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HEADQUARTERS 16TH INFANTRY  
APO #1, U. S. ARMY

28 June 1944

SUBJECT: Remarks on Operation "Neptune".

TO : The Commanding Officer, 16th Infantry.

1. In an operation of great magnitude, situations are bound to arise which are not covered by SOP solutions. An operation, such as "Neptune", calls for unified teamwork on the part of a number of what, might almost be called, self governing units. The more important of these are the Navy, The Army SOS unit, and the Army Combat unit. Roughly the SOS unit is charged with getting the Combat unit ready for, and carried to, the point of embarkation. The Navy carries the combat unit from this point to its assault destination.

2. From these senior echelons of command we descend to the respective lower echelons, the Transportation Corps, the Regiment and the Naval organization. Many of the difficulties encountered by the lower echelons are due to the conflicting orders issued from above. In addition there is always the conflict in the interpretation given to these orders by the lower units. The result is an overlapping of authority in some cases while in others there isn't any authority at all. You either have too many cooks or none at all.

3. Particular difficulties were encountered by this headquarters in its efforts to make certain that a physical check of each and every officer and enlisted man of this combat team was made at the embarkation points. The difficulties were varied and included:

- (a) No provision was made for office space in which to do absolutely necessary clerical work. Regardless of how elaborate and detailed the instructions may be, units will still arrive at the E. P. with insufficient rosters or none at all. This work must be done on the spot and immediately.

Remarks on Operation "Neptune", (Continued) 28 June 1944.

- (b) The unavoidable clash between the Transportation Corps and this headquarters due to conflicting interests. The Transportation Corps is mainly interested in seeing that everything is loaded according to schedule. The chief interest of this headquarters is to see that every man is checked, regardless of anything else.
- (c) Possibly of less importance, but a source of trouble and inconvenience to the men attempting to make the check, is the tendency of Field Grade officers to wander from their units. Complete checking of whole rosters has been held up while attempts were made to find the missing officer (S).
- (d) The roster problem. This is the supreme headache from beginning to end. How many rosters should be made up? Should they be made up tactically or alphabetically by grade? Should one officer per serial be made responsible for turning in all rosters of a serial, at the E. P.? Or should each and every unit or fraction of unit be responsible for their own? Whom should the rosters be turned in to?

4. With previous experience to go on there is now no reason why a definite number of rosters per unit per ship should not become SOP.

5. As to the best manner of making up the rosters, something can be said for both methods. However either method is workable as long as it is uniform throughout and as long as the unit to be checked presents itself according to the roster. However the alphabetical Roster by rank is preferred for it does make the checking much more simplified.

6. This headquarters recommends that one officer per serial be made responsible for the collection of corrected rosters from each unit and fraction of unit. This to be done not before the serial has reached the RCRP. In turn these rosters should be given to the Designated Authorities - and no one else - at the E. P.

7. In retrospect the snags which were encountered in operation "Neptune", were disposed of with little loss of time.

Remarks on Operation "Neptune" (Continued) 28 June 1944.

However snags may be the cause of great delay and confusion if efforts are not made to solve them prior to actual operations.

*J. E. Margolis*  
J. E. MARGOLIS  
Captain, 16th Infantry  
Personnel Adjutant

HEADQUARTERS CO. 16TH INFANTRY  
A.P.O.# 1 US ARMY

29 June 1944

Subject : Comments and Criticisms, Operation "Neptune".

To : C.O., CT-16th.

a. Planning Stage.

1) Time Factor.

The time spent in the planning phase was sufficient for those who were "classified". However, individuals who were not classified were kept in the dark and their subsequent planning had to be hurried. In particular the I. & R. Platoon Leader, Military Police Officer, Ass't Communications Officer and Company Executive Officer needed information and time from the very start. It is realized that from a secrecy standpoint it was necessary to limit the "classified" individuals. However, around a CT headquarters it is quite evident that just enough information is available for everyone down to and including the lowest private to know pretty much of what is going on.

2) Facilities Available.

Much more space should have been made available as "Secret" rooms. There was never enough room to allow the segregation of the departments of the planning, i.e., Transport, Quartermaster, Intelligence, Tactical Plan. The result was that the "Secret" room was a hodge podge of confusion for an outsider to come to for information. It was all there in the same room, but you couldn't get across the room to the person you wanted to see.

3) Equipment.

There appeared to be a wealth of equipment, maps and models for study but it was difficult to examine anything in particular as the space was not sufficient, as mentioned above.

4) Tactical Plan.

It is everyone's conviction that the Tactical Plan was beautifully worked out, complete in every detail. But, it didn't work for the Germans screwed up our time and space schedule. Throughout the planning phase no emphasis was placed on any subordinate plan which we and others would adopt if the initial plan didn't work. In particular, location of C.P.'s, landing of vehicles and equipment, Naval support fires, etc., to compensate for the emergency dictated by the enemy ashore.

5) Other Points.

The Supply problem for the operation was an extremely difficult one and individuals concerned worked unceasingly to accomplish their task.

It does seem, however, that something could have been done at higher headquarters to make it easier to secure necessary equipment.

**b. Concentration Area.**

- 1) Movement to the concentration area was accomplished with a minimum of difficulty.
- 2) Food in concentration area was well prepared and, except in isolated cases, sufficient.
- 3) The health of the men was generally fair and any sickness was not due to any conditions existing in the concentration area. Red Cross and Special Service facilities were excellent for the men.

**c. Marshalling Phase.**

- 1) The S.O.S. in attempting to allow sufficient time for movement set up their schedule in such a way that men were kept standing and waiting for long periods of time unnecessarily. One group from Headquarters Company waited from 0400 hours until 2000 hours before moving, yet S.O.S. could plan no other way than to rout them out at 0200 hours, breakfast at 0230 hours (doughnuts and coffee) and move to Marshalling area at 2000 hours.
- 2) Time Factors. As Above.
- 3) Food was excellent in most areas but in some it was poorly prepared and of insufficient quantity. This was due, no doubt, to particular Camp Commanders.
- 4) Security of Secret Information.  
Security of information was good but there was a tendency among officers to discuss and reveal unnecessary things in the open. Much more caution on everyone's part could have been exercised.

**d. Embarkation of personnel and Loading of Vehicles.**

Accomplished with a minimum of confusion and very efficiently handled.

**e. Landing on Hostile Shore and Culmination at the D<sup>1</sup> Phase Line.**

Great difficulty was experienced in getting equipment ashore from the landing craft. A valiant effort was made on everyone's part to accomplish task. However, when the Company was assembled it was discovered that there was too little equipment to function satisfactorily, initially. However, everyone went to work at once salvaging equipment and soon we were in fair shape.

Little can be said of the tactical employment of Headquarters Co. as our job depends directly upon the progress and disposition of the assault battalions. We were able to establish and maintain communication constantly from D-Day.

**f. Miscellaneous Points..**

- 1) Naval co-operation was excellent. They appreciated our problems and did their best to help in every way possible.
- 2) Communication. In general the communications plan was good, however in some respects the equipment could have been altered to



to better fit our needs.

- a) At least 2 miles of 130 wire could have been easily brought ashore instead of the like amount of 110, which is heavier and bulkier. The 130 wire should be on DR8 Reels (1/2 mile)
  - b) Perhaps some fantastic means could be worked out of dropping communications equipment on the beach at H Hour by parachute in sufficient quantities to guarantee its being immediately available. In every amphibious operation in which we have participated the quantities of equipment lost were far out of proportion and some means should be devised for its safe landing.
3. Additional equipment needed--None.
  4. Medical Setup. Insofar as this company is concerned our needs are well taken care of.

*Stephen V. Ralph*  
Stephen V. Ralph  
Capt. 16th Inf.  
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS 1ST BATTALION 16TH INFANTRY  
A. P. O. #1, U. S. Army

30 June 1944

SUBJECT: Comments and Criticisms on Neptune Operation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 16th Infantry

In compliance with letter, Hq. 16th Infantry dated 26 June 1944, subject as above the following comments and criticisms of Neptune Operation are submitted:

A. PLANNING STAGE

1. Time Factor - Just sufficient time to coordinate available information and publish a Battalion order based on FO #5, Hq CT 16.
2. Facilities Available - A building with complete facilities including electric lighting, tables, living quarters, and complete tools for working with maps and aerial photographs is essential. This was furnished in case of CT 16. Tents are not suitable for this stage of a landing operation.
3. Equipment - Certain items of essential equipment which could have been issued during this period were not issued until the final days in the marshalling area.
4. Tactical Plan - No comment.
5. Other Points - Organization Commander's should be bigoted and allowed to participate in this stage of the operation.

B. CONCENTRATION AREA

1. Movement - More truck space should have been allotted because the assault equipment carried was quite bulky and in most cases occupied the same amount of truck space as the individual.
2. Food - The food supplied by the QM was of good quality. The preparation and serving by the static personnel was satisfactory. The kitchens however, should have been decentralized and the groups fed per kitchen should have been smaller.
3. Health - The health of the command was above normal. Those in need of medical aid could, in a majority of cases, have been taken care of in the concentration area if a suitably equipped dispensary had been provided to include overnight treatment.
4. Morale - Passes and transportation to recreational areas are necessary. Garrison caps and neckties could have been retained by the individual during this period so that a suitable uniform could be worn on pass. Recreational tents, especially one provided with benches and tables for writing would be invaluable.  
Soldier orchestras should be allotted by higher headquarters as to play daily somewhere in the area.  
A radio centrally situated in each of the different blocks would have entertained the troops.  
Movies were shown daily but the seating facilities, ventilation and coordination by the static troops was of an unsatisfactory nature. A little planning and proper control would have made the setup more enjoyable.



## G. LANDING PHASE

Movement - No movement, therefore no comment.

Time Factors - The time allotted for briefing and orders was sufficient.

3. Feed - The preparation and serving of food improved. The groups fed per kitchen were too large and the personnel had to move too far from their block areas for feeding. Decentralize the kitchen into the block areas.
4. Security of Secret Information - The static troops associated too closely with the briefed personnel and thereby had access to certain information. The security guard and the restrictions placed on the briefed troops proved sufficient except for the above.
5. Other Points - All vehicles could have and should have been waterproofed during this period. Training in waterproofing was not sufficient and each of the many waterproofing inspectors sent around gave different and conflicting instructions.  
The area allotted for training purposes was too small.  
Briefing tents for the companies would have expedited briefing of enlisted men and provided the officers with an area suitable for individual study of maps, etc.

## D. EMBARKATION OF PERSONNEL AND LOADING OF VEHICLES

1. Conflicting instructions from ETC and the SOS in charge of the embarkation delayed the movement two hours. A simplified method of checking and a standard procedure on rosters is an essential of prompt and successful embarkation. It was lacking during this operation.
2. Loading of Vehicles - The Transportation Corps didn't allow the TOM sufficient time to load the vehicles according to his priority. LCT's used instead of LCM's would have speeded up the loading.
3. Blankets didn't arrive on the APA until after the troops had been embarked. Arrangements should be made to load same 24 hours prior to personnel.

## E. LANDING ON HOSTILE SHORE AND CULMINATION AT D-1.

1. Too many service troops were landed in early waves. This condition caused a crowded beach and increased the casualties proportionately. A plan should be worked out so that only assault troops are landed until the beach defenses have been reduced; then the service and other troops be landed on call. The latter group will not function while fighting is taking place in the beach area.  
Vehicles with the exception of tanks and tank destroyers were given too early a priority for landing; they are of little value in the early stages of a landing operation and most of those landed were destroyed by hostile fire. Certain vehicles such as the DUKW's were debarked too early and at too great a distance out to sea. Naval supervision was inadequate or entirely lacking in this regard. Close in naval bombardment of the artillery and automatic weapons emplacements commanding the assault troops landing beach was haphazard. If initially, destroyers and cruisers had shelled the beach and the high ground immediately in rear from a point blank range, the fire on the assault troops would have been much less. A complete and overwhelming naval bombardment of the beach and beach exits is the most valuable support which can be given assault infantry.  
Assault troops should be impressed above all with the necessity of getting off the beaches. Instructions should deal chiefly with how to clear wire, mine fields, and other obstacles.

Section Leaders carry the weight of the attack in the early stages. success or the failure of the landing depends on their leading their men against beach defenses and supervising the clearing of the beach property, by the personnel of their command.

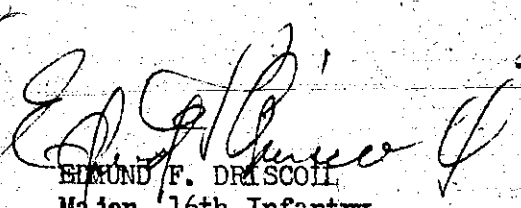
Heavy equipment should be discarded in place of a lighter substitute. 110 wire, the 284 radio, and other equally heavy equipment was all lost or damaged in landing. The men carrying the same were more often casualties than others. Flame thrower men were all wounded on the beach as were most of the SCR 300 operators. Light wire (130) and 536 radios are the best means of communication during the early stages of a landing. Runners are sufficient until the above can be established.

The landing plan should be very flexible and alternate objectives clearly defined beforehand.

The advance inland after the beach had been cleared was coordinated by companies through the Bn CP and followed ordinary tactics of the attack. Tanks or assault artillery would have expedited this movement.

#### F. MISCELLANEOUS POINTS

1. Naval Cooperation - Excellent on the APA and otherwise except for a few scattered instances; the most important of which concerned the handling of the DUKW's.
2. Communications - Waterproofing and waterproof containers were distributed at the last possible minute and in inadequate quantities. Wire proved to be the surest and most easily established method of communication within the Battalion.
3. Additional Equipment Needed - If assault equipment is to be carried, additional transportation is necessary.
4. Medical Setup - Every assault boat should carry a medical rating to render 1st Aid to men wounded in the boat and also to collect wounded men from the water and beaches for return to the transports. A navy medical officer or officers should supervise this work from advantageous points along the beach.

  
EDMUND F. DRISCOLL  
Major, 16th Infantry  
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS, 2ND BATTALION, 16TH INFANTRY  
A.P.O. #1, U.S. Army

/alc

29 June 1944

SUBJECT : Comments and Criticisms on Operation Neptune.

TO : Commanding Officer, 16th Infantry.

The following comments and criticisms of Operation Neptune are herewith submitted and are intended in a constructive manner rather than a criticism:

1. PLANNING STAGE:

a. During the planning stage, time factor as given to regimental and higher headquarters might have been adequate, but that given to battalions was entirely too short. It is felt that at least an additional week or ten days should have been given in order that battalion commanders and staff have sufficient time to thoroughly study the problem before making decisions. This would enable battalion commanders to get together with all commanders of supporting units before the final plans are made, rather than after the plans are made, as was done in Operation Neptune. It is felt that the facilities available for making the plans and publishing of orders was not adequate. There were too many different groups trying to work in the same room which resulted in a lot of unnecessary noise and confusion on occasion. This is not conducive to clear thinking and the making of the best plan.

b. Equipment received or available during the planning stage was very good. However, it is felt that additional reliefs should have been made available to battalion for study by all officers in the battalion for a greater length of time than was done.

c. Another very small item but important was the lack of sufficient cellulose tape and pliofilm. It should not be necessary for organizations to beg, steal and borrow this type of equipment.

d. The tactical plan it is felt was basically sound. However, it is believed that there was a tendency to plan on the initial operation being easy rather than hard. It is felt that it is better to look on the pessimistic side initially and then have things easy, than it is to look on the optimistic side and then have a very difficult operation. Another point during this stage of the operation was the making of decisions by higher headquarters which tactically affected the lower units without consulting them whatsoever. An example of this was the manner in which the landing tables and boat loading tables were made by higher headquarters without consulting battalion or company commanders as to what their desires were in regard to personnel in these individual boats. This naturally resulted in changes having to be made at later dates. Also, battalion and company commanders were kept in a constant state of ignorance as to what their equipment on the initial assault would be. Battalions and companies were assured on three separate occasions that they would have the assault jacket, and each time it was changed. The assault jackets finally arrived while in the marshalling area, which was three days prior to embarkation. This naturally resulted in a great deal of confusion. The same is true of other items of equipment which were more or less thrown at the troops at the last minute. Such items of equipment being machine gun carts, back pack carriers, additional wire cutters, etc.

## 2. CONCENTRATION AREA:

a. Movement to the concentration area was generally very good. However, it is felt that additional warning notice of the movement should have been given. Warning notice was not received until approximately 1800 hours of the night prior to movement at 0700 hours next morning. This naturally resulted in a lot of confusion and last minute packing which indicated to everyone that a movement was imminent, and could have been avoided if companies had been given as much as twenty-four to forty-eight hours notice.

b. Some difficulty was encountered at the concentration area in the refusal of the camp commander to allow any trucks to enter the area. This meant that some twenty tons of ammunition and demolitions had to be hand carried for a distance of some three or four hundred yards, which could have been easily avoided by driving the trucks on which this was loaded into the camp and unloading in the company areas.

c. Food in the concentration areas was extremely poor. "C" rations were fed on two separate occasions, which in the opinion of the undersigned was absolutely inexcusable. Also, on several occasions there were not sufficient rations and the kitchens ran short before all troops had been fed. It is not felt that this was true of all camps. Conditions in the concentration camps depends to a great extent on who the static troops are, and this unit was unfortunate in drawing a very poor camp. The health of the command remained at a high level while in the concentration area, but this was due to the physical shape of the individual rather than the health facilities available in the camp, as shower facilities, hot water, etc., were not available in sufficient quantities. The morale of the troops remained at a high level and some morale benefits such as movies, PX rations, etc., were available in the camp from the camp Special Service.

d. It is felt that troops were in the concentration and marshalling areas for too long a period. Some of the physical hardness of the men was lost due to inactivity and lack of facilities for keeping in physical shape.

## 3. MARSHALLING AREA:

a. No comment can be made on the movement to marshalling area as this unit remained in the same camp where it was concentrated. However, it is felt that the time factor of the marshalling area was again too extended. Comment made on the food situation in the concentration area applies also to the marshalling area.

b. Security in the marshalling area was very very bad. There were not sufficient briefing tents for briefing of personnel in the proper manner. Also, too many people who had nothing whatsoever to do with the operation, such as the camp commander and the Transportation Corps officers, knew entirely too much about the coming operation. There is no reason in the world why this personnel should be given maps or should know anything at all in regard to target and dates.

## 4. EMBARKATION OF PERSONNEL AND LOADING OF VEHICLES:

Embarkation of personnel and loading of vehicles was very very satisfactory, with all personnel being embarked within two hours and a half after starting. However, the movement from marshalling area to the hard was very poorly planned. Men and equipment were loaded into trucks and trailers like cattle, and after all troops had left the marshalling area, seven empty trucks were left over. It is felt that the Transportation Corps should be able to figure closer than this the number of trucks needed and the number of personnel to go on a truck. It is extremely difficult to put twenty-eight men with packs, machine guns, mortars, pole charges, scaling ladders, etc., in a 2½ ton truck.

## 5. LANDING ON HOSTILE SHORE:

a. Landing on hostile shore was made pretty well on schedule but it was not made on correct beaches. This was due in my opinion mainly to Navy personnel being afraid to stand up and watch for prominent land marks in order to bring their boats in to the right place. Boat in which the undersigned was a passenger was landed in the correct place at the correct time due to the undersigned personally bringing the boat in and not because the Navy knew where they were going. Some craft were landed as much as fifteen hundred yards from where they should have been. This naturally resulted in great state of confusion, regardless of how much the Navy assures that they can put us at the right place at the right time, I think that it was definitely proven that this is not true.

b. Since the battalion was so widely scattered it was necessary to fight with approximately one company for the first twenty-four hours. Naturally, we did not reach our objective and it was necessary for the 18th Infantry to pass through us and take same. I am firmly convinced that had my battalion been landed intact as was planned, the seizure of the objective and the "D" plus 1 phase line could have been accomplished as planned.

## 6. MISCELLANEOUS:

The following are a few miscellaneous points which it is desired to touch on:

a. Naval cooperation as far as the Captain of the APA was concerned left nothing to be desired. However, the attitude of some of the younger naval officers was none too good. They seemed to be upset with the idea that we were only non-paying passengers and the sooner that they could get rid of us so that they could get home, the better they would like it.

b. Communications were completely lacking for the first six hours after the assault due to all radios and communication equipment being lost on the beach. Personnel carrying this equipment were too heavily laden and were easy victims to be picked off by snipers.

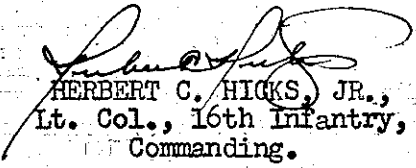
c. Equipment of all types as brought in initially was adequate and no additional equipment which was needed can be thought of at this time.

d. The medical set-up for the first twenty-four hours was very bad. Wounded personnel could not be adequately taken care of and evacuated. This was due however to enemy action and is a concrete example of the planning of an easy landing rather than a hard one. It appears that all medical personnel for evacuation, etc., were in one boat which was sunk by the enemy. If the planning had been based on the assumption that it would be a hard operation and this personnel split between several boats, this situation would not have arisen. It is a good example of the old adage that it does not pay to put all your eggs in one basket. A lot of personnel were wounded on the beach and later drowned because the water was rising very fast and there were not sufficient medical personnel to remove them to a place of safety.

e. Another point to be considered is the time at which vehicles began to land. A large number of vehicles were lost because they were landed before the beaches had been cleared of enemy fire and obstacles. This could have been avoided had there been proper personnel on the beach to control the beach of craft loaded with this type of equipment. This was due to lack of communication from ship to shore. Some alternate plan should be made for communication by pyrotechnic, signal light, or some other means between the beach-master and the control craft when the beach-master loses all of his radios.

f. It is felt that too much confidence and weight was put on what the supporting fires were going to do. Supporting fires were of absolute no consequence on Omaha Red Beach. The Air Corps might just as well have stayed home in bed for all the good that their bombing concentration did. There were no indications of

any bombs hitting closer than fifteen hundred yards to any of the strongpoints, and there were indications of the greater quantity of them falling four thousand yards inland. It is not understood why the naval support plan could not have been more effective. As they fire by instrument and even though the shore line was covered by haze, it should not be necessary for them to see their target in order to hit it. The idea of the rocket ship is a very good one, but in order to do the most good it is necessary that they come within range of the beach. A great number of the rockets fell short into the water because the craft were not brought sufficiently close before launching them.

  
HERBERT C. HICKS, JR.,  
Lt. Col., 16th Infantry,  
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS THIRD BATTALION  
SIXTEENTH INFANTRY  
APO #1 U.S. ARMY

*Handwritten:*  
5-3

2 July 1944

SUBJECT: Comments and Criticisms of Operation "Neptune".

TO : Commanding Officer, 16th Infantry.

1. The following report concerns comments and criticisms of operation "Neptune". Although the planning for this operation covered all conceivable minor points. A lack of coordination and cooperation between the Army and Navy caused the unnecessary loss of life and material.

2. PLANNING STAGE:

The planning stage of the operation was in my opinion above criticism. Sufficient time was devoted to this phase of the operation. The facilities available during this stage were excellent. Equipment issued to men was late in being issued, but before the operation began nearly everything desired was in the hands of the units.

The tactical plan was in my opinion sound and there are no criticism of it.

The failure of commanders in the planning stage to make provisions for flexibility in the Landing Table caused much unnecessary loss of life and waste of valuable equipment. Furthermore, increased confusion was caused on the beach by the landing of non-fighting units before the beach was able to absorb them. This jamming of the beach hindered the operation of the infantry units in accomplishing their mission and caused extravagant loss of life and waste of equipment. The basic reason for this was that battles are not fought on time schedules or according to a timed plan. The commanders put too much emphasis on the time element in the build-up of troops coming ashore, consequently when the Infantry units were slowed up in the accomplishment of their mission there had been no provisions made to slow up the landing of follow-up or unneeded personnel. It should be remembered in future operations that the Landing Table is merely a priority table and troops should be available only to land at that time.

In the above discussion it is evident that close coordination between the Army and Navy is necessary to increase the flexibility in the Landing Table. This coordination and cooperation was definitely lacking from the time the boats were lowered in the transport area until the beach was reached. In each operation an Infantry unit is given a beach to seize. Therefore the Infantry commander and the Navy Beachmaster should be the two individuals who work in close cooperation until the initial beach-head is reached and the beach is clear of enemy ground fire. This coordination and cooperation between these two individuals did not exist. Only the Infantry unit commander knows the progress of his units,



he is the only one who can say whether more troops should land or not, and what type of ground troops are needed at that early phase of the operation. The control boat for a beach should be the Free Boat of the Battalion Commander. It should control the movement of all units to the beach until it is tactically feasible to land. The main point that any commander must remember in battle is placing him in a position where he can control the operation. Commanders cannot command with the assault squads. Positions of his command post, whether afloat or ashore, should be based on the principle — ~~Cannot~~ I communicate and control my command. If the location of his command post doesn't fulfill this principle he is useless.

In the operation "Neptune" it is believed that if each commander had a Free Boat with the Navy Beachmaster present with communication to control the landing on beaches, less loss of life and material would have been suffered.

b. Concentration Area and Marshalling Phase:

Generally speaking, the Marshalling and Concentration phases were handled in an excellent manner. I cannot offer any better way in general to handle such a vast and complicated problem. It was evident that "Too many did too little for so few". In short, wasted man-power.

c. The security side of this operation was generally well handled with the exception of the punishment of violators of security regulations was and still is being poorly administered. Until the Army starts using the maximum powers given to it under the Articles of War, violations of disciplinary regulations will continue.

d. The Embarkation of Personnel & Loading of Vehicles:

There is no criticisms of the embarkation and loading of vehicles. It was well done in my opinion.

e. The Landing and Culmination at D / 1:

This phase was handled as well as could be expected in accordance with the plan as written. One criticism which I believe was thought of by individuals of this unit, but not properly understood by higher command was the matter of the launching of the DD tanks and DUKW's. One individual must make the decision as to whether the sea is light enough to enable them to get to shore. It is possible that the losses in tanks and DUKW's would have been much lighter if they would have been landed a few hundred yards off shore or landed from beached landing craft.

f. Miscellaneous Points:

(1) Naval cooperation is not a matter of Army and Navy commanders meeting in a ward-robe and agreeing to certain principles of operation and then going their separate way to never meet again. Army and Navy cooperation must be close cooperation; commanders of both Army and Navy units working together physically until the last man and vehicle has landed from the unit. This was not done; and in four years of amphibious work I have never seen it done. Until Army and Navy commanders in all echelons of command get together and stay together. Until the phase line of cooperation has ceased, amphibious operations will continue to be haphazard and massacres for those participating, providing the resistance is

any half-hearted.


(2) Communication is 'Command' and commanders without it are just taking up space. In the Neptune Operation the battalion had communication with SCR-300 radio throughout the D-day. The situation was known as well as it could be through radio communication. Communication between battalion and regiment was in by SCR-610 but after the landing of the Advance Regimental CP the communication failed in as much as the Regiment radio was lost in landing.

(3) No additional equipment is needed.

(4) The medical set-up on D-day was entirely handled by the Regimental Medical Detachment with the subordinate Battalion Medical Detachments. Although medical personnel on the beach numbered five times the size of the Regimental Medics, their work was nil on D-day.

I personally observed thirty doctors digging foxholes on the beach at about 3 p.m. D-day, when hundreds of men were dying on the beach from lack of medical care or else drowning because there was no one other than fighting troops to move them from the in-coming tide. The excuse offered by these so called practitioners of medicine and surgery was that they had no equipment. It is criminal for a doctor in the Army to not carry on his person in combat the tools of his profession. These doctors were carrying their blanket rolls, but not one medical kit. At least, if they did have them none used them in time to save hundreds of lives. It must be clearly understood that the above is not a criticism of the Divisional Medics, but of the Medics who landed by battalion with the Division for the sole purpose of removing the wounded to ships at sea and caring for them until evacuation was possible.

3. Compared to previous landing operations much improvement could be noted by all those who participated in them.

  
CHARLES T. HORNER, JR.  
Lt.Col., 16th Infantry  
Commanding.

*Covered*

HEADQUARTERS 7TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION  
APO, #1 UNITED STATES ARMY

1. July 1944

SUBJECT : Comments and Criticisms of Operations "Neptune".

TO : Commanding Officer, 16th Inf. APO #1 U S Army

1. In compliance with instructions your headquarters, reference above subject, the following comments are offered:

a. Planning Stage

(1) Equipment - It is felt that the prior experience of unit and organization commanders might well be considered and given weight in the determination of the equipment to be loaded and for its landing.

b. Concentration Area

No comment.

c. Marshalling Phase

(1) Security of secret information - Insufficient weight given security particularly in relation to intermingling of combat and static troops and unwarranted freedom of movement of the latter after briefing.

d. Embarkation of personnel and loading of vehicles.

This was not carried out according to plan in all instances. Too much latitude is allowed or taken by the transportation corps.

e. Landing on Hostile shores and culmination at the D / Phase Line as shown in FO#5, Hq CT 16, dated May 1944.

(1) Hundreds too many non-essential members of beach clearance and beach party organizations were ashore too early. Only those teams with specific assignments should be landed while there is fire of any sort on the beach.

(2) In a future such operation the disgraceful condition which existed relative to evacuation of wounded, must be overcome by the assignment of craft to whom the evacuation of casualties, as a mission, has priority over rapid clearance of the beach to save the craft.

(3) In connection with the above, three times the medical personnel and one quarter of the engineer personnel actually beached prior to H / 2 hours seems to be indicated.

f. Miscellaneous points covering

(1) Naval cooperation - This criticism may not be constructive; nevertheless, it seems that more care should be taken in the selection and training of personnel charged with the handling of landing craft. In too many instances, refloating the craft while under fire was effected before the mission of craft on the beach was completed.

*George W. Gibbs*  
GEORGE W. GIBBS  
Lt Col 7th FA Bn  
Commanding.

COMPANY "A" FIRST MEDICAL BATTALION  
A.P.O. #1, United States Army

1 July 1944

SUBJECT: Comments and Criticisms Concerning the Landing of Operation  
Neptune from the Standpoint of the Collecting Company.

TO : 16th CT Commander.

1. Distribution of vehicles, and personnel accompanying the vehicles were on five separate craft. Since all vehicles and personnel on these craft were landed safely I feel the distribution and timing of disembarkation were satisfactory.
2. Due to my own suggestion too many of the company personnel was loaded on one personnel carrier, thus causing a high casualty rate when the craft was fired upon.
3. The main criticism, however, is that the Navy did not withhold the Medical personnel carrier till the beach had been secured. For by landing on schedule and before the beach had been secured, not only were there many casualties but the hand carried equipment was not put ashore. This being in part due to the heavy shelling of the boat and in part due to the fact that the water was so deep at point of landing that all those getting ashore had to swim.
4. Another criticism is that we landed on the wrong beach. It is problematic, however, whether the casualty rate would of been lower on the unloading more satisfactory even though we had landed on the right beach.
5. If we had landed a little later and without the severe casualties I feel our evacuation would of been much more satisfactory on D-Day.

*Emerald M. Ralston*  
EMERALD M. RALSTON,  
Captain, M. C.,  
Commanding.

1 July 1944

SUBJECT : Comments and Criticisms of Operations "NEPTUNE".

TO : Commanding Officer CT-16

1. The following comments and criticisms of operation "NEPTUNE" are submitted for consideration.

a. Planning Stage.

- (1) No Comment.
- (2) No comment.
- (3) Equipment

(a) DD equipment must be improved along technical lines in the event that this type equipment is used again. These technical suggestions have been submitted to FUSA and SHAEF.  
(b) Supply equipment allotted to this organization would have been very inadequate if we had had to operate more tanks immediately after landing.

- (4) Tactical Plan: Close support low level bombing missions by fighter bombers could have been advantageously employed.
- (5) No Comment.

b. Concentration area: No Comment.

c. Marshalling Phase : No Comment.

d. Embarkation of Personnel and loading of Vehicles: No Comment.

e. Handling on Hostile Shore.

- (1) LCT's carrying standard tanks failed to beach in shallow enough water to permit proper unloading of vehicles.
- (2) Some LCT's completely lost direction and attempted to unload vehicles on other than proper beaches. One such instance occurred when an LCT attempted to beach at Port En Besin.
- (3) Naval small craft approached too close to DD craft that had been launched. In one instance an LCM hit a DD tank ripping the canvas, sinking the tank. Other Naval small craft kept weaving in and out of the DD formations adding their wakes to the heavy seas, which caused the DD tanks to ship more water than they would have normally.

f. Miscellaneous Points:

- (1) No Comment.
- (2) Communications: Individual Type EE field telephones secured on the tank hull will provide more efficient communication with ground troops than portable radio equipment.
- (3) No Comment.
- (4) No Comment.
- (5) No Comment.

*Robert N. Skaggs*  
ROBERT N. SKAGGS  
Lt. Col., 741st Tank Battalion  
Commanding

29 June 1944

**SUBJECT:** Criticism on Neptune Operation.

**TO :** Commanding Officer, 16th Infantry.

**I. Planning.**

**A. Time Factor.-** The entire company agreed on an adequate time factor. Fox and Fabius "I" exercises gave ample opportunity to appreciate operation "Neptune".

**B. Facilities Available.-** Facilities on hand were perfectly adequate for operation insofar as Antitank Company was concerned.

**C. Equipment.-** Adequate.

**D. Tactical Plan.-**

(1) Sound enough in itself; however, notification of an alternate plan came rather late.

(2) Engineer demolition (shore brigade) may have had a plan, but we sincerely feel that it was not put into effect and that we should have had more knowledge of their plans and vice versa.

(3) Air Force.- Though we fully realize the hazards involved insofar as the air force was concerned, their timing and execution of their missions on the beach-head was none too accurate.

(4) It is all well and good to have a landing schedule, but beach masters should be able to regulate the landings according to beach-head conditions.

(5) Antitank Company Plan.- We feel, as we have always felt, that the Antitank Company in order to carry out its mission, should have been landed on call. As conditions existed antitank guns were landed with assault forces finding the beach exits completely blocked and having no other alternative, but to remain on the beach until proper routes of exit were established. If the above plan had been facilitated the company's losses of personnel and equipment would have been almost nil.

(6) Antitank Company did not have any Stereoscopic photographs available for study, although the distribution of maps and aerial photographs were adequate.

**II. Concentration Areas.**

**A. Movement to concentration area** was quite satisfactory. We feel that certain road congestion was due to lack of control of elements outside of the Regimental Team. Namely Q.M. Trucking Companies with anywhere from 25-50 trucks parked along highways prior to picking up their loads. On the second change over of concentration areas the time element was not synchronized. The need for correction of this is obvious.

AT Co's criticism on Neptune operation continued.

### I. Concentration Areas. (Con't.)

B. Food.- D-12 area's food was sloppily prepared and in several instances not sufficient. - In all other areas that the company visited the Messing and Messing facilities were adequate.

C. Morale of Troops.- Morale excellent. One bit of constructive criticism; It is felt that books and other reading material should have been distributed to the LCT's rather than to Company CP's only.

D. Security of Secret Information.- As far as security of secret information is concerned, we feel that on moving into a concentration area, static and transient personnel should not be allowed passes at any time after entering same.

### III. Embarkation of Personnel-Loading of Vehicles.

A. Personnel.- Some elements of the company stood around in daylight in plain view of whoever may be concerned for four hours before being embarked on A.P.A.'s. Again a time schedule could have been made up whereby the Army and Navy could have coordinated the task of loading. For instance; Releasing the number of personnel from the Marshalling Area as one wave from the Navy boats would allow.

B. Vehicles.- Generally speaking loading of vehicles was most satisfactory, however, while Lt. Goyette was loading his craft (LCT#543) Lt Col. Mc Henry (197th A.A. Bn.) deliberately cut off the former's column of vehicles and held up same for approximately 30 minutes in order to facilitate his own loading. This was done in spite of orders from the Transportation Corps.

### IV. Landing on Hostile Shore.

A. We have already stated that the company was more or less unable to carry out its original plan due to beach congestion and lack of courage (?) on the part of the Engineers to open beach exists- namely #1 & #3. However, after certain individuals took it on their own to do something about it, the unit moved inland and at once started to perform its mission.

### V. Miscellaneous.-

A. Naval Cooperation.- Generally speaking, Naval cooperation was splendid as far as we were concerned, though we had equipment and men unloaded prior to reaching shallow water.

B. Communications.- Generally speaking, communication equipment was good until ducked in the ocean, and although all waterproofing precautions were carried out we had no defense against L.C.T.'s running over vehicles as happened in one case. The S.C.R. 300's worked well, but definitely need good waterproofing.

C. We need no additional equipment, in fact we could easily cut down on the paraphernalia that soldier's were required to carry ashore.

D. Medical Set Up.-

(1) We can't say enough in praise of the aid men of the 16th Combat Team, however, the same can not be said for aid men from other units that were observed. We feel that all aid men should be responsible for all wounded.



ATC's criticism on Neptune operation continued.

V. Miscellaneous.- (Continued)

D. Medical Set Up.- (Continued)

(2) We feel that each soldier, on a landing of this sort, should have two first aid packets. We are not much impressed with the Parachute First Aid Packet. Self Medication in the use of Morphine can be dangerous by the layman, particularly if a wounded man has been given more than one injection due to lack of medical identification, etc. Additional doctors and first aid men should be on call to assist those doctors and medical first aid men with the assaulting troops.

(3) We found that first aid packets, if carried on the front of the webb belt makes it much more handy for immediate use rather than if it is carried in the rear as regulations state.

*Linccln D. Fish*  
LINCCLN D. FISH,  
Captain, 16th Infantry,  
Commanding.

LDF:hap

CANNON COMPANY, 16TH INFANTRY  
APO #1, U.S. Army

27 June 1944.

**SUBJECT:** Comments and Criticisms of Operation "Neptune".

**TO:** Commanding Officer, 16th Infantry.

1. In compliance with letter your headquarters, dated 25 June 1944, subject as above, the following report is hereby submitted:

a. Planning Stage.

The part planned for this company was sound. Adequate personnel, weapons, equipment to include vehicles and howitzers, and liaison teams were provided.

b. Concentration Area.

(1) Movement: Aside from some annoying traffic difficulties brought on by a complex SOS system of control, the movement was satisfactory. The company was moved by organic transportation.

(2) Food: Excellent.

(3) Health: Health of command and morale benefits: Excellent. This was all handled by SOS personnel in an excellent manner in spite of the Senior Tactical Commander of the Camp D-1, rather than because of his aid and supervision.

c. Marshalling Phase.

(1) Movement: Satisfactory.

(2) Time Factors: No comment.

(3) Food: Excellent.

(4) Security of secret information: The SOS personnel apparently knew all about the operation and intrusted their knowledge to personnel down to include privates who were serving as runners. The SOS made no effort to conceal their knowledge of the whole plan.

(5) No other comment.

d. No comment on embarkation of personnel and loading of vehicles.

f. Miscellaneous Points.

(1) Naval cooperation: Excellent. In the final phase the Navy did not land us on the proper beach but the effort was good.


Comments and Criticisms of Operation "Neptune". (contd).

(2) Communications: No comment.

(3) Additional equipment needed: The Dukws proved to be unsatisfactory. All six (6) Dukws carrying cannon of this company sank. It is believed that better results could have been obtained by using LCT's and unloading directly on the beach.

(4) Medical Setup: Excellent with the 1st and 2nd Battalions.

(5) No comment on other points.



THOMAS F. O'BRIEN  
Captain, 16th Infantry,  
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS 16TH INFANTRY

APD  
S-3  
APO #1, U. S. Army,  
27 June 1944.

SUBJECT : Comments and Criticisms of Operation "NEPTUNE".

TO : Major Plitt, S-3, 16th Infantry.

1. In compliance with letter Headquarters CT 16, dated 25 June 1944, subject: Comments and Criticisms of Operation "NEPTUNE", the following report is submitted.

2. Planning Stage:

The limited functions of the S-1 Section required in the planning of the Operation NEPTUNE other than the clerical work required, the time factor was ample. Other than the preparation of an Administrative Appendix, distribution to units of the Combat Team, and collection of strength figures, S-1 was not particularly concerned in the planning stage.

3. Concentration Area:

The function of the S-1 Section in the concentration area was that of establishing and maintaining the dual operation of CT Headquarters and senior Tactical Camp Commander. Preparation before movement into concentration and marshalling areas of necessary administrative procedure for the operation of these combined headquarters, greatly facilitated their functioning. In the concentration area it was difficult to control the grouping of several of the smaller CT attachments, particularly Photo Interp Teams, CIC Det., etc. Distribution of necessary orders during the concentration period was relatively simple, and was given the utmost cooperation by the units of the CT.

Too much of the administrative details of running the concentration camp was left to the tactical troops. It had been anticipated that the handling of details, transportation, etc. would be the responsibility of static troops, but the actual procedure was to the contrary. There were ample recreational facilities, and the instigation of training programs among the tactical troops served to pass the time beneficially. Food was good and plentiful.

4. Marshalling Phase.

Here again the S-1 Section functioned in the dual capacity of CT Headquarters and Tactical Camp Commander. Control of administration in this phase was more difficult because of the intermingling nature of the boat load groups, but was facilitated by the cooperation afforded the headquarters. Security left much to be desired. In spite of previous instructions various Tactical Camp Commanders interpreted security regulations differently with the result that there were cases of laxness. As a general rule there were not sufficient exterior security guards, and any man so desiring could go through the guard and the outside of camp. CIC activities controlled by this section during the concentration and marshalling periods revealed few if any serious breaches of security.

In some cases it was difficult for units of CT 16 functioning under order of this organization to receive the necessary cooper-

ation from Tactical Camp Commanders who belonged to other organizations and the companies were forced to depend upon themselves for the performance of necessary administrative functions. Food in Camp D-4 was plentiful, and well prepared. Again the bulk of administrative details which should have been attended to by the static troops became the responsibility of the Tactical Camp Commander.

5. Operation Comments.

After debarkation, and the initial difficulty of the landing the S-1 Section functioned as usual with splendid administrative cooperation from all organizations of the regiment.

*William Friedman*  
WILLIAM FRIEDMAN  
Captain, 16th Infantry  
Adjutant

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HEADQUARTERS COMBAT TEAM 16  
Office of the Supply Officer,  
A.P.O. # 1, U.S. Army.

TPM/rvl

2 July 1944

SUBJECT: Comments and Criticisms of Operations "NEPTUNE".

TO : Commanding Officer, Combat Team 16, APO #1, US Army.

1. In compliance with Memorandum, Headquarters Combat Team 16, dated 23 June 1944, subject: "Comments and Criticisms of Operations "NEPTUNE", the following report is hereby submitted.

a. PLANNING STAGE.

(1) No comment as all details of this stage were in the hands of Major Leonard C. Godfray, deceased.

b. CONCENTRATION AREA.

(1) Movement to Concentration Area was well coordinated and satisfactory.

(2) Food was ample and well prepared.

(3) Health of Command was satisfactory but there were undue number of reoccurring malaria cases. There were adequate arrangements for all personnel to attend movies in comfort. Reading material was plentiful. Special Service insured prompt delivery of PX supplies, Stars & Strips and magazines. Religious services were numerous for all faiths. APO service was satisfactory.

c. MARSHALLING PHASE.

(1) To accomplish the movement from Concentration Area to Marshalling Area, insufficient transportation was provided. Troops and Officers were overcrowded in vehicles.

(2) The timing of the move to Marshalling Area, could have been better arranged, as troops were forced to wait until other troops vacated from various quarters before they could move in.

(3) Food was plentiful and well prepared. Troops were allowed to take all the food they wanted, and none was wasted.

(4) Security was excellent but it is believed that French currency should not have been given to troops until after embarkation.

(5) Static Troop Supply Agencies were not prepared nor willing to accept responsibility for filling requisitions. The arrangement whereby each camp was to supply Transient Troops was not satisfactory. Camps had neither transportation nor personnel available to fill requisitions. Nearby supply dumps were not always adequate in supplying items needed by the Regiment. This necessitated sending trucks long distances in order to completely fill requisitions. Ordnance repair was slow and procurement procedure difficult and confused.

md. EMBARKATION OF PERSONNEL AND LOADING OF VEHICLES.

(1) No comment.

e. LANDING ON HOSTILE SHORE AND CULMINATION AT THE D / 1 PHASE LINE.

(1) Landing on hostile shores entailed considerable loss of equipment, both individual and organizational. This loss was unavoidable and the cause was due to the tactical mission.

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Para. 1, e cont'd:

- (2) The Regimental Supply Section landed at 8:15 AM on D Day.
- (3) The D.A.O. had a limited amount of ammunition available approximately 2200 on D Day and the Regimental Ammunition Officer drew a supply of ammunition at that time.
- (4) All Division Supply Agencies were opened and functioning at 0900 D + 1; Although supplies were limited, the Regiment was able to start replacing equipment lost on D Day. The cooperation of all agencies was excellent.

f. MISCELLANEOUS POINTS  
(1) No comment.

*Thomas P. McKoan*  
THOMAS P. MCKOAN,  
Major, Infantry  
Supply Officer.