

NOTE

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G.H.Q. Exercise "SPARTAN", March, 1943.

1. This Report deals with the very important Exercise known by the codename "SPARTAN", conducted by G.H.Q. Home Forces in southern and central England during the first half of March, 1943. This was one of the largest exercises ever conducted in Great Britain. In the number of troops employed it was probably second only to Exercise "BUMPER", conducted in September and October, 1941 (see Report No. 49). In "BUMPER", a total of twelve divisions, of which three were armoured, took part. In "SPARTAN", the total number of divisions was ten, of which four were armoured; but a very large number of Corps and Army troops were also involved. No actual numerical total for the number of troops participating has been seen.
2. Whereas in "BUMPER" Lt.-Gen. McNaughton (then commanding Cdn Corps, now designated 1 Cdn Corps) acted as a Corps Commander under the orders of Lt.-Gen. (now General Sir Harold) Alexander, in "SPARTAN" he commanded the larger of the two opposing Armies, and had under his direction a total of six divisions plus large numbers of ancillary troops. This was probably the largest force ever commanded in the field by a Canadian officer.
3. Of the six divisions under General McNaughton's command, three were Canadian: 2 Cdn Div, 3 Cdn Div and 5 Cdn Armd Div. 1 Cdn Div did not participate, owing to the absence successively of 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Bdes on combined training in Scotland (see Report No. 93). During the Exercise, H.Q. 1 Cdn Div assumed the operational responsibilities on the coast of Sussex normally carried by H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, in an anti-raid role; and an ad hoc force organized by the Canadian Reinforcement Units and known as "Greek Brigade" was provided to supplement the available troops of 1 Cdn Div for this purpose. 4 Cdn Armd Div was still completing its training and mobilization and did not participate in the Exercise.
4. Two Canadian Corps Headquarters took part: H.Q. 1 Cdn Corps, under Lt.-Gen. H.D.G. Crerar, and H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, under Lt.-Gen. E.W. Sansom, which had been organized only in the previous January. H.Q. First Cdn Army functioned as a field headquarters for the first time, under the designation, "H.Q. Second Army".
5. Unlike "BUMPER", this was an offensive exercise, in which the Army commanded by General McNaughton was assumed to be advancing from a bridgehead on the Continent of Europe, already established by another British Army. The description of "SPARTAN" in The Times (London) of 23 Mar 43 as "The greatest offensive exercise ever staged in the military history of these islands" would appear to be an accurate one.
6. The Canadian Official Historian will presumably not require an extremely detailed narrative of this exercise, which nevertheless was an episode well worthy of his notice. Attention is directed to two publications of G.H.Q. Home Forces: G.H.Q. Exercise "Spartan", March, 1943: Narrative

of Events; and G.H.Q. Exercise "Spartan", March, 1943; Comments by Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces. Copies of these have been placed on C.M.H.Q. file 2/EX SPARTAN/1/2, and these publications have been heavily drawn upon in the account that follows. The object of the present Report is merely to provide a brief outline of the operations for the purposes of the Official Historian.

7. The writer was present at Headquarters, Second Army from 1 Mar to 12 Mar.

OPPOSING FORCES AND GENERAL IDEA

8. The forces available to the two opposing commanders were as follows:

BRITISH

First Canadian Army (Second Army). Commanded by Lt.-Gen. A.G.L. McNaughton, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

1 Cdn Corps:

- 2 Cdn Inf Div
- 3 Cdn Inf Div
- 1 Cdn Army Tk Bde

2 Cdn Corps:

- Guards Armd Div
- 5 Cdn Armd Div

12 Corps:

- 43 Div
- 53 Div

"Z" Mobile Composite Group, R.A.F. Commanded by Air Vice-Marshal J. Whitworth-Jones, C.B.

1 M.O.R.U. (Mobile Operations Room Unit)

- 121, 122, 123 and 124 Airfield H.Q.
- 16, 26, 170, 289, 400, 414 (F.R.) Squadrons, R.A.F. and R.C.A.F.
- 19, 129, 132, 247, 412, 504, 616 (F.) Squadrons, R.A.F. and R.C.A.F.
- 174, 175, 182, 184 (Army Support) Squadrons, R.A.F.
- 88, 226 (Light Bomber) Squadrons, R.A.F.

GERMAN

Eastern Command (Sixth Army). Commanded by Lt.-Gen. J.A.H. Gammell, C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

8 Corps:

- 9 Armd Div
- 42 Armd Div

11 Corps:

- 49 Inf Div
- 61 Inf Div

Buckinghamshire Brigade Group (five Bns, one Armd Car

"X" Mobile Composite Group, R.A.F. Commanded by Air
Vice-Marshal J.O. Andrews, C.B., D.S.O., M.C.

2, 4, 169, 268, 613 (F.R.) Squadrons, R.A.F.
124, 167, 303, 350, 411, 421, 453 (F.) Squadrons,
R.A.F. and R.C.A.F.
181, 183 (Army Support) Squadrons, R.A.F.
21, 98, 464, 487 (Light Bomber) Squadrons, R.A.F.

9. On each side, the Army Commander and the R.A.F. Group Commander worked on the same level of command in co-operation, neither being subject to the orders of the other. It will be noted that the divisions of 12 Corps were "Divisions" on the new organization, i.e., composed of two infantry brigades and one army tank brigade; whereas those of 11 Corps were "Infantry Divisions" on the old organization, i.e., comprising three infantry brigades. In accordance with the views of General McNaughton on this question (see Report No.91), both Canadian infantry divisions involved were of course on the old organization. All the armoured divisions taking part in the exercise were on the new organization, based upon one armoured brigade and one infantry brigade.

10. The general idea underlying the exercise was that England (representing part of the Continent of Europe adjacent to the British Isles) was divided into three separate countries, the boundaries of which met in the vicinity of STRATFORD-UPON-AVON. Eastland, lying east of a boundary following the general line ASHBOURNE - STRATFORD - SLOUGH, and including the "fortress of LONDON", which however was not under the command of the German Army Commander, had been occupied by the Germans. Westland, the territory west of the general line ASHBOURNE - STRATFORD - GLOUCESTER, was neutral. The instructions issued to General McNaughton by G.H.Q. (B.E.F.), represented by G.H.Q. Home Forces (copy attached to Comments of C.-in-C. as Appx "A") informed him that the British Government had decided to attack the German forces in Eastland by an operation launched through Southland. This would be carried out in two stages: (a) the seizure of bridgeheads in Kent, Sussex and Hampshire, by First Army in co-operation with U.S. forces; and (b) the subsequent invasion of Eastland across the unfortified frontier between Eastland and Southland by Second Army under General McNaughton's command. General McNaughton's task was to seize HUNTINGDON, the capital of Eastland, "as rapidly as possible". His operations were to be directed between the fortress of LONDON and the Westland frontier, both exclusive. He was informed that, coincident with his operation, additional attacks under a separate commander would be launched against the coast of Eastland to pin down enemy formations manning coast defences.

11. Instructions issued to General Gammell by H.Q. Army Group West, represented, as in the case of G.H.Q., B.E.F., by G.H.Q. Home Forces (Comments of C.-in-C., Appx "B") informed him that a British attack through Southland was probable, and that in the event of this taking place his task would be to resist an Allied invasion of Eastland from the direction of Southland until he could be reinforced. He was warned that the retention of HUNTINGDON was vital, and was informed that if it would assist his operation he might plan to occupy Southland up to the line GLOUCESTER - CIRENCESTER - HUNGERFORD - NEWBURY and thence along the line of the rivers KENNET and THAMES to LONDON. He was not to cross the frontier, however, without permission of H.Q. Army Group West.

12. The appreciations of the two commanders are outlined in G.H.Q. Narrative (paras. 10, 14-18). General McNaughton, on the basis of the fact that his information indicated that the

German forces were disposed in two groups divided by the WASH and the PEN country, decided that it was desirable to place his force between these two groups in order to defeat them in detail. He therefore planned to throw 1 Cdn Corps as rapidly as possible into the area between NORTHAMPTON and HUNTINGDON, while 2 Cdn Corps advanced into the area BANBURY - TOWCESTER - BICESTER with a view to destroying any German armour in this area and covering the left flank of 1 Cdn Corps. 12 Corps would move forward to secure the area SAFFRON WALDEN - CAMBRIDGE and cover the right flank of 1 Cdn Corps. Subsequently 1 Cdn Corps and 2 Cdn Corps would advance to destroy German forces north and west of the line PETERBOROUGH - BANBURY, covered on the right by 12 Corps.

13. The C.-in-C. Home Forces (Comments, paras. 11-15) criticised this appreciation on the ground that it assumed that there would be no German reaction to Allied landings in Southland and no serious opposition until the Eastland frontier had been crossed. He further suggested that instead of advancing with 1 Cdn Corps straight across the THAMES it would have been better to have conducted the main advance "through the more open country and across the smaller obstacles WEST of the THAMES, delaying the final wheel NORTH-EAST to HUNTINGDON until NORTH of OXFORD".

14. The C.-in-C. also criticised the British plan in that, as a result of this General Staff appreciation, it was assumed that no bridging would be required up to the Eastland territory. The lack of "a clear bridging policy," he noted, caused many difficulties.

15. The German commander's appreciation was that the most dangerous British advance would probably take place west of the THAMES. He planned therefore to fight if possible on a "prepared battleground" north of BANBURY, hedged round with demolitions, or alternatively to move down the east bank of the THAMES and destroy any forces crossing south of OXFORD before they could bridge the river and get their supporting weapons across. General Gammell conceived his plan as a door swinging on a hinge in the south-west CHILTERNS and admitting the enemy to his prepared battlefield. The C.-in-C. Home Forces (Comments, paras. 17 ff.) describes General Gammell's analysis as "detailed and sound" but not without weaknesses. The important "hinge" was too weakly held, and when it cracked "the whole structure of the defence failed". Moreover, General Gammell's plan for withdrawal "tied 8 Corps to an unsuitable defensive role, and involved the surrender of the excellent tank country WEST of the THAMES without a fight". The plan also proved unduly rigid, partly due to the large-scale demolition plan adopted, which hampered the Germans in operations and partly to "the conviction of the GERMAN Commander that the enemy would react in the way he had foreseen". The C.-in-C. Home Forces considers that General Gammell would have been wiser to have positioned 11 Corps behind the THAMES in the WALLINGFORD - HENLEY area, with 8 Corps left intact in the area of the COTSWOLDS to act against the British left flank.

PRELIMINARY MOVEMENTS

16. In accordance with his instructions from G.H.Q., General McNaughton concentrated the Second Army as follows (Second Army Operation Order No. 1, 18 Feb 43: C.M.H.Q. file 2/EX SPARTAN/1). 12 Corps was concentrated in the general area TUNBRIDGE WELLS - HURSTPIERPOINT (Q73). Second Army Troops were concentrated in the general area BILLINGSHURST (Q54) - AMBERLEY (Q43) - PETWORTH (Q44). 1 Cdn Corps was

concentrated north of PORTSMOUTH, in the general area HASLEMERE (Q35) - BISHOP'S WALTHAM (U93). 2 Cdn Corps, representing the major portion of Second Army armour, was concentrated further to the west in the general area MICHELMERSH (U74) - WIMBORNE MINSTER (U42), south of SALISBURY. These areas represented those in which the Second Army was assumed to have assembled following its landing, and were covered by the bridgehead position assumed to be held by First Army. Concentration of Canadian formations was to be completed by 2400 hrs 2 Mar 43; of 12 Corps, by 0600 hrs 3 Mar.

17. As a result of further instructions from G.H.Q., Second Army Operation Order No.2 was issued on 27 Feb. This laid down that on the night 3/4 Mar Second Army would assume responsibility for the defence of the bridgehead from GUILDFORD to WILTON (U55), taking over from First Army divisions withdrawing to base sub area. The forward edge of the bridgehead was to be advanced to the line ALTON (Q15) - MICHELDEVER STATION (U96) - ANDOVER - WILTON. 1 Cdn Corps would move into the general area GUILDFORD - ALTON, and 2 Cdn Corps into the general area HURSTBOURNE PRIORS (U86) - excl. SALISBURY. 1 Cdn Corps would include in its defended localities the HOG'S BACK between GUILDFORD and ALDERSHOT and the high ground to the west as far as the vicinity of ALTON. 2 Cdn Corps would similarly include in its localities HAREWOOD FOREST (U86) and the high ground between SALISBURY and STOCKBRIDGE (U75). These positions were to be occupied by 0600 hrs on 3 Mar. No troops were to advance north of the line of the advanced bridgehead until further orders from Second Army.

18. These moves were duly carried out and the two Canadian Corps were in their places by the early morning of 3 Mar. H.Q. First Cdn Army, functioning for the exercise as H.Q. Second Army, moved from its normal station near LEATHERHEAD and opened at 1800 hrs on 1 Mar at ALGONQUIN CAMP, WITLEY COMMON (south-west of GODALMING).

19. Meanwhile the German Sixth Army had been concentrated by General Gammell close to the Southland frontier with 8 Corps in the north, 11 Corps in the centre and the Bucks Bde in the south (G.H.Q. Narrative, para.24).

BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE EXERCISE

20. Control had arranged to confront both Force Commanders "with unexpected situations at the start of the operations" (Comments, para. 23) to test the flexibility of their plans. In the case of the German commander, the surprise was the information given him that at first light on 4 Mar several British landings had been effected on the Eastland coast between CLACTON-ON-SEA and LOWESTOFT. The effect of this was that he could no longer count on receiving reinforcements after one week, as had been forecast, but might have to fight unaided for a longer period. "On receipt of this information the Commander rightly decided to adhere to his original plan, but it would clearly be necessary under the changed conditions to strike at the enemy harder and more frequently in order to check his advance for a longer period" (Comments, para. 24).

21. In the case of the British commander, the surprise confronting him was the fact that the Germans were given permission to invade Southland at a time when Second Army was still tied to its bridgehead by instructions from G.H.Q. In pursuance of this permission, enemy forces crossed the frontier at 2400 hrs on the night 3/4 Mar. This information,

was received in the Operations Filter Room at H.Q. Second Army at 0415 hrs (Ops Filter Room Log).

22. At 1100 hrs on 1 Mar, Second Army had issued a warning order to its formations to be prepared to advance from the bridgehead on 5 Mar at first light, subject to confirmation at 1000 hrs 4 Mar. Second Army Operation Order No.3, issued at 2140 hrs 2 Mar, contained detailed instructions for the proposed movement. This Order will not be described in detail here (it will be found on the "G" War Diary of H.Q. Second Army) but the most general provisions of it may be quoted:

INTENTION

- 4 Second Army will attack in the direction WINCHESTER U94 - OXFORD P92 - HUNTINGDON L69 and break in the GERMAN centre.

METHOD

- 5 1 Cdn Corps will make main attack astride the line ALTON Q15 - ABINGDON P91 - STONY STRATFORD L25 - KIMBOLTON L58.
- 6 2 Cdn Corps will adv astride the line SALISBURY U55 - CHIPPING NORTON P74 - NORTHAMPTON L28, and destroy GERMAN armd fmns which threaten from the North and West the L of C of Second Army or left flank of 1 Cdn Corps.
- 7 12 Corps, when released by GHQ, will secure the right of Second Army, initially by attacking astride the line FARNHAM Q26 - READING Q19 - WATLINGTON L11 - LUTON L54.

23. At 0600 hrs 4 Mar, in view of the reported enemy advance, H.Q. Second Army asked G.H.Q. to confirm Zero for the advance; the reply was that "This was now redundant", and when permission to move troops forward of the bridgehead was requested, Second Army was referred to its own "G" Umpire who refused it.

24. At 0844 hrs, however, H.Q. Second Army received from G.H.Q. confirmation of the southward movement of the enemy, and details of the routes on which columns were moving. Second Army was further informed that the concentration of 12 Corps was estimated to be complete at 2400 hrs 4 Mar, at which time G.H.Q. would release it to Second Army. In view of the information now available, the Commander-in-Chief directed Second Army to begin the advance as soon as possible. At 0944 and 0948 hrs, in consequence, 1 and 2 Cdn Corps were informed by telephone from Army that foremost troops were to cross the start line at 1200 hrs that day.

25. The comments of the C.-in-C. on the beginning of the advance may be quoted:

26. In spite of this surprise the BRITISH force was on the move in four to five hours after receipt of the order at Army Headquarters. Formations had not, however, been grouped in their concentration areas by 4 March in a suitable layout for a quick get-away and there was consequently some confusion during the early stages of the advance, whilst reconnaissance units fought their way forward past other columns on the road to lead the advance and whilst suitable regrouping was carried out. In view of the difficulties the speed with which the advance

Commanders and staffs were, however, slow to appreciate the probable result of demolitions which the enemy might be expected to carry out in the changed conditions.

26. General McNaughton had decided to adhere to his original plan, and the advance was conducted on these lines. Contact was made with enemy reconnaissance elements as soon as the advance began. They did not however seriously impede it. By 2400 hrs 4 Mar, Second Army advanced troops "had reached a line roughly along the rivers KENNET and THAMES" (Second Army Intelligence Summary No.6). The river KENNET, which flows into the THAMES at READING, forms with the LOWER THAMES a continuous river line on which the enemy army was preparing to stand.

27. One important penetration of this line was at once effected at SONNING (Q.2095) below READING. Here troops of 2 Cdn Div succeeded in seizing the bridge across the THAMES "partially intact". It had been prepared for demolition but left unblown by the commander of the Bucks Bde in case he might want to use it. Protection provided for it was inadequate, and the result was that it was captured in condition passable for carriers (Comments, para.27). Although the C.-in-C. states that this took place on 5 Mar, the G.H.Q. Narrative (para.32) states that a bridgehead had been established here by 2400 hrs 4 Mar. The latter statement is probably correct, as at 2230 hrs 4 Mar "PHANTOM" (G.H.Q. Liaison Regt) reported the SONNING bridge open (Ops Filter Room Log, H.Q. Second Army).

28. The following day (5 Mar) witnessed the development of this penetration by 2 Cdn Div. The misfortune suffered by the Germans at SONNING had in fact, in the C.-in-C's phrase, "cracked the main pivot of the defence, and caused the successive withdrawal of forces from the WEST flank to bolster it up, leading ultimately to the scrapping of the GERMAN Commander's plan for trapping the enemy NORTH of BANBURY" (Comments, para. 28). "By 1110 hours two brigades of 2 Canadian Infantry Division were across the THAMES at SONNING and the bridgehead had been extended to a depth of six miles. A sharp air attack later damaged the bridge and caused traffic dislocation in the town." (Narrative, para.44.)

29. Further to the west, 3 Cdn Div developed a bridgehead across the KENNET in the NEWBURY area. Still further west, 2 Cdn Corps patrols, after temporarily losing touch, regained contact with troops of 42 Armd Div on the line of the THAMES between ABINGDON and LECHLADE. 5 Cdn Armd Div entered WANTAGE that evening.

30. In these circumstances the German commander, at midnight 5/6 Mar, ordered a withdrawal. Bucks Bde, which had had 146 Inf Bde under command, was to withdraw to the area PRINCES RISBOROUGH - COOKHAM (LO3). 8 Corps, with both its armoured divisions under command, would take over all responsibility north of OXFORD, and 11 Corps would have one division east of OXFORD and north of the THAME, and one just east of AYLESBURY. The German withdrawal was executed during the night 5/6 Mar, and with the exception of certain units of Bucks Bde, which had been badly mauled by 2 Cdn Div, most of the German force reached its new positions during the morning of 6 Mar. That afternoon General Gammell decided to withdraw further and concentrate behind the GRAND UNION CANAL, which runs north-west from LONDON by the general line HEMEL HEMPSTEAD - FENNY STRATFORD - RUGBY. 11 Corps was ordered to concentrate in two strong areas east of the canal (north of LEIGHTON BUZZARD and east of TRING). 8 Corps was to hold its position

north of OXFORD until the morning of 7 Mar and then cover the flank of 11 Corps during its withdrawal; while Bucks Bde was to conform to the movement of 11 Corps and protect its left flank (G.H.Q. Narrative, para. 49).

31. General McNaughton decided to continue to strike on the right, and to relieve 1 Cdn Corps between HENLEY and WALLINGFORD, when that line had been made good, with 12 Corps, which was now moving up from its concentration area. 1 Cdn Corps would then extend its front leftwards to WANTAGE. For the moment General McNaughton held back his armour; 2 Cdn Corps remained on the high ground south of the line WANTAGE - SWINDON, protecting the left flank of 1 Cdn Corps.

32. During 6 Mar 1 Cdn Corps pushed forward, following the withdrawing enemy. The line HENLEY - ABINGDON was reached by 1030 hrs, and that evening 2 Cdn Div continued the advance in the area east of ABINGDON. The advance of 12 Corps from its concentration area was slow (Narrative, para.51); but by night-fall of 6 Mar the majority of its formations had reached their new areas in the region MARLOW - HENLEY.

33. During 6/7 Mar, General McNaughton, as a result of the capture of a 49 Div Operation Order revealing the German intention to withdraw pivoting on Bucks Bde, gave consideration to the idea of moving 2 Cdn Corps east across the THAMES between WALLINGFORD and ABINGDON through 1 Cdn Corps, with a view to its making a wide sweep round the enemy's rear. Preliminary orders to this effect were issued at 2325 hrs 6 Mar.

34. This plan, the execution of which would have been a complicated and difficult process, was subsequently abandoned. General McNaughton resolved instead to adhere to his original design of using 2 Cdn Corps in a wide sweep to the west, which he considered would now offer the best chance of destroying the German Army before it could be reinforced. At 1740 hrs 7 Mar, accordingly, orders were issued by H.Q. Second Army to the effect that on the following day the German Army would be enveloped and destroyed. 12 Corps was to advance on the axis WATLINGTON (L11) - LUTON (L54); 1 Cdn Corps on the axis ABINGDON - STONY STRATFORD - KIMBOLTON (L58); and 2 Cdn Corps astride the line HUNGERFORD (U78) - CIRENCESTER (P42) - SOUTHAM (P88). The last named formation was to position itself in the area HELLIDON (P9678) - TOWCESTER (L16) - BRACKLEY (L05), its task being to sever the communications of the Sixth Army running south through NORTHAMPTON and RUGBY, and to bring to battle and destroy the German 8 Corps (Message SO 285).

35. On this order the C.-in-C. remarks as follows:

31. The final decision to move 2 Canadian Corps up the WEST flank was undoubtedly the correct one, but its results were disappointing owing to its slow advance and to tactical and administrative mistakes in its handling.

36. As pointed out by G.H.Q. Narrative, the main fighting up to this time had been between 2 Cdn Div and Bucks Bde, and the latter had suffered considerably. 3 Cdn Div had also been engaged. "The advance of both divisions had been considerably affected by the German demolition plan" (para. 70).

37. The very elaborate enemy demolitions threw, in fact, a very heavy burden upon the engineers of Second Army, and stretched their bridging resources to the limit. The comments of the C.-in-C. on the original British appreciation in this matter have been quoted. Dealing with it further, he observed, "Plans for bridging.....never caught up with operations and

were never more than one day ahead of the advance". Disregarding technical details, his general comment on this matter may be noted:

80. A total of sixty bridges was constructed during the operations of which about half were actually used, the other half being on token sites. Though the preliminary organization of work was sometimes slow the sappers showed great keenness and technical skill. Some very good performances were achieved, a notable example being the construction at night in 14 hours of the Bailey pontoon bridge at PANGBOURNE by 13 Canadian Army Field Company, a unit which had not previously handled this type of equipment.

38. The C.-in-C. points out (para.86) that elaborate demolition plans are apt to become "double edged weapons", and in this case the Germans during 6-8 Mar would have been unable to operate against 2 Cdn Corps, had they desired to do so, without bridging.

39. The bridging aspect of the exercise is well illustrated by Map "D" appended to the G.H.Q. Narrative, on which the location and classification of each bridge constructed is clearly shown.

40. 2 Cdn Corps was to begin its advance towards CIRENCESTER and SOUTHAM at 1900 hrs 7 Mar (Second Army Intelligence Summary No.9), moving on two roads with Gds Armd Div leading. As already noted, the advance proved slow, and the Army Commander's hopes for a successful enveloping move were not realized. The G.H.Q. Narrative gives the following account of the move of 2 Cdn Corps:

85. The distances for this move were 48 and 63 miles respectively for the two roads. Guards Armoured Division due to start at 1930 hours on 7 MARCH was delayed. All preparations had been made for a move EAST and dispositions had to be changed. Units and lower formations started from a half to three hours late. The division arrived in its concentration area at 0900 hours next morning. 5 Canadian Armoured Division was still arriving at 2225 hours the next evening. The average speed was 5 m.i.h.

The night was a dark one. No lights were allowed and enemy patrols imposed further delays. A large part of the delay, however, was attributable to insufficient traffic control. Between 1530 and 1730 hours 8 MARCH the administrative group of Guards Armoured Division was mixed up with the fighting echelons of 5 Canadian Armoured Division, and it was this congestion that delayed the concentration of the latter formation. At 1700 hours MALMESBURY was impassable. For fifteen hours 2 Canadian Corps was out of direct wireless touch with SECOND ARMY, owing partly to difficulties caused by wireless silence and partly by the fact that personnel were handling new types of set very recently issued to them.

41. In his Comments, the C.-in-C. noted that plans of road movement and the use of traffic control personnel were still imperfect. "For instance", he wrote, "on 9 March a traffic block occurred behind 2 Canadian Corps which stretched from TETBURY to CIRENCESTER where double lines of vehicles were immobile for such a length of time that fighter cover was asked for" (para. 155). The town of CIRENCESTER is reported to have become a bad bottleneck.

42. Second Army Intelligence Summary No.10, issued on the morning of 9 Mar, made the comment:

2. Comms with 2 Cdn Corps broke down fairly early on and there is some doubt as to the exact posn of Gds and 5 Cdn Armd Divs; at 0600 hrs, however they were reported to be in the area:

MORETON-IN-THE-MARSH P65 - BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER
P64 - BURFORD P63.

3. The advance of Second Army is proceeding according to plan and it is probable that 2 Corps will advance somewhat more quickly when certain sup problems have been overcome.

43. The supply problems referred to appear to have been in part at least a question of petrol. The G.H.Q. Narrative refers to this matter as follows (p.27):

5 Canadian Armoured Division was twice reported to be short of petrol. At the end of the advance of 9 MARCH the difficulty appears to have arisen owing to delay in petrol vehicles finding the units. The second delay on 10 MARCH was caused by a delay in sending up petrol from 2nd line. 3rd line refilled 2nd line at 1130 hours but 2nd line then halted for three hours. Consequently tanks were not refilled until 1800 hours.

44. While 2 Cdn Corps was thus slowly moving forward on the left, 1 Cdn Corps was advancing in the centre. Second Army Intelligence Summary No.9, containing intelligence to 0600 hrs 8 Mar, was able to state, "OXFORD is in our hands"; and Summary No.10, issued twenty-four hours later, placed 12 Corps on the line GREAT MISSENDEN (L32) - WENDOVER (L32) - KINGSEY (L12). This formation, falling into its place on the right of Second Army, had advanced along the line of the CHILTERNs encountering little opposition. 1 Cdn Corps had continued to have considerable fighting. "2 Canadian Infantry Division again had the severest fighting, chiefly in the evening (8 Mar) with a brigade of 49 Infantry Division. Both sides had heavy casualties, the German formation suffering more severely" (G.H.Q. Narrative, para. 78). By the early morning of 9 Mar 1 Cdn Corps was reported to be on the line CUDDINGTON (L13) - CHILTON (L13) - STANTON ST. JOHN (L02) - ISLIP (P93) - KIDLINGTON (P93) (Second Army Intelligence Summary No.10).

45. During this period elements of both German Armoured Divisions were in action against 1 Cdn Corps. On 8 Mar "elements, including armour, of 9 Armoured Division" successfully counter-attacked a bridgehead of 3 Cdn Div north of OXFORD, stopping the advance of this formation for some time (Comments, para.42). On the following day there was a brisk fight between part of 2 Cdn Div and 42 Armd Div on the ASHENDON feature (L13). This feature had been captured at dawn by 4 Cdn Inf Bde, which is reported to have also captured in the process an enemy battalion and the major part of the headquarters of 70 Inf Bde of 49 Inf Div (information from Lt.-Col. J.F. Ganong, who was an Umpire with 4 Cdn Inf Bde). In a subsequent counter-attack, 30 Armd Bde of 42 Armd Div, in an operation described by the C.-in-C. (Comments, para.42) as "partially successful", largely destroyed 4 Cdn Inf Bde, but itself suffered heavily. The C.-in-C. criticised 4 Cdn Inf Bde's dispositions on ASHENDON HILL, "where the (anti-tank) guns were sited in a perimeter round the position, with little attempt at concealment although the position had been occupied

for six hours before the attack of 30 Armoured Brigade opened against it", while moreover the garrison of the locality had "done no digging and laid no mines" (Comments, paras.98, 108). "In this and other fighting 2 Canadian Infantry Division suffered heavily; one brigade having only 800 men remaining and the other two being reduced by 50 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. 3 Canadian Infantry Division was now across R. CHERWELL but had been held at ISLIP. Little progress was made" (G.H.Q. Narrative, para. 86).

46. On 10 Mar the advance of Second Army continued. At 0130 hrs a night attack by 3 Cdn Div was directed against 147 Inf Bde of 49 Inf Div at BRILL (L13). "The attack was fully successful, nearly capturing Divisional Headquarters and annihilating the Brigade. 2,500 to 3,000 prisoners, including two Brigadiers, the whole of the brigade transport and some anti-tank guns were captured" (G.H.Q. Narrative, para.94). Otherwise the advance of 1 Cdn Corps was unopposed, and by evening 10 Mar it was "in the sector PENNY STRATFORD - BUCKINGHAM" with forward elements advancing north-east (Second Army Intelligence Summary No.11).

47. On the right of Second Army, 12 Corps had pushed forward, occupied AYLESBURY and was in possession of the area WHIPSNADE (L43) - CHEDDINGTON (L33).

48. Early in the morning of 10 Mar both divisions of 2 Cdn Corps crossed the OXFORD Canal near BANBURY and entered forward concentration areas. Their patrols were in touch with elements of the German Armoured Divisions, but Second Army Intelligence Summary No.11, containing information received to 2300 hrs 10 Mar, notes, "2 Corps has not yet established contact with enemy armour".

49. At 2200 hrs 9 Mar, Adv H.Q. Second Army, moving forward to conform with the advance, had opened at MONGEWELL PARK, immediately south of WALLINGFORD. Rear H.Q. remained at ALGONQUIN CAMP.

50. Finding that his hopes of effecting an envelopment had failed, the British Army Commander issued further orders at 2130 hrs 10 Mar. 12 Corps was to form "a strong pivot" on the high ground LEIGHTON BUZZARD - TRING - AYLESBURY and the WOBURN feature and so protect the Army's right flank. 1 Cdn Corps was to push on towards KIMBOLTON. 2 Cdn Corps was to destroy all enemy in the area BUGBROOKE (L1377) - STONY STRATFORD - BUCKINGHAM - BRACKLEY (Ops Filter Room Log, H.Q. Second Army).

51. The G.O.C. 2 Cdn Corps now took action which was subsequently much criticised. He regrouped his armoured divisions, placing both armoured brigades under Gds Armd Div and both infantry brigades under 5 Cdn Armd Div. The former formation was instructed to move to an area about four miles north of TOWCESTER, with a view to driving the enemy south-west in the morning. During the night, the infantry brigades were to "tank hunt with the utmost fury" in the area BRACKLEY - TOWCESTER (Ops Filter Room Log, H.Q. Second Army).

52. It is convenient at this point to detail the results of this action. The C.-in-C. commented as follows:

This regrouping was a tactical mistake. It resulted in the destruction of the Guards Armoured Brigade in an attack against a strong anti-tank position, at a time when the infantry brigades were deployed tank hunting in unreconnoitred country, in which, as it turned out, no enemy tanks were located.

53. The misfortune of Gds Armd Bde is thus described in the G.H.Q. Narrative:

107. About noon (11 Mar) Guards Composite Armoured Division attacked the infantry pivot of 42 Armoured Division near BLISWORTH and ROADE and tried to envelop the NORTHERN edge. Heavy anti-tank and artillery fire defeated the attempt with severe casualties. Tanks of the Guards Armoured Brigade launched their attack over a tunnel on to an unreconnoitred minefield, losing twenty-three tanks. They were also met with heavy anti-tank gunfire from 71 Infantry Brigade which was in a carefully selected but not very highly prepared position, and were again repulsed with heavy casualties.

At the end of the action only seventy tanks were left in the Armoured Brigade. Other engagements also took place in what was a very confused situation. Later in the day the Armoured Brigade was withdrawn WEST of the canal leaving 32 Guards Infantry Brigade to hold the bridgehead. By 1700 hours 2 Canadian Corps had lost contact with the enemy.

The tunnel referred to is the long one through which the Grand Union Canal passes south of BLISWORTH. It constitutes an important break in the water obstacle presented by the Canal.

54. General McNaughton had disapproved of the regrouping of 2 Cdn Corps, and at 0950 hrs 11 Mar had sent to 2 Cdn Corps an Emergency Operations message as follows:

Army Comd directs you to re-establish normal organization Armd Divs forthwith. Reliable information indicates there is no enemy force on your front which you need fear and it is imperative you push on with utmost speed on axis TOWCESTER - HUNTINGDON establishing contact with new sup route being built fwd at BUCKINGHAM. Repeat utmost importance you push on vigorously and immediately. Ack personally to Army Comd.

(Ops Filter Room Log, H.Q. Second Army)

The two composite divisions had already moved, and their reorganization was not completed, in consequence, until that evening. In the course of the day General McNaughton made a personal visit to H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps by air, and also "reconnoitred the front in an Air O.P." (Ops Filter Room Log, H.Q. Second Army; G.H.Q. Narrative, para. 110).

55. During 11 Mar 12 Corps continued to make progress, although heavy opposition was now encountered. The 33rd Independent Guards Brigade had been brought into action on the enemy side, and made an incursion westward from HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, but was withdrawn at 2030 hrs. 53 Div, after hard fighting with 49 Inf Div, was establishing itself in the area south of LEIGHTON BUZZARD by nightfall. In the centre, there was further advance by 1 Cdn Corps. 2 Cdn Div got some troops across the Grand Union Canal near WOBURN SANDS, but was "driven back with casualties". "At nightfall the division was just across the line of the canal at PENNY STRATFORD and SIMPSON, one mile to the NORTH" (G.H.Q. Narrative, para. 106).

56. General McNaughton's orders for 12 Mar were to the effect that at first light Second Army would attack and destroy the remnants of the German Army, 12 Corps attacking on the axis IVINGHOE ASTON (L4237) - WOBURN (L4052), 1 Cdn Corps on the axis WINSLOW (L2247) - KIMBOLTON, and 2 Cdn Corps on the axis TOWCESTER - KIMBOLTON (Message SO 379).

57. Information reaching H.Q. Second Army from H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps had been inadequate, and at 0830 hrs 12 Mar the Army Commander despatched the following message to the Corps Commander:

Please give your personal attention to insuring the prompt passage to me of infm concerning enemy dispositions & progress your attacks. This has been most unsatisfactory to date. ACK.

(Ops Filter Room Log, H.Q.
Second Army.)

58. "Cease Fire" was notified at 0900 hrs 12 Mar. At this time it appeared that, if the operations continued, the destruction of the German Army could not be long delayed. The general comment of the C.-in-C. on the later stages of the operations may be quoted:

34. After 8 March the situation swung steadily in favour of the BRITISH who had begun to overcome the handicap of their lines of communication across the THAMES. Apart from one disastrous operation by 2 Canadian Corps on 11 March it became only a matter of time before the concentrated BRITISH force would achieve its object.

(Comments)

THE AIR ASPECT

59. Only the briefest note on the air aspect of the exercise can be made here. The kernel of the matter is found in the general comment of the C.-in-C. :

115. In "SPARTAN" air action was co-ordinated with the land battle through the medium of the composite group organization by which a R.A.F. group containing fighter, light bomber, tactical support and reconnaissance squadrons, was allotted to the support of each army in the field with the group and army commanders located in a joint H.Q. This was the first occasion in this country on which this system of combined Army/R.A.F. action has been tried. In spite of many handicaps sufficient experience was gained to confirm that this conception is sound and should be accepted for future training and operations.

60. Air activity was on a very large scale, though it was somewhat reduced by weather conditions. For example, on 5 Mar it was proposed to put in the maximum British air effort against the enemy armoured divisions, but the weather prevented operations. Aerial reconnaissance was carried on very extensively; there was bombing activity against lines of communication, and some intervention by aircraft on the battlefield. The writer gathered that Air Vice-Marshal Whitworth-Jones was disposed to use his resources mainly against the enemy's rear areas, and from remarks which he heard dropped on the morning of 6 Mar, when Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Secretary of State for Air, and his party visited H.Q. Second Army, he gathered further that some R.A.F. opinion held that the commander of "Z" Group had gone too far in this direction.

61. "Enemy" aircraft made a number of low attacks on troops of 1 Cdn Corps during the afternoon of 11 Mar, and these led to three separate reports of the use of "spray" which were investigated by Chemical Warfare officers in accordance

with standard procedure and found to be baseless. Gas was, in fact, used by neither side during the exercise.

GENERAL

62. In view of the criticisms of the handling of 2 Cdn Corps which are reported above, it seems very desirable to recall once more that the headquarters of this formation was organized only in the middle of January, 1943, that is, less than six weeks before the beginning of the preliminary moves of this exercise. This fact undoubtedly placed those headquarters at a considerable disadvantage.

63. After the completion of the exercise, General McNaughton telegraphed his own comments upon it to OTTAWA for the benefit of the Minister of National Defence and the C.G.S. (telegram G.S.560, Canmilitary to Defensor, 13 Mar 43: C.M.H.Q. file 2/EX SPARTAN/1/2). This cable ran in part as follows:

Para.I Spartan exercise has now come to a conclusion and the troops are in the process of dispersal to their former stations. This large scale exercise was designed as a strict test of the physical condition and endurance of the troops, their proficiency in movement and tactics and of the ability of commanders and staffs to administer, handle and fight their formations and units.....

Para.II The Commander in Chief, General Paget, acting as Director of the exercise, has expressed himself as well satisfied with the result and with the very high standards of discipline, morale and conduct which were shown by all ranks, British and Canadian. I share his opinion and I feel we have learnt most valuable lessons for the future. I am particularly happy at the good relations which existed with the civilian inhabitants of the areas we traversed. Our Cdn troops showed every courtesy and consideration and scrupulously avoided creating unnecessary damage and annoyance. Their bivouacs were left clean and tidy. Despite the many tens of thousands involved I have had only two complaints which are being investigated.

Para.III As you know our Army staff was new and partly set up ad hoc. Nevertheless by the conclusion of the exercise it was working smoothly and efficiently and our officers have proved their capacity. Our engineers, signals, supply and transport, medical, ordnance, reme and other administrative services were most satisfactory and the officers and staffs in charge showed a capacity to organize, conduct and administer these matters which was very satisfactory indeed particularly as this was the first occasion in which we have ever had an opportunity to give them actual practice full scale.....

Para.V One of the important matters of organization tested was the new composite group of the Royal Air Force. In this for the first time I see a possibility of providing the Army with the air support which it requires. Detailed reports covering all phases are being prepared and copies will be forwarded.

Para.VI In general I have formed the conclusion that our plan of organization has been proved to be sound and that the existing W.Es. of units will require little

64. The evidence of officers who were in good positions for observation is that in this exercise the Canadian troops put in an excellent performance. Lt.-Col. Ganong (para.45, above) in particular said that both the physical fitness and the morale of the units were on an exceptionally high level. That this should be the case after more than three years in England during which there has been very little action and in which manoeuvres of this type have become an annual commonplace, would seem to be no small tribute to the troops themselves and to the policy of those who have commanded them.

65. During this exercise the weather was exceptionally fine; no rain fell, and the manoeuvres were conducted under the pleasant conditions of the English springtime. The nights, however, were cold.

66. No attempt is made in this Report to deal with the technical and administrative aspects of the exercise, which may be studied in the official publications.

C.P. Stacey

(C.P. Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer,
Canadian Military Headquarters.

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1. The "first draft" of these Comments was circulated to certain senior officers (including Lt-Gen H.C. Loyd, Lt-Gen G.W.R. Templer, Maj-Gen E.H. Barker, Air Marshal Sir Arthur Barratt and Air Vice Marshal R. Graham) with mimeographed letter HF.19708/14/G(Trg) of 22 Mar 43 from C.G.S., Home Forces. These papers are to be found in the file HF/10217/8/G(C.W.), "Exercise 'SPARTAN'" (2nd Cover), in box No. 31 of the "G.H.Q. Secret Files: Home Forces" series at the Archival Branch, Cabinet Office, London.

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"1. Attached is the first draft of the Commander-in-Chief's report on 'SPARTAN' which will be considered by CGS at a meeting in St Paul's School at 1000 hours 24 March.

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(a) To consider whether all major points have been covered by the report.

(b) To check fact in the case of instances which are quoted or on which comments are made."

3. The following notes are not exhaustive as regards differences between the two versions: many minor alterations (including the substitution of equivalent, or nearly equivalent, words) have been ignored. However, these notes do reflect all alterations of any apparent significance.

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Section 1 - Planning

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7. As drafted, the third sentence of para 11 read: "I consider that such an assumption is unsound when dealing with the GERMANS"

8. Paras 12-14 read, in draft, as follows:

"11. In view of the important factor of speed, coupled with a probable strong superiority in armour, I consider that it would have been sounder for the BRITISH to have conducted their main advance WEST of the THAMES through the more open country and across the smaller obstacles. Such an advance would have the following additional advantages:-

- "(a) The River THAMES could be used as the flank protection either by seizing the crossings or by attacking them and causing the enemy himself to destroy them.
- (b) An advance WEST of the THAMES would eventually threaten the lines of communication of formations located in the bend of the THAMES, and force them to withdraw NORTHWARDS in conformity. They would in fact be levered out of successive positions, thereby avoiding a direct assault across a serious obstacle.
- (c) The main BRITISH lines of communication would have been located further from LONDON and further out of range of a possible sortie from that fortress.

In such an advance the Armoured Corps could be used to the best advantage on the WESTERN flank."

- 9. The last sentence of para 15 was not included in "first draft".
- 10. The second sentence of para 16 read in draft as follows:
"His plan was therefore based on preparing a battleground NORTH of BANBURY into which he would lure the enemy, and, having hedged him round with demolitions, destroy, or at least seriously maul, his left wing."
- 11. In para 18(a), "improvised force" originally read "scratch force".
- 12. In draft, the last sentence of para 19 continued as follows:
"..... and was bound to force on it a defensive attitude from the beginning of operations".
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- 15. The following (draft) sentence was inserted immediately before the last sentence of the first para of 26: "In one case the advance was led by Divisional Headquarters".
- 16. As drafted, first sentence of para 32 read, in part, as follows: "..... portions of 1 Canadian and 12 Corps"

Section 2 - Operations

- 17. As drafted, para 37 read:
"The handling of armoured forces was one of the least satisfactory aspects of the operations, and it is clear that this is a subject which requires much greater study and practice."

18. Para 38 (a): the words "based on good information" do not appear in draft.

19. Following para 41 there was, in draft, the following para:

"When 2 Canadian Corps was freed to advance, its movement was slow and deliberate and hampered by tactical and administrative mistakes."

20. Paras 42 and 43, as drafted, read as follows:-

"As a result during the nine days of the operations the armoured divisions took part in only three actions:

- (a) An action by 30 Armoured Brigade of 42 Armoured Division on 8 March against part 2 Canadian Infantry Division on ASHENDEN HILL. This operation was partially successful.
- (b) An attack by one armoured regiment of 28 Armoured Brigade of 9 Armoured Division against a bridge-head of 3 Canadian Infantry Division NORTH of OXFORD on 8 March. This was completely successful and stopped the advance of 3 Canadian Infantry Division for some time.
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We must not allow the infrequency of large scale exercises to gramp our study of the correct and bold handling of armoured forces. It is possible to study this subject in both cloth model discussions and skeleton exercises and I want commanders to pay particular attention to this in the future."

21. Last sentence of para 48 missing from draft.

22. Second para of 49: The following (draft) sentence appears after sentence ending "..... to hold the bridgehead" and before sentence beginning "The defending forces.....":

"The GERMAN Commander's instructions on this point were perfectly clear, but their execution was faulty."

In the same para of 49 the following (penultimate) sentence appears in draft:

"Finally on 8 March when it was decided to counter attack with 49 Infantry Division, the operation was impracticable because 49 Infantry Division was already separated from the enemy by the obstacle of the THAME over which the bridges had been demolished".

23. Beginning of para 51 reads, in draft:

"Forethought. On the level of army, commanders cannot....."

In the fourth sentence of the same para, draft read:

"..... like battalions and must be given at least 24 to 48 hours' warning....."

24. Beginning of para 52 (a) read:

"6 March. Warning orders were issued to 2 Canadian Corps to advance EAST across the THAMES....."

25. Last sentence of para 54 originally read:

"They also give subordinates an impression of uncertainty in the mind of the commander."

26. Para 55, as drafted, as follows (substitute for "H.Q. should always be well forward"):

"Visits should therefore normally be confined to two periods:-

- (a) Quiet periods between battles when a commander wishes to see for himself the condition of his troops.
- (b) Periods of crisis during a battle when the presence of the commander may tend to encourage and hearten a subordinate who is having a harassing time."

27. Para 57 read:

"Conferences. There is a strong tendency to hold conferences in order to issue orders. This desire to hold conferences must be closely watched to ensure that commanders are not hampered in commanding their own formations by too frequent attendance at conferences. As an example of this, an attack on the GERMAN side on 8 March by one brigade was the subject of an Army Commander's conference at 1100 hours, a Corps and Divisional Commanders' conference and a final Army Commander's conference at 1600 hours. The attack in question was finally cancelled."

28. The following paras appear in draft version after para 61 and before para 62 of printed version:

"Splitting of HQ. The experience of these operations showed that it will generally be necessary for corps and army HQ to be split into advance and rear HQ. The division of staff between the HQ will vary with the state of the operations, but normally Heads of Services should be located at rear HQ. If located at advance HQ they will congest the signal communications to rear HQ in passing their instructions to their representatives there.

The distance between advance and rear should be kept as short as possible. On 8 March advance GERMAN HQ was at BEDFORD and rear at CAMBRIDGE, 32 miles away. This distance was too great and produced complications in the staff working.

Tactical HQ. The formation of tactical HQ may be necessary on occasions, but I consider that this will be rare. Two attempts were made to form tactical HQ, one by 2 Canadian Corps and one by Guards Armoured Division, both were failures. The former lead to loss of control and the latter to the sending of important information in clear; a gift to the enemy intercept.

ORGANISATION.

The course of the exercise brought out clearly the inherent difficulties of any organisation of 'twos' which leaves a commander without any readily available reserve, and which inevitably forces the senior commander to interest himself in the details of a fight from which he should stand aloof. This subject will be further considered by GHQ."

29. Second sentence of para 63 read, in draft, as follows:

"This regrouping took place in enclosed country and was a tactical mistake."

30. Beginning of fourth sentence of para 65(c): "On 2 March BRITISH....."

The following (additional) para was inserted in para 65 between (c) and (d) of printed version:

"(d) Orders issued to the Royal Air Force did not always cover the most important areas. On 6 March the area selected by 8 Corps for Tac R WEST of the THAMES superimposed air reconnaissance on an area in which the corps armoured car regiment was already working and in which no enemy except small patrols were located."

31. In draft form, paras 68-70 were condensed as follows:-

"The intelligence staffs were handicapped by the slow and inadequate passage of information, but in some cases showed no disposition to forage or press for information on their own. In some cases the process of 'filtering' also delayed the dissemination of information until it was too stale."

32. In draft, para 76 began:

"On the BRITISH side a dummy Corps H.Q. was in action and its experience was as follows:....."

33. In draft, second sentence of para 84 read:

"In order to secure uniformity a policy letter on this subject will be published shortly."

34. Para 86(a): "without bridging" does not appear in draft. Following para inserted between (a) and (b) of printed version:

"(b) On 8 March 49 Infantry Division was unable to counter attack elements of 1 Canadian Corps because of its own demolitions on the THAME."

35. Para 87(b): for "delay the demolition of the SONNING bridge", draft read "leave intact the SONNING bridge."

36. Para 94, as drafted, reads:

"Wireless silence should be imposed only to cover strategic moves by night or during periods of poor visibility when there is good reason to believe that the enemy is unaware of the move. In general its use is far too common and more of a handicap than a help."

37. Para 97: the unfortunate formation concerned is identified, in the draft, as 61 Infantry Division.

38. Para 112: last sentence omitted from draft.

39. Paras 113 and 114 not in draft.

Section 3 - Air Co-operation

40. Para 119 not in draft.

41. Para 121: third, fourth and fifth sentences have been inserted in printed version. In draft the sixth (printed) sentence read:

"The higher the military formation H.Q. at which the control of air forces is located, the wider becomes the variation in time in which air and ground forces can be brought to bear upon the current operations."

42. As drafted, sub-paras 123(a) and (b) read as follows:-

"(a) The Army to organise the rapid transmission of information affecting air action and requests for air support and reconnaissance to the point where the Army and RAF HQ meet at army and Corps levels;

(b) that thereafter the execution of the requests is solely the responsibility of the RAF who will provide all the necessary communications including those to enable the RAF sections at corps to exercise control on occasions and for use in the event of the breakdown in normal communications."

Section 4 - Administration

43. This Section was not included in the "first draft".

Appendices

44. Appendices "A" and "B" transposed in draft - i.e. Instructions to Lt-Gen Gammell in Appx "A", and Instructions to Lt-Gen McNaughton in Appx "B".

Appx "C", but not Appx "D", included in draft.

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23. Beginning of para 51 reads, in draft:

"Forethought. On the level of army, commanders cannot....."

In the fourth sentence of the same para, draft read:

"..... like battalions and must be given at least 24 to 48 hours' warning....."

24. Beginning of para 52 (a) read:

"6 March. Warning orders were issued to 2 Canadian Corps to advance EAST across the THAMES....."

25. Last sentence of para 54 originally read:

"They also give subordinates an impression of uncertainty in the mind of the commander."

26. Para 55, as drafted, as follows (substitute for "H.Q. should always be well forward"):

"Visits should therefore normally be confined to two periods:-

- (a) quiet periods between battles when a commander wishes to see for himself the condition of his troops.
- (b) Periods of crisis during a battle when the presence of the commander may tend to encourage and hearten a subordinate who is having a harassing time."

27. Para 57 read:

"Conferences. There is a strong tendency to hold conferences in order to issue orders. This desire to hold conferences must be closely watched to ensure that commanders are not hampered in commanding their own formations by too frequent attendance at conferences. As an example of this, an attack on the GERMAN side on 8 March by one brigade was the subject of an Army Commander's conference at 1100 hours, a Corps and Divisional Commanders' conference and a final Army Commander's conference at 1600 hours. The attack in question was finally cancelled."

28. The following paras appear in draft version after para 61 and before para 62 of printed version:

"Splitting of HQ. The experience of these operations showed that it will generally be necessary for corps and army HQ to be split into advance and rear HQ. The division of staff between the HQ will vary with the state of the operations, but normally Heads of Services should be located at rear HQ. If located at advance HQ they will congest the signal communications to rear HQ in passing their instructions to their representatives there.

The distance between advance and rear should be kept as short as possible. On 8 March advance GERMAN HQ was at BEDFORD and rear at CAMBRIDGE, 32 miles away. This distance was too great and produced complications in the staff working.

Tactical HQ. The formation of tactical HQ may be necessary on occasions, but I consider that this will be rare. Two attempts were made to form tactical HQ, one by 2 Canadian Corps and one by Guards Armoured Division, both were failures. The former lead to loss of control and the latter to the sending of important information in clear; a gift to the enemy intercept.

ORGANISATION.

The course of the exercise brought out clearly the inherent difficulties of any organisation of 'twos' which leaves a commander without any readily available reserve, and which inevitably forces the senior commander to interest himself in the details of a fight from which he should stand aloof. This subject will be further considered by GHQ."

29. Second sentence of para 63 read, in draft, as follows:

"This regrouping took place in enclosed country and was a tactical mistake."

30. Beginning of fourth sentence of para 65(c): "On 2 March BRITISH....."

The following (additional) para was inserted in para 65 between (c) and (d) of printed version:

"(d) Orders issued to the Royal Air Force did not always cover the most important areas. On 6 March the area selected by 8 Corps for Tac R WEST of the THAMES superimposed air reconnaissance on an area in which the corps armoured car regiment was already working and in which no enemy except small patrols were located."

31. In draft form, paras 68-70 were condensed as follows:-

"The intelligence staffs were handicapped by the slow and inadequate passage of information, but in some cases showed no disposition to forage or press for information on their own. In some cases the process of 'filtering' also delayed the dissemination of information until it was too stale."

32. In draft, para 76 began:

"On the BRITISH side a dummy Corps H.Q. was in action and its experience was as follows:....."

33. In draft, second sentence of para 84 read:

"In order to secure uniformity a policy letter on this subject will be published shortly."

34. Para 86(a): "without bridging" does not appear in draft. Following para inserted between (a) and (b) of printed version:

"(b) On 8 March 49 Infantry Division was unable to counter attack elements of 1 Canadian Corps because of its own demolitions on the THAME."

35. Para 87(b): for "delay the demolition of the SONNING bridge", draft read "leave intact the SONNING bridge."

36. Para 94, as drafted, reads:

"Wireless silence should be imposed only to cover strategic moves by night or during periods of poor visibility when there is good reason to believe that the enemy is unaware of the move. In general its use is far too common and more of a handicap than a help."

37. Para 97: the unfortunate formation concerned is identified, in the draft, as 61 Infantry Division.

38. Para 112: last sentence omitted from draft.

39. Paras 113 and 114 not in draft.

Section 3 - Air Co-operation

40. Para 119 not in draft.

41. Para 121: third, fourth and fifth sentences have been inserted in printed version. In draft the sixth (printed) sentence read:

"The higher the military formation H.Q. at which the control of air forces is located, the wider becomes the variation in time in which air and ground forces can be brought to bear upon the current operations."

42. As drafted, sub-paras 123(a) and (b) read as follows:-

"(a) The Army to organise the rapid transmission of information affecting air action and requests for air support and reconnaissance to the point where the Army and RAF H_q meet at army and Corps levels;

(b) that thereafter the execution of the requests is solely the responsibility of the RAF who will provide all the necessary communications including those to enable the RAF sections at corps to exercise control on occasions and for use in the event of the breakdown in normal communications."

Section 4 - Administration

43. This Section was not included in the "first draft".

Appendices

44. - Appendices "A" and "B" transposed in draft - i.e. Instructions to Lt-Gen Gammell in Appx "A", and Instructions to Lt-Gen McNaughton in Appx "B".

Appx "C", but not Appx "D", included in draft.

Appendix A

1. The purpose of this appendix is to provide a summary of the information contained in the report of the Joint Committee on the Operations of the Department of Defense, dated 1970.

2. The Department of Defense is the largest and most complex organization in the United States. It is responsible for the defense of the United States and for the promotion of world peace and stability.

3. The Department of Defense is organized into three main branches: the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. Each branch is responsible for its own operations and for the training and maintenance of its personnel.

4. The Department of Defense is also responsible for the development and production of weapons and military equipment. This is done through the Department of Defense's various agencies, such as the Defense Research and Engineering Agency and the Defense Production Administration.

5. The Department of Defense is also responsible for the recruitment and training of military personnel. This is done through the Department of Defense's various agencies, such as the Defense Manpower Data Center and the Defense Training Administration.

6. The Department of Defense is also responsible for the management of the Department's budget. This is done through the Department of Defense's various agencies, such as the Defense Financial Management System and the Defense Accounting System.

7. The Department of Defense is also responsible for the management of the Department's personnel. This is done through the Department of Defense's various agencies, such as the Defense Personnel Administration and the Defense Personnel Security Administration.

8. The Department of Defense is also responsible for the management of the Department's information. This is done through the Department of Defense's various agencies, such as the Defense Information Systems Agency and the Defense Information Security Agency.

9. The Department of Defense is also responsible for the management of the Department's facilities. This is done through the Department of Defense's various agencies, such as the Defense Facilities Administration and the Defense Facilities Security Administration.

10. The Department of Defense is also responsible for the management of the Department's resources. This is done through the Department of Defense's various agencies, such as the Defense Resources Administration and the Defense Resources Security Administration.