

Thursday, JUNE 1, 1944

Conf 0730: Still very uncertain about Sat to Mon whether ridge
will follow the forecasts fronts or many a succession of fronts.

Gen Bull 0845: Said quiet wind conditions fairly well assured
but clouds very uncertain

Travel to Portsmouth for Evening meeting of C's in C¹ 9.00pm

Aft conf at 17.30: fairly optimistic for favourable
conditions on Monday morning but ETA² gloomy

At later Conf (2100) Pett³ and Douglas⁴ forecast a gloomy
picture: W.W.⁵ Favourable and Admiralty ½ way

Things don't look too good for the Supreme Commander's⁶
meeting tomorrow morning.

Slept in tent in a wood near Southwick Hall⁷. ANCXF⁸
and 21 Army Group HQ are in and around Southwick Hall: SHAEF⁹
Command post is in a near by wood cut lane in tents

¹ Commanders in Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Force these were: Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight David Eisenhower; Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Tedder; Ground Forces Commanders Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery (21st Army Group), Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley (12th Army Group), Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers (6th Army Group); Air Forces Commander Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory Air Commander in Chief Allied Expeditionary Air Force and Naval Forces Commander Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay.

² ETA the code name for Air Ministry Weather Central (British Meteorological Office) based at Dunstable. ETA and Central are both used in this document to refer to this location.

³ Pettersen – a Norwegian meteorologist working for the British Meteorological Office

⁴ C. K. M. Douglas Met Office forecaster. Douglas and Pettersen, the ETA (or Central) team, were the only civilians on the team tasked with creating the D-Day forecast.

⁵ WideWing – based at Bushy Park near Hampton Court Palace this was the base for the US Eighth Air Force including the US Meteorological team from 1942

⁶ Supreme Commander, also referred to as SC – General Eisenhower Supreme Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force.

⁷ Actually Southwick House a mansion near Portsmouth set in the 295 acre Southwick Park. The property was requisitioned in 1941 and became the home of HMS Dryad, the RN School of Navigation following heavy bombing of the Naval Dockyard. In 1943 the property was selected as the location for the Advanced Command Post of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force and HMS Dryad moved onto further requisitioned lands within the grounds.

⁸ Allied Naval Expeditionary Force

⁹ Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force

Friday, JUNE 2, 1944

See separate notes for details¹⁰

At Portsmouth: Met Cont 07.30 ETA gloomy:

Wide Wing still optimistic

Conf. Before S.C. and Cs in C at 1000: said prospects not

good for cloud but not unfavourable for wind

Walk in Southwick Park in afternoon and back to Fleming's¹¹ office
in time for afternoon conf at 5pm

1700 Pett and Douglas more gloomy

2000 Another forecast conf. with Central¹²: much as before.

ETA gloomy. W W optimistic: Admiralty mid way between

2130 S.C's conference: said prospects still poor especially about
cloud.

Went back at 11pm to Advanced SHAEF¹³ camp in nearby wood:

Slept intermittently till 5am then to Southwick Hall in Jeep to conf. at
6am (see next page.)

The strain of this business is increasing. Yates¹⁴ is obviously badly
worried that Holzman and Krick¹⁵ are taking such a different line from
Pettersen and Douglas and this reacts on me. I think Robinson also
favours Widewing (US) and also Sutcliffe¹⁶. Its going to be a hard
business to give confident advice.

¹⁰ These notes no longer survive

¹¹ Inst/Cdr Fleming (Naval Staff Weather Officer) Special Weather Advisor to Admiral Ramsey for the
seaborne aspects of the Normandy Landings (Operation Neptune)

¹² Air Ministry Weather Central, Dunstable (also referred to be its code name ETA)

¹³ See note 20 below

¹⁴ Col. D. N. Yates U.S.S.T.A.F. (United States Strategic and Tactical Air Forces) Army Air Forces
Weather Service Commanding Officer

¹⁵ Irving Krick and Ben Holzman – the American Team based with the USAAF at Wide Wing (Code
name for Bushy Park).

¹⁶ Col. C. N. Spencer and Dr R. C. Sutcliffe were the meteorologists representing AEAFF Allied
Expeditionary Air Force. They did not take a direct part in producing the D-Day forecast but were
present as specialists for their own services, along with Inst/Cdr Fleming ANCXF (Naval Staff
Weather Officer) with the invitation to make contributions to general discussions.

Saturday, JUNE 3, 1944

A day of extreme strain: the weather situation got worse: two depressions below 980mb at once in June. Who could have forecast this? Eta and W.W. are taking opposite views and one of the main ships reports have gone crazy (jump of 20mb into most important Atlantic position)¹⁷ to make matters worse Robinson sides with W.W and Sutcliffe is non committal

At the 9.30pm conf before the S.C.¹⁸ Monty, Ramsey, Tedder, Leigh- Mallory etc. the invasion was tentatively called off after much cross questioning. But Yates is still unconvinced so is W.W.

Ad Creasy¹⁹ said he had told the SCC Conf yesterday after we had retired that there was 6'3" of Stag and 6'2" of gloom.

Did not go to bed: wrote up notes from midnight till 2.30 then got ready for 0300 conf (met)

Sunday, JUNE 4, 1944

At 0415 conf this morning, Assault for tomorrow definitely cancelled.

During today it began to appear that there might be a temporary fair interval Monday night: should we advise to make use of it. The alternative is Wed-Thurs night or alternatively a fortnight later.²⁰

I am now getting rather stunned – it is all a nightmare.

At this evenings conf I was hard pressed by the SC and his Commanders about * After the evening Conf 9.30 – until 11pm Gen Eisenhower jokingly promised Yates and me a bottle of whiskey if our forecast came off.

Assault provisionally put on again for 6.30 Tuesday morning but has to be confirmed tomorrow morning.

* likely conditions later in the week. I said I could say little about that:

¹⁷ This would have been data sent in by a ship or weather ship

¹⁸ Supreme Commander - Eisenhower

¹⁹ Chief of Staff for the planning and execution of the naval operations (Operation Neptune) for the Normandy Landings.

²⁰ Had the invasion been launched a fortnight later it would have encountered the worst Channel weather for 20 years

Monday, JUNE 5, 1944

After 1 hours rest Met Conf at 0300: Fair interval confirmed and Invasion put on 'Final and Irrevocable Decision'. Whatever the outcome the decision is taken.

ACM Tedder (probably having an inkling about the difficulties) said 'You have treated the whole business in a most masterly way Stagg.'

Ad. Creasy said "You should be proud of yourself and your forecast" – I wonder. He should wait till he sees how things go.

C. of Staff (Gen Beddle Smith)²¹ "Go and take a weeks rest now"

²¹ Mis-spelling of Bedell-Smith. General Bedell-Smith was Eisenhower's Chief of Staff at SHAEF

Tuesday , June 6, 1944

Returned from Portsmouth by Command Car (open overgrown Jeep). Arrived W.W. (SHAEF)²² about 1300.

Lunch and home by 1430.

On Tuesday afternoon afternoon²³ and evening cloud became 10/10 with increasing wind. Caused me considerable worry at home – but really too tired to be much concerned.

²² SHAEF Main HQ was based at WideWing and in the weeks running up to D-Day moved to its Advanced headquarters at Southwick Park. Following the invasion SHAEF advanced moved to mainland France and WideWing became SHAEF Rear HQ.

²³ This repetition is present in the original with the contracted 'aftn' followed by the expanded 'afternoon'

Wednesday, JUNE 7, 1944

To SHAEF main at 0815:

Still blowing Force 4-5 and mainly overcast

Discussed with ADMS(H)²⁴ (telephone) the forecast issued by 2nd TAF²⁵ which General de Guigand²⁶ had asked me to account for on Monday afternoon at Portsmouth

Spoke Farquharson²⁷ and Sutcliffe

Took Robinson to 2nd TAF by car and discussed with Sutcliffe and Farquharson (1) 2nd TAF Met Section

(2) Sutcliffe's status, now that AEAF²⁸ letter has come out appointing Spencer Chief Met O(fficer) advanced AEAF.

Back to SHAEF just in time to take 1730 conf with Central.

Ad this Conf. decided (1) to eliminate evening (2100) conf by giving details at this afternoon

(2) to reduce future confs to one each day at 1730

(3) to restrict nature of PLAFOR messages to some detail for first 2 days and then broad statement for next 3 days

Generals Morgan, Whiteley and Gale²⁹ came into the office at 1900 after Conf completed. I told them good prospect of things now fairly settled with well broken skies and winds moderate.

Home after supper at 2030

²⁴ Possibly Assistant Director of Medical Service (Home). If this is the case the discussion may have been in relation to evacuation of wounded personnel.

²⁵ 2nd Tactical Air Force

²⁶ General Freddie de Guigand, Chief of Staff to Montgomery and 21st Army Group.

²⁷ Dr James Strachan Farquharson, Senior Meteorological Officer 2nd Tactical Air Force. After the D-Day landings he served on the continent with 2 TAF and SHAEF almost to the end of the war.

²⁸ Allied Expeditionary Air Force

²⁹ General Frederick E. Morgan Deputy Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander; General John Francis Whiteley deputy to the Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations) SHAEF, General Humfrey Gale Chief Administrative Officer SHAEF