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OPERATIONS IN NORTH-WEST EUROPE FROM 6TH JUNE, 1944,
TO 5TH MAY, 1945.

The following despatch was submitted to the Secretary of State for War on 1st June, 1946, by Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, G.C.B., D.S.O.

I arrived in England on 2nd January, 1944, after handing over command of the Eighth Army, and immediately started a detailed study of the plans for the assault of the Continent—Operation OVERLORD.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Naval Expeditionary Force was Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay and of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory. There was no parallel appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the Allied land forces, but General Eisenhower decided that I should act in that capacity for the assault, and subsequently until the stage was reached in the development of our operations when a complete American Army Group could be deployed on the Continent. No definite period was stipulated for this, but Headquarters Twelfth United States Army Group were formed in London and prepared to take command of First and Third United States Armies at the appropriate time. This Army Group, when formed, remained under my operational control until 1st September: when the Supreme Commander took over direct control of the land battle.

The assault was an operation requiring a single co-ordinated plan of action under one commander; I therefore became the overall land force commander responsible to the Supreme Commander for planning and executing the military aspect of the assault and subsequent capture of the lodgement area.

In the initial stages, the object of Operation OVERLORD was to mount and carry out an

operation to secure a lodgement on the Continent from which further offensive operations could be developed.

The troops under my operational control comprised 21 Army Group and First United States Army (General Omar N. Bradley). 21 Army Group comprised First Canadian Army (Lieutenant-General Crerar), Second British Army (Lieutenant-General Dempsey), the British Airborne Troops (Lieutenant-General Browning), and various Allied contingents. Attached to First United States Army were the American 82 and 101 Airborne Divisions.

Ninth United States Air Force planned with First United States Army, while Second British Army worked with Second Tactical Air Force, R.A.F.

THE PLAN.

The intention was to assault, simultaneously, beaches on the Normandy coast immediately North of the Carentan estuary and between the Carentan estuary and the R. Orne, with the object of securing, as a base for further operations, a lodgement area: which was to include airfield sites and the port of Cherbourg. The left or Eastern flank of the lodgement area was to include the road centre of Caen.

Once ashore and firmly established, my plan was to threaten to break out on the Eastern flank—that is in the Caen sector; by this threat to draw the main enemy reserves into that sector, to fight them there and keep them there, using the British and Canadian armies for the purpose. Having got the main enemy reserves committed on the Eastern flank, my plan was to make the breakout on the