

INTERVIEWS WITH REICHMARSCHALL HERMANN GOERING

Date : 21 July 1945  
Place : GC PWE # 32, "ASHCAN"  
Interviewer : Major Kenneth W. HEBBLER  
Interrogator : Captain Herbert R. SENSENIG

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I. INVASION OF NORMANDY

Q.: Did you anticipate that we would land in NORMANDY?

A.: The FUHRER expected an invasion either in BRITTANY or in the area along the beaches East of the COSENTIN Peninsula. Our fortifications there were not as strong as in the Pas de CALAIS Area. We did not anticipate an invasion in the BORDEAUX or Pas de CALAIS Area at first.

Q.: Were you satisfied with the beach fortifications which you had completed along the NORMANDY Coast? Was there a date set for completing them to your satisfaction?

A.: Of course we had fortifications along the NORMANDY Coast, but there was no definite date set for their completion. We just kept on building as conditions permitted. Our main trouble was with transportation. The chief difficulty was inability to bring in enough cement.

Q.: What else led you to believe that the landing might be made in NORMANDY?

A.: The Navy believed that landing conditions there were much better because the area was protected from storms and westerly winds.

Q.: Did you expect a second invasion elsewhere?

A.: We expected a second invasion - that is we held a second invasion possible. That is why we kept our Fifteenth Army so long in that area, even though we considered our defenses adequately strong. We had 400 mm guns to protect us. I might add that I am of the opinion that we kept it there too long.

Q.: Were you able to move reserves to the invasion area quickly enough?

A.: It was only after the third day that reserves were made available in the invasion area.

Q.: How much did our paratroopers figure in the success of the invasion?

A.: I believe that you would not have been successful with your invasion had you not employed paratroopers. They were a big surprise to us. They captured a series of strongpoints without much opposition.

Q.: Did they hurt communications very much?

A.: The effectiveness of the paratroopers was of course enhanced by our difficulties in notifying these various strongpoints of paratroop landings.

Q.: How effective was your intelligence in spotting our activities along the English coast prior to the invasion?

A.: Our intelligence knew exactly where you had your equipment stored along the English Coast. Our 'ARADO 234' Reconnaissance Planes made numerous flights and photographed the entire area.

Q.: Do you also know that we had artificial ports, and did you know that we were able to land troops and supplies as quickly as we did?

A.: We saw also those peculiar items of equipment which we thought would be used to build artificial ports, and we held you were quite capable of bringing in troops and materiel quickly. (NOTE: I am dubious from GOERING's reaction that he really knew anything about the artificial ports).

Q.: Which checked your LUFTWAFFE the most over the beaches?

1. Anti-Aircraft FLAK Fire, or
2. our air cover?

A.: At that time our air force was as weak as could be imagined. Your anti-aircraft didn't bother us too much, only your fighters (especially during the day). We were much more successful with our night attacks.

/What difficulties stood..

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Q.: What difficulties stood in the way of successful performance by the LUFTWAFFE over the beaches?

A.: Although we brought in additional fighter planes from within GERMANY, our ground installations in FRANCE were very heavily attacked. Almost all of our air fields were destroyed. Our planes had to land on meadows, in fields. From time to time I had thought over the idea of committing all our fighter-aircraft against you to stop the invasion.

This would have given us one big advantage; we could have offered much stronger resistance. But it had much stronger disadvantages. First, we did not know the exact date of the invasion. Therefore, I would have been compelled to shift all of those planes from GERMANY during May. Had this been done, then the German and the American air forces would have engaged in many battles. Since the American air force was superior, if these battles had taken place, then my air force would have been completely exhausted by the time the invasion actually took place. Second, our air force ground crews were not adequate enough to sustain all these fighters. Since our fighter planes did not have too great a radius, it was necessary to concentrate most of our air fields close to the coast. That, in turn, made it possible for the American air force to destroy our air fields more quickly. Third, GERMANY would have been fully stripped of fighter planes. Since air attacks were being continually made on GERMANY, both before and after the invasion, such a move would have made GERMANY completely defenseless in that area. The third reason was the deciding factor not to commit all the fighters we had to repel the invasion.

Q.: When you knew of our troop and ship build-up for the invasion, why didn't you bomb the coast of ENGLAND more heavily in the days prior the invasion?

A.: Actually we had much less trouble committing our bomber squadrons, as they could be more easily distributed among the various fields in GERMANY. I for one wanted to commit these bombers against the English Coast. But the FUEHRER was adamant; for reasons of domestic politics he insisted upon continuing those damned revenge raids on the city of LONDON. We had reports from our British agents that everybody in BRITAIN was happy that we kept on concentrating on LONDON instead of directing our attention to the Southern Coast of ENGLAND, where you were building up your forces for the coming invasion. In addition to the importance of the target, I should have much rather had my planes fly over the Southern Coast than to be subjected to the great losses which we suffered over strongly-defended LONDON.

II. NORMANDY AND THE BREAKTHROUGH OF 25 JULY



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