the Luftwaffe may be informed in time to prepare for action.

1915 hrs. Chef XXV A.K., replying to Ia's inquiry, reports that the 275th Infantry Division is no longer mobile, as its transport is in Normandy.
Units must be taken from other regiments for the formation of a regimental staff ordered from Grenadier Regiment 894.
The staff will be moved to LXXXIV A.K. in cars and on bicycles.

1930 hrs. Chef d.G. reports new chain of command to SS General Hauser. The attachment of II SS Panzer Corps to I SS Panzer Corps will be proposed for the attack tomorrow; SS General Hauser agrees to this. Chef d.G. informs Chef Pz. Gr. West of this decision.

A.H.Qu., June 28, 1944

Telephone message from Lt. Colonel Keil.

1. Difficulties still exist in executing orders. All branches are officially complying, but are attempting to act differently. In my command I have already expressed the intention of relieving any officer from his post and reporting him to the Army, if he does not carry out my instructions. I further request that queries from the Navy and the Luftwaffe to their units cease, and that these be sent directly to me, as otherwise the possibility exists that some units will appeal to their own branches of the Wehrmacht with regard to special orders.

I request that two energetic infantry battalion commanders be attached to me if possible,

- a) as a reserve of commanders,
- b) to replace any officer who is removed from his post.

The situation:

No change, apart from transport movements on the Cherbourg-Beaumont-Hague road, which were dealt with by our artillery.

2. The Luftwaffe is only to drop what we ask for.

/Review

Review of operations on June 28, 1944

At 1000 hrs. this morning, O.B. of the Army, General Dollmann, died as a result of a heart attack. The Fuehrer appointed SS General Hauser to be his successor.

June 28 was distinguished by the heavy fighting in the area south-east of Caen. In audacious counter-attacks units of the 12th SS Panzer Division, the 2nd Panzer Division, the Panzer Training Division and the 2nd SS Panzer Division were able to halt the enemy and inflict extremely heavy losses on him.

In preparation for our counter attack on June 29, the area under the command of Pz.Gr.West was altered, with the permission of the Army; for the purposes of this offensive, II SS Panzer Corps was put under the command of I SS Panzer Corps. Further, Pz.Gr.Kdo. West wishes to have the 2nd SS Panzer Division put under its control, so that it can build up a reserve. At the moment the 2nd SS Panzer Division is part of the H.Gr. reserve, and only a few formations from it are taking part in the counter-offensive organised by Pz.Gr.West.

South-east of Caen the enemy was able to deepen his penetration by throwing in masses of material. Counter-attacks on the enemy's flanks resulted in two areas of penetration being greatly reduced, but it was not possible to exploit this success.

Infantry units of II SS Panzer Corps could not be thrown into the fighting. The corps will not have completed its dispositions until tonight. The delay has been caused by the fact that the units were late in arriving, and by enemy air activity.

The concentration of enemy shipping in the Vire estuary is now larger than before. It has been observed that the enemy has airfields in south Cotentin, and this, coupled with the fact that he will have at his disposal forces previously engaged against Cherbourg suggests that an early enemy attack in this area is to be expected.

/June 29,

June 29, 1944

- 0900 hrs. Chef Pz. Gr. West informs Chef d.G. that as far as can be predicted II SS Panzer Corps will not arrive before 0900 hrs. Reports of intended enemy landings to the east of the Orne have not been confirmed. Relief by the 16th Observation Division is slowly progressing. Pz. Gr. West intends to evacuate Caen, not however because of force of pressure, but because after the announcement to the population that Caen will be defended to the last stone, a voluntary evacuation seems appropriate. II SS Panzer Corps forms up on the Gavrus - Boyers line as ordered. Chef d.G. reports that, according to this morning's report, an encircling movement seems to be in operation and the Corps must commence a major action.
- 0940 hrs. Chef LXXXIV A.K. reports on inquiry, that the round-up operation is not being carried out by the troops, but by reinforced patrols. In addition, the number of deserters is not as great as was formerly presumed. Ia requests that all engineer units which are not required be placed at the disposal of Colonel Stiotta for road construction.
- 0945 hrs. Telephone conversation between G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K., Ia, and Chef II Parachute Corps regarding formation of a regiment of troops drawn from eastern occupied countries, and the transfer of detachments necessary for this from II Parachute Corps. II Parachute Corps reports that the enemy has been attacking since 0900 hrs. along the boundary with LXXXIV A.K. The attack at Villers has been momentarily repelled. Battles in progress to the north of Mesnil - Rouxelin.
- 0955 hrs. Chef Pz. Gr. informs Ia that there is no question of encircling the enemy salient. The enemy is on both sides of Verson with his front towards Caen. The new British 11th Division is within the area of the salient. II SS Panzer Corps' intention to attack remains unchanged; offensive cannot begin before the afternoon. Our concentrations are under continual enemy artillery and air bombardment.
- 1230 hrs. G.O.C. II Parachute Corps reports to Chef d.G. that a reserve battalion has been brought in to re-establish the situation on the 352nd Infantry Division front. This attack may lead to a large-scale action, and if this occurs, II Parachute Corps requests forces from the 2nd SS Panzer Division. Chef d.G. replies that this would be proposed by the Army if the situation on the II Parachute Corps front became serious. In the opinion of Chef d.G. the artillery in this sector is placed too far to the rear. G.O.C. II Parachute Corps explains that the corps has already ordered the artillery to move up to operate against tanks.
- 1250 hrs. Chef d.G. discusses with G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. relief of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division by the 353rd Infantry Division for the purpose of forming a mobile reserve. G.O.C. considers possibility that this measure may coincide with enemy attack.
- 1340 hrs. Major Hahn describes II SS Panzer Corps attack to Ia. It seems that the enemy has not noticed concentrations, but in spite of this is causing heavy losses by fighter-bomber attacks. The 11th and 15th Infantry Divisions are being brought up. It is to be regretted that the attacking panzer divisions cannot bring up all their tanks owing to lack of fuel.

- 1350 hrs. Chef d.G. transmits to Chef Luftflotte 3 the very urgent request of the Army for support for the attack now in operation. Enemy strafing from the air has increased our losses by knocking out several tanks and a large number of vehicles.
- 1820 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef H.Gr. that II SS Panzer Corps attacked at 1430 hrs.
Chef H.Gr. gives instructions that for the time being concentrations will be ordered only at night. H.Gr. knows nothing of an attack.
Chef d.G. answers that the attack was ordered by the Fieldmarshal two days ago.
The situation: The 10th SS Panzer Division is making good progress on the right.
The 9th SS Panzer Division has suffered from enemy artillery fire from the region of Cheux. The situation at Verson cannot be clearly estimated yet. At first the enemy was greatly superior in the air, but later the Luftwaffe seems to have become effective.
- 1830 hrs. Chef d.G. informs Chef II SS Panzer Corps that the battle group of the 2nd SS Panzer Division must be relieved today or tomorrow.
- 1950 hrs. Chef II SS Panzer Corps informs Ia of the situation in connection with the ordered withdrawal of the Weidinger battle group (the 2nd SS Panzer Division). In three hours of heavy and costly fighting an advance of 3 km. was made over country intersected by hedges. Withdrawal of the Weidinger battle group would cause a severe weakening of the attack on the left since the battle group was to have taken over the Vendes - Juvigny sector. As the enemy is already asking for assistance, the situation should be exploited and the attack continued during the whole of the night. Ia replies that the execution of the order issued by Pz. Gr. West to withdraw the Weidinger battle group must be complied with.
- 2000 hrs. Chef Pz. Gr. West reports regarding the order relating to the Weidinger battle group that two battalions of the 2nd SS Panzer Division have been sent in on the left wing, and it seems advisable that they should be withdrawn only after the conclusion of the present attack.
Ia comments that O.B. agrees with this.
Regarding the question of the subordination of II and I SS Panzer Corps, Chef Pz. Gr. West comments that the same basic opinion is held by Army, and that the subordination will be at an end after the attack is completed. The 9th and 10th SS Panzer Divisions are to be withdrawn as reserves again.
- 2050 hrs. G.O.C. II Parachute Corps requests support for tomorrow by the 2nd SS Panzer Division. The enemy is exerting further pressure and the power of resistance of the 352nd Infantry Division is almost exhausted.
Ia points out that the battle group of the 2nd SS Panzer Division has been ordered into the St. Lo area.
- 2140 hrs. Major Hahn describes the II SS Panzer Corps' attack to Chef d.G. Corps took Crainville, Gavrus and Rauray, but these places had to be evacuated towards 1930 hrs. owing to heavy enemy tank counter attacks and artillery fire.
- 2220 hrs. I SS Panzer Corps intends to continue the attack after regrouping. The main pressure will be exerted on the left owing to difficult terrain. The area of penetration is 8 km. deep and 6 km. wide.
British divisions newly in action: 11th Armoured Division, 15th and 43rd Infantry Divisions and 4th Armoured Brigade.

2300 hrs. The bridgehead at Caen is unusually quiet. Fuel and ammunition in sufficient supply for attack.
Plan of II SS Panzer Corps: Attack tonight in the Verson-Mouen-Baron area with main pressure on the 12th SS Panzer Division front.

2315 hrs. G.O.C. II Parachute Corps brings to Chef d.G.'s attention again the enemy intention to attack on the 352nd Infantry Division front, and requests that units of the 2nd SS Panzer Division be brought up. Chef d.G. replies that one tank battalion of the 2nd SS Panzer Division has been attached to the corps. The tank battalion should only be sent in with infantry.

Review of operations on June 29, 1944

The battle for Caen has reached a new pitch of intensity. This battle developed after the enemy had launched an attack with several new divisions in the area of Tilly sur Seules on June 25; spearheads of II SS Panzer Corps started a counter-offensive at 1400 hrs. (on June 29).

By bringing a division of II SS Panzer Corps into action at the right moment, it was possible not only to contain the enemy, who is superior in numbers both in the air and on the ground, but also to drive him back at some points.

A large concentration of shipping which has been increasing for days in the waters east and west of the Orne suggests that further reinforcements are arriving. It must be assumed that the enemy plans to take the important centre of communications at Caen by exploiting his breakthrough, and with the help of those forces east of the Orne.

In the sector held by II Parachute Corps the enemy attacked during the morning on a broad front on both sides of the Maon sur Elles - St. Lo road. In fluctuating fighting the last reserves of the corps were thrown in, and the enemy was thus prevented from securing a breakthrough. To help I Parachute Corps to withstand the heavy pressure to which it was being subjected, armoured units of the 2nd SS Panzer Division were put into the line.

In the Cherbourg area the enemy began his attack this morning against the whole of the front held by the units under Lt. Colonel Keil. Final reserves have been thrown in to seal off numerous penetrations. The situation here must now be considered grave as these troops have for a long time been engaged against an enemy enjoying enormous material superiority.

/June 30,

June 30, 1944

- 0915 hrs. Chef Pz.Gr. West describes the attack to Chef d.G. Attack is incredibly difficult and costly. The enemy naval artillery fire is unbelievably heavy, and is covering the area of penetration with continual fire.
- 0920 hrs. General von Geyr informs O.B. that he will submit a report on the situation this evening, which in the interests of strategic use of the troops will be quite frank. Regrouping of units will be carried out according to the wishes of the Army as soon as possible. General von Geyr requests that he be allowed to send back non-official visitors. Authority granted.
- 0930 hrs. Chef d.G. reports to Chef H.Gr. on the very heavy and costly attack by II SS Panzer Corps.
- 1000 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. reports to Chef d.G. that the C.O. of the Volga-Tat Battalion 627 was shot at by his own men. The battalion cannot be used, and it is requested that permission be given for its withdrawal. Nothing is known of the left wing, whose concentration was at Cheux. The front line runs as follows: Gavrus in our hands, we are closing in on Baron, road crossing north of Esquay in our hands, hill 112 occupied by enemy, road crossing west of Maltot and Chateau Fontaine occupied by enemy, also the station at Verson, and Chateau Marcelet. According to the estimate of Pz. Gr. and II SS Panzer Corps, the battle has been made extraordinarily difficult and costly by enemy land and naval artillery. The counter-attack came just at the right time.
- 1120 hrs. Major Hahn informs Ia that after regrouping, I SS Panzer Corps intends to send in everything at Cheux.
- 1130 hrs. O.B. and Chef d.G. Pz. Gr. West bring Chef d.G.'s attention to the fact that contrary to the daily communique of the Army, the Luftwaffe did not support the attack. Chef d.G. replies that the report originates from II SS Panzer Corps and that the 9th SS Panzer Division reported twice that they were very satisfied with the Luftwaffe support. As to the question of the employment of the battle group of the 2nd SS Panzer Division; Chef d.G. states that the group is to remain in action for the time being, as long as no special developments occur in the St. Lo area.
- 1245 hrs. G.O.C. LXXXIV A.K. considers that only one line should be occupied and that the advance line should be secured by outposts, since the composition of the Bunjatschenko Regiment is uncertain. After clarification Ia replies that the former order is still in force, but that the corps should however report which solution would still be possible in the changed circumstances. Chef LXXXIV A.K. points out that the 797th Georgian Battalion has not yet been relieved. The corps does not know which units are to be brought up, as there are no more available.
- 1300 hrs. Ia asks the Military Commander South-west France for stronger action in cities in the rear, if need be by giving area commanders authority to conduct local operations.

/1650 hrs.

- 1650 hrs. Chef d.G. agrees that Volga-Tat Battalion 627 should be withdrawn. General Choltitz reports that according to an intercepted message, the enemy intends to attack between Montcastre and the eastern end of the Prairies.
- 1830 hrs. Major Hahn reports to Chef d.G. on situation.
Enemy ready for action in the Baron - Tourville area.
Direction of attack not known.
Only slight harassing fire from artillery (calm before the storm?).
The weather is good and the enemy is very active in the air.
Our plans remain as before.
Light artillery harassing fire on XXXXVII Panzer Corps sector, isolated reconnaissance patrols driven off.
A small penetration was made to the north of St. Lo, during the whole day no connected attacks in the frontal sector north of St. Andre.
Strength roughly one battalion with tanks.
- 2010 hrs. Lt. Colonel Keil describes situation to Ia.
- 2130 hrs. Penetration between strong-points 311 and 306. Enemy prepared for attack.
- 2155 hrs. Batteries out of action owing to lack of ammunition. Strong enemy tank forces. Group will fight to the last round, and then will attempt to break through to the south, even though this does not comply with the Fuehrer's order.
Last call from the battle headquarters, which has been surrounded. Resistance presumably short before collapse. Fighting seems to be decreasing tonight.
- 2230 hrs. Chef II SS Panzer Corps reports on attack to O.B.
Heavy losses during the day, but confident of tonight's attack.
- 2400 hrs. Chef d.G.H.Gr. informs Chef d.G. that because of the estimate of the situation by AOK 7 and Pz. Gr. West, the evacuation of Caen according to plan is approved by H.Gr.

/Review

Review of operations on June 30, 1944

The counter-offensive begun by I and II SS Panzer Corps had to be temporarily suspended in the face of intensive enemy artillery fire and supporting fire of unprecedented ferocity from naval units. Other factors contributing to the suspension of the attack were the difficult country and the stubbornness with which the enemy was defending; moreover, the attack had only slowly gathered momentum. Our forces are now being regrouped and brought up to strength in order to resume the attack during the night in the direction of Cheux. It is not so far possible to state how far our forces have been able to re-form in the face of the heavy artillery fire. In the face of tenacious enemy resistance, which will prevent our counter-offensive from having any appreciable effect, everything in the present situation will depend upon husbanding the resources of the armoured divisions which have been sent into action so that they may undertake further offensive thrusts, and the creation of a defensive line commensurate with our infantry resources and beyond the range of supporting fire from enemy naval forces. AOK therefore suggests to H.Gr. that the first move in an adjustment of the front should be the evacuation of the Caen bridgehead.

H.Gr. agrees with AOK's view of the situation, and, provided permission for such a course can be obtained, believes it would be advisable to plan an orderly withdrawal from the Caen bridgehead.

In anticipation of the battle which is expected to develop on both banks of the Vire and on the northern front it is planned to replace the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division in the tactically important Carentan sector with the 353rd Infantry Division (but minus the Brehm battle group). This division is to take up positions immediately in the area north-east of Periers. In the forward area the 353rd Infantry Division is being replaced by the battle group of the 77th Infantry Division.

/Opinions

June 30, 1944

Opinions on the conduct of battle in Normandy

- 1.) The enemy attacked during the morning hours of June 25 with several fresh divisions and reached the line Carpiquet - Chateau Marcelet - railway station Verson - Chateau Fontaine - road crossing west of Maltot - Hill 112 - road crossing north of Esquay - Baron - Mondrainville. Heavy new concentrations of shipping lead to the conclusion that fresh forces are being brought in. It is presumed that the enemy will continue the attack from this large area of penetration and will also attack to the east of the Orne to capture the large road junction at Caen. The advance of the enemy was halted just in time by units of the 21st and 2nd SS Panzer Divisions. During the day and night of June 29, II SS Panzer Corps was brought forward and powerful spearheads of this unit were sent in to the attack at 14.00 hrs., not only preventing the area of penetration from spreading on all sides, but even compressing it in fighting against an enemy superior on the ground and in air.
- 2.) II SS Panzer Corps is fully occupied with the attack and for the time being cannot be available for operations on other parts of the front. It will continue the attack with all available forces, with concentration to the left near Cheux in the direction of Carpiquet, to block further enemy penetration. If it is not successful in gaining a complete victory, the bridgehead still being held around Caen must in the opinion of the Army be withdrawn over the Orne, so that the battle-weary troops may be given better defensive positions. A shortened line through Evrecy - Villers Bocages - Livry, could thus be linked up with the hilly country at Caumont. It is essential that at the same time, the front in this sector be withdrawn out of range of enemy naval artillery, against which no effective measures can be taken by our Navy or Air Force. In addition, the question of conserving our forces must be considered.
- 3.) A withdrawal of the front at Caen can also influence the important flank position east of the Orne, and make its withdrawal necessary. If it is no longer possible to compress the bridgehead east of the Orne any further, then the question arises, whether folding back the right flank which lies along the coast and a link-up with the Stau area is more practical. This would firstly conserve forces, and secondly limit the effectiveness of enemy naval artillery in country which is far more suitable for defence.
- 4.) The intended withdrawal of the better equipped panzer divisions and their replacement by infantry divisions entails the necessity of creating defensive positions on more favourable terrain. Only thus can the bulk of the panzer units be released, and the possibility for an active defence be created.
- 5.) A second concentration is apparent on the west wing of the Normandy front. An attack here by the superior enemy could render a withdrawal necessary because of the formation of our forces, and in that case the approximate line St. Lo - Canisy - Coutances would be our objective.

A.H.B.6. Distribution

Same as for Translation VII/68

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