

Little Known Facts

of a

Well Known War

**Q. R. Walsh
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)**

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PREFACE

We knew we were going to get ashore in Normandy. The question was could we stay there against German counter attack.

But the name of the game in Normandy was Cherbourg. We invaded the Cotentin Peninsula via the Bay of the Seine to isolate and capture this deep water port. We had to depend on the artificial ports, erected at the beaches, (after being built in England and towed across the English Channel) until we captured, cleared and operated Cherbourg.

The worst storm in forty years struck Normandy on 19 June. It destroyed the artificial port at Omaha Beach. Hundreds of landing craft and dozens of large ships were also wrecked. Landing of men, equipment, ammunition and supplies over the beaches stopped for about four days. This emphasized that we had to capture Cherbourg in a hurry. We could no longer depend only on the beaches to sustain the invasion.

German troops fiercely resisted the advance of U.S. Army 7th Corps, which was designated to capture Cherbourg, while the German navy destroyed and blocked the port.

The capture of the port was made more difficult when the German general and German admiral surrendered only themselves and their staffs at their headquarters, which was in a cave at the foot of the hill on top of which Fort Du Roule was located (on the southern edge of the city). Large pockets of resistance and several forts continued fighting in the western half of the port, especially in the arsenal area, which had been previously designated to be under the control of the US Navy even before we left England. This is why my Task Unit had to clean out the last resistance in the arsenal area.

Military records reflect that Cherbourg was captured on 26 June. However, the last fort in the middle of the harbor did not surrender until 29 June. This is verified by the dispatch I sent on 29 June to the Navy chain of command.

My command, U.S. Navy Task Unit 127.2.8, was allowed only fifty-two men on the initial lift over Beach Utah. Our objective was Cherbourg. We had twenty-five percent

casualties. Three men were killed and ten wounded. Four of the wounded were sent back to England immediately. One of the officers killed in the arsenal area left a wife and five children. The other officer killed left a three month old baby he had never seen. The enlisted man killed left a widowed mother. One of the wounded officers had a bullet go through his cheek but it did not break into the buccal cavity.

I have written a report reflecting my activities in 1943-1944 while in England and France.

I have given two copies of this report entitled "Little Known Facts of a Well Known War" to the Caroline County Library. This allows a perusal of the history of U.S. Navy Task Unit 127.2.8 from the day it started training in Scotland in April 1944 until it entered LeHavre with the First Canadian Army in September 1944. Copies of my secret dispatches and orders are in the report for persons interested in details.

After forty years, our thoughts should be not only of memories but also the sacrifices made by the dead and the living. Proud of our victories we should always remember the bitterness and sorrow their cost.

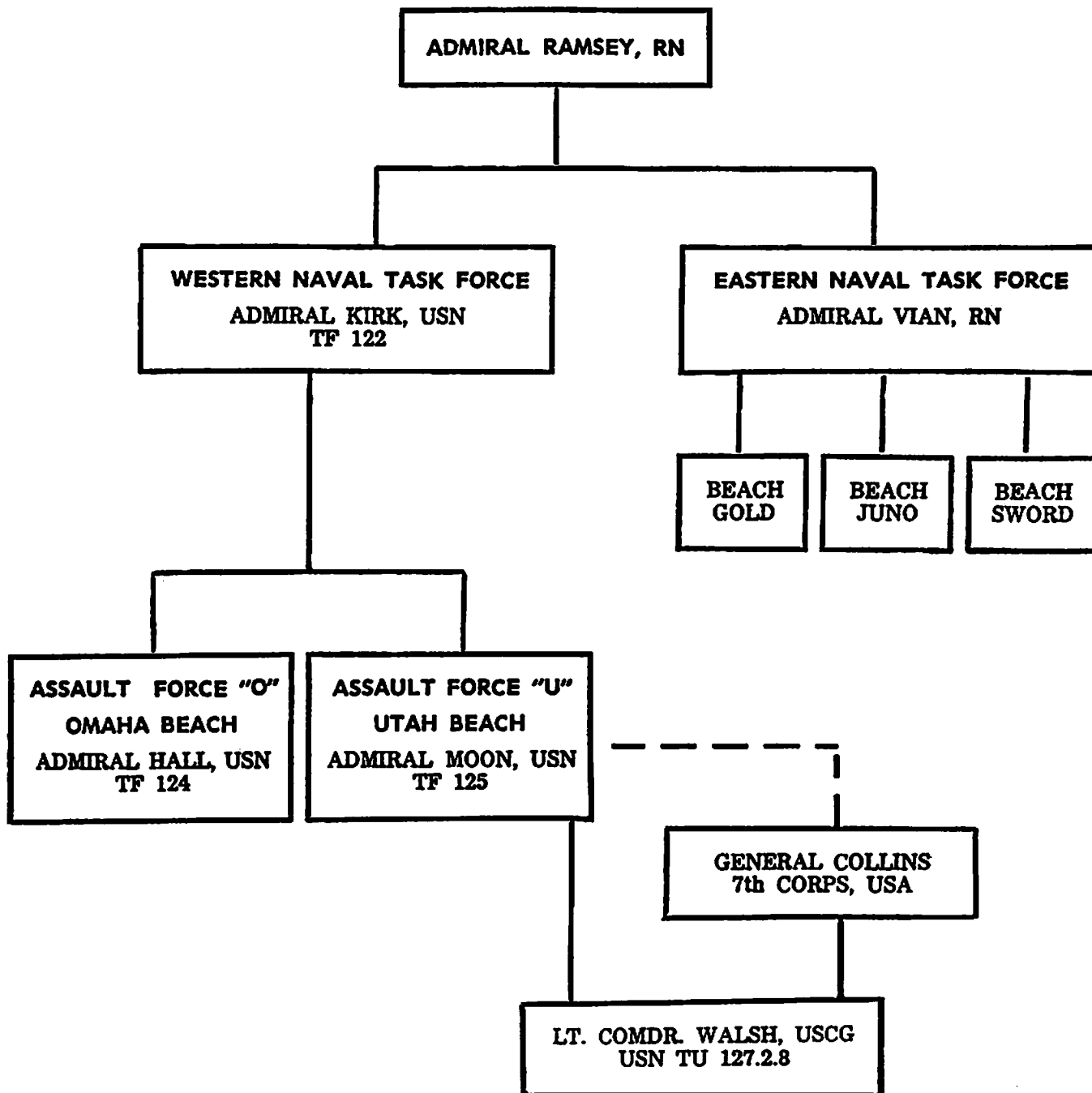
As for Task Unit 127.2.8 we held a memorial service in July 1944 in the Church at St. Mere Eglise in memory of our dead and to express our thanks for those that were privileged to survive.

WALSH'S UNIT – NORMANDY

INVASION OF NORMANDY — 6 JUNE 1944

OPERATION OVERLORD — PHASE NEPTUNE

CHAIN OF COMMAND



Attack Transport USS Bayfield, flagship of Force "U", was manned by Coast Guard. Under command of Captain Lyndon Spencer, USCG, landed the First Wave on Beach Utah at 0630 June 6, 1944, led by General Theodore Roosevelt, Deputy Commander of the 4th Division, USA.

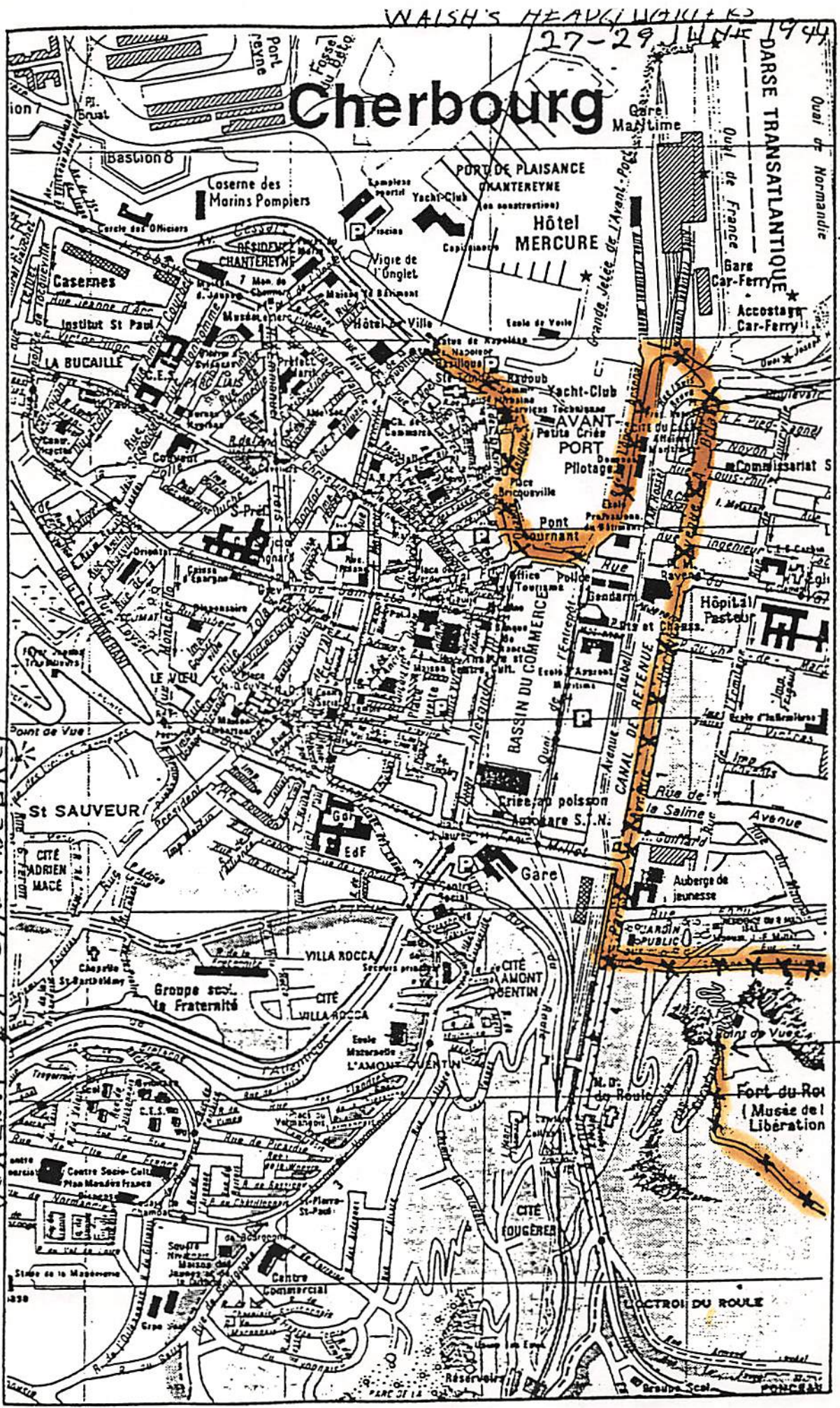
TU 127.2.8 was under Force "U" until landing over Beach Utah; then came under 7th Corps.

After Cherbourg was captured TU 127.2.8 was under Admiral John Wilkes, USN, Commander Navy Bases, France (also known as "Flag West").

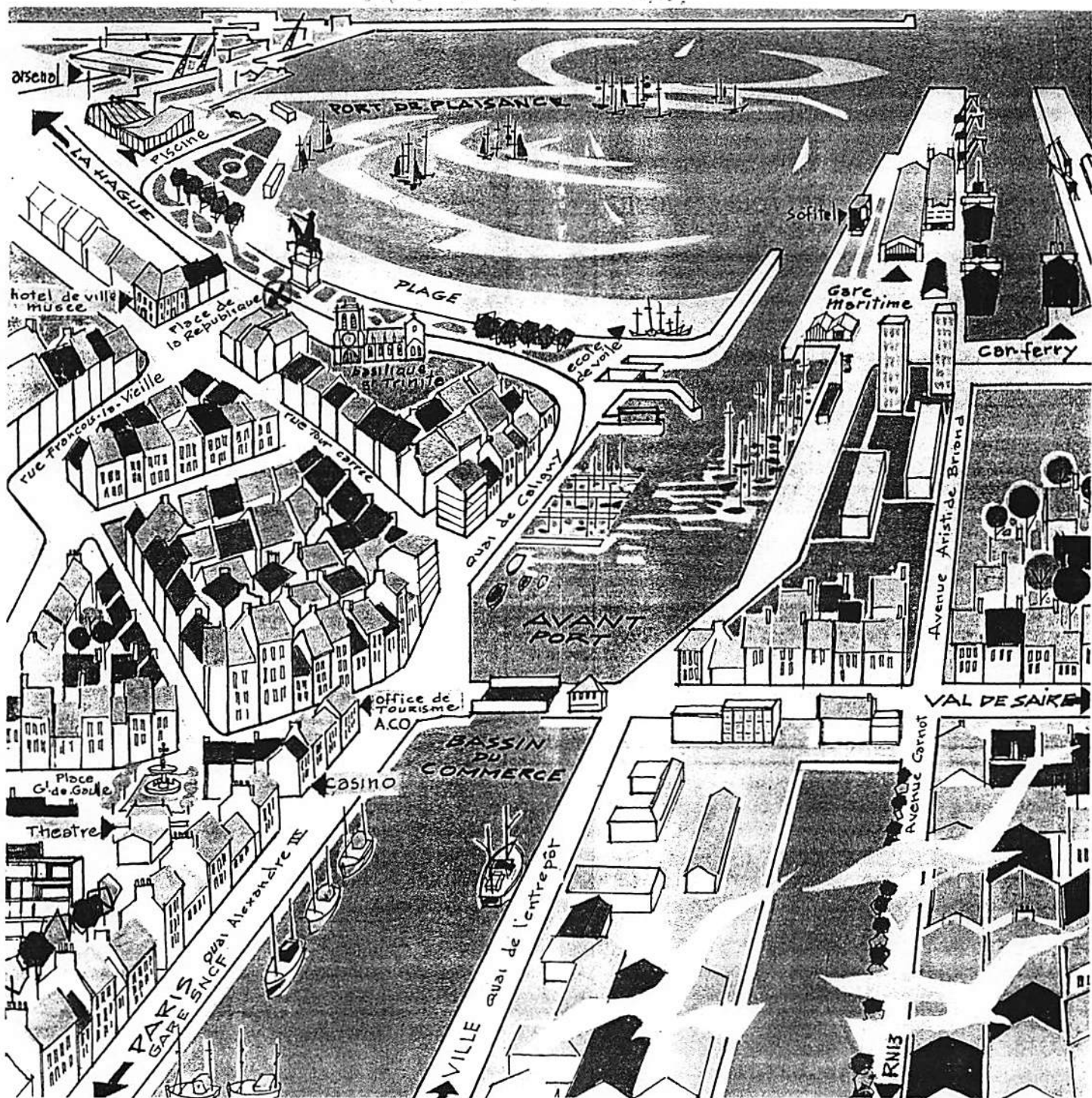
OFFICE DE TOURISME DE CHERBOURG

et du Nord Cotentin - 2 Quai Alexandre III - Tel: 33.43.52.02

WALSH IN CHERBOURG



WALSH IN CHERBOURG 6/26-6/29/44



Commander Quentin R. Walsh, USCG was the Senior United States Navy Officer in Cherbourg France from 26 June to 29 June 1944. His Place de la République headquarters is marked by an "X".

Diploma of Citizen of Honor of Utah Beach

Awarded to Quentin R. Walsh

In testimony of warm friendship and gratitude,
from The Inhabitants of Sainte-Marie du-Mont Utah Beach

The Mayor Sainte Marie du Mont

Michel de Vallavielle

Diplôme

de Citoyen d'Honneur d'Utah-Beach



décerné à M. Luther Wolf
en témoignage de chaleureuse amitié et reconnaissance, par les habitants
de Sainte-Marie-du-Mont - Utah-Beach.

Le Maire de Sainte-Marie-du-Mont

A. Wallum



Comdr. Walsh at Cherbourg



(Official U. S. C. G. Photo)

Comdr. Quentin R. Walsh, U. S. C. G., of Groton, left, points out harbor installations at Cherbourg to Capt. A. C. Richmond, senior coast guard officer in London and formerly basketball coach at the Coast Guard academy, after he led a small naval reconnaissance party from the water side of Cherbourg before its capture. Commander Walsh with a Seabee lieutenant caused the surrender of three forts at Cherbourg, capturing 400 Nazis and releasing 50 American paratroopers. He is now operations officer at Cherbourg. Captain Richmond was basketball coach at the academy in 1926-27-28.

From New London Day - Sept. 1944

After forty-eight years we have another D-D Anniversary. Time has not dimmed our memory of the biggest amphibious operation in history and one of the decisive battles of the world. I recall the deeds of bravery and heroism while remembering the sacrifices made by the living and the dead. Proud of our victories, we should always remember the bitterness and sorrow that they cost.

In September 1943 I was ordered to the Planning and Logistic Section on the staff of Admiral Stark, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe with headquarters in Grosvenor Square, London, England.

Here I was privileged to participate in the planning of the Normandy invasion - Code name - "Operation Overlord; Phase Neptune."

We had some little known facts that made the invasion successful.

They were Ultra, "Fortitude", the weather, the poem Chanson d'Automne by Paul Verlaine, and the "Transportation Plan".

Ultra - This was the code name assigned to the achievement of breaking the German military code by the British. Very few people knew this secret. The fact that the German code had been broken was not divulged to the public until 1957.

"Fortitude" - This was the cover and deceptive operation to conceal the secrets of Operation Overlord, Phase Neptune. We built a base near Dover, England on the English Channel opposite Pas de Calaise, where we put rubber boats, rubber planes, and troops, in addition to heavy radio traffic in the area, to make the Germans think we were going to invade the Pas de Calaise area instead of Normandy. General Patton appeared in the area to add to the deception.

This plan was most successful. The Germans thought Normandy was a feint. They kept troops in the Pas de Calaise area for about six weeks after D-Day, during which time German reinforcements were badly needed in Normandy.

The Weather - Ultra allowed us to read the German weather reports in addition to our own. This allowed us to predict seventy-two hours of clear weather in Normandy on 6 June. The German weather reports, being limited in scope, predicted bad weather and decided our invasion could not take place the first week of June. They cancelled E-Boat patrols and air reconnaissance. General Rommel went to Germany. The generals in command of troops in Normandy were directed to a war game study in Rennes, about eighty miles from the beaches.

During the planning we knew we had to invade Normandy in June and not later than about the middle of July because of the inclement weather that prevails in the English Channel the rest of the year.

Paul Verlaine's Poem - Chanson d'Automne, played an important part in the invasion. The first couplet of the poem, "The long sobbings of the violins of autumn", the alert message, was broadcast several times by the British on June 1, 1944 to the French underground as an intelligence message that the invasion of Normandy was imminent. German intelligence was aware this message was a warning of possible military action by the allies. However, this couplet had been broadcast several times in May 1944 and each time the Germans alerted their forces, but nothing happened. As a result, they took no action on June 1. However, the action message, the second couplet of Chanson d'Automne "wound my heart with monotonous languor" had never been broadcast before. It was intercepted by the Germans on June 5, after repeated transmissions. But the Germans in the Cotentin Peninsula, Normandy, where we landed on D-Day, took no action even though they alerted their forces around Pas de Calaise. Why they failed to alert the Cotentin remains a mystery to this day. It changed the course of history.

The Transportation Plan - This was used to bomb railroads, rail junctions, roads, bridges, and key towns and cities weeks before the invasion. We know it was successful. It prevented the Germans from expeditiously bringing up reinforcements to the beaches from the interior of Normandy, and Brittany, after our initial landings.

It also killed thousands of French civilians.

General Eisenhower had two groups of three days each to decide the invasion date. They were 5,6,7 June and 18,19,20 June.

We had to have moonlight for the paratroopers to identify their targets.

We had to have darkness for the initial landing forces to approach Normandy.

We had to have daylight for the actual landing on the beaches.

The rise and fall of the tide was about 22 feet.

Daylight came about 4:00 A.M.; sunrise about 5:00 A.M.

The Navy wanted to land at low water so we could clear mines and obstacles on the beaches.

The Army wanted to land at high water so troops would not be too long exposed to enemy fire on the beaches.

As I recall, we compromised.

We planned to land about three hours after low tide and about one hour after sunrise.

And how lucky we were that General Eisenhower selected 6 June. If he had not decided on this date we would have had to wait two weeks to get the same conditions again as for 6 June. This would have put the invasion date on June 20. On 19 to 24 June we had the worst storm in Normandy in 40 years. It would have been a disaster.

The planning for Normandy was completed about the end of January 1944.

I was ordered to the big U.S. Navy Base at Roseneath, Scotland to organize, train and command a U.S. Navy reconnaissance unit that was to enter captured Normandy ports with the Army in order to determine the condition of the port, to find the mine fields, and establish a Navy Headquarters. My Task Unit was designated 127.2.8 and landed on Beach Utah attached to the 7th Corps, USA. Subsequently it was in action in Normandy and Brittany.

I have enclosed a Chain of Command diagram which reflects "Operation Overlord - Phase Neptune" on 6 June 1944.

During the planning stage I was cleared by British and the American Intelligence. This made me a Bigot which allowed me access to the details of Operation Overlord, Phase Neptune. This required frequent meetings at Norfolk House, St. James Square, where Cossac and later Shaef was located.

General Sir Frederick Morgan, one of the British planners for Neptune stated the invasion was to be a close run thing, a damned close run thing --the closest run thing you will ever see in your life.

And it was!

Quentin R. Walsh
Captain USCG (Ret)



SPRING 1989 - Cherbourg, France

Quentin visits Fort Du Homet which surrendered to him 27 June 1944. He was the first and only American allowed by the French Navy to visit this Fort since it became a Navy Base.

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May, 1944

United States Navy Task Unit 127.2.8

In October 1943 I was assigned to the Planning and Logistic Section on the Staff of Admiral Stark, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe at U.S. Navy Headquarters, Grosvenor Square, London, England.

Later, I was Chief Staff Officer to Commander Advanced Bases.

Subsequently, I was designated Commanding Officer of U.S. Navy Task Unit 127.2.8 for the invasion of Normandy.

I was awarded the Navy Cross by the Secretary of the Navy for the successful accomplishments of the Unit at Cherbourg.

The history of this Task Unit is from the date it was formed in Scotland, April 1944, until its final assignment to enter LeHavre, France in September 1944.

Attached to the 7th Corps, U.S. Army, it landed over Beach Utah and fought at Cherbourg with the 79th Division, U.S. Army.

I planned, organized, trained and commanded this force, which was the first U.S. Navy outfit to enter Cherbourg.

The name of the game in Normandy was to isolate, capture and operate Cherbourg to provide logistic support for our combat forces in Normandy which had landed over the beaches.

A perusal of this history reflects the successful achievement of all missions assigned by the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army.


Captain Quentin R. Walsh

U.S. Coast Guard Retired

My Three Important Contributions to the Invasion of Normandy.

1. US Navy Task Unit 127.2.8
2. Capture of German Mine Fields, Cherbourg
3. Capture of Fort DuHomet

1. US Navy Task Unit 127.2.8

In order to determine the condition of the captured ports in Normandy after the invasion, I conceived the idea the US Navy should send in its own reconnaissance party from shore side attached to the Army unit capturing the port. This would ensure an on-sight inspection to be made with subsequent reports to be made via the Navy Chain of Command so plans could be made for clearance and operation of the port. Capt. Norman Ives approved my recommendation and forwarded it via the chain of command. It was approved. Lt. Bannister was assigned initially to command the unit. Subsequently, Ives thought I should command it because I was familiar with the details of Cherbourg and realized what the Navy had to do in the port to ensure logistic support for the US Army on the Cotentin Peninsula of Normandy. Accordingly, I planned, organized, trained and commanded US Navy Task Unit 127.2.8.

2. German Mine Fields, Cherbourg Harbor

We plotted about ninety-eight mines in the harbor. Information on their location was obtained from German prisoners, slave laborers, and Free French. I did the plotting. Lt. Robert Herman and Lt. George LaVallee did the interrogating. The chart showing the location of the mines was then sailed out to the British mine sweeps off the port. The small sailboat was used by Bannister and LaVallee because of the types of mines noted. This method of delivery was used; otherwise we would have had to send the information back to the beaches and then by boat to the mine sweepers to ensure delivery. We saved anywhere from a day or two by the direct delivery to the mine sweepers.

3. The Capture of Fort duHomet

I negotiated the surrender of the fort in the interest of saving time. I could have notified the troops in Cherbourg that the fort was still holding out but this would have consumed precious hours and we wanted to get the harbor cleared and opened.

The German officer in command wanted safe conduct granted to him and his troops to the nearest German lines. I brushed this aside; told him it was unconditioned surrender or we would arrange for the Army Units in Cherbourg to attack the fort.

(As a matter of information, Fort duHomet was not the last fort in Cherbourg to surrender. Fort Central, located on the Digue in the center of the harbor did not surrender until 28 June 1944, and then only after it had been shelled and bombed for about two days.)

Tour of Duty of Captain Quentin P. Walsh, USCG
from July 1943 to October 1943 in the British Isles
and France.

A Unique Assignment

A Unique Assignment

As a follow-up on the Admiral Chalker Mission to England, Commander A. C. Richmond (later Commandant) was designated by Admiral Waesche to head-up a group of Coast Guard officers to establish Coast Guard Hearing Units in England to handle problems concerning U.S. ships and personnel in U.K. ports. I was one of four officers selected for this assignment by Richmond.

I was assigned to Gourack, Scotland on the River Clyde, serving there from about July 7, 1943 to the middle of September when I was ordered to the Planning and Logistics Section on the Staff of Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Europe, in London, to satisfy the request of Admiral Stark who had asked Richmond to assign a Coast Guard officer to his staff to deal with matters relative to the future ports to be captured on the Continent during the invasion. These were known as "Advanced Bases." I reported to Admiral Patrick Flanigan, Chief of Staff to Stark, then posted under Captain Neils Dietrich (later Admiral Detrich, USN) who headed-up the Planning and Logistics Section. Captain Norman Ives, USN, was designated "Commander Advanced Bases" (ports contemplated for capture after the invasion). I was Ives' Chief Staff Officer responsible for formulating plans for the clearance, occupation and operation of the captured French ports.

I was given the highest security clearance which was "BIGOT A" for operation Overlord, Phase Neptune. This was a special procedure instituted for the security protection of documents and discussions that revealed the time and place of the invasion. Only bigots could see documents or attend conferences dealing with Operation Overlord Plan.

The Planning and Logistics Section was charged with establishing U.S. Navy Bases in England and Scotland, preparing the training facilities to be employed by the Navy and making plans to support the naval operating plans for the invasion.

I was assigned to various projects which included Mulberry A (U.S. artificial port) Pluto (pipe line under the ocean), the organization of far side ports; the division of responsibility between our Army and Navy in far side ports, and the determination of the cargo capacity of ports in Northwest Europe. This required a study of all ports from Bordeaux to Holland.

While assigned as Chief Staff Officer to Commander Advanced Bases, I wrote the plan for the occupation, clearance and operation of Cherbourg. This included the details of operation and protection of the port against limpet mines. This plan was completed about February 1944. It was later modified for employment at LeHavre and other captured ports.

I conceived the idea of bringing U.S. Navy units from the United States and putting them at Base 2, Scotland, to satisfy the possibility of Plan "Rankin Case C" and also to operate the French ports when captured. Many wanted to move contingents already operating bases and performing various duties in England over to the captured ports in Normandy as the operation demanded. I was against this idea because we would have had to use the bases in England to keep the invasion going, rapid transportation might pose problems and fail altogether, and the units might be lost enroute. Ives and Admiral Flanigan approved the idea over much opposition. Accordingly, the Drew Units consisting of approximately 1,200 men were brought over from the U.S. in January 1944 and sent to Base 2, Scotland for continued training and immediate availability if required.

Commander A. L. Stanford, Lt.Col. Scott and I were among a small group of U.S. Army and Navy officers assigned to determine initially the cargo capacity of Mulberry A. It was essential that at least 8,000 tons of cargo per day be landed in Normandy. This study lasted several days. It was determined the cargo capacity of Mulberry A was feasible. A written report confirmed our conclusions. At the time of making this study, all officers had to sign a ledger of their participation. As a result,

as a security measure, no one informed on Mulberry A could leave the area of Scotland or England until after the invasion. After the assignment of Captain Clark to take command of the Mulberry A project, I no longer was involved with it.

Another of my assignments was laying out the anchorages and berths in Cherbourg harbor. It was determined that at least twelve large cargo ships had to be accommodated simultaneously in Cherbourg to support the operation. Results were successful. Cherbourg eventually handled more cargo while being operated by our Navy than it ever did before.

I finished writing the plan for Cherbourg in January 1944. It was approved by the chain of command by April 1944. I also wrote the plans for LeMavre, Brest, Quiberon Bay, St.Malo, and Granville; also, the billet structure and plan for training the Navy reconnaissance unit for Cherbourg.

The purpose of invading the Cotentin Peninsula, Normandy, was to isolate and capture Cherbourg. We had to have a deep water port for men and supplies to sustain the invasion forces after the initial landings over the beaches. There was never any doubt expressed about getting ashore on D-day. The problem was to throw back the German counter attacks, expected anywhere from a week to three weeks, while we were capturing and clearing Cherbourg and then preparing to break out of the Cotentin Peninsula.

The jewel of the game was Cherbourg. We had to capture the port, overcome any damages inflicted by the Germans, and get it into operating condition.

As I recall, the initial plans called for the capture of Cherbourg on D+6 but these had to be modified as I shall relate subsequently.

The U.S.Navy was to be responsible for clearing and operating Cherbourg. This required our Navy to obtain the earliest information on the condition of the harbor, the location of mine fields, block ships, etc.

In order for our Navy to get the necessary information as soon as possible on the condition of the port, I conceived the idea that our Navy should have its own reconnaissance party enter Cherbourg with the U.S.Army forces designated to capture it.

This idea was approved by our Navy chain of command. Lt. Roger Bennister, USNR, was designated to command the unit. Accordingly, he was ordered to start training with the Royal Marine Commandos about January 1944 in anticipation of carrying out his duties. However, about March 1944, Captain Norman Ives thought I should command the reconnaissance party because I was well informed on Cherbourg and realized what had to be done as soon as possible to satisfy the logistic demands which were to be made on the part. Ives recommended that I command the reconnaissance party to Admiral John Wilkes and Admiral Alan Kirk. They approved. I was then ordered to duty under USN Task Force 122 (Kirk and Wilkes).

Prior to leaving London, I reported to Admiral Flanigan and discussed with him my assignment to the reconnaissance party. He requested I call on him for any assistance I might need. I met also with Captain Dietrich and Admiral John Wilkes, who was to be in command of all U.S. Naval forces ashore in Normandy with his headquarters at Cherbourg. It must be understood that Admiral Stark had command of the U.S. Navy bases in England and Scotland and was responsible for logistically supporting the units under Admiral Kirk. It was sort of a gray area where their authority commenced and terminated but everything seemed to work in a satisfactory manner.

I arrived Base 2, Scotland (Rosneath) in April 1944 to organize and train the reconnaissance party.

I informed the Commanding Officer of the base that I desired three nissen huts for quarters, about fifty-five men, four motorcycles, two 2½ ton trucks, 9 jeeps, rifles, pistols, bazookas, hand grenades, and a communication truck. I informed him I was assigned a special mission concerning the invasion but I could not give him any details as to my destination or objectives because he was not "Bighted." He and his executive officer looked at me as if I had come off the moon. They diplomatically refused my request unless they were informed of the purpose of my request. Accordingly, I called Admiral Flanigan in London. I don't know what he told the Commanding Officer, but I received cooperation immediately; but even then I had to insist on nine brand new

fully equipped jeeps and trucks instead of a miscellaneous group that had been driven for months with worn tires, no axes, and no jerry cans. Eventually I did get everything I needed.

About 300 men, the majority from Drew Units, responded to my request for volunteers for a special mission. I was informed before leaving London to keep my personal and equipment to a minimum because of lift restriction. This is why only 55 men were selected. I selected Lt. Commander Jack Gurley, a former Marine, as my executive officer; also, Lt. George LaVallee of French descent as my communications officer. (This man subsequently proved to be invaluable.) Gurley, LaVallee and I selected the remainder of the group from the 300 volunteers. All could drive jeeps and trucks. All had basic training in the use of firearms. Some were divers, bomb disposal men, radio operators, and intelligence specialists. Many could talk French. A few spoke German. All eventually proved capable of doing any duty to which they were assigned in addition to their specialties.

All the men were moved into the three nissen huts I had requisitioned. The training schedule was set from 0500 to 1000 daily, seven days per week. We ran a mile and had calisthenics before breakfast. After the evening meal we looked at military movies dealing with bomb disposal, booby traps, reconnaissance duties, camouflage, house to house fighting, etc.

My idea was to make the training so tough and arduous that combat would seem easy by comparison. Base 2 had the facilities used for the training of troops for the Dieppe raid. The obstacle courses were tough and demanding. A small village of canvas and wood houses was near by for house to house fighting tactics. Pistol, rifle, bazooka, and hand grenade ranges were available. They were all used.

I contacted the Third U.S. Army Headquarters. They sent Col. Stribler, 28th Division, 3rd Army, with about 5 officers and 7 men to train the reconnaissance party in the military aspect of reconnaissance, map reading, house to house fighting, use of bazookas, gas warfare, hand grenades, rough and tumble fighting. We really had

the combat infantry man's training except for the live ammunition. The training was carried out in the hills around Base 2 and Loch Lomond. The map reading and tactical problems performed at night in the driving rain leaves vivid memories.

To ensure readiness, we bivouacked at Loch Lomond three times. The first inspection revealed about twenty per cent deficiencies. The second was better. The third was excellent. We were ready to go. This included our communication truck gear which had four antenna masts about forty feet high when fully assembled.

Strange as it may appear, some of U.S.Navy units landed over the beaches without water in their storage batteries for their signal equipment. Later, at Cherbourg, the harbor control signal unit assigned to control ships entering and leaving the port, and to break off convoys to and from the beaches, did not have their halyards for flag hoist nor carbons for their signal lights. Our inspections at Loch Lomond prevented these derelictions.

On 23 May 1944 my command departed Base 2, Scotland. We arrived in the Southampton area 25 May and were assigned to bivouac in Area B approximately six miles west of Southampton. Locally it was known as Camp Cadnam.

On 26 May I reported to a Naval Headquarters, Plymouth, England for final orders from Admiral John Wilkes and Admiral Moon. Admiral Moon was to control Beach Utah. Admiral Wilkes was to be Flag West, Normandy. Task Unit No. 127.2.8 was assigned to my command.

On 28 May I reported to General Lawton J. Collins, 7th Corps, Commander U.S. Army. His objective was to capture Cherbourg. I informed Collins that orders from the Navy directed me to land on D-Day over Beach Utah. Then I was to enter Cherbourg as early as possible with the division capturing the port in order to determine the damage, the location of mine fields, and to establish a U.S.Navy Headquarters to expedite the opening of the port. Upon that statement, the General directed a staff member to pull aside a black curtain which showed the disposition of all German divisions in the areas of Pas de Calais, Normandy and Brittany. Collins then stated

that more German divisions had been deployed recently in Normandy and instead of capturing Cherbourg about D+6, he did not plan to take it until about D+20. He then revised my orders to land over Beach Utah on D+2 to D+4, contingent on the priority assigned to my lift. He then ordered me to report to 7th Corps Headquarters with my command after leaving the Utah Beach area.

He also directed that my command carry no written orders nor operational plans, nor cameras. No war diary was to be kept. In case of capture we were to give only name, rank, and serial number. However, each man was allowed to carry a very detailed map made out of silk which had already been provided for use in case of capture and subsequent escape. This map could be folded into a very small packet and secreted on the body. Most of my command carried their's inside their socks adjacent to the ankle. (I am going to have this map framed and presented to the Academy Museum.)

General Collins then asked me to explain the objective of 250 Royal Marine Commandos which were attached to my command at the request of the Royal Navy. I explained they were under my administrative command but were to be under his operational control after landing. (Refer to the Villa Maurice affair which follows.)

While in camp near Southampton all vehicles were water proofed, supplies and equipment again checked. We departed Camp Cadman area on 4 June for the marshalling area nearer to the waterfront. Here our vehicles were impounded by personnel in charge while all personnel proceeded with equipment to temporary tent shelter surrounded by barbed wire. Messing facilities, movies, stage plays and church services were provided in tents. Church services were conducted around the clock. It was my observation there were no atheists getting ready for Normandy.

It was in the marshalling area that I briefed my command for the first time on their mission and objectives. The maps of Normandy and Cherbourg charts were opened for the first time.

In addition, I opened a rubber model of Cherbourg which was made so it could be kept in a locked box about five feet long, four feet wide and three inches thick. I had this model made before I left London. It was carried to Base 2 and kept in a secure place while there. This model proved invaluable for the briefing sessions. Later on, if I saw a church steeple or canal or railroad, I oriented myself immediately to my location as a result of memorizing this model. It was also invaluable to Commodore Barton, Commodore Sullivan, Admiral Wilkes, Captain Ives and Captain Quimby, when they had to carry-out their duties.

(This model was in Wilkes' Headquarters when I left Cherbourg for St.Malo in August 1944. Its final disposition is unknown to me.)

While in the marshaling area, we shifted into wax impregnated outer garments. Our shoes, socks, jackets, trousers, shirts, gloves, etc. were all waxed for defense against possible gas attack. We were in these clothes until after the capture of Cherbourg. We got soaking wet going over the beach. As a result, it was like walking around in a steam bath all day when the weather was quite warm but like walking around with your clothes full of ice at night. As I recall, all personnel that landed before D+20 carried gas masks. During the planning sessions in London, they discussed the possibility of seventy percent casualties if the Germans used gas.

About 2:00 a.m. on 8 June, I was summonsed by loud speaker to pick-up my unit's departure orders. I walked into the building and who the hell was sitting there but Captain John Petrosky, U.S. Army Air Corps, from New London, Connecticut. We had played baseball on the same team at Bulkeley High School. After a few minutes of reminiscing, he handed me my lift orders and I was on my way to Normandy.

We proceeded to the loading area, where we were marshaled alongside the Liberty-ship, James A. Farrell. Then we mustered and each man was checked off by name and serial number. Then we boarded the ship with 250 Royal Marine Commandos, U.S. Paratroopers with field guns, and an assortment of Army personnel and equipment. There must have been at least 500 men on the ship. We ate K-rations enroute.

I look back nostalgically on that roll call and muster. The morale and esprit de corps was excellent. The Red Cross ladies gave us tons of doughnuts and gallons of coffee. We joked and talked as if we were going on a picnic. It never occurred to any of us that some of us might not be coming back. Out of fifty-five men, two officers did not come back. Ten men were wounded; four of the badly wounded were returned early to England. Lt. Comdr. Jack Curley left a wife and five children. Lt. Blue left a wife and three month old child which he had never seen.

We arrived off Beach Utah 9 June near St. Martin de Varreville and commenced the off-loading immediately of vehicles and men. We were all ashore by June 10th. We had trouble getting the vehicles ashore via LCI's. The landing craft, which discharged early on the beaches, caused deep holes in the sand when they reversed their engine to back off. The LCI's that came in later would ground out on the rim of these deep holes. As a result, vehicles proceeding off the ramp were dumped in the deep hole. Several of jeeps and trucks drowned out. About half the men stayed with me on the beach to get the drowned out jeeps ashore at low water. The rest proceeded inland to an area near St. Marie du Mont.

Those of us who remained on Beach Utah got orders that night to dig in and prepare for German shelling and counter attack, perhaps by paratroopers. Curley and I took turns sleeping in the same fox hole. It was very cold. We were soaking wet. The wax impregnated clothing only added to the misery because it kept our under garments from drying out. To the north the sky was illuminated by a big conflagration which we learned later was the burning town of Montebourg.

My men near St. Marie du Mont with the 250 Royal Commandos also dug in but were hit with an air attack in this area. Anti-personnel bombs were dropped on them. The Commandos suffered over one hundred casualties. They had to get some replacements from England. Four of my men were badly wounded. The pellets from the anti-personnel bombs went right through jeep rims as if made of butter.

The unit finally reassembled near St. Marie du Mont. Equipment and supplies were checked. We had found and cannibalized some spare parts from jeeps from the wrecked Army gliders which had suffered heavy casualties in landing.

I reported to Colonel King, 7th Corps Headquarters, near St. Mere Eglise on 15 June. He offered me every assistance available to carry-out my mission. (Col. King was later killed near St. Mere Eglise.)

The 7th Corps at this time was composed of the 4th Division on the right flank; the 79th was in the center; the 9th Division was on the left. The 90th backed up line.

I informed Col. King that I would remain attached to 7th Corps while we approached Cherbourg but would join up with the first division to enter Cherbourg. He approved this plan.

As a result, I frequently contacted the headquarters of the 4th, 9th and 79th while we proceeded north towards Cherbourg via Montbourg and Valognes. This is when I again met General Theodore Roosevelt, Deputy Commander of the 4th Division, whom I got to know when I was navigator of the Joseph Dickman and he was a colonel in command of the 26th infantry, 1st Division, during the Onslow Bay Maneuvers of June 1944.

On 18 June the big storm hit the Cotentin Peninsula. The wind was of gale force. The rain came down in torrents. The dirt roads, turned into dust by hundreds of vehicles, turned to mud inches deep. The bocage country of Normandy, with its sunken roads and lanes, was a helluva place to fight a war.

The rains and wind would have made a saint uncomfortable. We had four men to a jeep, which were combat loaded at all times, which required we ride with the tops and windshields down. Wire cutting hooks were on the front of each vehicle which carried four sand bags on the floor as protection against land mines. Each man carried a knapsack with a blanket and a half of a pup tent, with K-rations. He was equipped with a gas mask, trench shovel, dagger, hand grenades, helmet, bandoleers and rifle. Most of the officers carried Thompsons sub-machine gun. Each had a .45 automatic. Most of the men carried Garands. A few carried carbines. Each jeep carried a camouflage net, an axe, shovel, jerry can and spare tire with tools. Four men in a jeep with all their gear left little room. We slept on the ground, wrapped in our blanket, on the top of the tent half until it

rained. Some men then pitched the pup tents. Most of us just tried to sleep in the jeep. During the big storm's heavy rain, the pup tents were useless. The jeeps filled with water because the sand bags on the floors prevented drainage. We had to bail them out. As my British friends remarked, "It was no bloody picnic." The two 3¹/₂ ton trucks and communication truck were kept to the rear. The trucks carried a complete change of clothing and shoes for each man, but we never got to change clothes until after several days in Cherbourg.

The storm showed the precarious situation we were in. We heard Mulberry A was demolished, that the beaches were piled high with wreckage. 7th Corps and the three division headquarters emphasized we had to capture Cherbourg in a hurry. They ran short of ammunition. We were still around Montebourg, about fifteen miles from the port. Dukws were used to ferry ammunition directly from the beaches to the front line but originally they were to have only about a five mile complete turnaround from the beaches.

On 22 June, I took a party of twenty-one men north of Montebourg to a small hamlet called Delasse to await the outcome of a surrender ultimatum which General Collins had delivered to Cherbourg. The Germans were to surrender at noon June 22nd. They refused. We were bivouaced in a small field near a stone farm house, a short distance east of the main road to Cherbourg. German shells were passing south over our heads; American shells were going north into Cherbourg. While having breakfast on 23 June, American planes repeatedly strafed the area, which was full of German stragglers. We scattered. I ran alongside the house and threw myself to the ground around the corner but slammed into a dog house where I found a hen's nest with about eight eggs. We had not seen a fresh egg in months. After the planes left, we hard boiled the eggs. Each man got a small portion. It was small but tasted good. That afternoon we dropped back to Montebourg. I reported to 7th Corps that American planes had strafed us well behind the American lines. They brushed it off with the statement that they must have been German planes with American markings.

Montebourg had been destroyed by fire. The statue of Joan of Arc in the town square appeared a dusty red from the heat. Sometime in July, Capt. A. C. Richmond (later

Commandant of the Coast Guard) Senior Coast Guard Officer in Europe, paid a visit to Cherbourg. I took him to Montebourg where he was photographed with the Joan of Arc statue as a background.

It was about 24 June that Richard M. Boucher, (209-09-94) SM 3/c, USNR, my jeep driver, and Edward Perry (815-01-46) Y2/c, USNR, my yeoman, were driving with me to a division headquarters in the area around Valogne when we came under enemy fire near American infantry dug in along the road. We hit the ditch with them. In talking to a major, I learned that they crossed the channel on the Coast Guard manned Joseph Dickman. They knew Commander Bernard Scalan, who was on the Dickman. They were high in their praises for the treatment they received while aboard that ship. (It's a small world.)

It was about 25 June that I conferred with General Theodore Roosevelt, Deputy Commander of the 4th Division. Cherbourg is in a depression formed by Cape de la Hague as a western horn and Cape Barfleur as the eastern horn. General Roosevelt concluded the 79th Division would enter Cherbourg while the 4th Division cleared the resistance in the eastern horn, while the 9th Division did the same to the west. With this information, I took Lieut. George LaValee (235690) USNR and four men and reconnoitered well into the 79th Division area, going almost to Fort du Roule. LaValee was interested in locating his communication truck to establish communication with the beaches.

At 0600 26 June, Perry, Boucher and I approached Cherbourg via Rt.13 but found it blocked by shell holes and debris. We cut east of the main road and proceeded via open fields to Fort du Roule. This heavily fortified strong point had just been captured by one company of American infantry. When we arrived, the Company Commander had just been killed by a stray bullet in the throat. The officers and men were disconsolate. They insisted I have a drink with them in one of the strong points which had been set-up as a command post. It did not take much arm twisting. I enjoyed that slug of whiskey.

While at this command post, I learned that Company G, 314th Infantry, 79th Division was departing shortly to carry rifle grenades to a platoon which had been stopped by the

Germans near Gare Maritime. Perry, Boucher and I moved out with Company G to the east of DuRoule to follow a country lane which brought us back to the bottom of the hill on which the strong point was located. German eighty-eights were firing into Cherbourg from caves made in the hill on which Fort du Roule stood even though satchel charges were being lowered from the top to blow off the muzzles. The country lane led into Rue de Paris which was the main road out of Cherbourg to the south.

While traversing the country lane, we witnessed German prisoners removing their own dead. It was two men to a body, one on each foot. If the dead man fell on his back, he was dragged off on his back. If he fell face-down, he was dragged off face-down. I wondered at the time what the vaunted Wehrmacht would have thought about this.

It was about 1100 when we turned right on Rue de Paris to proceed towards the waterfront. This is where the street fighting took place until about 8:00 p.m. that night. The railroad yard to the left was an inferno of combat. The machine guns never stopped. American jeeps with red cross markings were going in both directions. Those to the south generally had a wounded man beside the driver while one stretcher case was across the hood and another one athwart up behind the driver. Dead and wounded from both sides littered the streets. German machine guns were zeroed-in on the intersection of Rue de Paris and the canal bridges which led to the west and main part of the city. German machine guns were placed at sidewalk level in the basements of the buildings fronting on the street. We would capture the upper part of the structure but the Germans had to be dug out of the basements. In the meantime, the German guns in the hill under Fort du Roule, which had not been silenced by the satchel charges, fired into the rear of the American troops.

I heard after Cherbourg was captured, the Germans had about 50,000 men in the port and we had about 3,000 killed and 15,000 wounded taking the place.

Perry, Boucher, and I were the first U.S. Navy personnel to enter Cherbourg. We reached the blazing wrecked waterfront in the eastern section of the port about 1700 26 June 1944. The rest of my command was now near Fort du Roule.

On the evening of 26 June, I sent the following message via our communication center which Lt. LaValee had set-up in the communication truck, just south of Fort du Roule. This gave us contact with the beaches.

CLASS SECRET

FROM: CTU 127.2.8

TO: CTF122CTF127CTU127.2.1

INFO: CO MNAVEU ANCFX PREC OPERATIONAL PPP

D/T 262200

QUAI NORMADIE QUE FRANCE COMPLETELY DEMOLISHED WITH HEAVY DEBRISXORIGINATOR
USE RECONNAISSANCE PARTY X WEST SIDE GARE MARITIME CONDITION FAIR X BLOCXSHIPS
AT ENTRANCE TO DARSE ATLANTIQUE AND AVANT PORT DECOMMERCEXARSENAL BURNING
OBSERVATION INDICATES SEVERE DAMAGEX NOUVELL PLACE PARTLY BLOCKED BUT USABLEX
RECONNAISSANCE RESTRICTED TO EASTERN HALF OF PORT BY SHIPING AND MACHINE GUN
FIRE

TOD

DELVO BY NOIC UTAH JUNE 27

The above indicates that we held the eastern part of the port on 26 June while the Germans held the western section.

My whole command was in Cherbourg by 2000 26 June. We bivouaced in a house at the foot of Rue de Paris on the waterfront. About midnight, I was awakened by the challenge of a sentry outside my window, followed by angry voices. Investigation revealed two American soldiers had intercepted a German soldier dressed in civilian clothes. He carried about a half bushel of women's silk stockings in a sack on his back. He was armed with several knives inside his clothing hanging from his neck by thongs. German naval documents found on his person established his identification. Angry because of the severe casualties suffered that day, the two American soldiers and some of my men wanted to shoot him on the spot. However, I passed the prisoner to the custody of my officer in charge of the guard for safe keeping until he could be turned over to the military police at daylight.

General VonSchlieben, Commander at Cherbourg, and Admiral Hennecke, Naval Commander, surrendered themselves and their staff on 26 June. They refused to order the rest of the Germans to surrender. This is why strong pockets of resistance continued throughout the city and the arsenal area and also why Fort du Homet and Fort Centrale did not surrender.

A captured German officer told me later that the German troops held back the Americans while the German naval personnel, under Hennecke, systematically wrecked and booby-trapped the port, while sowing additional mines in the harbor.

A great disadvantage to the Americans in entering and clearing Cherbourg was the existence of the railroad and two canals which ran north and south through the city from the waterfront. The Germans destroyed the railroad yard. They demolished the canal gates, then blocked the waterways with sunken ships and wrecked derricks which they booby-trapped. It was one helluva mess.

It was the railroad and the canals which divided the port and made it easy to defend, but difficult to capture.

By 27 June our Army silenced most of the remaining German resistance in the western section of the port. Many Germans had retreated into the Naval Arsenal which was to be under the control of the U.S. Navy. The E-boat pens, dry docks, etc. were in the arsenal. The eighty-eights under Fort du Roule had been silenced.

My idea at this time was to do everything possible to get the port open as soon as possible.

Napoleon's statue in Cherbourg is located in a small square called Place Napoleon which faces the harbor. Napoleon has one arm extended toward England which indicated his desire to invade England during the Napoleonic wars. The Germans had constructed an eight foot anti-tank wall along the waterfront. It had a base about five feet wide and a top about two feet wide. Within two or three days after capturing the city, the Army engineers passed the word that the wall was to be blown-up at noon. We took shelter.

It was one helluva explosion. Chunks of concrete fell all over the place.

Within a matter of hours the waterfront was cleared. Harbors were built for landing craft and dukws to offload cargo. It also facilitated the removal of the mines in the harbor.

If you passed Napoleon's monument on your right hand, a street extended west which led to the arsenal. German military and naval headquarters were located on your left as you proceeded to the arsenal entrance.

On 28 June, Task Unit 127.2.8 carried out the following operations and duties in the port:

1. Carried out a water survey of the harbor while the area was still subject to enemy resistance and sniper fire, locating numerous wrecks and obstructions.
2. Installed communications facilities consisting of a radio station, signal station, and harbor entrance control post.
3. Reconnoitered and took over building that eventually became headquarters for Commander, U.S. Navy Advanced Bases, France, the Port Commander, and the Port Director, and their staffs.
4. Reconnoitered and requisitioned garages, officers' billets, barracks storage spaces, and work shops to expedite the occupation and rehabilitation of the port by U.S. Naval Forces.
5. Provided transportation for naval personnel in the form of jeeps and trucks ashore, and waterside transportation in the form of "ducks", requisitioned from the Army.
6. Interrogated prisoners, located, and charted the mine fields in the harbor, and determined the extent of the swept channel in the Grande Rode, which was found to exist approximately 150 meters south of the digues.
7. Reconnoitered and determined the damage done to discharging facilities and wharfs and piers for ships, also the amount of water along side these accommodations. Made an over-all estimate of the damage done to the port and its waterside facilities referring specifically to the damage done to Gare Maritime and naval arsenal

and the waterside facilities in the vicinity of the naval arsenal.

8. Established a first-aid station.
9. Reconnoitered and determined the feasibility of rehabilitating the oil installations in the port or the possibility of constructing new installations for Naval activities at the port.
10. Established temporary naval headquarters, performing all the duties necessary in carrying out the Navy's responsibilities in cooperation with the Army and maintaining liaison with French Navy, the mayor, and other persons in responsible positions declared reliable by intelligence.

Lieut. Jesse Stodghill (222317), USNR, was in charge of the personnel that made the waterside survey. Lieut. LaVallee was in charge of the organization that surveyed the town for billets. Lieut. Herman acted as duty officer at the established headquarters, at Place Napoleon.

On 28 June, Lt. Frank Lauer and I led about fifteen men, armed with Thompson sub-machine guns, grenades, and bazookas into the arsenal. At the arsenal entrance we found about twenty-five American infantry men disarming a group of German prisoners. Here we were joined by an American paratrooper and an American private who informed us there was still strong resistance pockets in the arsenal. Among the Germans being disarmed, we found a German sailor who spoke some English. He had been assigned to the arsenal for three years. We ordered him to be our guide and inform us of booby-traps, mine fields, pill boxes, etc. He assured us there were no booby-traps, but claimed numerous mine fields in the harbor and many Germans left deep in the arsenal who had not surrendered. Over the next two hours we killed several snipers, silenced machine guns, and cleaned out about 200 Germans by using grenades and bazookas against the steel doors of the strong points, which were located about ground level, with sunken steps in a well leading to the entrance. Many prisoners were taken near the power house and the E-boat pens which had been blown-up by detonating piled-up torpedoes. The concrete ceilings of the E-boat pens were about eight feet thick, reinforced with steel rods. The walls were about four feet thick. When detonated, the walls fell out and the ceilings fell in. Several E-boats were burning in their pens.

It is believed Lt. Comdr. Curley was killed near the E-boat pens because Lauer and I heard machine gun fire in the area as we neared Fort du Homet.

The men accompanying Lauer and I had been detached to march prisoners back to the arsenal gate. We continued to assess the damage done to the waterfront. When we surprised an armed German, we took cover as he did. In a moment he came out and surrendered, informing us there were a large number of Germans in a nearby bunker whom he thought would surrender. We let him go to the bunker and the Germans surrendered. There was one German in this group who could talk good English. He informed us there were American paratrooper prisoners in Fort du Homet, a short distance away, but he refused to go to the Fort, claiming the commanding officer was a madman who would shoot any man who surrendered. We put the English speaking German in charge of the group, told them to keep their hands behind their heads on the shortest way to the arsenal gate, warning them American forces were in the area and would shoot them if the prisoner stance was not maintained. Lauer and I then discussed the possibility of entering the Fort under a flag of truce to see if we could get the Germans to surrender. This would certainly be better than assaulting the Fort with American troops, which would delay opening the port. We then proceeded towards the Fort via a foundry which had been blown-up and was burning. Working our way to a position between the foundry and the Fort, we took cover behind a wrecked German truck. Crouching underneath the truck, we waved a white piece of parachute on a stick. Lauer had been wearing the parachute as a scarf. After about a half hour, a soldier came out of the south entrance to the fort, looked around, and returned to the fort. In about fifteen minutes an officer appeared under a white flag. The area between us and the fort had been blown-up by the Germans in an effort to isolate the fort from the main land, but the explosives had formed a deep trench which led from the north side of the fort almost to the dry dock. When the German officer appeared, Lieut. Lauer and I walked to the edge of this trench; the German indicated that we were to go to the north area of the trench to cross it.

We learned later that mines had been set in the trench. Lieut. Lauer and I crossed the trench, were met by the officer who conducted us around the north side of the fort. The German officer conducted us into the fort directly across the parade grounds to a flight of steps on the north side. These steps led up to a second story rampart; thence, through an old battery shelter that had been converted into a room. The German commander was in this room with approximately six other German officers. Through Lieut. Lauer, with very poor German, and a smattering of English that one of the Germans could speak, we informed the German Colonel that we had come to take surrender of the fort and we wanted the American paratroopers turned over to us. The officer refused to surrender, saying that he had instructions to surrender only on orders from his superior officer. He was informed that the senior officer in Cherbourg was in the hands of the U.S. Army. He refused to believe this. He immediately held a conference with the officers present, at which time the English speaking German officer advised us that one of the paratroopers could talk German fluently, and that the commanding officer was going to get this man to act as an interpreter. In about 5 minutes an orderly brought in two Army paratroopers, one was a private and the other was a First Lieut. The First Lieut. had been wounded through the left shoulder and although he had been neatly bandaged, the left side of his uniform was still caked with blood. Using the Private as an interpreter, we again informed the German Commanding Officer of the situation and demanded that he surrender. He still refused to believe the American forces were in control of Cherbourg. We thereupon told him that we would take one of his staff officers into Cherbourg so that he could see for himself that the American forces had captured the town. The Germans immediately held another conference. The Commanding Officer then stated that he would surrender the fort if we would promise safe passage to him and his men to the German line. This we refused to do. He thereupon inquired if we had any other men with us. He was informed that we had 800 men in the vicinity of the fort. Thereupon, the Germans held another conference. Finally the Commanding Officer said that he would surrender if we would separate German Officers from the rest of the prisoners. We told them that was regular routine and that we would do it. The Commanding Officer brought out the bottle of cognac and poured a drink for each of his staff. Lieut. Lauer

and I refused to drink with them. The German Officer proposed some kind of toast, where upon all officers drained their glasses and came to a "Heile Hitler" salute. We told the Commanding Officer we would take him with us and that men would take over the rest of the prisoners. The paratroopers were ordered released and Lieut. Lauer and I started out of the fort with the German Colonel. We got outside the gate when we met a Lieut. Colonel of our Army and a half dozen men. We told the Lieut. Colonel what had transpired and asked him if he would take over the German Colonel. We turned the Colonel over to him. Lieut. Lauer and I then started for the vicinity of the dry dock and on the way down, we were greeted by the paratroopers, 53 of them, who had been prisoners since D-Day. They had been dropped by mistake in Cherbourg. They told us that the Germans had treated them fine and that during the bombardment of Cherbourg, that they had taken them into the fort for protection. They also advised us that the Germans had seen the Navy Reconnaissance Party working their way through the arsenal and several times efforts were made to bring machine guns to bear on us. The first thing the paratroopers asked for was cigarettes. The second thing they asked for was souvenirs. We told them where we had disarmed the last prisoners we had taken. The prisoners had left their pistols, binoculars and field equipment in a large pile. The last we saw of the paratroopers they were on their way to ransack the pile of equipment.

Several days after release of these paratroopers, a Major of the 101st Paratroopers Division called at Navy Headquarters to thank Lieut. Lauer and I for obtaining release of the prisoners.

After turning over the prisoners to the Army, Lieut. Lauer and I completed our reconnaissance and returned to Navy Headquarters which was on the eastern corner of Square Napoleon. About this time, the rest of the Reconnaissance Party had completed their preliminary survey and the results were plotted on a Cherbourg Harbor chart by Lieut. Herman. The following message was sent:

FROM: CTU 127.2.8
TO: CTF 122, CTF 123, CTF 127.2.1
INFO: CTF 129, CTF 127
TEXT

CLASS SECRET
PREC OP
D/T June 28'44

NOUVELE PLACE HEAVILY MINED X BOTH ENTRANCE GRANDE RADE MINED X
ENTRANCE PETITE RADE BLOCKED X DIGUE HOMET AND NORTH SIDE QUAI
HOMET CRATERED X DRYDOCK CAISSON PARTLY BLOWN OTHERWISE DRYDOCK
INTACT X ENTRANCE CHANNEL AND ALL PASSAGES IN ARSENAL BLOCKED X
SOLGLINT EMPTY BUT SCUTTLED AND ONLY APPARENT OBSTRUCTIONS TO DARSE
ATLANTIQUE X TEN FEET OFF QUAI DE FRANCE AT LOW WATER SHOWED DEPTHS
OF SIX FATHOMS NO OBSTRUCTIONS VISIBLE OR FOUND BUT REPORTED MINED X
PRACTICALLY EVERY BUILDING IN ARSENAL HAS BEEN WRECKED AND BURNED OUT X
NAVAL HEADQUARTERS AT PIA CE REPUBLIC X TEMPORARY ARMY HEADQUARTERS FOOT
OF GARE MARITIME:

ENCODED AND DELIVERED BY NOIC UFAH

On the morning of 29 June, Lieut. Jack Lambie, U.S. Navy Intelligence, reported in
at Navy Headquarters with some Dutch boys who claimed they knew where the German mine
fields existed in the Harbor. At approximately 11:00 on the morning of 29 June, Fort Central
surrendered after a bombardment of approximately 14 hours. The following message was sent:

FROM CTU 127.2.8
TO CTU 125
INFO
TEXT

CLASS SECRET
PREC URGENT
D/T 291130

ALL CHERBOURG PORTS SURRENDERED AT ELEVEN FIFTEEN BAKER X
ORIGINATOR CTU 127.2.8

TOD 1219 June 29
RECD BY GYM 9

One of the officers from the fort was brought into Naval Headquarters and he indicated
the exact location of all mine fields in Cherbourg. All entrances to the harbor had been
completely mined but there was a channel south of each dique, approximately 150 meters wide.
An immediate check by the saterside Reconnaissance Party Section confirmed this information.
The mine fields were thereupon drawn upon a chart and given to Lieut. Bannister and Lieut.
LaVallee. These officers took a small French boat with a French civilian crew, and using a
sail because a motor was considered dangerous in the mine fields, they sailed out past the
outer break waters and delivered the plan of the mine fields to the British Mine Sweepers
that had arrived in the vicinity. Message was sent as follows:

FROM CTU 127.2.8
TO CTU 122, CTF 125
INFO COMNAVEU, ANGXF, CTF 123, CTF 129
TEXT

CLASS SECRET
PREC OP
D/T 292025

INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM CAPTURED OFFICER IN FORT CENTRALE INDICATES GROUND ACCUSTIC AND MAGNETIC MINES LAID IN LARGE NUMBERS OUTSIDE PORT NORTH OF DIGNE CENTRAL X IN GRANDE RADE X IN PETITE RADE AND TRANSATLANTIC DOCK X ESTIMATE APPROXIMATELY SEVEN TO TEN DAYS TO CLEAR MINES X NAVY HEADQUARTERS PLACE REPUBLIC X ARMY HEADQUARTERS HOTEL ATLANTIC X ARMY PORT HEADQUARTERS PLACE REPUBLIC

NOTE: RECEIVED QJM ON THIS MESSAGE AND ORIGINATED NEW MESSAGE QCM DT 292025 - THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH CYPERRING ON THIS MESSAGE

TOD 2158 June 29
RECD BY GYM 9

Captain Norman Ives arrived in Cherbourg at approximately 1600 28 June and relieved me as Senior Naval Officer present. I was designated as his Chief Staff Officer in which position I served until 15 July 1944. In the meantime, we had obtained sufficient billets and garage space to quarter Navy Personnel and vehicles, and to commence the operation of a Naval Headquarters. In the meantime, our harbor entrance control group had located a signal tower at the south entrance to the harbor, and had blinker communication with the mine sweepers. Navy Headquarters radio communications had been set up in a large concrete block house near the waterfront, and communications had been established by radio with Beach Utah and England. In the course of the next week, Admiral Wilkes and his staff arrived and approximately 300 Seabees were brought in, in addition to Drew Units one and two.

I acted as Chief Staff Officer to Captain Ives until 15 July at which time Commodore Barton, U.S. Coast Guard, requested I be assigned as his assistant. I, therefore, acted as assistant Port Director until 2 August 1944. Of all the duties performed by any officer during the operation of Cherbourg, Commodore Barton had the most difficult task to perform. He had no facilities and his personnel assigned to him were inexperienced, to say the least. There were a great many officers who could function as Administrative Officers but damn few could perform any operations.

About 1 August, Captain Ives departed with the Reconnaissance Party of approximately 75 officers and men to reconnoiter Granville and St.Malo. The majority of these men came from Drew 2. Captain Ives had requested that either I accompany this party or Lieut. LaVallee should go. However, Commodore Barton requested that I remain in Cherbourg. Lieut. LaValle had been assigned to Captain Coryall, the Officer in Command of seabees to act as an interpreter and billeting officer. Neither of us, therefore, accompanied Captain Ives.

Captain Ives departed Cherbourg approximately 1 August 1944. On 2 August 1944, Captain Ives' Reconnaissance Party was ambushed by a force of approximately 600 Germans in the vicinity of Dol, Brittany, Captain Ives and approximately 16 men were killed or wounded. On 2 August 1944, Admiral Wilkes gave me verbal orders to standby to carry out reconnaissance work in Brittany. I was to take the Reconnaissance Party that entered Cherbourg with me. This party being augmented by approximately 350 seabees under Lieut. Commander Frorath. On 4 August, orders were issued and the Reconnaissance Party went into bivouac outside of Cherbourg. Admiral Wilkes issued additional orders, that all Reconnaissance Parties of the U.S. Navy going into Brittany were to be under my jurisdiction, and they were not to go west of my advanced position. The orders issued by Admiral Wilkes are set forth as follows:

P16-4/00 (02-St)
File No. 30442

Serial: 278

Y TWELFTH FLEET
U.S. PORTS AND BASES, FRANCE
C/O Fleet Post Office
New York, New York

4 August 1944

RESTRICTED

From: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France
To: Commander, Q.R. WALSH, USCG, 30442
Via: Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Advance Base, Cherbourg.

Subject: O-R-D-E-R-S.

Enclosure: (A) List of Personnel and Equipment.

1. Upon receipt of these orders you will assume the duties of Officer in Charge of U.S. Naval Reconnaissance Party for Malvern. (Brest)

2. You will assemble this party at Camp 1/2 mile south of Orteville at 1100 August 4, 1944 and carry out intensive training and indoctrination in preparation for movement to Malvern.

3. When directed by Commander U.S. Ports and Bases, France, you will proceed with this party to Malvern and carry out the following instructions: -

- (a) Conduct a preliminary survey of harbor and port installations in the area allocated to the Navy and send report of this survey by Courier to Commander U.S. Ports and Bases, France, within 24 hours after arrival at Malvern.
- (b) Conduct a detailed survey of harbor and port installations and facilities in the Navy area considered of value for use by U.S. Navy.
- (c) Establish guards over installations and facilities selected (paragraph b).
- (d) Prepare material and equipment lists for rehabilitation of installation and facilities (paragraph b).
- (e) Requisition captured enemy stores and equipment of Naval value and use.
- (f) Report to the Commanding General VIII Corp. U.S. Army and cooperate to the fullest extent in accomplishing your mission.
- (g) Take necessary steps to prevent looting and unnecessary damage to property and equipment.
- (h) Maintain continuous radio communications with Commander U.S. Ports and Bases, France Headquarters, at Cherbourg after arrival and every six hours while enroute.
- (i) Keep Commander U.S. Ports and Bases fully informed concerning developments and results of survey with recommendations.
- (j) Employ couriers as necessary.
- (k) Exercise every precaution in executing your mission and follow accepted and proven principles of warfare.

4. INFORMATION

- (a) Commanding General Third Army has been requested to give clearance to your party to enter Malvern as soon as it has been declared safe.
- (b) Personnel and equipment for your party is contained in enclosure (A). (Any additions must be promptly reported and record kept.)
- (c) The Third Army is making a rapid advance and is expected to reach Malvern at an early date.
- (d) Many pockets of enemy resistance will not be cleared out until some time after the capture of the town.
- (e) Extensive demolitions are to be expected in the port and harbor as well as all types of booby traps and delayed action bombs, personnel and ground mines.
- (f) Extensive barriers, booby traps of all types descriptions and delayed action bombs, personnel and ground mines may be expected enroute to Malvern.
- (g) Enemy agents are to be expected at Malvern to carry out additional demolition after capture of the town.
- (h) Prompt and early rehabilitation and operation of port and harbor installation and facilities is of the highest priority.
- (i) An agreement between the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy has allocated the area off Malvern on the west side of the Penfeld River to U.S. Navy use.
- (j) Commander U.S. Ports and Bases, France will maintain Headquarters in Cherbourg.
- (k) Communication with Commander U.S. Ports and Bases, France will be by courier or on 3800 KC using ARMY SCR 193 (75 Watts). Authority is granted to open up on any frequency in an emergency which Commander U.S. Ports and Bases France is guarding if unable to communicate on 3800 KC. 5690 KC can be used if unable to receive on 3800 KC.

/s/ John Wilkes

The Reconnaissance Party departed Cherbourg on 6 August 1944 and reported to the Chief of Staff, 8th Corps, Third Army in the vicinity of Vergonoy, Brittany. During this movement to prevent ambush, I moved ahead of the main party with approximately 20 men. This party of 20 men was followed by another group of 30 men. The main party of approximately 350 seabees brought up the rear. The 8th Corps was preparing to capture Fort St.Malo and although they estimated three days to capture the town, it took approximately two weeks.

We entered Ft.St.Malo approximately two days before the capture, and on the day of surrender made a brief reconnaissance of the port. Lieut. Commander Bishop later entered Ft.St.Malo, as he was to act as NOIC and make a more thorough reconnaissance.

After the fall of St. Malo, the Reconnaissance Party moved to the coast in the vicinity of Mont St.Michel. Contact was made daily with the Eighth Corp Headquarters to determine the military situation. While in bivouac near Mont St.Michel the Army requested that I accompany Colonel Beeler on reconnaissance of the north ports of Brittany. Six of my men and six Army men accompanied us. The ports of Roscoff, Morlaix and Carantec were reconnoitered.

It was the desire of the Army at this time to open these ports as soon as possible for the flow of supplies which was necessary to sustain the forces converging on Brest. The following message was sent:

DISPATCH

15 August 1944

151600

S E C R E T

FROM: OINC Reconnaissance Party - Malvern
TO: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France

Have reconnoitered Roscoff and Morlaix at request of and in company with Army. Army considering possible use of both ports because railroad not destroyed. At Roscoff Army plans on using anchorage for Liberty Ships East of Ile Right, distance 1-1/2 miles, with possible discharge of 1500 to 3000 tons per day into barges. At Morlaix Army considers using Rade de Morlaix to moor ships. If present considerations approved by higher Army authority, Navy will be requested to make hydrographic survey and supply mooring buoys. Prospects brighter for earlier movement to westward. Making arrangements for future bivouac in vicinity of Morlaix.

Q. R. WALSH

This Reconnaissance Party was the first allied force to enter the town of Roscoff. We entered the town at approximately 1500, the Germans having withdrawn at noon at this time. The Reconnaissance Party was moved from St. Michel to Carantec. I had bivouaced at Eighth Corp Headquarters which was located just outside the town of Landerneau. Lieut. R. Kitchell and about ten men were with me when the seige of Brest commenced. Daily reconaissance was made of the Rade de Brest from the Crozon Peninsula. Admiral Wilkes and Captain Holcomb were advised daily of results because a force of 800 men (U.S.Navy) were ready to occupy Brest as soon as it was captured. The fighting around Brest was very severe; initial estimates expected to find about 15,000 Germans; actually it was determined a force of about 35,000 Germans were in Brest, about 10,000 of these enemy being German paratroopers.

On 23 August 1944, reconaissance indicated the Germans had not blown the quays and harbor facilities; the Army commenced attack on 25 August.

On 26 August after heavy bombardment and serial attack only slight gains had been made by the Second, Eighth and 29th Divisions. The following memorandum was sent to Captain Holcomb on 30 August 1944:

MEMORANDUM TO CAPTAIN HOLCOMB:

1. At the present time I am with Eighth Corps in bivouac south of Lesnevan. The Reconnaissance Party is in bivouac at Carantec. I plan to stay with Eighth Corps until such time as the fall of Brest is eminent, then I will move to 29th Division Headquarters. The 29th Division is scheduled to take the area on the west side of the Penfeld River. I have already contacted 29th Division and they have expressed their willingness to cooperate in every way possible. At about the time I move to 29th Division, I plan to move the Reconnaissance Party from Carantec to the vicinity of St. Renan, located northwest of Brest. From St. Renan the party can proceed into Brest by a good road system and it will put them on the west side of the town. When Brest falls, the Army will withdraw to the north and northeast. It is for this reason I am bringing the Reconnaissance Party in from the northwest to avoid interference, as much as possible, with the withdrawing Army elements.

2. It looks like a long, hard fight for Brest. The Germans have a former paratroop general in command and he is apparently going to fight to the last ditch. To date the resistance has been strong and stubborn. We are making progress, but it is slow and time consuming. The Army cannot give me an estimate when we may get into the port. I personally don't think we will get in for another five days, at least. Even after Brest falls, unless the Army clears the peninsulas to the southeast and south of Brest, it may be impossible for us to carry out any organized reconaissance.

3. I am sorry that I failed to see you when you were in Carantec, but I was informed that you were coming to Eighth Corps and had arranged for you to meet the heads of the various departments. I will outline below some of the subjects which I had hoped to discuss with you:

(a) Civil Affairs of the Army has requested that all food and liquors found in the buildings to be occupied by the Navy on the west side of the Penfeld River, be turned over to the Army. I informed the Army that I would advise you of their request but for the present I intended to inventory and seal all buildings containing liquor and food, upon our arrival in the Port. This is a decision that I think should be made before our arrival in the Port.

(b) There is a Captain Lucas, French Navy, now attached to Eighth Division who approached me several days ago and requested that I obtain gasoline for him to transport 400 men to Brest. I suggested to him, at the time, that he leave any personnel that he desired to bring into Brest behind until conditions were more stable and that we would then arrange to have personnel brought into Brest after you and Captain Lucas had come to some agreement. The figure has now gone as high as 5,000 men that Captain Lucas desires to bring into the port of Brest. The Army has thrown the entire matter into the Navy's lap. Pending instructions from you, I do not intend to assist Captain Lucas in anyway in introducing personnel into Brest, and in accordance with Captain Percifields orders I have no authority to deal with the French Navy. I do not intend to give them billets or any official status on the West side of the Penfeld River. I recommended to the Flag recently that Captain Lucas be ordered to report to you. I understand he has orders to that effect. May I recommend most strongly that he be ordered from Eighth Division to report to you immediately. In this way I think many problems that are going to arise in the future, with the French Navy, can be averted immediately.

He approached me Sunday, August 27, and stated he would like a conference with you to determine where U.S. Sailors and French Sailors are going to be bivouaced in the port of Brest. Such assumptions and line of thinking by Captain Lucas, to my way of thinking, indicates he is not familiar with the Navy's future plans for this port. That is the reason I suggest he report to you immediately, where you can be kept advised of what his activities involve.

(c) I have been advised that we are going to have about 800 men sent to the vicinity of Roscoff. It seems that the Army is prepared to turn over the western section of the town to us. If they do, we will have to have more sentries than available in the Reconnaissance Party. I would, therefore, suggest that we get at least 200 men out of the 800 men and have them standby at Roscoff for early entry into the port of Brest, to be used for sentry duty only. This will help us to control the situation when we take over.

(d) It has taken me a long time to run down that agreement between the Army and the Navy, that divides the port of Brest. I suggest if it is possible, that you get a copy of this agreement and bring it along just in case something turns up in the future and a misunderstanding arises. It will prevent embarrassments on both sides. I understand Colonel Grower, Advance Section, now in bivouac at Rennes, was supposed to pass the word of this agreement to Third Army and to Corps. I have advised G-2 of this matter and believe they are convinced enough of the agreement to let us go on with our work when the port falls. However, as a matter of precaution, I suggest bringing along the agreement in writing if it can be obtained.

(e) The C.I.C. had requested the names of officers who will be authorized to enter any buildings in the port of Brest. I have submitted a list of about seven officers, including yourself; otherwise all the officers are attached to the Reconnaissance Party. I am sorry I did not know the name of your Executive Officer or I would have included his name also. These passes will allow the officers to enter any building even before intelligence has a chance to inspect them, but it will not allow documents, stores or furniture to be removed.

(f) It is requested, if possible, that some personnel familiar with refrigerating equipment be included in the 800 men to be bivouaced at Roscoff. They will come in most handy if we acquire any storehouses that are found damaged.

(g) The 30th Assault Unit is ready to move in on Brest. As you may know this is a Royal Marine Commando outfit, it's duties are purely intelligence. It has the highest credentials obtainable from SRAEF. I mention the entry of this outfit as a matter of information. I am sure you will be pestered with them enough after the port falls concerning billets, gasoline, food, trucks and everything else imaginable.

4. I am enclosing a sheet indicating the coordination of intelligence activities for Brest, which I think will meet with your approval.

5. General Middleton, Commanding General Eighth Corps, is apparently taking steps to avoid the confusion, looting and moving of seized materials that has existed in the capture of previous ports. I have maintained very close contact with G-2 and G-5, and feel sure that we are going to be in a position to follow a procedure that will be in accordance with the Army's wishes.

6. Information to date indicates that the Germans are commencing to blow the installed demolitions in the port. There have been several air attacks by our forces and considerable bombardment by artillery. I am not optimistic as to what the port may look like when we arrive. I expect it to be in shambles.

7. Everything is fine here. I wish that we had more to keep our men occupied because I am a firm believer in the old saying: "He who becomes motionless, becomes stagnant".

Respectfully,

Q. R. WALSH

On 30 August the following message was sent:

DISPATCH

301800

S E C R E T

From: OinC Reconnaissance Party - Malvern
To: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France.

Situation as of 1800 30 August. Daoulas peninsula cleared of enemy resistance. 2nd and 29th Divisions continue to advance slowly. Observed Rade de Brest and Rade Abri this date from Plougastel. There appears to be three rows of booms in Goulet de Brest to eastward of Mengam light. Single boom present just inside entrance to Rade Abri extending westward. Single boom also extends from Point Portzig parallel to south jetty to entrance to Rade Abri. Large tanker is sunk in 947975. Large hospital ship is sunk parallel to quai de Laninon near drydock No.9. Building on mole de Ouest appears to be in ruins and are afire. Naval school partially demolished and appears extensively

damaged. Medium sized vessel observed at 1430 passing from Rade de Brest into Rade Abri and then into mouth of Penfeld River. Large floating drydock towed by tug from Penfeld river into Rade Abri at 1500 in vicinity of quai Laninon believed to be enemy demolition charges. Large self propelled crane observed moving from submarine boat pen to jetty Sud where loaded cargo then proceeded up Penfeld river. Vessel about size of LST moved from sub pen to port de Commerce flying red cross flag. Large net tender anchored in 930935. From ship movements in Rade Abri it appears improbable that mines are present. Cranes still standing on Quai port de Commerce and on Quai de Laninon. Observations will continue. Our artillery firing from Daoulas peninsula into Brest.

Q. R. WALSH

On 31 August the following message was sent:

DISPATCH

311800

S E C R E T

From: OinC Reconnaissance Party - Malvern
To: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France

Situation as of 1800 31 August. All quiet on all sectors shifting guns and troops for attack tomorrow Friday. Observations this date indicate following. Sunken tanker formerly reported in 947975 now appears at 942975. A small vessel is sunk in eastern section of Passe Sud blocking approximately one third of entrance of Rade Abri. Floating drydock still anchored in 940977. Most of wreck visible in mouth of Penfeld river. Large hospital ship remains in position previously reported. Four small vessels resembling harbor tugs and lighters appear to be sunk alongside Quai de Flotilles. Digue de Sud pierced by eight craters and eastern and reduced to rubble. Western and northern sides of Bassin Number five Port de Commerce cratered. Five buildings on Point des Blagueurs ruined by fire also foundry and engineering bridge still standing. Gates of drydocks eight and nine in place but appear damaged. Large vessel in drydock number eight. Drydock pumping station destroyed. Quai de Laninon cratered in four places. Digue Abri du Port de Laninon cratered in three places. Eastern half of Naval school appears only slightly damaged. Two and maybe three holes in roof of submarine shelter. Small boats and tugs continue to move in Rade Abri. Terrific explosion occurred at 1600 this date followed by smaller explosions for forty-five minutes in vicinity of submarine shelters.

Q. R. WALSH

K On 3 September the Germans commenced to destroy the harbor facilities.

By 4 September the majority of harbor facilities were destroyed and most of the city was burning.

On 5 September the following message was sent:

DISPATCH

051800

S E C R E T

From: OinC Reconnaissance Party - Malvern
To: Commander, U.S. Ports & Bases, France

Situation as of 1800 5 September. Nothing to report on military situation. Observations of port this date indicate following. From shipping consideration Port de Commerce definitely considered as ninety-five percent destroyed and practically all

quai-side building appear unusable. Same condition exists from Point Blaguars to Quai de Flotillas on west side of Penfeld river. Jetee Sud and Jetee Ouest cratered in numerous places. Hulls approximately two hundred feet long sunk in middle of Rade Abri. Quai de Subsistence has been cratered. Our air force active over Brest this date.

Q. R. WAESE

On 7 September the following message was sent:

DISPATCH

071300

S E C R E T

From: OinC Reconnaissance Party - Malvern
To: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France

Request control minefield men be ordered to report to Reconnaissance Party - Malvern at Eighth Corps Headquarters immediately. Believe controlled minefield now captured is for the Brest minefields.

Q. R. WALSH

Use Highest priority.

On 7 September flame flowing tanks arrived. The Reconnaissance Party discovered the control tower of the mine fields at Brest. On 7 September flame flowing tanks arrived. The Reconnaissance party was detached from the activities at Brest and ordered to the vicinity of LeHavre to be attached to the First Canadian Army. The following orders were issued and received:

A4-3
Serial: 001101

DREW FOUR

HRH/gd

S E C R E T

7 September 1944

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Officer-in-Charge, Malvern Reconnaissance Party.

Sub.: Movement Order.

1. Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases France dispatch 071205B of September 1944 is quoted for information and compliance:

"FROM: RADIO CHERBOURG
ACTION: RADIO CARENTEC

SECRET
OPER. PRIORITY

DIRECT OINC MALVERN RECONN PARTY PROREP WITH PARTY COMUSBASFRANCE X
COMUSBASFRANCE SENDS ACTION CO DREW 4"

2. You will proceed with your reconnaissance party in time to report to Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases France at his Headquarters Cherbourg prior to dark 8 September 1944.

/s/ Harold R. Holcomb
HAROLD R. HOLCOMB.

cc: COMUSBRASFRANCE

Al-3

Serial: 001101

U.S. NAVY RECONNAISSANCE PARTY * MALVERN.

8 September 1944

From: The Officer-in-Charge, Malvern Reconnaissance Party-Malvern.
To: Commanding Officer.

1. Departed Roscoff at 1030, 8 Sept. 1944, arrived Cherbourg at 1630, 8 Sept. 1944.

/s/ Q. R. WALSH

File: P16-4/00(02/01)

TWELFTH FLEET
U.S. PORTS AND BASES, FRANCE
c/o Fleet Post Office
New York, New York

RESTRICTED

8 Sept. 1944

From: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France
To: Commander Q. R. WALSH, USCG 30442

Subject: O R D E R S

Reference:(a) COMUSBASFRANCE Serial 278 of 4 August 1944.

1. Upon receipt of these orders you will assume the duties of Officer in Charge, of U.S. Naval Reconnaissance Party for Le Havre.

2. Personnel and equipment provided under reference (a) is assigned you for this party. You will be guided in general by the directives contained in reference (a) except there had been a area specifically allocated to the U.S. Navy.

3. You will proceed with the reconnaissance party early morning of 9 September to the vicinity of LeHavre and upon the capitulation of the city, and when declared safe by the CG First Canadian Army, enter and carry out your reconnaissance duties. Immediately upon arrival in the British Assault Area you will report your presence to the Flag Officer British Assault Area (FOBA) who will furnish you with whatever intelligence he may have. You will also report to the CG First Canadian Army who is conducting the attack on the city, whose Headquarters are at Neufchatel. You will contact the Royal Navy Reconnaissance Party under the command of Lieutenant Commander FREMANTLE, RN which is standing by to enter LeHavre immediately upon its capitulation. This party in company with military representative are located at Cerlangus, which is 12 miles east of LeHavre, map reference 4/710270. Upon turning over to you, Lieutenant Commander FREMANTLE, RN with his party, will be withdrawn. The British Port Party 1371 will join your party after the city is captured.

4. Keep Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases currently informed concerning the situation.

/s/ JOHN WILKES

-LAB-

File P16-4/00/(02/01)
Serial: 760

U.S. NAVY RECONNAISSANCE PARTY - LE HAVRE

8 Sept. 1944.

1. Received orders 1700, 8 September 1944

/s/ Q. R. Walsh

Q. R. WALSH

Departed Cherbourg 0930

Reported to FOBA 1330, 9 Sept, at Couselles.
Departed Couselles 1630, 10 September

Arrived La Cerlangue at 0930, 10 September 1944

Reported to Commanding General, 1st British Corps at 1430, 10 September 1944

11 September, 1400 entered LeHavre

Temporary duty completed LeHavre; departed LeHavre for Cherbourg at 1330, 17 September 1944.

Arrived Cherbourg at 2130, 17 September 1944

The Reconnaissance Party shifted from Brest to Cerlangue, a small village to the east of LeHavre. This movement of approximately 450 men and vehicles was completed in approximately 48 hours, which was no small feat considering the terrific traffic congestion that existed in the vicinity of Avranches and Rouen.

On 11 September 0900 the following message was sent:

DISPATCH

110900

S E C R E T

From: OinC Reconnaissance Party - Munster
To: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France

Reported Flag Officer British Assault Area 1315 September 9. Reported to 49th Division which is attacking LeHavre at 1430 September 10. Have not reported to Commanding General First Canadian Army reported at Neufchatal because that headquarters shifted and existing conditions do not allow time for traveling. Now in bivouac with Royal Navy Reconnaissance Party at Cerlangue approximately twelve miles east of LeHavre. Lt. Comdr. Fremantle Royal Navy still here will enter LeHavre with me if port falls today 11 September. 49th Division Commander and Commanding Officers of units that will occupy and operate LeHavre after capture until relieved by our forces are not familiar with recent changes. Request this information be disseminated immediately through proper chain of command otherwise to avoid misunderstandings cannot act independently. Receiving fullest cooperation and assistance.

Q. R. WALSH

The attack on LeHavre commenced at 1600 10 September, with a terrific aerial bombardment. The RAF performed this bombardment. Approximately 5000 tons of explosives were dropped on the city of LeHavre between 1600 and 1800.

Observations made from a distance of seven miles indicated the city aflame and severely damaged. The Infantry moved in the attack at approximately 1800 that same date. Good progress was made and LeHavre surrendered at approximately noon 12 September.

Lieut. Raymond Kitchell was the first Naval Officer to enter this port with the British Reconnaissance Party; he entered from the northeast at approximately 0930, 12 September. The U.S. Navy Reconnaissance Party under my command entered at approximately 1030 from the southeast. On 12 September the following message was sent:

DISPATCH

122200

S E C R E T

From: OinC Reconnaissance Party - Munster
To: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France.
Info: CTU 125.8

LeHavre formally surrendered 1205 today Tuesday twelfth. Superficial survey indicates following. City area totally destroyed in area bounded on North by Boulevard Foch as far East as Place Carnet and Bassin de la Barre on the South by Arriere Port and on the West by Boulevard Clemenceau. Buildings in Bassin area can be considered destroyed. Entrance to Avant Port blocked by at least three sunken vessels and one barge afloat. Possibility exists of getting around obstructions at high water. Extensive damage observed on all quais and bassins detailed survey impossible due to enemy action. Reconnaissance Party will enter morning of thirteenth. Detailed reports will follow. Royal Navy Reconnaissance Party passing this dispatch to FOBAA.

Q. R. WALSH

We found the city of LeHavre practically demolished. The French people were very bitter towards the occupying forces. A temporary Navy Headquarters was set up in a building owned by the U.S. Lines at 103 Strasbourg Blvd., which was one of the few buildings not destroyed.

On 13 September the following message was sent:

INCOMING DISPATCH FOR INFORMATION.

From: CTF 125
To: CG Rpt CG ComZone
Info: OinC Recon Party - LeHavre

U.S. NAVAL RECONN PARTY ENTERING LEHAVRE ONE THREE SEPT. TEMPORARY HDQRTS IN AREA NORTH ARRIERE PORT. REQUEST U.S. ARMY ENG CONTACT COMDR. WALSH USCG OINC AT EARL* IEST AND I BE INFORMED NAME SENIOR U.S. ARMY OFFICER X

131215 Rec TOR

On 14 September the following message was sent:

DISPATCH

142200

SECRET

From: OinC Reconnaissance Party - Munster
To: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France.

Minesweepers now in LeHavre. Avant Port swept for snag lines results negative. Diving begins tomorrow fifteenth and sweeping continues. Channel eight fathoms deep eighty feet wide between blockships in entrance in Avant Port. Vessels entering

should keep close to Digue Nord then shape course to leave two boom mooring buoys close to port.

G. R. WALSH

The following memo was sent to Captain Clark:

MEMORANDUM TO CAPTAIN CLARK:

1. Information is requested concerning the name, rank, and possible time of arrival, of the United States Navy Officer who will be Port Commandant of LeHavre. This information is requested because it is being asked by the Royal Navy in this vicinity and also by the U.S. Army Engineers. Colonel Potter and Col. Webber visited LeHavre on 13 September. They are attached to Army Headquarters at Paris. They were after an overall picture concerning the status of the port.

2. The courier has delivered the reports to the Flag. We have been severely hampered in getting around LeHavre due to the amount of destruction caused by the five thousand ton bombing on Sunday, 10 September. The heart of the town has been practically wiped out to the extent that you cannot tell where the streets begin and end. As was expected the harbor was systematically destroyed and I might add the Germans did an excellent job again. I happened to be in the port on the day they blew the E-boat pens and it was the largest explosion that I have ever seen. Debris went to a height of over three hundred feet and was thrown over a radius of over five hundred yards. As usual we ran into the initial situation of snipers, spasmodic enemy resistance and land mines on the waterfront. However, to date we have been fortunate and have suffered no casualties.

3. If it is possible I would like to be relieved upon the arrival of the officer who will have command of the port. This request is based upon physical reasons. As you know this chest condition of mine has caused some irritation of late and the coughing spells are becoming more frequent. I would like to get a check at a hospital at the earliest date. Everything is going fine. Will keep you advised by memoranda and the Flag advised by official correspondence.

Respectfully,

G. R. WALSH

On 15 September the following message was sent:

DISPATCH

152330

S E C R E T

From: OinC Reconnaissance Party - Munster
To: Commander, U.S. Ports and Bases, France.

Channel six cables wide swept for ground and moored mines from Point Afirm in position 49° 29' 42" N, 0° 07' 24" W to Passe du Nord Ouest results negative. Passe du Nord Ouest swept to entrance to Avant Port for ground and moored mines results negative. Avant Port for ground and moored mines results negative. Avant Port Arriere Port and Bassin Maree swept for ground and moored mines results negative. Statis sweep of entrance to Avant Port at high water tomorrow sixteenth. Ships not to exceed 2500 tons and speed of six knots may enter port. Restriction on tonnage and speed due to possible existence of oyster mines which will take approximately one week to clear. Channel through blocked entrance to Avant Port as follows course set for southern and of Digue Nord until bow is abeam of Digue Nord then to starboard leaving two boom mooring buoys close to port steadied on pill box located to east of breach in Digue Sud. Channel eighty feet wide forty-eight feet deep at high water heaps.

On 17 September Captain Arnold relieved me as Senior Naval Officer in LeHavre. He had approximately 700 officers and men with him.

By this time the chest condition which had bothered me from July became more aggravating, and it was necessary for me to be relieved because it was impossible to carry on my regular duties.

The Reconnaissance party had been on duty both in training and operation from approximately 17 April. The men were tired and weary, all personnel had lost a great deal of weight, and upon my return from Cherbourg I requested that all my men be given a rest. Immediately, I was hospitalized at Cherbourg and later flown to England. I returned to the U.S. aboard the U.S. Wakefield and arrived Boston at approximately 7 October 1944.

Q. R. WALSH

(In December 1943 I had viral pneumonia in both lungs and was in an Army Hospital near London for two weeks. I was discharged December 24th and advised to take it easy for six months. Subsequent events ruled otherwise.)

The Forts at Cherbourg

We carried small intelligence maps printed in green ink on white paper which had been run off on stencils. These maps located most of the blockhouses and strong points along the main road north via St. Mere Eglise, Montebourg, and Valognes. The Bocage area was most dense west of the beaches. Between Valognes and Cherbourg it disappeared; driving through this area on cool sunny days reminded me of the terrain around Groton, Connecticut, in the summer.

It was surprising that many of the blockhouses were constructed only to meet resistance from the north. They could not be used to the south.

As we approached Cherbourg, the German's fortification became more formidable. Here were permanent strong points which had been recently augmented by the Germans as they retreated into the city.

The most formidable of these was Fort du Roule. It was located on a hill about 600 to 900 feet high; built to offer resistance by land or sea. The Germans had installed heavy guns at different levels inside the hill, while putting strong points on the top. The area of approach from the south was protected by bunkers, barbed wire and anti-tank ditches.

The concrete strong points on the top were above ground level, surrounded by tank traps with a steep stairway on one side which allowed the fortification to be entered from underneath; a submarine telescope topped each one for a complete circle of observation. Machine guns bristled on all four sides through apertures. If the barrel was blown off a gun it could be withdrawn, a steel plate shoved over the aperture, and a new gun installed.

It is almost impossible to believe that one company of infantry from the 79th Division took the top of Fort du Roule after infiltrating the outer defenses to gain the summit.

I talked to one of the American officers right after the surrender. The Company Commander had just been killed by a stray bullet in the throat. This officer stated

the Germans in one of the strong points surrendered. As they filed out in the open, they were shot down by comrades in the adjoining strong points.

As I have related elsewhere, we had the top of the fort but the Germans held out underneath.

Fort du Homet is located on your starboard hand as you enter the port. It is at the north end of the arsenal, fronting on the inner harbor, which was covered by its armament. Most of its structure was of Napoleonic war vintage, cut off from the arsenal by tank traps, barbed wire, etc.

Fort Centrale was located on the middle dique, built on bedrock. It was shelled for hours but refused to surrender. Finally, dive bombers silenced it on June 29th.

Fort des Flamand and several other small forts around Cherbourg finally gave up.

Enemy resistance in Cherbourg and on the Cotentin Peninsula, between Cherbourg and the beaches, ended about 1 July 1944. The whole operation had been one helluva blood bath.

About a week later I visited the grave of my executive officer, Lt. Comdr. Curley, in the temporary American cemetery near St. Mere Eglise. His grave was adjacent to General Roosevelt's, who died of a heart attack about the time the port was captured. On the day of my visit, our dead were laid out row on row in their white shrouds awaiting burial. War is a young man's game. They pay high stakes to participate.

FORT DU ROULE, CHERBOURG, FRANCE
 "FOUR STRONG POINTS," LOCATED ON
 HILLTOP ON SOUTHERN EDGE OF CITY

Vertical View of one side of Bunker

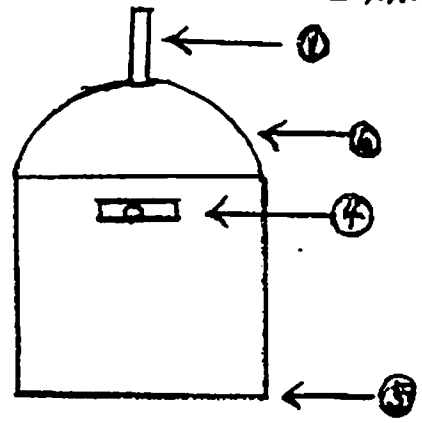
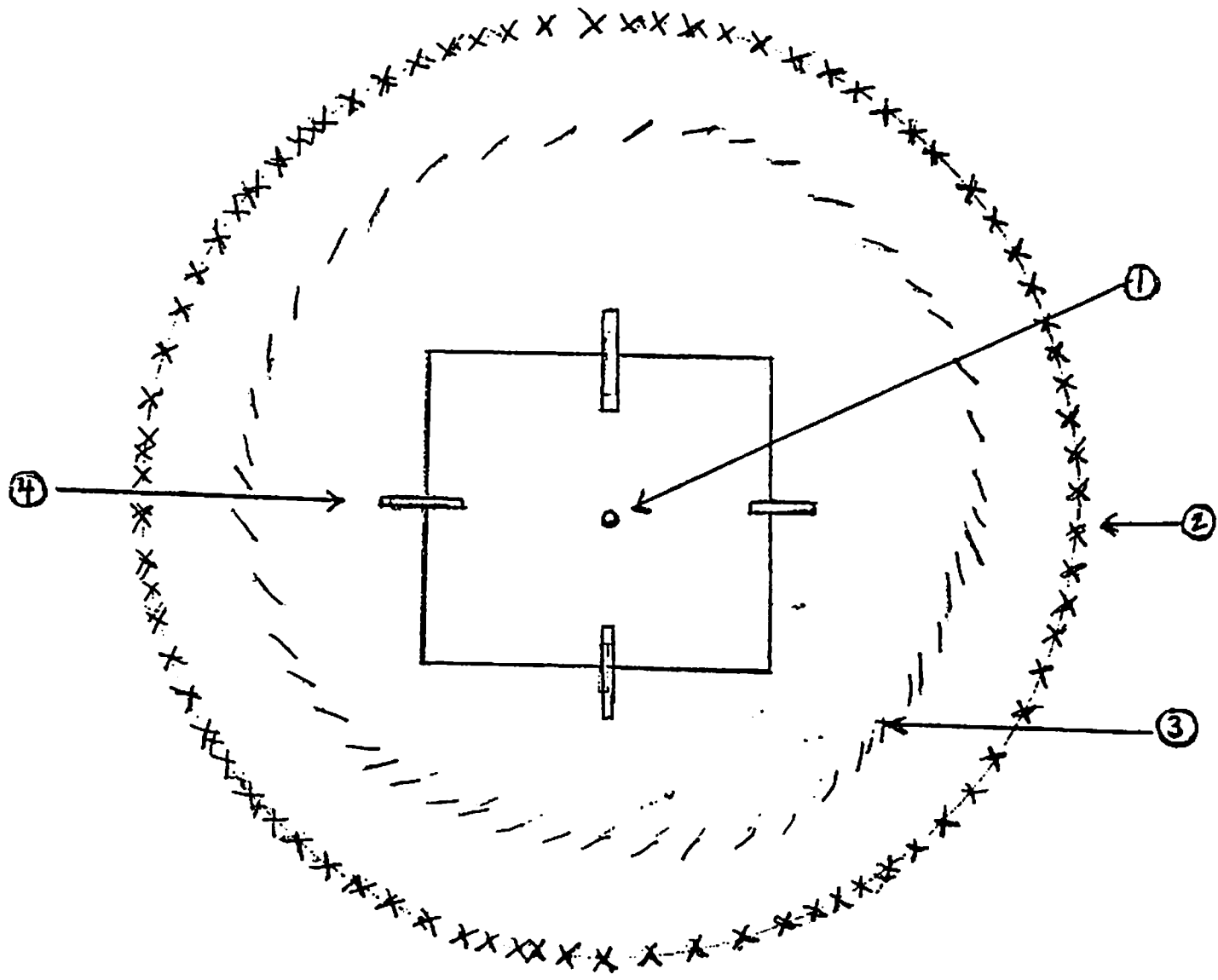


Diagram of Layout of one Strong Point



- ① Submarine Telescope
- ② Barbed Wire
- ③ Tank Trap
- ④ Machine Gun Opening
- ⑤ Ground Level
- ⑥ Reinforced Concrete

26 JUNE, 1944

Cherbourg Staff Work

Captain Norman Ives relieved me as senior U.S. Navy Officer in Cherbourg on 28 June. He became Base Commander. I assumed duties as his Chief of Staff. Admiral John Wilkes arrived Cherbourg about 15 July with his staff. Capt. Charles Quimby relieved Ives as Base Commander. Ives then prepared to carry out the shoreside reconnaissance of the Brittany ports with the U.S. Army. Commodore George Sullivan arrived with his salvage outfit and Commodore Barton, USCG, arrived about the same time to be the Port Director; General Plank, USA; in command of the Communication Zone, and Colonel Sibley, USA, representing the Army in interservice conferences and coordination of port operation.

The harbor, arsenal area, waterfront, and dikes were one helluva mess, in addition to the mine fields and booby traps.

At one of Wilkes' early staff meetings, I briefed the group on the condition of the port from facts obtained by Task Unit 127.2.8, referring to harbor charts and the model of Cherbourg which I had brought with me. The next high water was set as the target date to assess operational achievement. Plans were made to do as much as possible in the time allotted in clearing mines, removing sunken ships and obstruction, repairing dikes and wharfs, getting a swept channel and establishing harbor control posts capable of breaking off ships in convoy from England to the beaches in order to divert them to Cherbourg. It was flank speed with no damn nonsense to achieve maximum goals. Admiral Wilkes was an officer intolerant of excuses. You stated your opinion when assigned your responsibilities. When you accepted the order, it was your pigeon to feed.

At one of the staff conferences, Commodore Barton requested I be assigned as assistant port director and that he be given several Drew Units, which were composed of about 350 Seabees, trained to operate captured enemy ports. Wilkes issued orders approving both requests.

Henceforth, I worked under Barton. It was demanding. We had to get the port open. Commodore Sullivan and Commodore Barton were really the officers responsible to get it achieved operationally. Coordination of plans and operation required exact timing.

The days blended into nights and the nights into days. We lost track of dates and days of the week. The rise and fall of the tide seemed to govern everything.

Barton and I started out about 5:00 a.m. daily with coffee and a bite to eat in his office. We reviewed the proposed plans for the day and checked what was supposed to have been done previously. We checked these matters with Commodore Sullivan and his staff, who in turn kept us informed of their plans and operations. Barton and I rode around the port for hours to confirm operations and make more plans. The British did most of the mine sweeping. Their results had to be plotted almost by the hour.

The date of the first high water arrived followed almost immediately by Wilkes' staff meeting to assess accomplishments. No one was satisfied. Wilkes was less interested in reasons than results. Sullivan did not get rid of all the sunken ships he had patched at low water and pumped free of water so they could be towed out and sunk. Colonel Sibler did not get ships in that the Army was demanding. Barton and I came under criticism because it was deemed we had not done certain things to enhance Sullivan's operation or satisfy the Army. Tempers were short. Impatience reigned. Barton pointed out to Wilkes that he had not received all the Drew Units he had previously requested from Wilkes and that if Wilkes wanted a job done, he had to give Barton the men to do it.

Wilkes immediately demanded of his Chief of Staff, Captain W. M. Percifield, the whereabouts of the Drew Units which had been previously ordered to report to Commodore Barton. It was determined that the orders had been issued but one of the Drew Commanders did not favor the orders, so was taking his time in carrying them out. This officer was returned to England via plane in forty-eight hours and Barton got his men.

If ever a man deserved accolades, it was Commodore Barton. He never spared himself. The future success of the allies depended on Cherbourg. Barton was one of the key men to get the port operating. He did an excellent job without fanfare. He was a pleasant man, very sensitive to the welfare of his men, but demanding that his orders be carried out. When aroused when he thought he was right, he became very formidable. For instance, during one of his tours he found the Army unloading bombs and shells over

one of the diques by dragging them in a net from the ship's side to a nearby truck. He ordered this routine stopped on the spot. The Army remonstrated that it was necessary under the circumstance to hasten discharge of cargo. Commodore Barton would brook no opposition to this order, even though the discussion eventually involved Admirals and Generals. Barton ran the port as his particular responsibilities demanded. There was never a doubt about that.

It was an arduous tour of duty with Barton but he was a fine officer to work for. This assignment was from 15 July to 1 August; I assumed command of the Brittany reconnaissance party on 3 August 1944.

Little Known Facts about a Well Known War

Field Marshall Rommel -- Was I right or wrong?

On 2 August 1944, Capt. Norman Ives was killed while carrying out the reconnaissance of Brittany. Admiral Wilkes ordered me to carry out the assignment, eventual objective being Brest. I was given back my original unit plus a back-up force of about 350 men. I traveled in the van with about twenty men. The rest of the unit brought up the rear. On 6 August, I departed Cherbourg for Brittany.

We had turned the corner at Avranches and were in the area of a small village near Pontorson. The advance jeep, accompanied by a motorcycle courier, had been contacted by an elderly French woman who wanted to see the Commanding Officer. She told me and Lt. LaVallee that her daughter had just departed for the south of France after visiting her, but had told her that Field Marshall Rommel had been killed in a car accident. She did not know where her daughter was or how she was traveling. We tried to corroborate the information, but were unsuccessful.

I decided not to inform Wilkes of this intelligence. It had come uncorroborated from an old woman. The original source could not be located. Also, an unfounded rumor of Rommel's death would have caused waves throughout the allied command. In addition, I felt the Maquis or F.F.I. would have had the information and passed it to higher authority.

Lt. LaVallee agreed, as did our intelligence officers. It was reported later to 8th Corps. I do not know what they did about the report.

(We know now that Rommel's car had been strafed on 17 July and he had been badly wounded.)

Ives' Ambush:

It was a funny war. There were no front lines as might be expected in a battle area. The only reliable information existed at the nearest Division or Corps headquarters. Some farm areas and cities were devoid of any damage. From all appearances you would not know there was a war in the area. Other cities, villages, and hamlets were completely

destroyed if, generally, they were a road or railroad junction or if the Germans decided to resist at that point. As examples, Montebourg, Brest and LeHavre were severely damaged; Valognes and Rouen suffered little.

I believe the lack of battle lines is what caused Ives to be ambushed, plus the fact neither he nor his men had been trained for reconnaissance by Colonel Stribler of the 28th Division, 3rd Army. Stribler's training of Task Unit 127.2.8 in Scotland proved invaluable to me and my men in the combat areas.

Ives had requested Wilkes to assign LaVallee and me to his Brittany reconnaissance party but his request was refused. I had been recently assigned as assistant Port Director under Commodore Barton, USCG, and LaVallee was billeting officer in Cherbourg.

Information received at Cherbourg indicated Ives and his party received a report that St.Malo had surrendered. This report was false, but Ives and his party started for St. Malo. They captured two Germans alongside the road. Instead of stragglers, they were sentries. While interrogating the two prisoners, the surrounding area erupted in gunfire. Ives was killed instantly with several men. His command was pinned down. They fought for about an hour. Then one of the motorcycle couriers dashed back to the American units. Some light tanks came up to spray the area. They got out the survivors. Many had been killed and wounded. The unit was dispersed.

One of the unfortunate results of Ives' ambush was that his command carried some top secret documents indicating what ports were desired by the Americans for logistic bases. St.Malo was one of them. These documents were captured by the Germans. These top secret papers were found on the Channel Islands after the war ended.

General George Patton, 3rd Army, and General Middleton, 8th Corps, raised holy hell because Ives' reconnaissance party was in Brittany without their knowledge. As a result, when Wilkes ordered me for the Brittany reconnaissance, I had emphatic orders to keep General Patton and General Middleton advised daily of my location and operation even if I had to send an officer each day to their headquarters to do it. After I entered Brittany,

I reported in person to General Middleton to acquaint him with my duties and planned operations, advising him I would work almost daily with the American division under 8th Corps as we approached Brest, carrying out the reconnaissance of the Brittany north coast ports as we advanced. This was agreeable to him. He authorized the cancellation of daily contacts with General Patton's headquarters.

Drapes for the Admiral's Office:

One of my early duties in Cherbourg was to establish a headquarters for Admiral Wilkes and his staff. We had commandeered all the buildings on the left of the street that led west out of Place Napoleon. We gathered most of the furnishings from the former offices of the German Army and Naval Commands, which had occupied these buildings. We put together a nice headquarters except we had no drapes for the windows. This problem sort of taunted me so I conferred with Lt. LaVallee. He said he would take care of it. Within two days we had beautiful drapes in Wilkes' office. LaVallee had gone to the German senior officers' brothel in Cherbourg. He brought the madame to Wilkes' future office so she could measure the windows. Then the madame and her girls made the drapes for the office which were formerly in the brothel.

LaVallee and I were among the officers that greeted Wilkes and his staff when he arrived about the middle of July. We escorted him to his office. He was agreeably surprised by the furnishings. One of his staff remarked about the drapes. He was told the drapes had been furnished by the ladies of Cherbourg. A captain on his staff remarked that he thought the Admiral should commend these ladies for their assistance and patriotism. We never said a word.

(Years later, I met Admiral Wilkes on the Eastern Shore of Maryland while he was visiting some relatives. I related this incident. He got quite a laugh out of it.)

Radio Phone -- Wilkes' Dedication:

Lt. LaVallee and his communication crew installed a radio phone in one of the rooms on the top floor of Wilkes' headquarters in Cherbourg. LaVallee checked it out, notified Wilkes' staff the phone was installed, and then he asked me if I wanted to use it. I

called Captain A.C. Richmond, senior Coast Guard Officer, in London. We had a pleasant chat for about five minutes.

As LaVallee and I were going down the stairs, we met Wilkes and some of his staff coming up. Wilkes was going to make, supposedly, the first call on the phone to Admiral Stark in London.

German Liquor --Who got it?

After Cherbourg was captured, I received frequent reports from my men about numerous Army trucks coming and going in the vicinity of a cave entrance at the foot of the hill on which Fort du Roule was located. It was from this cave that General VonSchlieben and Admiral Hennecke surrendered only themselves and their staffs. They refused to order the remaining Germans in the city to surrender. This is what prolonged and made dangerous the cleaning up of the German pockets of resistance. This is why Fort du Homet and Fort Centrale continued to resist.

I soon learned that the Germans had a huge cache of liquor in the cave. U.S. Army vehicles were taking it away by the truck load to split it up among Corps and Division headquarters. We paid no attention to what was going on until Capt. Ives relieved me on 28 June as senior U.S. Naval Officer present and asked me what I had done with all the liquor which the U.S. Army was telling the U.S. Navy and British that Walsh and his reconnaissance unit had taken from the cave. It was some time before these rumors were put to rest. However, we got even with the Army. After the arsenal was initially cleared of Germans, we refused to allow curious Army officers in there if they were only looking for liquor. In the meantime, we filled several panel trucks with liquor and turned it over to Ives so he could distribute it to the U.S. Navy commands as he saw fit.

Cheese and "Dog Biscuits" for Admirals:

After Ives relieved me as SOP, Cherbourg, I became his Chief of Staff. Sometime before the arrival of Admiral Wilkes, Ives asked me to prepare some kind of a lunch for a group of senior officers that would be arriving in a matter of hours. We had no cook in my unit. We drew field rations from the Army. However, I got some field rations to serve on a small table with about four chairs, in a room in my headquarters on Place Napoleon.

It seemed only minutes before Admiral Cunningham, RN, Admiral Stark, Admiral Kirk and several more admirals arrived. It was quite a sight to see so much gold braid, bunched around a small table with only a few chairs, as they opened their canned field rations and ate their "dog biscuits", followed by a small glass of wine. Ives and I stood up, as did some other admirals, during the meal.

Time and Lives were Expendable at Cherbourg:

The U.S. Army was clearing out a German ammunition dump to the east of the port in the area of Cape Barfleur. This dump blew up in July. About fifty men were killed. Upon receipt of the information, we went on working as if nothing had happened. However, it did alert us to take greater precautions in the off-loading of explosives in the port and Barton issued stringent orders which had to be obeyed and enforced without question.

Jeeps for Inspection Party:

A few days after German resistance ceased in the port, I received orders to provide my jeeps for an inspection party of senior officers. We removed the sand bags. The jeeps were cleaned, inspected, and drivers assigned. The inspection party arrived and toured the city and port. When the jeeps were returned, we found a German potatoe masher grenade under one of the jeep's seats. How the hell it got there, we could not find out. The only explanation we had was that visiting officers were always coming to Cherbourg from England or the beaches and requesting transportation for short periods of time. During their visits, they were always looking for souvenirs. Perhaps one of these officers used a jeep for a few minutes just before the inspection party arrived.

The disconcerting thing was that we had unconfirmed information later that Prime Minister Churchill was in the inspection party which used the jeeps.

"Pluto":

Pluto was the code name for the pipe line under the ocean. I had worked on part of this plan while in England. The line was laid from England beginning in July. The terminal end in Normandy came ashore at an installed pumping station near Cherbourg. The U.S. Army had numerous trucks loaded with pipe in twenty foot sections. Two men on a truck lowered the pipe into the arms of two men on the ground while the truck moved slowly ahead.

Additional men followed to connect the pipe. The pipe lines extended for miles to furnish gasoline to dumps containing hundreds of "jerry" cans.

The Dead German Officer:

There were plenty of dead on both sides at Cherbourg but one corpse left a deep impression on us.

On a final sweep of the Napoleonic fortification near Fort du Homet, we came across the body of a handsome young German officer on a stretcher. He looked as if he was asleep. His boots were highly polished. His field gray uniform was immaculate. He wore an iron cross at his collar and another one on his left side. His hands were folded on his chest; a Rosary entwined his finger. A small purple spot appeared at his left breast.

We notified the grave registration unit of his location.

We wondered how a man who fought for Hitler's Germany could die with a rosary in his hands.

Scratch One Locomotive:

When the first car ferry arrived alongside one of the outer dikes, which had been repaired to serve as a wharf, it started to unload a railroad locomotive via the use of its jumbo boom. As they raised the engine up in the air, one of the vangs broke on the boom. This caused the boom to break. The locomotive struck partly on the deck and fell in the water. All the crew did was rig a new boom and go on with their work.

I do not know whether they tried later or not to raise the sunken locomotive.

General George Patton:

I was under the 8th Corps, U.S. 3rd Army, from 6 August to 9 September 1944 to carry out the reconnaissance of Brittany. I contacted 8th Corps almost daily, but visited the headquarters of the 2nd Division^{29th} and 8th Division. I never heard one word of criticism or fault finding of any men serving in the 3rd Army. Morale was high. The spirit of the men was excellent. Conversations with tank crews and anti-tank guns dug in along the roads reflected nothing but praise for Patton. I recall one anti-tank crew stating

General Patton got on them for not having their gun properly located. Patton levied a \$25.00 fine on anyone not wearing a helmet. Jeeps drivers were enlisted men. Officers were not supposed to drive the jeeps; if found doing so, they had to explain the reason. This order was to prevent jeep thefts and equipment which was rampant. If a jeep was left unguarded for any length of time, you had to remove the steering wheel, the points, or some other part of the engine or it would have been stolen. We had a jeep stuck in a river bed near Brest for several hours. It was left unattended when the tide came in. When we returned, it had been cannabalized. I saw a soldier driving a jeep with a monkey wrench because someone had taken the steering wheel.

General Patton ran a rough show but he took care of his men. When the area at Mount St.Michel was taken, the U.S. Army put up signs that the historical monastery was off limits to U.S. personnel. Patton ordered the signs removed. He stated if his troops liberated the place, then his troops could visit it. LaVallee, Boucher and I toured the abbey ; then had scrambled eggs in the small restaurant, famous for their menu, located in the narrow street on the right side of the hamlet.

I recall visiting the Army-Navy Club in Virginia around 1938-1939. There was a model in a glass case in the lobby which represented a tank crewman's uniform proposed by Patton. It had a helmet, shoulder pads, elbow pads, large gloves, knee pads and heavy coveralls. Club visitors regarded it with a great deal of humor. Nobody made fun of this uniform in Brittany. All tank crews wore it.

I was ordered from Brest to Cherbourg for a conference with Admiral Wilkes. Lt. Bannister and I left about 10:00a.m., arriving Cherbourg late in the afternoon. Military traffic was heavy and slow due to bombed out roads. We ate on arrival; then were directed to Wilkes' headquarters outside of Cherbourg. Here we found a scene out of the world of combat. We drove up to an old chateau which had a circular drive around a pond which was occupied by white swans. It was late afternoon. The sun cast shadows which

made the surroundings beautiful. The Admiral and his staff were in blue uniforms. Bannister and I were heavily armed, covered with dust, and in combat dress. The contrast was extreme. Admiral Wilkes explained they had held up the evening meal pending our arrival. I explained we had already eaten so I briefed the staff during their meal on the situation at Brest, which indicated the port was being destroyed by the resistance offered by the Germans. Wilkes then stated the overall situation had changed because of General Patton's annihilation of the Germans at Avranches and Falaise. He then directed I move my command from Brest to LeHavre. We left immediately for the return to Brest which was a long cold ride interrupted by fog on roads jammed with military traffic moving with only cat lights on their jeeps. As I recall, we arrived Brest about four in the morning. I immediately issued the orders for LeHavre. Bannister and I got a couple hours of sleep; then were off for LeHavre via Rouen.

German Wooden Bullets:

The Germans used wooden bullets during the street fighting in Cherbourg. They were painted red or green. A German prisoner explained to me they were used only in the rifles of men engaged in close order firing, such as the street fighting, where German troops were liable to fire in the direction of other German soldiers engaged in the same street fighting. The prisoner explained they made an ugly wound if a person was struck within their range capability.

The "Cricket Signals"

We were trained to use cricket signals in the bocage country of Normandy.

The equipment was a toy cricket like the well known child's toy made of tin about one or two inches long. When squeezed by hand, it made a snapping sound or audible click.

It was amazing how far the signal could be heard when there was no other sound in the area.

We used it in darkness or limited visibility to determine if friend or foe was present nearby.

If you heard clicks in response to your clicks, you knew friendly forces were present and you could expose yourself and join up.

We did not use the signals often but we had to be cognizant of them because of paratroopers in the area. This system of communication was invaluable to them.

Limpet Mines

The laying out of the anchorages in Cherbourg required consideration of limpet mines. A defense was considered necessary against this type of attack from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, with a half pound explosive charge being thrown overboard every thirty minutes from patrol boats off the harbor entrance.

I do not recall how many weeks we planned to use this defense but I do recall it required two to three tons of explosives in half pound packages to be ordered via U.S. Navy routine supply channels.

I do recall quite vividly the uproar when the supply order was submitted. Admiral Flanigan had to call a staff conference to obtain a high priority for the explosives to be shipped at such a late date, which was January 1944. Flanigan backed up the request and we got the explosives.

(The main reason for the late request was my illness in December 1943, when I had a series of bad colds which culminated in viral pneumonia in both lungs and a two weeks stay in a U.S. Army hospital in London.)

As a matter of information for the uninformed, a limpet mine is an explosive charge carried by a swimmer who attaches it to the underwater part of a ship's hull.

The Italians were most successful in damaging Royal Navy ships in Egyptian ports with this type of attack.

Steel Plates for Tanks:

Over the years the French farmers had marked off their farm acreage by what were known as hedgerows. The hedgerow was a growth obstruction made up of bushes, trees, and brambles from two to twenty feet high, growing out of a dirt embankment. Large ditches and wagon trails followed the hedgerows on both sides of the embankment. Most of the time your vision was completely obstructed by the dirt wall and/or its heavy vegetation. The hedgerow was ideal for defense but one helluva place for reconnaissance or offensive action. We killed our first Germans along a hedgerow while we were cannibalizing some jeeps from the wrecked gliders south of St. Mere Eglise. We were trying to find replacement batteries for some of our jeeps which had washed out in crossing the beach. The Germans, three apparent stragglers, came down one side of the hedgerow while we stood motionless in a ditch on the opposite side near a wrecked jeep. We blasted them from about ten feet. They never knew what hit them.

Tanks had a great deal of trouble in getting through the hedgerows. After they traversed the ditch or sunken lane, they would come up on the embankment at an angle which exposed the bottom of the tank to enemy fire. The bottom of a tank was a very vulnerable target.

After I reported to General Collins at St. Meere Eglise, his staff requested if we found any steel plates 7th Corps was to be notified.

After we captured the Naval Arsenal at Cherbourg, we found at least fifty steel plates which the Germans had stacked vertically in a wooden frame. They were of various thickness and anywhere from 2 ft. square up to 10' x 20' and some even larger. A motorcycle courier was dispatched to 7th Corp Headquarters and trucks requested to get the steel. In the meantime, the free French had started to work back into the Naval Arsenal with Allied Military Government approval, which had directed that the French be given one building in the Arsenal area so they could assist in opening the port.

We soon learned the French started to covertly remove some of the steel plates. I ordered them to stop. They persisted. Armed sentries were assigned to guard the steel with instructions to shoot unauthorized persons that attempted to take any of the plates. After approximately five days, several large flat-bed U.S. Army trucks arrived. The plates were taken out of Cherbourg. Where they went, I do not know.

The Affair at Villa Maurice

Villa Maurice was the German communication and code center for the Normandy area. It was an isolated wood structure on a hill to the south and to the west of Cherbourg. The objective of the 250 Royal Marine Commandos attached to my command was to capture the German codes and ciphers in Villa Maurice. They were to attain their objective by landing over Beach Utah under my command and then transferring to the U.S. Army Divisions under 7th corps. They were to advance with these divisions to within two to three miles of Villa Maurice. Then they were to jump off to assault, capture, and hold their objectives until "rescued" by 7th Corps troops. In the meantime, they were to prevent the Germans from destroying their codes and ciphers.

General Collins then asked me if the Commandos could perform this mission, why couldn't his troops? I explained that I had nothing to do with the Commando mission but merely accepted the orders I received to attach them to my command. Collins then ordered that the Commandos remain under my command until I reported to his headquarters after landing in Normandy. He then directed that the Commandos not assault Villa Maurice without his specific approval. I then informed Lt. Colonel Willey, in command of the Commandos, of General Collins' orders.

Subsequently, Willey reported to 7th Corps headquarters in Normandy. Burdened with my own objectives, I paid no further attention to this mission; but I did order two of my intelligence officers to accompany the Commando/^{mission} which was carried out with 7th Corps approval.

Later I learned the mission was unsuccessful. The Germans had been alerted. They destroyed their communication equipment and burned all codes and ciphers, while being assaulted. One of my officers with the Commandos was shot in the cheek. The bullet passed through the flesh but did not penetrate the bucal cavity. He was sure lucky!

The French Dismayed Us

We were amazed and irritated at the large number of young French males in Normandy and Brittany who pursued their daily lives as if there was no war. Many Normandy farmers were insolent and hostile. They created the impression that we were interfering with their lives for our benefit and not their's. They were a demanding bovine breed. Some of this attitude could be explained by the fact that they had made friends with many of the German troops in the area, some of which had been actually billeted on their farms and their daughters consorted with them. Then, the Americans came along and killed many of the Germans on the farms of their French friends. Another irritating factor was the large number of cattle killed. There were literally thousands of them dead on the roads and in the fields.

Most of the men in my command were young, unmarried, and gregarious. They enjoyed practicing their anglicized French with the natives. Another of their enjoyments was riding German horses. It was astounding to us the number of horses the Germans had in their Army. Unfortunately my men never got acquainted with the French people and could not keep the horses with them. We were always on the move.

I could read, speak, and understand a little of the language, especially if it was spoken slowly, but I relied on Lt. George LaVallee in dealing with the natives. This man had been born in France but come to the United States at an early age. An unmarried Harvard graduate, he was affiliated with business in France before the war. He knew France and he knew French people. As a general statement, he was critical of them and held them in contempt because of their attitude they expressed towards us. He was invaluable to me. It seemed to me LaVallee could look at a Frenchman and tell you what he was thinking.

Frankly, I had little patience with them. My attitude was well fortified.

One day we were bivouaced near St. Mere Eglise. I returned to find three Frenchmen waving their arms while they held about twelve German horses. LaVallee explained that they came to report that American paratroopers had killed some of their sheep for food. They wanted to know who was going to pay for the sheep. I directed they be sent to the

nearest Allied Military Government Command with their complaint. This satisfied them. They prepared to leave with the horses. However, I told them to stop and leave the horses, which were branded on the neck or flank with German markings, explaining that the animals were now captured U.S. Army property as was all German property in the liberated areas. My orders to leave the horses disconcerted them. They conferred among themselves, then stated they would forget about the sheep if I would forget about the horses.

The French were most irritating to me at Cherbourg. We never saw any of them during the fighting. After it was over, they appeared by the hundreds with their FFI Bands on their arms.

I have related previously about the steel plates in Cherbourg and the action we had to take to stop the French from stealing the material.

A French farmer appeared with a shoe box full of German currency which he received as pay for farm products delivered by him. He wanted us to redeem it in U.S. currency. The local theatre manager wanted me to open the same theatre that the Germans had used and at the high rent they paid him. He tried to remonstrate with me when I pointed out we would never pay such a rent, informing him I was aware of the fact that the French people paid the cost of the occupying German troops and this is where he got his high rent. I got rid of both these people by sending them to Allied Military Government Units.

Underneath one of the buildings we took for naval headquarters was a German garage with about six cars in it. A Frenchman and his wife ran the garage, living in an adjacent room. When we took the building over, I told him and his wife to leave, explaining the reason for expelling them. Two days later they were still there, refusing to depart on the grounds that some French authorities had told them they could stay in order to operate the garage as a French enterprise. I accused him of being a collaborator and I pointed out the cars he had repaired for the Germans. To be accused of collaborating with the Germans at this time was a very serious matter.

The wife started to scream. The man started to yell. We had to get on with our work. Both of them were ejected. Forty-eight hours later I got an order from a senior U.S. Allied Military Government Officer to find the Frenchman garage space of the same footage in some other part of Cherbourg.

Lt. Comdr. Bishop established the first Shore Patrol under my orders. Many sailors and Merchant Marine personnel were finding their way into Cherbourg from the beaches in their quest for souvenirs. German lugers were selling for sixty dollars. There were thousands of German rifles, machine guns, binoculars, etc. all over the place even though our Army had started to collect them after the fighting ceased. Bishop's job was to arrest all Merchant Marine personnel and sailors from the beaches and put them out of the city if they were only sight-seeing. He did a good job. He had established a headquarters. Several days passed when one of the former burgomasters of Cherbourg appeared with his family about eleven o'clock at night and ordered Bishop out of his headquarters, the official claiming it was his residence. Bishop reported to me. I told Bishop to disregard the Frenchman and to get rid of him and his family. We heard no more about the matter.

We had all kinds of trouble with the French in the arsenal area. They requested and got permission to occupy one of the buildings. Soon they took over adjoining buildings without permission; then started to fill these buildings with all kinds of materials and equipment. I remonstrated with Ives about allowing this until after the U.S. Navy had decided the future function to be performed in the arsenal area, which had been previously allocated in England for the U.S. Navy to control. This matter hung fire until Wilkes' arrival. The Frenchmen continued to irritate with their activities which seemed to me to be encouraged by Allied Military Government personnel.

As a result, when I got ready to leave Cherbourg for Brest, I consulted with Admiral Wilkes about the possible French interest in that port. He verbally ordered me in no uncertain terms to try to keep the French out of the city and under no condition was I to make any agreements with them concerning the future of Brest. It was a good thing

I got such orders from Wilkes. As related elsewhere in this record, a Captain Lucas, French navy officer, appeared in the area of Brest with hundreds of French sailors. All they did was ride around in trucks heavily armed, yelling, cheering, and blowing bugles at every Frenchman they encountered.

LeHavre was practically destroyed. The Germans refused the Canadian ultimatum to surrender, but wanted to let the French residents evacuate. The Canadians refused, claiming the welfare of the French was the responsibility of the Germans. LeHavre was bombed by the British on a beautiful Sunday. You could see for miles. The planes could carry extra heavy bombloads because fuel was not required for the short run from England. Heavy smoke hung over the city in the afternoon.

When we entered LeHavre, you could not tell where the streets were; the waterfront and adjoining city area was a shambles. We bivouaced in a wrecked house on a hill to the north of the port. One morning, about daylight, LaVallee and I were driving into the port when we met an elderly Frenchman. LaVallee said, "Goodmorning Grandpere." The old man came over to the jeep. He said, "You kill my friends, you kill my family, you ruin my home, you ruin my city; then you say good morning to me." Then he spit on the jeep and walked down the hill.

The old man had a right to be angry. The Americans got blamed for the bombing which hit most of the city because the planes avoided the heavy German anti-aircraft fire from the north. Hundreds of French people were killed in the air-raid shelters from the bombs and fire.

While visiting a division headquarters in Brittany, some infantrymen brought in a Paris taxi-cab that they had captured with two German staff officers and a French civilian. The cab and all its windows were painted black. The Germans were arrogant but explained they had come out of Paris to determine the situation in Brittany which contained thousands of German troops cut into pockets by Patton's tanks. The Germans lacked knowledge of the whole situation because they had no organized communications. The Frenchman formerly operated business interest in the port cities of Brittany. He was so frightened he had to be held up. He was literally paralyzed

with fear. He could not talk. He apparently expected to be shot on the spot. I presumed this is what happened to him eventually when the FFI or Maquis finally got him.

The Maquis was the communist French underground in Brittany. They were well armed and well disciplined. They were of great assistance to me. They patrolled the roads with great efficiency, especially the crossroads.

If you wanted to know what was going on in an area, all you had to do was contact the local Catholic priests. They helped me when we had to quell disturbances in some of the towns because the young Frenchmen were cutting off the hair of the French girls who allegedly consorted with the Germans. In many of the small towns we were the first Americans seen by the local people and I was under orders from our Navy and Army to stop any problems I encountered.

One evening LeVallee and I visited a local priest. We were the first Americans he had met. He told us that when the war ended, France might have a civil war between adherents of DeGaulle and the Communists; but he predicted that DeGaulle would eventually assume power in France and head the government. I have often thought of these predictions. The priest was right.

Several miles south of Cherbourg our Army set up several batteries of heavy guns in an orchard. They shelled the port for several hours. Nothing was left of the orchard but blackened, leafless trunks. The farmer's nearby house lost most of the roof tile from the concussion. The farmer asked me who was going to pay him for his damaged property. He was referred to the nearest Military Government Unit. As I recall, our government paid for such damage. This policy infuriated men in my unit. I agreed with them.

We passed through Rouen on a beautiful Saturday evening; using the temporary wooden bridge the British had constructed over the Seine River in sight of the historic cathedral. There were thousands of cheering Frenchmen lining the streets. Apparently the 400 men in my command were the first Americans the people saw. My jeep driver, Boucher, asked me, "Why the hell were we doing all the fighting while the French stood around and cheered?" As I recall, my answer was in terms that our mission had to be

accomplished; orders were orders. However, I agreed with Boucher's observation, but under the circumstances could not verbally state my own personal reaction. The French were a constant source of irritation to me from the time I landed in Normandy.

GERMAN PRISONERS

The prisoners taken in the Cotentin Peninsula and Cherbourg were surly, arrogant, glowering and threatening. They appeared only willing to cooperate and follow orders under duress and because of the threatening attitude of their captors. Their demeanor reflected an attitude that "you've got me today but I'll have you tomorrow."

Prisoners taken by the British were generally marched to the prison pens. U.S. prisoners were carried away in trucks, if transportation was available, in the interest of moving them as soon as possible.

I witnessed one incident in moving some of the thousands of prisoners taken at Cherbourg. The military police were moving them out in trucks. One truck appeared to be filled but there were about five prisoners still standing on the ground at the rear of the truck. The prisoners in the truck indicated there was no more room. The military police told the men on the ground to get in the truck. The prisoners in the rear of the truck refused to make any more room. The M.P.'s then picked up the prisoners on the ground and threw them up on the truck. They bounced off the men on the truck. As the man hit the ground, the M.P.'s picked him up again and threw him back on the truck. This went on until prisoners in the truck caught them and finally squeezed them into the truck.

The demeanor of the prisoners taken at LeHavre was different. They appeared more resigned to their fate. We had several inquiries concerning the German port of Hamburg. Apparently they had heard about the allied bombing of the port with devastating destruction. We knew nothing about it at LeHavre but learned later that Hamburg was just about totally destroyed.

No matter where the prisoners were, there were always several who could speak some English --and they always had a cousin in Hoboken, N.J.

German prisoners were used to erect the tents at our evacuation field hospitals near St.Mere-Eglise. I observed it being done mostly under the direction of U.S. Army nurses, who, by the way, had to use their helmets as wash basins to bathe.

Prisoners were also used to remove their own dead on the southern edge of Cherbourg, especially in the area at the foot of the hill upon which Fort DuRoole was located. Casualties were heavy in this area. There were two prisoners to a body. If the dead man died on his back, he was dragged off on his back, a prisoner pulling on each leg. If found on his stomach, he was dragged off on his stomach, face down. I thought at least they could have done was turn him over. I was surprised at this German attitude towards their dead comrades.

PERSONNEL ROSTER OF USN TASK UNIT 127.2.8

On the lift for Normandy over Beach UTAH, I commanded a unit of 52 men. This is all that was allowed by the U.S.Army and Admiral Moon. From Cherbourg to Brest, and then onto LeHavre, I commanded a unit of about 350 men.

The Personnel Roster of this Task Unit is in the files of the U.S.Coast Guard Academy Museum, New London, Connecticut.

Many of the men, who, in the original unit, landed over UTAH and entered Cherbourg with the 79th Division, were not in the unit ordered into Brittany by Admiral John Wilkes. They remained in Cherbourg to carry out their special duties such as deep water diving, mine disposal, etc.

I reported to General Lawton Joseph Collins, U.S. 7th Corps, outside Southampton, England, prior to D-Day. I was ordered not to carry any written orders, not to keep a war diary, and not to allow any photographic equipment to be carried by personnel in my unit.

Area Traversed by USN Task Unit 127.2.8

May 1944 to September 1944

Departed Base 2, Firth of Clyde Scotland, May 1944

(Base 2 also known as "Princess Louise's Castle")

From Scotland to Southampton, England

1. Arroch
2. Dumbartons
3. Paisley
4. Carlisle
5. Preston
6. Wigam
7. Stoke
8. Stafford
9. Warwick
10. Winchester
11. Southampton

Routed by US. Army

Due to Heavy Military Traffic Moving South

(Bivouaced outside Southampton to await cross channel orders for Normandy)

(Reported 7th Corp - General Lawton Collins)

Beach UTAH, Normandy to Cherbourg

1. St.Marie DuMont (Attached 7th Corp)
2. St.Mere Eglise
3. Montebourg (Destroyed - burned out, no people - statue of Joan of Arc appeared as if painted with red lead)
4. Valognes (Heavily damaged - two to four feet of water in main streets no people)
5. Laglacierie (Bivouaced in small single story field stone house. In this area.

Straffed by US planes. Found eggs in dog house)

6. Cherbourg (Entered by going over and around Fort DuRoule with 79th Division)

Cherbourg to Brest (Attache Third Army)

1. Briquebec
2. Lahaye Du Puits
3. Lessay
4. Coutances

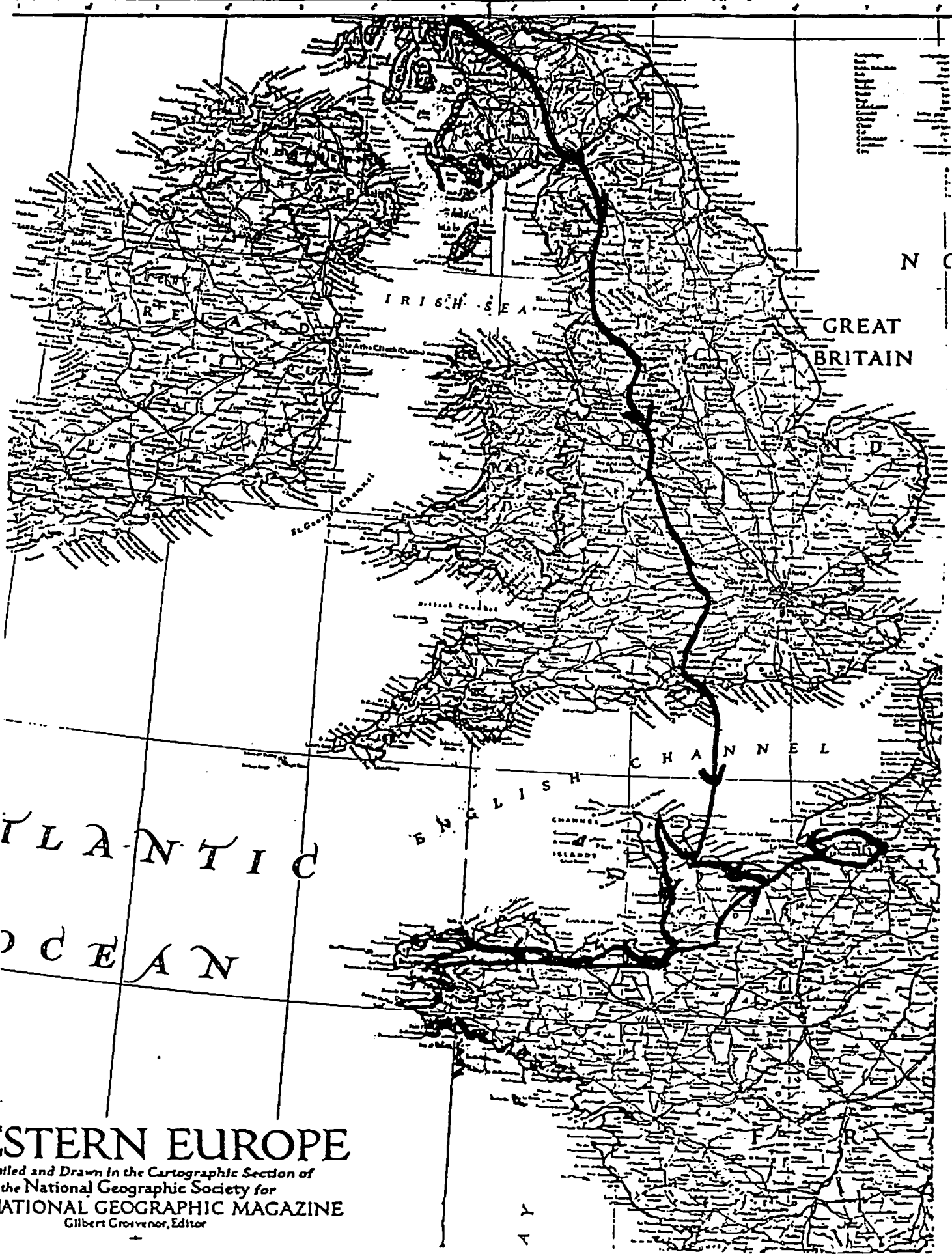
5. Granville (found dead US soldier in rubble with dead German on his back)
6. Avranches
7. Mt St.Michel (Had scrambled eggs with Boucher and LaValle)
8. Pontorson
9. Dol
10. Dinan
11. St.Malo (Contacted US Army)
12. Erquy
13. Painpol
14. St. Brieuc
15. Guincamp
16. Morlaix
17. Roscoff (Citizens gave us lobster dinner with cake. Gave them "dog biscuits")
18. Landerneau
19. Le Relecq
20. Daoulas (Bivouaced in area)
21. Brest (Never entered city. Made reports to Cherbourg. Ordered from Brest to LeHavre)

Brest to LeHavre

1. Morlaix
 2. St. Brieuc
 3. Dinan
 4. Dol
 5. Vire
 6. Caen
 7. Houlcate
 8. Villers
 9. Deauville
 10. Honfleur
- } Ordered to look at enroute LeHavre
11. Rouen (Crossed Seine River, via wood bridge erected by British, in sight of cathedral.
Crowds of French people cheered us on a Saturday night.)
 12. Tancarville (Attached Canadian Forces)
 13. Harfleur
 14. LeHavre

LeHavre to Cherbourg

1. Rouen
2. Caen
3. Bayeux
4. Isigny
5. Carantan
6. Valognes
7. Cherbourg



WESTERN EUROPE

Compiled and Drawn in the Cartographic Section of
the National Geographic Society for
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE
Gilbert Grosvenor, Editor

GENERAL ROOSEVELT

I became acquainted with General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., when he was a colonel in command of the 26th Infantry, 1st Division. I was the navigator of the Joseph Dickman, an attack transport with a crew of 700 and a troop carrying capacity of approximately 2,200 men. The Dickman carried 26 landing craft for amphibious operations.

Colonel Roosevelt and the 26th boarded the Dickman at the Army Base, Brooklyn, New York in June 1941, coming from Camp Devens, Massachusetts. We went from Brooklyn to Onslow Bay, North Carolina for the first amphibious training of troops. There were about ten other transports engaged in this exercise which lasted about six weeks.

Being navigator, I stood the 4-8 watch. Colonel Roosevelt would come up to the bridge almost daily about 4:30 to 5:00 a.m. to check the weather. The Dickman would be at anchor or drifting. Because of the insufficiency of the boat davits and other boat handling gear, our boat crews had to commence moving the boats out of their checks and rests about 3:30 to 4:00 so all boats would be in the water and ready for the embarkation of troops about 6:30 a.m. We trained seven days per week.

The bridge force on the 4 to 8 watch generally had bacon sandwiches and coffee. Roosevelt would join in the coffee and sandwiches while we stood around and talked, when operations allowed.

I told Roosevelt I was a great admirer of his father, President Teddy Roosevelt, and had read most of his father's books about his sojourn in the west and on big game hunting. I recall mentioning to the Colonel that I read and was most impressed in high school with his father's famous speech called "The Strenuous Life."

Needless to say, the Colonel and I had many interesting conversations during the time the 26th Infantry was aboard.

The eight transports departed Onslow Bay for night maneuvers at sea, running dark and in close formation. Unannounced to the public, the transports decided to put into Charleston, South Carolina at the end of the maneuvers at sea. As a result, the

town was engulfed by approximately 16,000 soldiers and 4,000 sailors. It was a mad house. The Dickman crew was broken into three watches so we all got ashore. Several officers and myself hired a taxi and paid him about fifty dollars to stay with us from about 3 in the afternoon to 9:00 p.m. when we returned aboard.

Winthrop
/Roosefeller was in the 26th Infantry as a sergeant. When we pulled into Charleston, he passed the word that he had rented a whole floor in a hotel on the Battery and anybody could go over there that wanted to and take all the showers they wanted -- which was quite a blessing after being on daily water hours on the Dickman with a bucket of water per day per man at 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

I did not witness it, but I was told the Colonel had all troops assembled aft on the weather deck of the Dickman where he made a speech pointing out the long and distinguished history of the First Division and that he wanted them to conduct themselves like gentlemen during their visit ashore.

We sailed about 7:00 a.m. the following day and returned to Onalo Bay for more training.

The 4th of July 1944 was observed as a holiday. Colonel Roosevelt approved a picnic for his troops on the beach. We took them ashore in the boats about 8:00 a.m. Plans were to pick them off the beach about 4:00 p.m. The day was clear and very hot. A strong wind came up in the afternoon. A heavy surf developed which prevented us from getting all the troops off the beach in the Dickman's boats. The troops had been ashore all day eating and swimming, most of them clad only in shorts. They were sun burned to the color of a cooked lobster. Those troops that could not get back to the ship spent the night on the beach or what is now at Camp Lejeune. We sent boats in the next day at dawn to get them back. Some of them had to be brought aboard on stretchers because of the sun burn. I saw one man so badly burned he had a blister that covered most of his chest and stomach. There were dozens of sick bay cases.

Shortly after the 4th of July incident we returned the troops to the Army Base in Brooklyn.

I met Roosevelt again in June, in Normandy, in 1944, after he became a Brigadier General and was Deputy Commander of the 4th Infantry Division. Their code name for the 4th Division in the field was "Cactus."

The 4th Division headquarters was located south of Cherbourg, on the right of a line made up of the 9th Division on the left, with the 79th Division in the center. The 90th Division buckled-up the line in reserve.

It was pouring rain and windy the day I drove into the 4th Division Headquarters shortly after dawn. Roosevelt was seated in the map tent looking at the troop disposition. He had on foul weather clothing with a woolen cap under his steel helmet. Roosevelt was bald headed and, like most bald headed men, he wore a steel helmet with great discomfort.

I introduced myself as C.O. of Task Unit 127.2.8 and asked him if he recalled me from our days on the Dickman. At first he did not recognize me because I was dressed in paratroop boots, wax impregnated Army field clothes, my helmet, ammunition belt, shoulder straps, knife, pistol, and carried a sub-Thompson. When I took off my helmet, he recognized me immediately. We talked of days on the Dickman. I could have had anything I wanted from the 4th Division.

I then told him I was in command of a specially trained Navy unit with orders to carry out a reconnaissance of Cherbourg as soon as it was captured in order to determine the condition of the port, location of the mine fields in the harbor, establishment of a Navy headquarters, etc.

On being told I had to get into Cherbourg as soon as possible, General Roosevelt advised me to attach myself to the 79th Division because he believed the Germans, after being driven out of the city, would withdraw their troops to the two prongs of land on the NE and NW of the city, which would occupy the 4th and 9th with clean-up operations.

As a result of his advice, my task unit entered Cherbourg by going over the top of Fort DuRoule with elements of the 79th Division.

After Cherbourg was captured, I was present in a window in my headquarters in the city when Roosevelt decorated members of the 4th Division who had won medals subsequent to the landings on the beach. The men getting the medals were drawn up in two ranks in Place Napoleon almost in front of Napoleon's statue. My headquarters was in the building on the right corner of Place Napoleon as you faced Napoleon's statue. A street ran along the waterfront between the water front buildings and a high anti-tank wall the Germans had constructed between Napoleon's statue and the water's edge.

About five days after Roosevelt handed out the decorations, I met him in a building in Cherbourg occupied by troops of the Allied Military Government. We met on the stair landing which, as I recall, had a leaded glass ceiling. We stood and talked for about a minute. He was carrying a heavy cane with a steel pike on the end and wore a shoulder holster under his left armpit which contained a small pistol. He was leaving. I was arriving in the building.

About twenty-four hours after our meeting, General Roosevelt died of a heart attack in his trailer at 4th Division Headquarters.

Roosevelt was initially buried in the temporary U.S. Cemetery at St. Marc Eglise only four graves away from where my executive officer, Jack Curley, was buried. Curley was killed in action at Cherbourg while mopping up Germans in the arsenal area of the port. To my knowledge, Roosevelt still lies in Normandy. His widow is alleged to have stated, "Let the tree lie where it has fallen."

It must have been gratifying to Roosevelt to lead the well trained and well equipped troops ashore at Beach Utah in Normandy on D-Day after all the trials and tribulation of the Oslo Bay training in 1941. I do not know how he kept his cool demeanor during those exasperating Oslo Bay days when we were dropping boats thirty feet in the water because of faulty davits; at the end of about one month we could only use the nested landing craft on deck because the worn screw davits had frozen and could no longer be used for the boats cradled under the davit heads. The Army personnel were running around with saw horses with a piece of wood about three feet long attached on one end at a 45 degree angle with a sign attached that they were an anti-tank gun; other men carried signs that

they were mortar crews because they had only two mortars aboard which had been assembled and disassembled during drills so many times there were no longer any threads on the screws, nuts and bolts; the World War I tank we had aboard would not run half the time and took hours to lower and get back aboard --it never did get ashore; the troops removed every door knob they could get to use as leads on fishing lines; O-H-I-O was scribbled all over the ship's bulkheads --(Over the Hill in October)-- as a reminder that the federalization of the National Guard was to end in October 1941 after only one year's duration.

Our nation owes men like General Roosevelt a debt that can never be paid but I am sure he took it philosophically as indicated to me one day on the Dickman when he jokingly stated, "you know the Oyster Bay Roosevelts are out of season."

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "RANKIN CASE C?"
By Capt. Quentin R. Walsh, USCG (Ret)

What happened to Plan "Rankin Case C?" This thought provoking question has been tantalizing my memory for years. Now that "Rankin" has been declassified, we may discuss it.

In October 1943 I was attached to the Planning and Logistics Section on the staff of Admiral Stark, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, at U.S. Navy Headquarters, Grosvenor Square, London, England.

Admiral Patrick Flanigan, USN, was Chief of Staff. Captain Neils Dietrich headed the Planning and Operations Section, which was composed of about fifty officers and men, (Captain Dietrich later made Flag. He was one of the finest officers I ever met. It was a privilege to serve with him).

Captain Norman Ives, USN, was the staff man designated "Commander, Advanced Bases," e.g., ports contemplated for capture and operation by the Allies after the invasion, working first under Admiral Alan Kirk, Commander Western Task Force (Operation OVERLOAD, Phase Neptune); later under Admiral John Wilkes. He was responsible for formulating plans for the clearance, occupation, and operation of the captured French ports. I was Ives' Chief Staff Officer.

It was engrossing work --seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. with one afternoon off for compulsory physical exercise. The challenge made you pass up meals and forget Sundays.

About the middle of November 1943, Ives and I were ordered to attend a conference at Norfolk House, St. James Square, London; the headquarters of "COSSAC" and "SHAEP." "Bigot A" security clearance was required.

Preliminary plans were discussed concerning the contemplated operation of various French ports after capture but emphasis during this meeting was on LeHavre. This seemed unusual to me at the time because the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army were coordinating detailed plans for Cherbourg, Brest, St. Malo, and even the possibility of building a port at Quiberon Bay. However, I had studied LeHavre and was informed on the port

even though the British considered it their responsibility.

A few days after the Norfolk House Conference, Ives and I were ordered to Portsmouth, England. We left London via train on a Sunday morning. A Royal Navy car met us and took us to one of the forts outside Portsmouth which had been built during the Napoleonic Wars. After a 7:00 a.m. breakfast the next morning, we were ushered down about one hundred steps to an underground headquarters under the fort. I was told this was the command post for the Dieppe Raid.

For three and one-half days we conferred here from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., drawing up a detailed plan known as "Rankin Case C." (The plan Rankin had other parts but only Case C was formulated at Portsmouth.) It was a plan predicated upon surrender of German forces in France to Americans and British and a landing in LeHavre without resistance.

Attending the conference were Major General Clarence Heubner, USA, representing the segments of the U.S. Army which were to land in LeHavre and race for Berlin; Rear Admiral Sir Philip Vian, R.N., representing Royal Navy units responsible for cross channel operations; a U.S. Army Air Corps Brigadier (whose name I've forgotten), responsible for air cover for the operation; and Captain Ives, representing U.S. Navy elements responsible for occupation, clearance, and subsequent operation of the port. Each except Ives had 2 to 6 staff officers attending him; Ives had me alone.

I remember the Army Air Corps contingent arrived a day late and immediately asked for a briefing on the conference details they had missed. General Heubner, Chairman of the Conference and senior officer present, showed a great deal of impatience at this, directed them in no uncertain terms to "read the record," and summarily proceeded with the conference.

We worked from Monday through Wednesday on the plan, then reviewed and critiqued it on Thursday. It set forth in detail all that would be needed to make a massive and rapid unopposed landing in LeHavre and thereafter operate the port to provide logistic support to these forces.

Upon completion of the planning, Ives and I were invited by the British Admiral in Command at Portsmouth to be his luncheon guests at his headquarters aboard HMS VICTORY, Admiral Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar. We were piped aboard, signed the guest log, and had a pink gin followed by a delightful meal in Nelson's quarters. The Admiral, his flag lieutenant, Ives and I were the only officers present.

After lunch we were invited to inspect the ship throughout. I felt honored by the occasion and reflect back on it with a great deal of pride and pleasure.

The U.S. Navy aspect of "Rankin" was completed and approved shortly after our return to London. Thereafter a curtain dropped. Very few officers saw the plan. Only a handful knew of its existence. Until its recent declassification, I have never met anyone who ever heard of it.

Many of the officers at the Portsmouth Conference later commanded combat units in Normandy. General Heubner commanded the First Division, U.S. Army, Vian commanded the Eastern Royal Navy Task Force at beaches Gold, Juno, and Sword. I commanded United States Navy Task Unit 127.2.8 assigned to carry out the shoreside reconnaissance of captured ports in Normandy. Captain Ives commanded a task unit for the shoreside reconnaissance of Brittany in July 1944. He was killed in action near St. Malo after his command was ambushed.

So whatever happened to "Rankin Case C?" The question has plagued me for years. I later learned of many things that might have affected it --things not known to the Portsmouth planners in 1943.

For instance: The Schwarze Kapelle (the name used by the Nazi Party to describe members of the German military service and Abwehr conspiring to overthrow Hitler) included, among others, prominent German military leaders such as Rommel, Reck, VonKluge and Canaris. We know now that United States intelligence agents in Switzerland were in contact with representatives of Schwarze Kapelle and that Roosevelt and Churchill were advised accordingly.

Did supporters of the Morgenthau Plan (which would have reduced Germany to an

agrarian economy) combine with the Russians in blocking implementation of "Rankin?" It is known now that Roosevelt initially favored the Morgenthau Plan but later withdrew his support when the British refused to approve it. But did these adherents of the Morgenthau Plan block "Rankin" and seek Germany's destruction via the policy of unconditional surrender? Also, did Russia block "Rankin" in order to promote the Kremlin's future interest in Germany?

We know what followed upon the unconditional surrender policy. Germany fought to the bitter end and was divided, with the Russians getting the lion's share. It might have been different had we opted for the overthrow of Hitler via the Schwarze Kapelle and "Rankin" Plan implementation. Germany may not have been divided; there may never have been a Berlin Wall; the Soviet Union might have been restricted to the area of East Prussia and Poland.

However, the course of events was different. The British and Americans did not seek the overthrow of Hitler via the Schwarze Kapelle. We fought our way into the Normandy bloodbath where we suffered 140,000 casualties with about 35,000 dead. From Normandy to Germany the Americans had about 500,000 casualties with about 90,000 dead.

Whatever the reasons behind the ultimate choice it must be agreed that the Fates would have ridden different horses if "Rankin Case C" had been adopted.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY CROSS to

COMMANDER QUENTIN R. WALSH
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of a United States Naval Reconnaissance Party assigned the mission of reconnoitering the Naval Facilities and Arsenal at Cherbourg, France, June 26 and 27, 1944. A gallant and aggressive leader, Commander Walsh courageously engaged in active street fighting with the enemy as he led his party in the skillful penetration of the eastern half of the city and, while advancing through scattered pockets of resistance and extremely hazardous areas which were still subjected to hostile fire, accepted the surrender of approximately four hundred enemy forces at the Naval Arsenal and disarmed them. Subsequently receiving the unconditional surrender of three hundred and fifty other officers and men, he released fifty-two United States Army Paratroopers who were prisoners in the fort. Commander Walsh's brilliant initiative, inspiring leadership and successful accomplishment of a difficult mission reflect great credit upon himself, his command and the United States Naval Service."

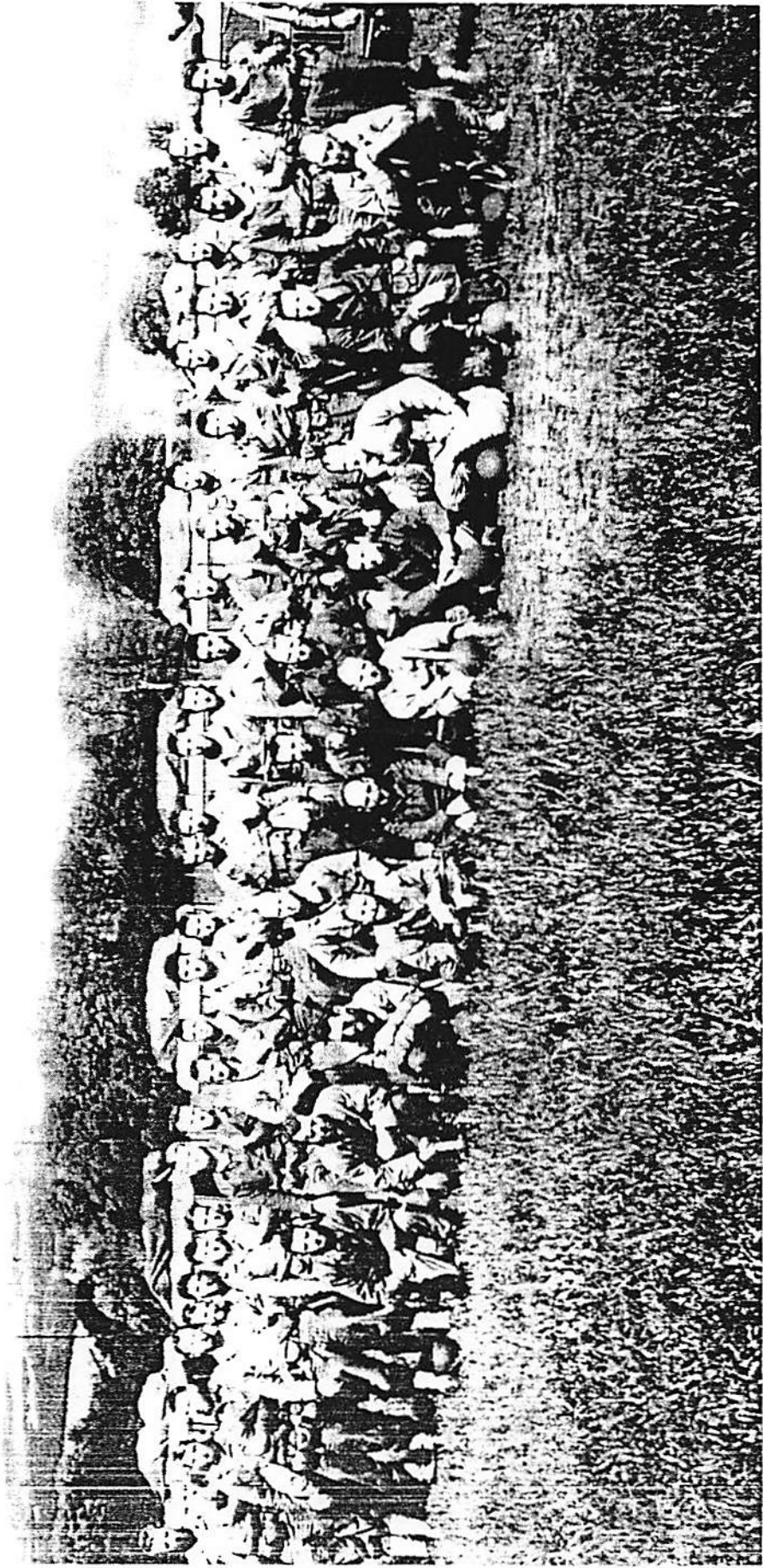
For the President,

James Forrestal

Secretary of the Navy



Commander Q. R. Walsh, U.S.C.G. at Tancarville Castle, Seine River, east of LeHavre, France, September 1944, just before entering LeHavre with 1st Canadians. At this time he commanded a task force of about 400 men.



U.S.N. Task Unit 127.2.8 training near Loch Lomond, Scotland, 23 May 1944, just before leaving for Normandy. Walsh, Commanding Officer, is first man kneeling in front row, extreme left.

