

The Command Organization of the “Normandy Landings 60th Anniversary” Operation

(May 20 – June 7 2004)

The Army is regularly involved in homeland operations, either to protect the domestic population, in case of some natural disaster, to fight terrorism, or to carry out homeland security during major events. For the last few years Armed Forces resources, and more particularly Army ones, have been steadily involved in these kinds of operations. “VIGIPIRATE”², a plan that is familiar to the French people, is a good example of this involvement. As a matter of fact this homeland operation (OPINT³) is given much publicity in the media, it has been going on since the waves of terrorist attacks in the 80s.

The latest homeland operation carried out by the French Armed Forces, took place in June 2003 at the time of the Normandy Landings 60th anniversary. At that time the French Army had been tasked with planning and carrying out, in close cooperation with all State agencies, the land operations necessary to secure the whole set of the planned events.

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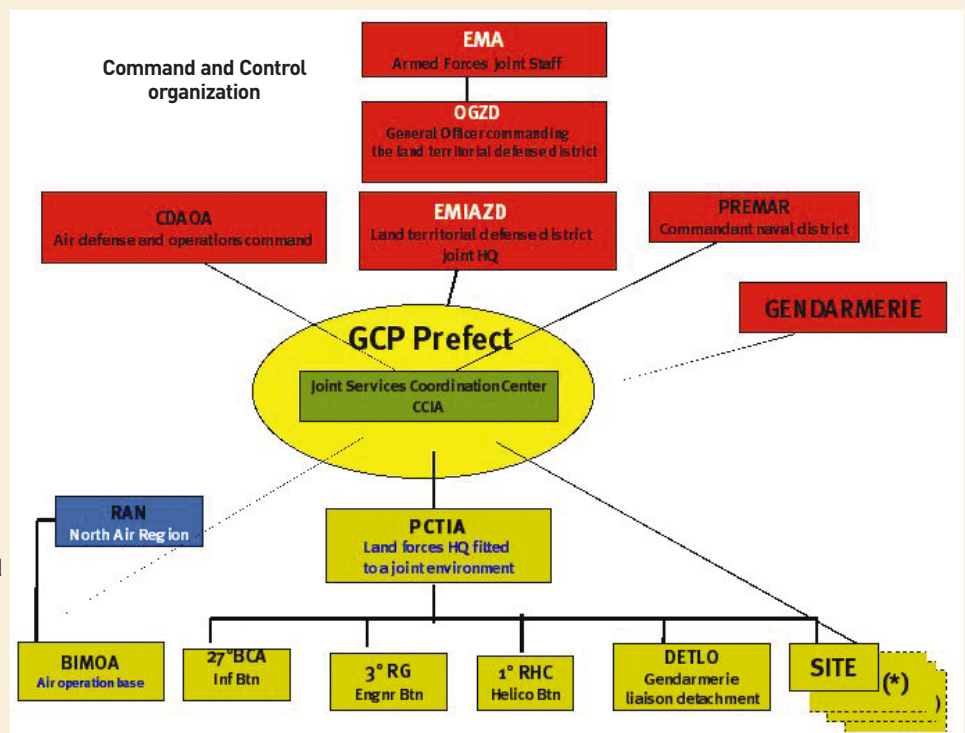
The “Normandy Landings 60th anniversary” operation is original because of:

- the participation of all State agencies,
- a necessary coordination and liaison at every level,
- the mission given to the Army which resources were to reinforce those of the Gendarmerie, while retaining its own independence and freedom of action.

Those main characteristics made it necessary to set up a specific command system, organized on three levels, that stresses the liaison need between the various components in order to get a good information flow and utmost coordination.

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMAND AND CONTROL ORGANIZATION

The first and main feature of this operation is the participation of all the major State agencies: the three Services, the national Gendarmerie, the various police services, civil support assets, etc. The whole operation had been placed under command of the regional prefect (Région de Basse Normandie et du Calvados), responsible to the government authorities for the smooth running of the commemoration events. Because there were so many actors it has been necessary to clearly define the roles



and responsibilities of each one, and to set up command structures and assets proper to enable the “inter-services chief” to use and coordinate all these assets.

To do so the regional prefect used a general command post (GCP) located in CAEN. This GCP was the decision and coordination body for all actions related to the 60th Anniversary. It was composed of representatives from all State Agencies, among which were the operational controllers of the three Services and of the

Gendarmerie. These operational controllers assumed command of the deployed forces; they were the first level of the command system.

They were military advisers to the prefect for the use of the forces they assumed command of, they also had a staff structure available to act as a liaison and to command and control the deployed forces, as it remains a military commander prerogative.

THE MILITARY COMMAND AND CONTROL ORGANIZATION

The land structure

This structure included the participation in land operations security on one hand, and on the other hand the various commemorative ceremonies. In that matter, the armed forces' role was to provide a number of units and to transport them. Organizing and running the ceremonies was the responsibility of prefectorial authorities. The land security disposition included elements from each one of the three Services and was under command of the land operation controller. It is worth noting that this officer was also the joint services controller and consequently the one directly dealing with the regional prefect for defense matters.

He had available to him the second and third levels of the command and control system:

- one Joint Coordination Cell (CCIA –Cellule de Coordination InterArmées) located in the same place as the GCP (general command post) and manned with personnel from the North-West Army District (RTNO⁴), from the Joint HQ of the Rennes land territorial defense district, from the Nantes Force HQ # 2 (EMF₂), and from Navy and Air Force liaison detachments. In addition to its coordinating role this cell was in charge of monitoring the ceremonies, of joint health care and of NRBC supervision, as well as of a direct liaison to the Army district HQ and to the CPCO (Planning and Conduct of Operations Center).

- One PCTIA (land forces HQ fitted to a joint environment), manned by the Force HQ # 2, augmented with personnel from the North-West Army District, responsible for the land security disposition, the transportation of those forces involved in the ceremonies, and the logistical support to be provided to the three Services. It also included liaison detachments from the other two Services and from the Gendarmerie. This CP was taking its orders from the land operational controller and directly controlled both tactical HQs in the field and one joint helicopter battalion.

That structure made it possible to maintain a single chain of command. The PROTERRE (Homeland Protection) companies were

issued orders by the tactical HQs. Those last ones being tasked by the PCTIA (land forces HQ fitted to a joint environment). However the companies had no subordination link to the prefectorial authority. Any request from that authority had to go through the Joint Coordination Cell (CCIA) and through the land operation controller

The air structure

Inside the GCP (general command post), the air operation controller had a C2A2 (Air activities coordination center) available in charge with coordinating all air activities in the area of the 60th anniversary. The air structure was made up of three components:

- one air operation base (BIMOA), manned by the Air Force, but under control of the land operation controller in charge with the land security disposition,
- one joint helicopter battalion, equipped with aircraft from the three Services, under command of an Army Aviation officer, it was an integral part of the land security disposition,
- some resources under Air Force control (armed helicopters, reconnaissance and combat aircraft) to fulfill its air security mission.

The naval structure

The Navy operational controller was represented inside the GCP and he had his naval CP in Port-en-Bessin to carry out all operations related to the maritime area surveillance.

RELATIONSHIP AND COORDINATION WITH LAW AND ORDER FORCES

One other feature of the operation was the interlocking of the Army disposition inside the Gendarmerie and police areas of responsibility.

During the planning phase of the event each one's responsibility had been defined, steps had been taken to ensure independence of the tactical HQs and to avoid a duplicate subordination of the tactical HQs simultaneously to the PCTIA and to the police or to the Gendarmerie.

To do so, orders accurately defined:

- the missions and zones of action for each unit,
- the ROEs and attitude,
- the coordination measures by sworn

police officers assigned down to the lowest level. This step has been seen as a must for any future operation of that nature.

Any new request not planned in the operation orders had to pass through the CCIA and/or the PCTIA, the only bodies authorized to make decisions.

Organization of the Communication System

Command and control of the joint CIS was the responsibility of the Air Force. In this context it had to provide for the equipment of the military cells located in the GCP.

The CIS assets committed by the Army were as follows:

- phone, encoded or not, telegraphy, Internet and Intranet;
- forces Command and Information System (SICF) between the CCIA/GCP, the PCTIA and the tactical HQs;
- PR4G5 radio sets that have been used as a basic net within the tactical HQs and between the PROTERRE companies;
- Integrated Automatic Signals Network (RITA 2G) used as the backbone of the basic communication architecture.

In conclusion, the command and control organization implemented during the "Normandy Landings 60th Anniversary" operation made it possible to keep a single command and control system, while achieving coordination at every level by setting up detailed procedures and liaison detachments all along the chain of command. It has been the source of:

- quick return of information,
- great reaction capacity facing any new situation,
- field coordination added to some freedom of action, while sticking to the general framework as clearly defined by orders.

1 Translator's note: Force HQ # 2.

2 Translator's note: Homeland Security Plan.

3 Translator's note: OPINT stands for "OPération INTérieure" – Homeland Operation.

4 Translator's note: RTNO stands for Région Terre Nord-Ouest.

5 Translator's note: Postes Radio de 4^e Génération –4th generation radio sets.