OMAHA BEACHHEAD



WORLD WAR II
50th Anniversary
Commemorative Edition

OMAHA BEACHHEAD

(6 June–13 June 1944)



American Forces in Action Series

Historical Division
WAR DEPARTMENT

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FOREWORD

In the thick of battle, the soldier is busy doing his job. He has the knowledge and confidence that his job is part of a unified plan to defeat the enemy, but he does not have time to survey a campaign from a fox hole. If he should be wounded and removed behind the lines, he may have even less opportunity to learn what place he and his unit had in the larger fight.

AMERICAN FORCES IN ACTION is a series prepared by the War Department especially for the information of wounded men. It will show these soldiers, who have served their country so well, the part they and their comrades played in achievements which do honor to the record of the United States Army.



G. C. MARSHALL,
Chief of Staff.

WAR DEPARTMENT
Historical Division
Washington 25, D. C.
20 September 1945

Omaha Beachhead, seventh of a series called *American Forces In Action*, is the first of a number of narratives dealing with U. S. military operations in France. *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, planned for later publication, will round out the account of the invasion at corps level and below. Larger phases of the NEPTUNE operation, including high-level planning, naval operations, and the action of British units, are treated here only in outline.

Omaha Beachhead was prepared in the field by the 2d Information and Historical Service, attached to First Army, and by the Historical Section, European Theater of Operations. Although as published this book contains no documentation, the original manuscript, fully documented, is on file in the War Department. It is based on complete unit reports and records, on interviews, and on available enemy records. Some unit records for the period concerned are inadequate, and despite all care used in research and assembly of the materials, it is recognized that the information is not complete in all details and may involve minor errors of fact. Before a final official history of the campaign in France is prepared, the gaps should be filled and the errors corrected. This can be done only if individuals who possess additional information will furnish it to the War Department. Readers are therefore urged to send directly to the Historical Division, War Department, Washington 25, D. C., all comments, criticisms, and additional data which may help in the preparation of a complete and definitive history of this operation.

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CONTENTS

	Page
OPERATION NEPTUNE	1
Navy and Air Forces	2
21 Army Group	3
V Corps Planning	6
ASSAULT PLAN	8
Terrain	10
Enemy Defenses	20
Pre-Assault Bombardment Plans	28
Plan of Assault Landings	30
Plan for Movement to Inland Objectives	33
D DAY: THE LANDINGS	35
Approach to the Beach	38
The Initial Assault Wave	42
The Later Assault Waves: 116th RCT	49
The Later Assault Waves: 16th RCT	53
Conditions on the Beach: 0730–0800	54
ASSAULT OF THE BLUFFS	58
The Advance from Dog White	59
The Advance between D-3 and E-1 Draws	63
The Advance from Easy Red	65
The Advance from Fox Green	73
Other Assault Actions	75
The Beach: 0800–1200	79
Landing of Reinforcements on Easy Red	82
The Rangers at Pointe du Hoe	87
ADVANCE INLAND	92
Vierville Area	93
St-Laurent Area	97
Colleville Area	98
Afternoon on the Beach	101
At the End of D Day	107
The Enemy Side	112
ATTAINMENT OF D-DAY OBJECTIVES (7–8 June)	116
Trévières–Tour-en-Bessin (1st Division)	116
Grandcamp–Isigny Area (29th Division)	122
Improvement at the Beach	131
The Enemy Side	134
THE ATTACK OF 9–11 JUNE	136
Advance to Cerisy Forest (1st and 2d Divisions)	138
Across the Lower Aure (29th Division)	143
The Enemy Side	147
THE ATTACK OF 12–13 JUNE	150
Advance to Caumont	151
Crossing the Elle River	153
Action West of the Vire	157
The Enemy Side	159
CONCLUSION	163
ANNEX NO. 1: Unit Citations	164
ANNEX NO. 2: Abbreviations	165

Illustrations

	Page
U. S. Commanders	viii
Unit Commanders	8
The Crescent Curve of Omaha Beach	10
The Gently Sloping Tidal Flat	11
The Shingle Embankment	12
The Beach Flat	13
At the Western End of Omaha	14
Marshes Along the Beach Flat	14
Along Easy Red Sector	15
E-1 Draw	15
Hedgerows	17
Sunken Roads	18
Trévières	18
Underwater Obstacles	21
Pillbox near Vierville Draw (D-1)	23
Gun Emplacement Overlooking Beach	24
Trenches Along the Bluff Edge	26
Enemy Shore Defenses	27
German Mortar Position	28
Landing Diagram, Omaha Beach	31
Loading LST's for the Invasion	36
The Lane of Ships	37
Landing Craft	39
Mist and Smoke Obscured Landmarks	40
Assault Landing	44
Smoke From Grass Fires	45
Men From Wrecked Landing Craft	46
The Obstacles Were Used as Shelter	51
Artillery Fire Concentrated on Larger Craft	55
Noon of D Day, Dog White	59
Penetration Area, 116th Infantry	60
Profile View of Bluffs, Dog White	61
Easy Green	63
Easy Red	67
E-1 Strongpoint	68
Path Through Minefields	69
Advance from Easy Red	70
Rocky Ledges	74
Beach Sector Charlie	76
The "Fortified" House	76
The Bluffs on Dog Green	78
Vehicles are Held on the Tidal Flat	81
High-Tide Landings	83
A Crowded Beach	84
The Tip of Pointe du Hoe	89
The Cliffs at Pointe du Hoe	90
The Vierville Draw Under Fire	94
Head of D-3 Draw	96
Entrance to Colleville from West	99

Page

Landings Were Delayed ... 102
Breaches in the Shingle Embankment ... 104
The E-1 Exit Road ... 105
Roadblocks Were Demolished ... 105
Wreckage on Easy Red ... 107
Debris ... 108
Wreckage Littered the Beaches ... 109
A Pillbox Used as Headquarters ... 115
Tanks Roll Through Colleville ... 118
Observation Was Difficult ... 120
Typical Norman Orchard ... 125
Damage in Isigny ... 128
Organizing the Beach ... 131
Landing Supplies ... 132
The 2d Division Starts Inland ... 137
The Approach to Trévières ... 140
The Aure River ... 142
Cerisy Forest ... 146
Caumont ... 152
A German 88-MM ... 160
Insignia ... 162
LCI 91 ... 167

Maps

No. Page

1 *Disposition of German Forces in the West, 6 June 1944* ... 4
2 *Enemy Defenses at D-3 Draw (les Moulins)* ... 22
3 *The Advance between D-3 and E-1 Draws* ... 64
4 *Advance from Easy Red* ... 66
5 *The Penetration at Fox Green* ... 72
6 *The 2d Ranger Battalion at Pointe du Hoe, 6 June* ... 86
7 *The Relief of Pointe du Hoe, 7–8 June* ... 124
8 *Action at Grandcamp, 8 June* ... 129
9 *Carentan—Isigny Area, 12–13 June* ... 156

Maps I—XVI are in attached envelope

I *Invasion Area*
II *Omaha Beach Terrain*
III *Terrain Inland from Omaha Beach*
IV *D-Day Objectives, V Corps*
V *First Wave Landings (Infantry)*
VI *Later Assault Landings (Infantry)*
VII *Vierville—St-Laurent Area (To Noon 6 June)*
VIII *St-Laurent—Colleville Area (To Noon 6 June)*
IX *Evening of D Day*
X *The D-Day Beachheads*
XI *1st Division, 7–8 June*
XII *29th Division, 7–8 June*
XIII *Enemy Reinforcements, 6–8 June*
XIV *V Corps Attack, 9–11 June*
XV *V Corps Attack, 12–13 June*
XVI *Development of the Beachheads*



U. S. COMMANDERS IN THE OMAHA BEACHHEAD OPERATIONS
Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, General Dwight D. Eisenhower (Ranks as of June 1944; Photograph taken July 1944)

OPERATION NEPTUNE

TWO YEARS of planning and preparation led up to the Allied landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944. British and American staffs had to work out every foreseeable detail for an undertaking that would involve the major military resources of the two Allied powers; immense stocks of shipping, aircraft, and supplies were assembled in the British Isles in an effort that taxed the war industries of both countries; before D Day the Allied air forces had carried out several months of bombing operations which were an integral part of the invasion itself.

The first decisions were strategic in the broadest sense, since the opening of a front in Western Europe had to be considered in reference to over-all Allied plans for offensive operations against Germany, as well as the developments of the war in Russia and of the war against Japan. In May 1943 the Anglo-American conference in Washington concluded this stage of strategic planning; Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt together with their highest military advisers decided to launch an offensive in 1944 against Hitler's Atlantic Wall.

Allied planners, after weighing all the possibilities, finally selected 50 miles of coast in western Normandy, from the Vire Estuary to the Orne, as the assault area for securing a lodgement. This area was near good, relatively undamaged ports in southern and southwestern England, and was in range of fighter planes operating from English bases; the major French ports of Cherbourg and le Havre were within striking distance; and air attacks on railways and river bridges might be able to isolate the region behind the assault area from the main enemy centers of supply and reinforcement to the east. In comparison with the stretch of coast northeast of the Seine (Pas-de-Calais), along the narrowest part of the English Channel, western Normandy was somewhat further from English bases but was not as heavily fortified. At the Quebec Conference in August 1943 Allied leaders approved the choice of this battleground for invasion.

The staffs of ground forces, air forces, and navies had now entered the second stage of planning for the largest amphibious operation in military history. The tactical difficulties to be faced were only one part of a problem that required complete coordination and teamwork, not merely between the military forces of two nations but also between all arms of those forces. Planning necessarily included preparation for operations over an extended period of time, and had to cover far more than the initial task of securing beachheads. In some respects the critical factor was the Allies' ability to reinforce and supply the assault rapidly enough both to meet enemy counterattacks and to prepare for a larger Allied offensive beyond the landing area. The Allied navies and services of supply had to solve logistical problems on which would depend the fate of the whole undertaking.

In this phase of planning, as main policies were worked out in ever more complex detail by staffs of subordinate commands, the work was coordinated under the Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Command, Lt. Gen. Sir Frederick E. Morgan. In his organization, British and American officers of all the services worked side by side in shaping their joint enterprise. The fusion of Allied planning staffs under a single command involved a principle which was carried into the command organization for the operation itself. On 21 January 1944 Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, called from the North African Theater of Operations, had his first meeting with the high Allied planning staff in England. He took formal command at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, on 13 February.

Planning now approached the final stage. The approximate target date (Y Day) had been set as 31 May, after earlier designation as 1 May; the postponement was made in order to obtain a larger supply of assault craft and to give more time for the preliminary air operations to produce their desired effect. By February, the staffs of higher commands had finished their plans, which would determine the major outline of the assault, and the plans of lower echelons were nearing completion. What remained was the difficult task of shaping last details, with due regard to ever increasing intelligence of enemy defenses and to the experience gained in training exercises. Final loading plans, among the most complex features of the whole operation, were subject to change as late as May because of uncertainties as to the number of ships and craft available.

Services of Supply, commanded by Lt. Gen. John C. H. Lee, was completing its program of mounting the supplies for an operation which has been described as "an assault of matériel, operated by man." Planning for this aspect of the invasion had begun in April 1942, and along with it went the work of preparing facilities and assembling stores, work which was interrupted by the need to furnish 50,000 tons of cargo for the invasion of North Africa in November 1942. By June 1944 the number of United States troops in the United Kingdom had risen to 1,526,965, half of them arriving after the end of 1943. The stock pile for invasion—over and above basic loads and equipment—was 2,500,000 tons. In the process of mounting the assaults, 1,200 troop concentration camps and 100 marshalling camps had to be set up and operated, and 144,000 tons of supplies were preloaded, waiting for D Day.

Navy and Air Forces

Allied naval forces in the NEPTUNE operation, commanded by Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay, faced a task of primary importance. They had to convey the ground forces to the area for assault on a hostile and defended shore, assist their landings by gunfire support, protect their lines of communication against enemy surface and underwater attack, and insure the flow of supplies for an indefinite period of future operations. Some 4,100 ships and craft of all types were involved in the assault, including major units of both British and American fleets.

The Allied air forces, under command of Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford L. Leigh-Mallory, were assigned a complex role both defensive and offensive in character. They would protect the huge assault convoy at every stage on its approach to Normandy and throughout the battle for the beaches. Offensively, they had the mission of assisting the operation by landings of airborne troops, by air bombardment of coastal defenses, and by attacks on enemy lines of reinforcement and supply.

In a very real sense, the invasion began with air force operations that had commenced long before D Day. From the summer of 1943 to the following spring, the U. S. Eighth Air Force had concentrated its attacks on German aircraft industries and airfields, with the primary purpose of preventing the enemy from increasing his strength in the air. Both by destruction of factories and of enemy planes met in combat this program was successful, and its success counted in the invasion. In addition to losing between 5,000 and 6,000 planes in the period, the enemy was unable to enlarge his first-line force in preparation for the expected assault.

In April and May 1944, while continuing attacks on Germany often enough to force concentration of enemy air strength in that area, the heavy bombers entered on a phase of operations directly related to the impending assault. This was a series of heavy attacks on marshalling yards and airfields in France, the Low Countries, and western Germany, over an area large enough to preclude any indication of the precise invasion area. The attack on marshalling yards was designed to paralyze repair and maintenance facilities, thus wearing down the capacity of railways for movement of troops and supplies and forcing the enemy to maximum use of road transport. During May the range of air attacks was gradually narrowed, coming to a climax in the three days preceding D Day. However, even in this period of final blows against rail junctions and airfields a majority of the targets were along the Channel coast east of the Seine.

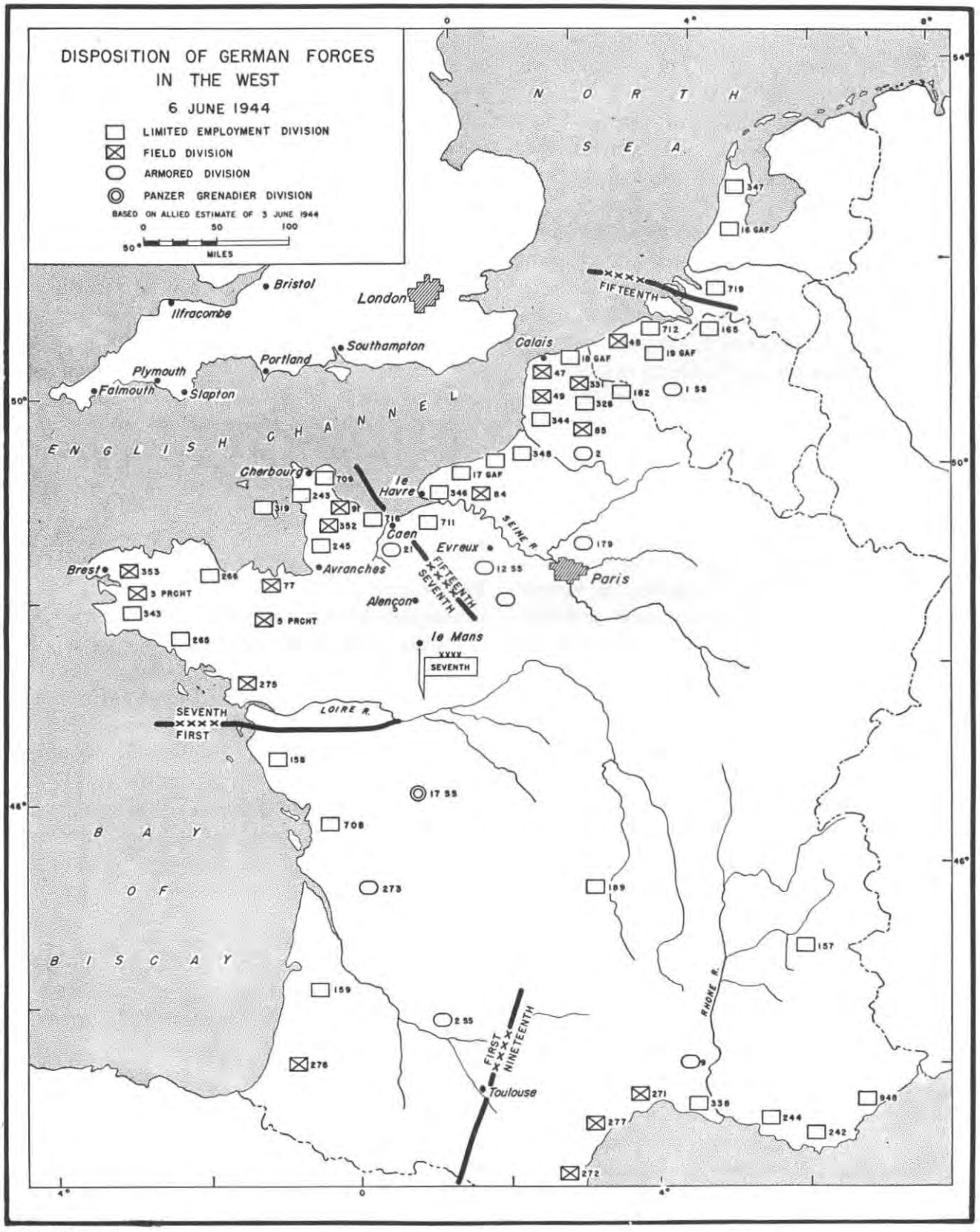
Ninth Air Force medium bombers and fighter-bombers had also shared in the preparatory phases of the campaign. Beginning in April and continuing with increased vigor in May, they delivered attacks on enemy airfields in northern France, with the aim of ultimately neutralizing all fields within 130 miles of the assault beaches. During May, 36 airfields from Brittany to Holland received one or more attacks. Marshalling yards were also a target of medium bombers; between 1 March and 5 June, 36 yards in Belgium and northern France were hit in a total of 139 attacks. Results were excellent. The important yard at Creil, near Paris, was estimated as 60 percent out of commission on 24 May. Late in that month, rail bridges on the Seine and the Meuse Rivers were given first priority. By 4 June, all rail bridges (10) between Rouen and Conflans, inclusive, were knocked out, and all but 1 of the 14 road bridges. Fighter-bomber attacks on enemy rolling stock during May inflicted considerable damage. On 21 May, in the most active day for this type of work, 500 aircraft claimed results of 46 locomotives destroyed and 32 damaged, and damage to 30 trains. The Ninth Air Force was also busy on reconnaissance missions, which included heavy activity north of the Somme River as well as in the invasion area.

Bomber Command of the Royal Air Force switched the main effort of its attacks during May from Germany to France and the Low Countries. Of 37,250 tons dropped during the month, 28,703 were directed at targets which were chosen as part of the "softening-up" program leading to the invasion.

21 Army Group

The ground forces in the Normandy operation were led by Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, commanding 21 Army Group. His troops would assault in three main areas (Map No. I),[1] with initial strength of six reinforced infantry divisions landing from the sea and of three airborne divisions.

[1] Maps numbered in roman are bound in sequence on the inside of the back cover.


DISPOSITION OF GERMAN FORCES
IN THE WEST
6 JUNE 1944
LIMITED EMPLOYMENT DIVISION
FIELD DIVISION
ARMORED DIVISION
PANZER GRENADIER DIVISION
BASED ON ALLIED ESTIMATE OF 3 JUNE 1944
0 50 100
MILES
NORTH SEA
ENGLISH CHANNEL
BAY OF BISCAY
Bristol
London
Ilfracombe
Plymouth
Falmouth
Slapton
Portland
Southampton
Calais
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Caen
Evreux
Avranches
Brest
Alençon
Le Mans
Paris
SEINE R.
LOIRE R.
RHONE R.
Toulouse
FIFTEENTH
SEVENTH
FIRST
NINETEENTH
347
16 GAF
719
712
165
18 GAF
19 GAF
47
49
344
348
17 GAF
346
84
709
243
319
352
245
21
711
179
12 SS
353
266
77
3 PRCHT
343
5 PRCHT
265
275
158
17 SS
708
273
189
157
159
2 SS
276
9
271
277
272
338
244
242
948

MAP NO. 1

On the left the Second British Army would attack with three divisions (two of I Corps, one of XXX Corps) on three landing beaches. A brigade of the 6 British Airborne Division was to be dropped behind the beach defenses to secure vital bridges over the Orne River, between Caen and the sea. The objectives for D Day of the Second British Army included Bayeux, Caen, and Cabourg.

The First U. S. Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, was responsible for the other two assault areas. VII Corps (Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, commanding) would land one division just north of the Vire Estuary (Beach "Utah"). In the early morning hours of D Day, four to five hours before the assault from sea, the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions were scheduled to be dropped in the area southeast and west of Ste-Mère-Eglise, where their mission was to capture the crossings of the Merderet River, secure the line of the Douve River as a barrier to the south, and assist the landings at Utah Beach. At the end of D Day, VII Corps should control the area east of the Merderet from just south of Montebourg to the Douve.

Between the other assault areas, V Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow planned its attack on a 7,000-yard stretch of beach to be known as "Omaha."[2] The scheme and objectives of this assault will be described later in detail.

General Montgomery's intention after the initial beachheads were secured, was to hold in the area south and east of Caen while the First U. S. Army meantime maneuvered to cut off the Cotentin peninsula and capture Cherbourg. This port, to be opened as a major supply channel for further operations, was to be taken by D+15. The First Army, reinforced to a strength of three corps, was then to attack south toward Coutances and the base of the Brittany peninsula. Tentative phase lines allowed for capture of the Cerisy Forest area by D+5 or 6; St-Lô and Caumont by D+9. These phase lines were set with the most favorable possible development of the operation in mind. They insured readiness for maximum progress but represented neither a hard-and-fast schedule nor an optimistic forecast.

Enemy strength in France and the Low Countries (Map No. 1) was estimated at 60 divisions, having been built up from 53 since February 1944. Of these, 17 were infantry divisions, 26 were characterized as "limited employment" units (coastal defense units of limited mobility), 7 were training units, and 10 were panzer or panzer grenadier divisions. The armored divisions were located at inland points whence they could be moved as striking forces into a threatened coastal area. As a possible indication of where the German high command expected the assault, no fewer than 22 divisions guarded the region from the Seine to Holland.

The sector in which the blow was actually to fall came under the German *Seventh Army*, commanded by Col. Gen. Friedrich Dollmann with headquarters at le Mans in Normandy. *LXXXIV Corps* was responsible for the defense of the French coast from the Orne River to the northeast corner of Brittany. At the end of the winter the enemy force in or very near the assault area was estimated at only five infantry divisions, plus minor ground force elements. During May, Allied intelligence found evidence of reinforcement by two infantry divisions and (just south of Caen) the *21st Panzer Division*. As a mobile reserve, two panzer divisions had come into the Alençon–Evreux region, from which they could reach the assault area quickly. A number of the enemy units in Brittany would also be available as reinforcement within a few days, and (depend-

[2] From "O" Force, assigned to the area.

ing on the success of Allied air attacks) divisions from north of the Seine and south of the Loire could be brought to Normandy. Allied estimates of enemy build-up, assuming no interference to his road and rail movement, fixed his maximum possible strength in the assault area at 18 to 20 divisions, including 8 armored, by D+3.

At this same date, Allied forces ashore were scheduled to number 13 divisions, including elements of 2 armored divisions.[3] The success of the invasion would depend in considerable measure on the outcome of a race between Allied build-up and enemy reinforcement, in which it was hoped that the operations of the Allied air forces against rail and road communications would impose a decisive handicap on the Germans.

V Corps Planning

As the highest U. S. Army field-force headquarters then in Britain, V Corps Headquarters began in July 1943 to share in the early planning for employment of American forces in assault on the continent. On 12 September, by directive of the Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Headquarters, V Corps' work was focused on the specific problem of an assault landing in Normandy. By October the headquarters of First U. S. Army and U. S. 1st Army Group were established in Britain. Since the decisions taken at higher levels determined the mission and objectives of subordinate units, the work had to be done concurrently and with constant interchange of views between the different levels of command and between the different services. The final plans for ground forces were produced in a series from January to May, beginning with 21 Army Group. First Army NEPTUNE Plan was issued on 25 February, V Corps' plan on 26 March, and that of the 1st Infantry Division on 16 April. No final decisions on troop lists and loading were possible until even later dates, and revisions of detail in many parts of the plans were necessary as late as the end of May.

A special planning group, headed by Col. Benjamin B. Talley, had been put in charge of shaping the V Corps NEPTUNE Plan. As the First Army and V Corps planning groups proceeded in their work, they felt the necessity of practical experiment with the problems involved in an amphibious operation on the scale proposed, particularly those of mounting and loading assault troops. A training center at Ilfracombe, northwest Devonshire, for study of assault techniques had been in use since 1942, and experiments on methods of loading and landing had been conducted near Dartmouth since September 1943 with cooperation of the British Navy. In December a stretch of coast at Slapton Sands (South Devonshire) was provided by the British Government as an assault training area for American forces. Here the conditions of tide, beach, and terrain were roughly similar to those on the Normandy coast, and the area was large enough to permit large-scale exercises and the use of live fire including naval and air bombardment. From January on, this training ground was used for every type of experiment and for exercises involving naval, air force, and service force units as well as the assault infantry and tanks.

In addition to its training value, the work done here was of direct influence on the planning, particularly in the case of exercises conducted on a scale large enough to embrace major units. Exercise "Duck," held in January, involved a division plus corps troops and took in all the stages of assault from concentration and marshalling to a landing after air bombardment and naval fire. From this exercise it was learned that three divisions could be mounted from the Plymouth–Portland–Falmouth–Dart-

[3] Also several British and U. S. tank units attached to infantry divisions or employed as corps troops.

mouth port areas, instead of one as previously supposed. In March, Exercise "Fox" was staged at corps level and involved two divisions. From 3 to 8 May, "Fabius I" concluded the series of larger exercises with what amounted to a dress rehearsal for the NEPTUNE operation. The troops used a scheme of maneuver closely similar to that of the NEPTUNE plans, and the concentration and embarkation took place in areas soon to be used for NEPTUNE mounting. Throughout these months, training and planning went hand in hand, and the Planning Group used lessons learned at Slapton Sands in its final adjustments and revision of details. V Corps NEPTUNE Plan, consisting of an operations plan proper and 22 annexes (practically all of these completed by revisions in April or May), totalled 326 legal-size pages with 23 maps and charts.

UNIT COMMANDERS

(Ranks as of June 1944)



MAJ. GEN. CLARENCE R. HUEBNER
Commanding General, 1st Division

ASSAULT PLAN

THE MISSION OF V CORPS was to secure a beachhead in the area between Port-en-Bessin and the Vire River, from which they would push southward toward Caumont and St-Lô, conforming with the advance of the British Second Army. The Corps would arrive at the beachhead in four stages. The initial assault force (Force "O") consisted of the 1st Division, reinforced to include four infantry regiments with strong attachments of artillery, armor, and engineers, as well as attachments of engineer and service units for movement to the beach. Chief components of the 1st Division were its own 16th and 18th Regimental Combat Teams, the 116th Regimental Combat Team and the 115th Infantry attached from the 29th Division, and the Provisional Ranger Force of two battalions (2d and 5th). Force "O" numbered 34,142 men and 3,306 vehicles.

The follow-up force (Force "B") was scheduled to arrive off the assault beach after noon on D Day and numbered 25,117 men and 4,429 vehicles. It included the 29th Division, consisting of the 175th Infantry and (attached from the 1st Division) the 26th RCT. Scheduled to arrive on D+1 and D+2, the preloaded build-up contingent had as main component the 2d Division and



MAJ. GEN. CHARLES H. GERHARDT
Commanding General, 29th Division

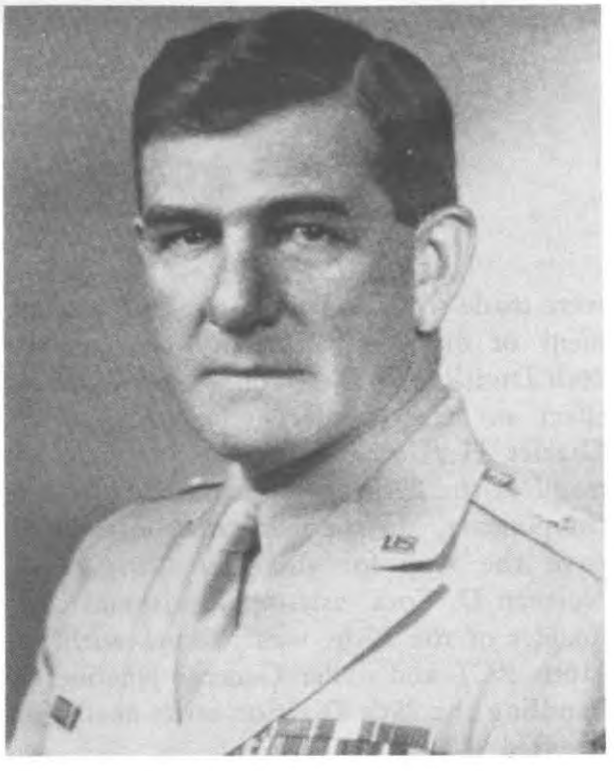


MAJ. GEN. WALTER M. ROBERTSON
Commanding General, 2d Division

BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM M. HOGE
Commanding General, Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group

totalled some 17,500 men and 2,300 vehicles. Schedules for the later build-up completing the transfer of V Corps to Normandy, called for the arrival between D+2 and D+15 of 27 residual groups involving 32,000 troops and 9,446 vehicles. All of these totals included a large number of units attached to V Corps for movement only.

The loading plans of Force "O" and Force "B" were designed to fit an operation which would develop from an assault by one reinforced division into attack by two divisions abreast. Unity of command in the critical first stages would thus be assured. Maj. Gen. Clarence R. Huebner, commanding the 1st Division, would conduct the initial assault with a force that included two units of the 29th Division, and plans for the landings and for movement inland





THE CRESCENT CURVE OF OMAHA BEACH *shows from the high ground at the F–1 strongpoint above the eastern end of Omaha. Right foreground, German 75-mm gun emplacement; far background, the cliffs near Pointe de la Percée. (Photo taken February 1945.)*

were made so as to permit the early assignment of divisional zones to the 1st and 29th Divisions. These zones would go into effect on corps order, when Maj. Gen. Charles H. Gerhardt would assume command of the 29th Division with its normal components. In the meantime, in order to pave the way for this step, Brig. Gen. Norman D. Cota, assistant divisional commander of the 29th, was to land with the 116th RCT and assist General Huebner in handling the 29th Division units until they reverted.

The 1st Division was a veteran unit which had served through the campaigns of North Africa and Sicily. The 29th and 2d Divisions would experience their first action in Normandy.

Terrain

The coast of Normandy offers only a few areas favorable for large-scale landing operations in the zone assigned to V Corps (Maps Nos. II and III). Cliffs, reefs, and the wide tidal ranges combine to present

natural difficulties. The estuary at the mouth of the Vire River is marked by extensive shallows, exposed at low tide, and flanked on the east by reefs that extend to Grandcamp. Beyond that seaside village cliffs averaging 100 feet in height tower above a narrow beach as far as Pointe de la Percee. Five miles further east, cliffs reappear at the shore line, and the beach is spoiled by rock ledges which continue as far as Port-en-Bessin.

It was on this five-mile, cliffless interval that V Corps planned its assault landings, designating the sector as "Omaha" Beach. That part of the stretch regarded as suitable for landing operations was about 7,000 yards long, on a shore which curves landward in a very slight crescent and is backed with bluffs which merge into the cliffs at either end of the sector.

The beach slopes very gently below high-water mark. With a tidal range of 18 feet expected at the period of the assault, low tide would expose a stretch of firm sand averaging about 300 yards in distance from low-water mark to high. The enemy had placed "underwater" obstacles on this tidal flat. At high tide, men and vehicles wading

THE GENTLY SLOPING TIDAL FLAT *offered no cover for the attacking forces. This reconnaissance photograph taken 19 May 1944 shows the sands at low tide in front of E–1 draw. A pillbox is seen just to the right of the house, and a strongpoint on the bluff shoulder left of the draw. Work is in progress on obstacles, including hedgehogs and some mined posts. French labor was used.*





THE SHINGLE EMBANKMENT *was characteristic of the whole length of Omaha Beach. It was impassable at most places for vehicles, but afforded some cover for the assault troops. This section is in front of D–3 draw, by the house which Maj. Bingham occupied early in the assault. German trenches were just beyond the wire on the top of the shingle. The crest line of the bluff barely shows.*

up the beach could expect trouble with irregular runnels parallel to the shore, scoured out by the tidal current and two and one-half to four feet deep.

At the high-water mark, the tidal flat terminated [4] in a bank of coarse shingle, sloping up rather steeply to a height of some 8 feet. In places it was as much as 15 yards wide, and the stones averaged 3 inches in diameter. On the eastern two-thirds of the beach, the shingle lay against a low sand embankment or dune line and constituted a barrier which was impassable for vehicles. On the western part of the beach the shingle piled against a sea wall, first (near the Vierville exit, D-1) of stone masonry sloping seaward, then of wood. The wall varied in height from 4 to 12 feet and was broken by a gap several hundred yards wide where the tidal flat ended in shingle and embankment. Immediately behind the sea wall a paved,

[4] As a result of defensive preparation by the Germans, the effects of the assault bombardment, and (above all) the work done by engineers to clear the beach for supply operations after the assault, many features of the beach at the time of the assault were largely destroyed. The sea wall and shingle embankment were completely removed, and many of the beach villas were razed or reduced to rubble. The road system was entirely changed.

promenade beach road ran from Exit D-1 to Exit D-3, then became a rough track going as far as Exit E-3.

Between the dune line (or sea wall) and the bluffs lay the beach flat. Very narrow at either end of the main landing zone, this level shelf of sand widened to more than 200 yards near the center of the stretch. Except at the Vierville end, the flat had large patches of marsh and high grass, usually near the edge of the bluffs. Toward Exit D-1, a number of summer villas lined the shelf behind the promenade road, and at Exit D-3 lay a small village, les Moulins, with buildings clustered on the road running back inland from the beach. Many of these had been razed by the Germans to improve fields of defensive fires. East of les Moulins there were only a few scattered houses.

Bluffs 100 to 170 feet in height rise sharply from the flat and dominate the whole beach area. The slopes are generally steep, but in varying degree. They are most abrupt between Exit D-1 and Exit D-3; farther east, the rise is easier but reaches higher elevations (150 to 165 feet) fairly close to the beach flat. The grass-covered slopes are more uneven than they appear when viewed from only a short distance. Many small folds or irregularities provide opportunity for cover from flanking fires, and from Exit E-1 eastward the bluff sides are partly covered with low scrub and brush. Along most of the stretch, the bluff ends in a clear-cut crest line as it reaches the edge of the inland plateau; toward the eastern end, where the slopes are longer and more gradual, the edge is not sharply defined.

THE BEACH FLAT, *looking east from western shoulder of E–1 draw. Taken a few days after the invasion, the photograph shows the antitank ditch protecting the draw. Trucks are already using a new exit road leading straight up the bluff off Easy Red (right).*





AT THE WESTERN END OF OMAHA *the bluffs merge into a cliff line. Taken from a point 150 yards west of D–1 draw, this view shows the cliffs toward Pointe de la Percée and the narrowing beach flat along sector Charlie. A pillbox sited to fire east along beach is on the sand (right). Other gun emplacements were built into cliff sides near the Point. (Photograph taken June 1945.)*

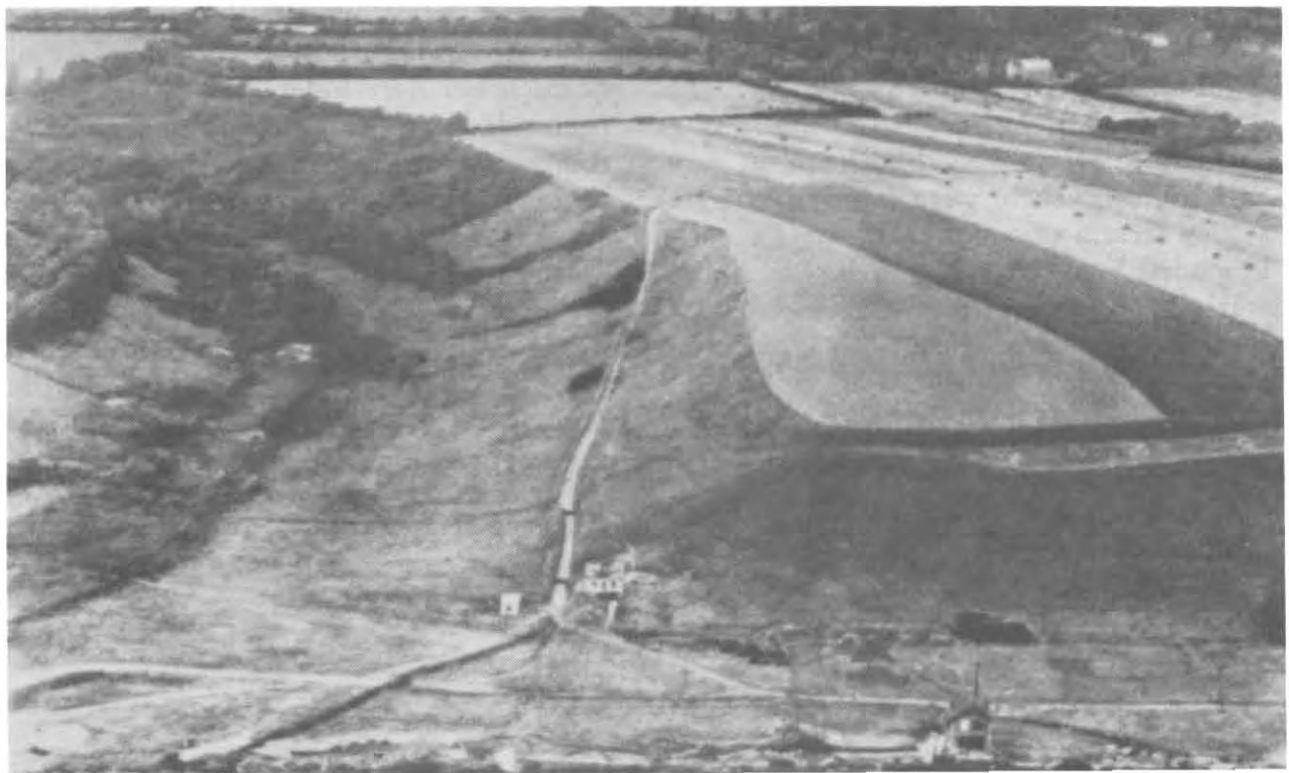
MARSHES ALONG THE BEACH FLAT were found at the foot of the bluff and were often mined. This photograph, taken June 1945, shows the beach from Easy Green, looking west past D–3 draw. The exit road over the bluff (center) was constructed by beach engineers.





ALONG EASY RED SECTOR *the bluff has more gradual slopes, marked by patches of brush. This beach is between E–1 and E–3 draws, facing a main penetration area of the 16th Infantry. Taken just after D Day, the photograph shows wreckage near shingle embankment, including a bulldozer and LCI 553. Obstacles have been cleared, and gaps opened through the embankment to the beach flat.*

E–1 DRAW *leads off the beach to the flat plain behind the bluff. To the right, the fields toward St-Laurent have unusually few hedgerows. This aerial oblique was taken in June 1943, when little work had been done on fortifications along Omaha Beach.*



At four points along Omaha Beach small wooded valleys slope back inland and provide natural corridors for exit from the beach flat. A paved road led off the coast at Exit D-1; the other draws had unimproved roads. These corridors were, inevitably, key areas both in the plan of attack and in the arrangement of defenses. The advance inland of assaulting units would depend on opening exit roads for traffic and supply from the beach, and armor used in the attack could only get up to the high ground through the draws. Near the eastern end of the beach a very shallow and fairly steep draw, followed by a rough trail leading inland, was marked for development as a fifth exit route (F-1).

Once up the steep slopes bordering the beach, attacking troops would get the impression of coming out on a gently rolling plain. Actually, there is a gradual rise to a height of land which parallels the coast about 2,000 yards inland and reaches over 250 feet in altitude south of Colleville. There is no marked "ridge" line whatever, and except for unusually open fields near the bluff between Exits D-1 and E-1, observation in the whole area is severely limited by the numerous hedgerows, orchards, and patches of trees. Three villages, Vierville, St-Laurent, and Colleville,[5] 500 to 1,000 yards inland, were so situated near the heads of draws and along the coastal highway as to figure inevitably in the defense of main exit routes. These were farming villages, with a certain amount of activity in summer as modest beach resorts. Their stone houses were clustered on or near the coastal highway that connected them with Grandcamp and Bayeux.

South of the tableland lies the valley of the Aure River, running from east to west, about two miles behind the beach at Port-en-Bessin and five miles south of it at Pointe de la Percée (Map No. III). West of Trévières the valley plain had been flooded to form a barrier over a mile wide. Above Trévières the Aure was fordable by infantry. Only on the northern side of the valley are the slopes at all pronounced; at two points (just north of Trévières and at Mount Cauvin) the ground close to the river on the north is 150 to 200 feet above the stream, giving good observation into the valley and its main approaches from the south.

South of the Aure the ground rises again, at first very gradually, toward the height of land crowned by Cerisy Forest, 12 miles south of the coast and nearly 400 feet above sea level. Several small streams flowing north toward the Aure divide this rising ground into a series of low north–south ridges. In V Corps' estimates for the operation the Cerisy Forest figured as an important tactical objective, necessary to hold if the beachhead was to be secure. It not only included commanding ground, within medium artillery range of the coast, but offered cover for assembly of enemy forces.

The region west and southwest of Omaha Beach figured prominently in D-Day plans, for early junction with VII Corps depended on progress in that direction. The flooding of the lower Aure Valley had nearly made a peninsula, 10 miles long and 5 miles wide, comprising the low tableland stretching from Formigny–Trévières west to the Vire Estuary. In it lay some of the strongest German fortifications, controlling the sea approaches to Carentan, and through it from east to west ran the principal highway from Paris (Caen) to Cherbourg and the Cotentin. The town of Isigny, where the highway crossed the Aure, would be a key point in any effort to link the beachheads of V and VII Corps; all east–west communications near the coast funneled through Isigny, and

[5] All three have compound names, with the ending "-sur-Mer." For convenience, and, since there is no danger of confusion with other localities, these endings are omitted.

from it V Corps could debouch on the lowlands near Carentan.

The road net south and west of Omaha is characterized by the absence of main north–south routes; the few major highways in the corps zone would be laterals rather than axials. The most important artery is the Carentan–Isigny–Bayeux road just noted. Another highway, well paved for two-way traffic, links Bayeux with the junction point of St-Lô, crossing the Cerisy Forest. From Port-en-Bessin to Grandcamp runs a 15-foot, hard-surface road paralleling the coast about a mile inland. North–south roads in the region, at best secondary, are winding and usually narrow; they were expected to present difficulties in the form of steep shoulders and narrow bridges. Local communications are served by many small lanes and tracks, designed for the needs of farmers, but regarded as unsuitable for military use except by infantry. Any advance inland would require, for the supporting vehicular traffic, a great deal of engineering work to develop small roads into suitable north–south axials. Deployment from any of the roads was estimated as likely to be difficult because of the ever present hedges, often combined with embankments. The double-track railroad from Paris (Caen) to Cherbourg runs from east to west across the high ground a few miles south of the Aure. Cutting this line at Bayeux and Caen, and denying its use to the enemy, was a primary objective in the D-Day attack of the British Second Army.

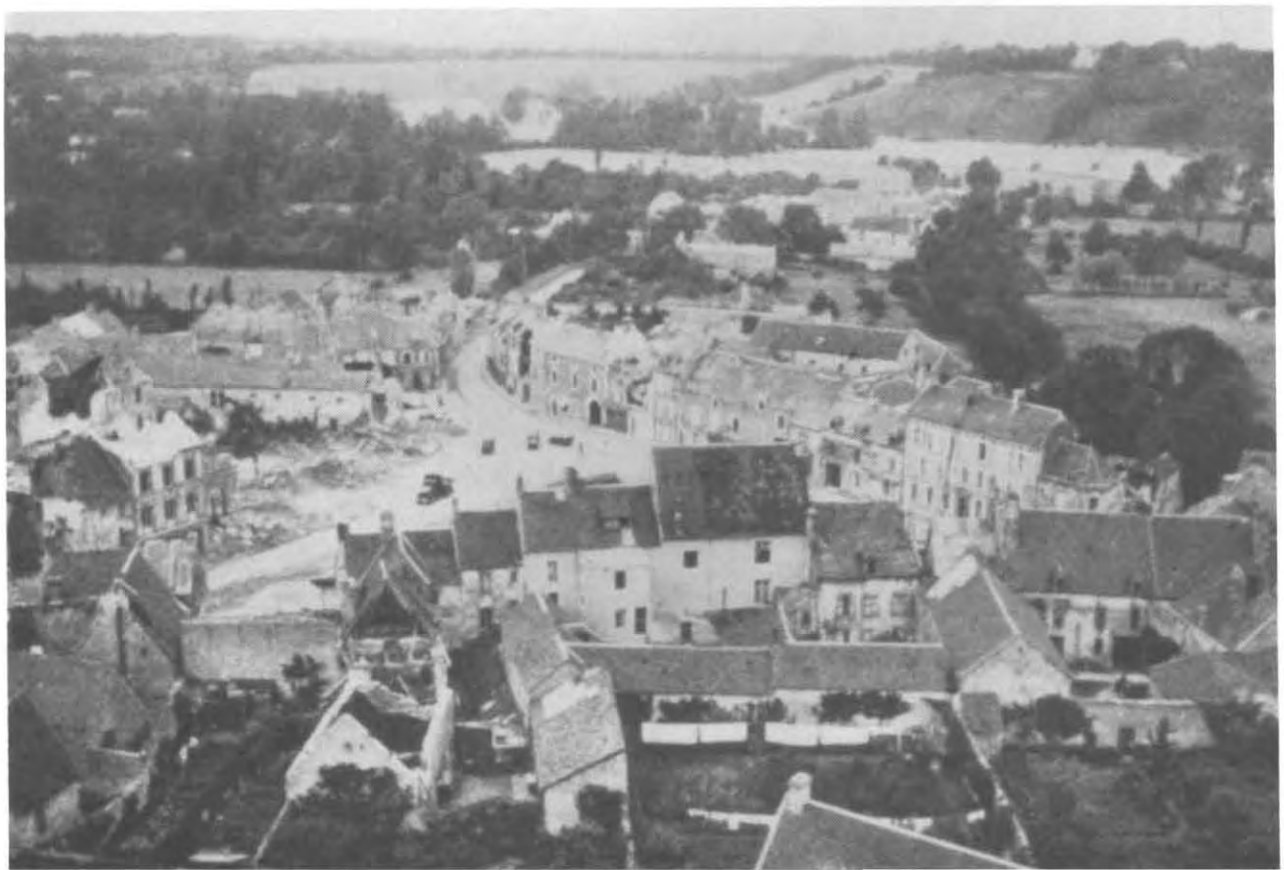
HEDGEROWS *marked the boundary of most fields in Normandy. This one grows out of a low embankment and in the background is double, with a deep ditch between the embankments. The field shown was part of the position occupied by units of the 2d Ranger Battalion on the night of 6 June, when they were attacked by a superior German force near Pointe du Hoe. (Photograph taken June, 1945.)*





SUNKEN ROADS *were often formed by the high hedgerow embankments, which had occasional openings into adjacent fields. This road, leading up E–3 draw toward Colleville, indicates the difficulties for heavy traffic from the beaches. (Photo taken June, 1945.)*

TREVIERES, *an important road center behind Omaha, is the largest village close to the beach. This view looks across it to the north, showing bluffs that overlook the small Aure River. Damage to the town is result of naval and artillery fire before 10 June.*



American troops who fought in Normandy will always connect the name with hedgerow fighting. They were to begin it as soon as they left the bluffs above Omaha Beach. Stock raising and fruit growing are the main rural activities in this part of Normandy, and the field system is characterized by a patchwork layout of irregular fields varying from narrow ribbon-like strips to shapes more nearly square. These range in size from 10 or 15 to a 100 acres or more, with the greater number probably averaging between 50 and 75 acres. Some contain orchards of low-growing apple trees, more are used for pasture, and there are occasional patches of grain, though the main wheat-growing area of western Normandy is in the Orne Valley. Boundaries between fields tend to follow NNE-SSW and WNW-ESE axes in the Omaha region, but local variations are numerous, and the boundaries could never be counted on to provide a safe direction-line for keeping to an axis of advance. Hedgerows form the universal substitute for fences in this country and vary in character almost as much as do the shapes of the fields. Some are low bushes, five to six feet high, growing from the ground level of the field and not hard to break through. Others are thick, densely matted walls of tough and briery hedge, running up to 10 feet in height and interspersed with large and small trees. In many regions (not so often in the area just behind Omaha Beach) the hedges grow out of banks or dikes of earth, forming natural ramparts sometimes six feet high and adding immensely to the strength of the barrier. Many hedge embankments are not passable for tanks. Drainage ditches are often found skirting the hedge or its embankment, and provide good sites for shelters and fox holes. Communication between fields is usually limited to small openings at the corners. Occasional narrow trails or sunken roads, running between parallel hedgerows (and not always shown on maps) give access to fields far off the regular road net.

Fighting in country of this sort presents serious difficulties to attacking forces. Each hedgerow across the axis of advance might conceal a nest of enemy resistance, in which good positions for flat-trajectory weapons could be quickly organized, with short but usually excellent fields of fire across the nearest fields. Axial hedgerows could be utilized by defenders for delivering flanking fire. Observation would be extremely difficult for the attackers (see illustration, p. 120), and this might hinder the quick use of supporting heavy weapons and artillery fire. In contrast, a defending force could use prearranged fires of mortars and automatic weapons sited to cover the hedgerows leading toward any prepared positions. Split up by hedgerow walls, attacking forces were often to find difficulty in maintaining communications on their flanks and in coordinating the attack of units larger than a company. Fighting in this country would put a premium on initiative and aggressive leadership in small units, and armor could have only limited use.

Trévières, largest village in the area close to Omaha Beach, had a prewar population of about 800, and the total population of the region shown on Map No. III (excluding Bayeux) was probably under 10,000. Following practices that go back to Celtic settlement of the land, farmers in this part of Normandy tend to group in small straggling villages and hamlets, with houses of stone and rubble-mortar construction. If located on important roads or high ground, these villages were often destined to become centers of local resistance and to suffer accordingly. In terrain so lacking in hills, church towers were inevitably regarded as possible observation posts, and their ruins testify to the results of neutralizing artillery fire. The occasional isolated farms usually

consisted of fairly substantial buildings grouped around a court yard; many farms of this type became strongpoints in the battles through hedgerow country.

Enemy Defenses

In the years which followed the fall of France, the Germans publicized the building of an "Atlantic Wall" against any invasion attempts on the part of the Allies. In his speech announcing declaration of war on the United States, Hitler said (11 December 1941): "A belt of strongpoints and gigantic fortifications runs from Kirkenes (Norway) to the Pyrenees. . . . It is my unshakable decision to make this front impregnable against every enemy." Commando forays on the coast of France, aerial reconnaissance, and reports from the French Resistance and secret agents helped Allied Headquarters to amass detailed information on the enemy's progress in strengthening his fortifications in the west. On the basis of this intelligence Allied plans were checked and revised up to the middle of May. The estimates were later found to be substantially correct regarding enemy fire power, the underwater and beach obstacles, the plans for use of terrain in defense, and the strength of defensive emplacements.

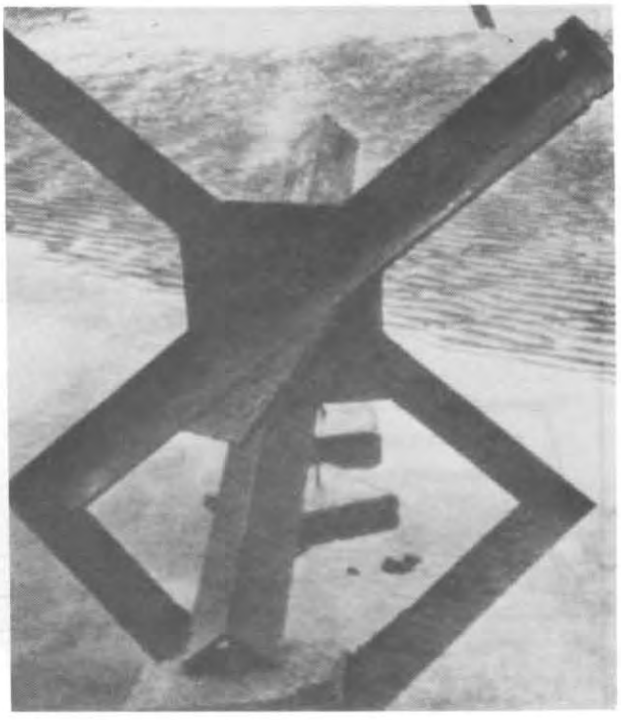
German coastal defenses in the V Corps zone were distributed in accordance with the degree of opportunity offered by different sectors for a landing assault (Maps Nos. II and IV) Thirty-two fortified areas or strongpoints were located between the Vire River and Port-en-Bessin. The Vire Estuary, Grandcamp, and Port-en-Bessin were strongly defended. On the long stretches of coast enjoying natural protection by reefs and cliffs, the strongpoints were widely spaced. The enemy had recognized that the Omaha sector was more favorable for attack from the sea, and 12 strongpoints were so placed as to be able to bring direct fire on the beach.

The enemy's tactical plan for meeting assault was suggested by the disposition of his coastal defenses, which were concentrated at the beaches and were not developed in any depth. Every evidence pointed to the conclusion that the Germans intended a maximum effort on the coast, seeking either to smash the attack at the water's edge or, at worst, to hold the assaulting forces near the beach until mobile reserves could arrive to finish them off. The beach defenses were designed to stop the attacking force by obstacles and mines, both on the tidal flat and the beach shelf, while it was annihilated with concentrated fires from every type of defensive weapon.

In 1944, at all main beaches practicable for massive landings, the Germans had begun to construct an elaborate system of obstacles along the tidal flat between the high- and low-water marks. These obstacles, designed to wreck or block off landing craft, had begun to appear in the Omaha sector early in April, and work on them was still in progress by D Day.

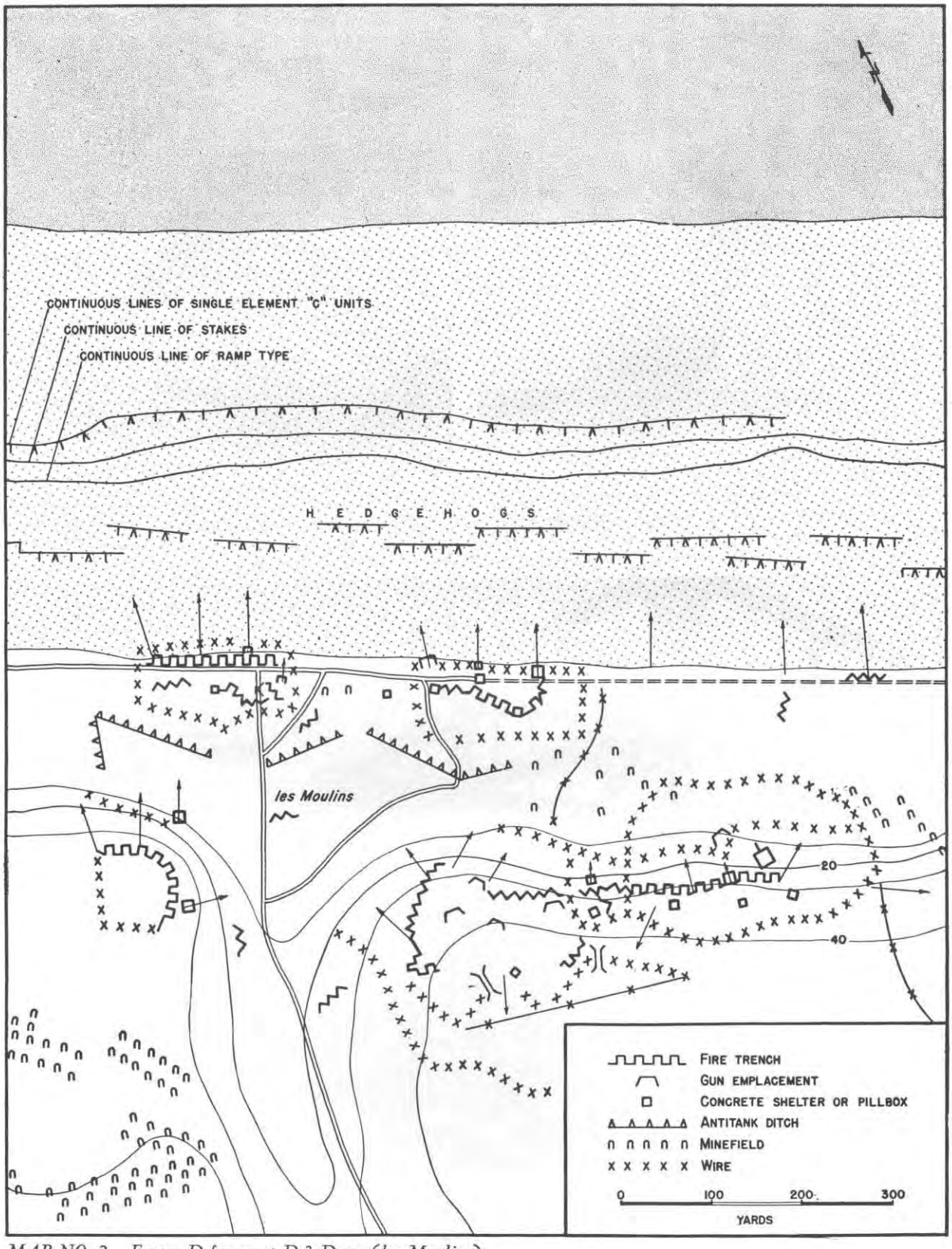
The first band of obstructions consisted of a series of Element "C," gate-like structures of reinforced iron frames with iron supports, on rollers, about 250 yards out from the high-water line. The main support girders were 10 feet high, and waterproofed Teller mines were lashed to the uprights. The second band, 20 to 25 yards landward, was composed of heavy logs driven into the sand at such an angle that the mine-tipped ends pointed seaward, or of log ramps, reinforced and mined. This belt was found to be more formidable than had been anticipated. One hundred and thirty yards from shore, the final row of obstructions included hedgehogs, about five and one-half feet high and made of three or more steel rails or angles, crossed at the centers and so strongly set







UNDERWATER OBSTACLES: *Upper left, a mined post; upper right, hedgehog; below, Element "C" (with explosives attached for demolition by U. S. engineers who cleared the beaches). A fourth type found on Omaha, the log ramp, is seen in other illustrations.*



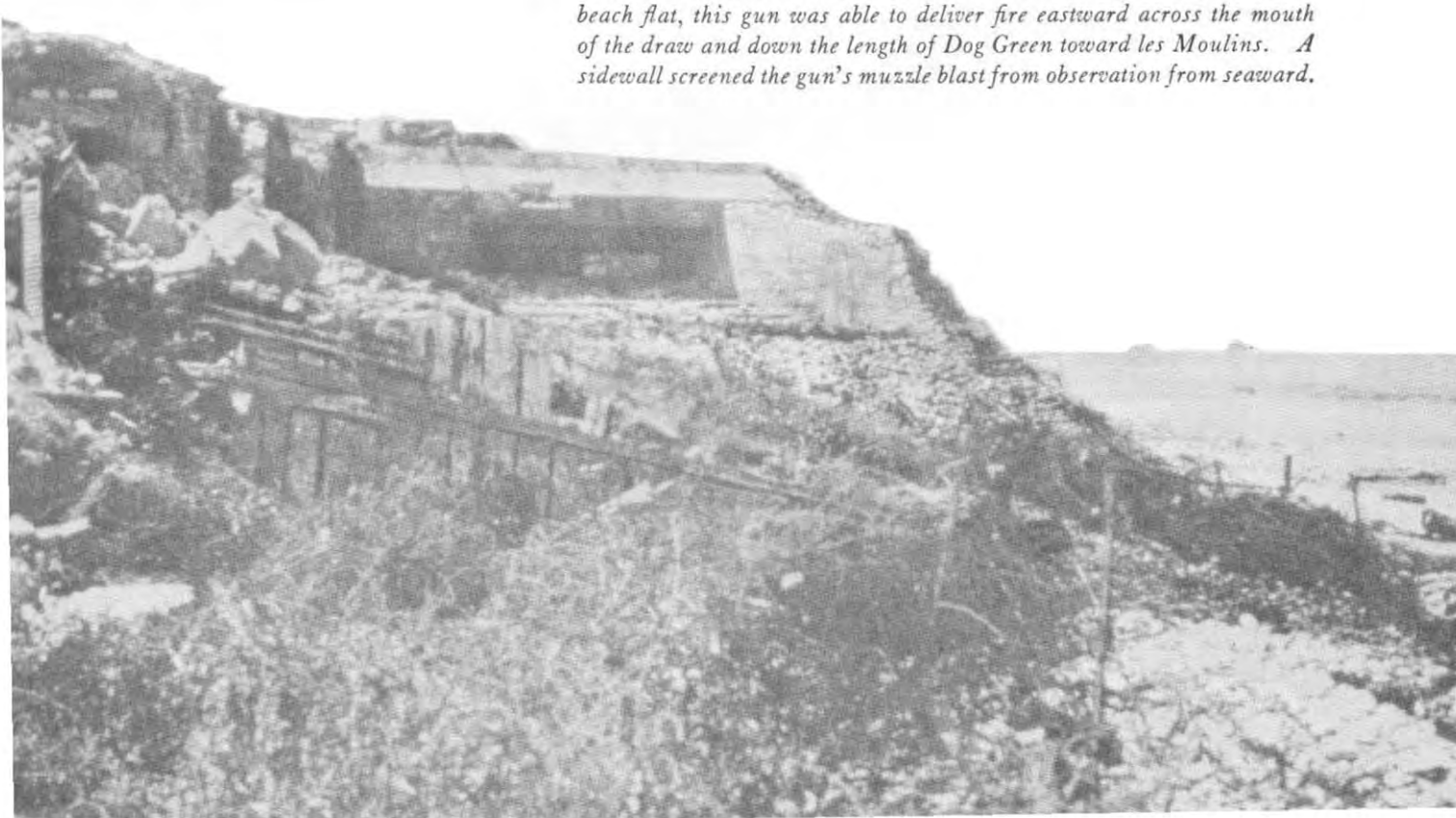
MAP NO. 2 Enemy Defenses at D-3 Draw (les Moulins)

that the ends would stave in the bottoms of landing craft. None of these bands were continuous, the elements being staggered at irregular intervals. There were no mines in the tidal sands. Shortly after work began on these obstacles, Allied intelligence learned of the new development, and Allied planning staffs were preparing measures to meet this new and serious complication in the assault problem.

If the attacking troops reached the bank of shingle at the edge of the tidal sands, they would still have to cross the narrow shelf of beach flat to reach the bluffs. The Germans made liberal use of wire and mines to slow up movement beyond the shingle. Along most of the beach, a row of concertina wire was placed just to landward of the shingle; at the western end, the wire was on top of the sea wall. Irregularly placed minefields, usually posted with warning signs, lay in the flat ground behind the wire and on the bluff slope. In addition to the ordinary types, there were rock fougasses (charges of TNT covered by rock and set off by trip wire, sometimes in the concertina), ordinary trip-wire mines, French "buttercup" mines, and mustard pots. Some dummy minefields consisted of scrap iron planted below the ground surface, but most of the fields were real.

Enemy firing positions were laid out to cover the tidal flat and beach shelf with direct fire, both plunging and grazing, from all types of weapons. Observation on the whole Omaha area, and flanking fire from cliff positions at either end, were aided by the crescent curve of the shore line. The emplacements between Vierville and Pointe de la Perćée were particularly dangerous because of their ability to deliver enfilade fire on a large stretch of the landing area. Each strongpoint was a complex system made up of elements including pillboxes, gun casemates, open positions for light guns, and firing trenches, surrounded by minefields and wire (Map No. 2). The elements were connected with each other and with under-

PILLBOX NEAR VIERVILLE DRAW (D–1). *Placed on the beach flat, this gun was able to deliver fire eastward across the mouth of the draw and down the length of Dog Green toward les Moulins. A sidewall screened the gun's muzzle blast from observation from seaward.*





ground quarters and magazines by deep trenches or by tunnels. Most of the strongpoints protecting Omaha were situated near the entrance to the draws, which were further protected by antitank ditches and road blocks. In some cases the elements of a strongpoint were echeloned from the north edge of the beach flat to the top of the bluff, with weapons sited for both grazing and plunging fire on every yard of approach to the draw. In June the Germans were still in process of completing or strengthening several strongpoints, including those guarding E–1 draw.

While machine guns were the basic weapons in all emplacements, there were over 60 light artillery pieces of various types. Eight concrete casemates and four open field positions were designed for guns of caliber from 75-mm to 88-mm; 35 pillboxes were occupied by lighter guns; and there were about 18 antitank guns (37-mm to 75-mm). The heavier guns were sited to give lateral fire along the beach, with traverse limited by thick concrete wing-walls which concealed the flash of these guns and made them hard to spot from the sea. Mortar positions were sometimes included in the strongpoints but were more frequently placed behind the bluffs. About 40 rocket pits were later found, located several hundred yards inland on the high ground and each fitted to fire four 32-cm rockets.

The considerable areas between the strongpoints were supposed to be protected by their flanking fires, by minefields scattered on the beach flat and the slopes of the bluff, and by occasional trenches, rifle pits, and machine-gun emplacements along the crest. While the line of defense was not continuous, no areas of beach were left uncovered in the pattern of defensive fires. Nearly all weapons, machine guns as well as artillery pieces, were sited primarily to give lateral fires down the length of the beach, and the defense of a given sector usually depended as much on the flanking fire from neighboring positions as on the emplacements in the sector itself.

The Omaha sector was not strongly defended by coastal batteries of heavier guns. But at Pointe du Hoe, some 5,000 yards to the west, there was a battery believed to consist of six 155-mm howitzers (French make), mounted partly in casemates. This position was regarded as the most dangerous in the American zone, for guns of that caliber could cover not only the V and VII Corps landing beaches but also both transport areas. Further west, at Maisy, was a battery estimated at four 155-mm howitzers and near Géfosse-Fontenay were four 105-mm field gun-howitzers. Both of these batteries were later found to consist of mobile field guns. Just beyond the First Army boundary, in the British zone, the strong defenses of Port-en-Bessin included guns that might be used against the landing area at Omaha.

All main enemy defenses in the Omaha sector were on the beach or just behind it; there was no evidence that the Germans had prepared positions inland for a defense in depth. There were known to be a few minefields in the fields just south of the bluffs, and some scattered emplacements at bivouac areas and assembly points. Defense beyond the beach would depend largely on the use of local reserves in counterattack.

GUN EMPLACEMENT OVERLOOKING BEACH. *This 76-mm howitzer (Russian) was in the strongpoint just east of E–1 draw, and was sited for flanking fire on the approaches. Open emplacements were vulnerable to naval gunfire. (Photograph taken June, 1944.)*



TRENCHES ALONG THE BLUFF EDGE *were the main German defenses between strongpoints guarding draws. These trenches, leading from dugouts to firing positions, overlooked Easy Red Beach west of E–I draw. Such systems usually included machine-gun positions.*

Omaha Beach lay in the 53-mile sector reportedly held by the *716th Infantry Division*, extending from the Orne River to the Vire Estuary (Map No. I). This was a defensive division, estimated at two regiments, two or three artillery battalions, and other small divisional units. Non-German elements in the division were estimated to be as high as 50 percent, mostly Poles or Russians, and morale was thought to be poor. The *726th Infantry Regiment* was responsible for the coast defenses from west of Grandcamp to a point three miles east of Port-en-Bessin. According to the intelligence available, defending troops in the Omaha Beach strongpoints amounted to about a reinforced battalion, some 800 to 1,000 troops, most of them needed to man the beach defenses. Local reserves of the *716th Division* were estimated at three battalions, two of these near enough to the Omaha assault area to reach it in two or three hours. Counterattacks by these units were not regarded as likely to be effective against penetrations of the beach defenses, and major counterattacks would depend on the arrival of mobile reserves. The nearest of these to the Omaha area, and the most likely to be committed there was the *352d Infantry Division*, reported as stationed in the St-Lô–Caumont area some 20 miles inland. Commanded by Lt. Gen. Heinz Hellmich, this was an offensive division of good quality, with a core of veterans experienced in fighting on the Russian front, and was expected to furnish most of the opposition

to V Corps. It was at full strength, with three infantry regiments and normal artillery of three battalions of 105-mm and one battalion of 150-mm howitzers. By commandeering local transportation, the enemy was believed able to get one regimental combat team of this division into the Omaha area by afternoon of D Day. In addition, the three small battalions of the *30th Mobile Brigade*, headquarters at Coutances, might be used for early counterattack. These battalions, consisting of three companies each, were provided with adequate transport for quick movement. Other enemy mobile reserves, including his available armored divisions, were located nearer the Caen–Bayeux area in the British zone. V Corps units were warned to guard against possible armored counterattack on this flank by late on D Day. The three German divisions in the Cotentin peninsula were expected to be completely occupied by VII Corps' attack [6] and by the need for defending the Cherbourg area against possible further landings.

It was thought that the German air force would make a supreme effort against the Allied convoy and landing operations. Despite his heavy air losses during the winter, the enemy was believed capable of making 1,500 sorties on D Day, mainly of fighters and fighter-bombers. In view of the overwhelming Allied naval strength, there was little fear of enemy surface action against the assault convoy. Enemy capabilities would

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[6] The *245th Infantry Division*, believed to be guarding the coast from Coutances to Avranches (see Map No. 1), was found in July to have been in the Dieppe region at the time of the invasion.

ENEMY SHORE DEFENSES *were being strengthened and enlarged in the months preceding the invasion. Compare this picture of Easy Red sector (E–1 strongpoint at left, E–3 at right), taken on 31 May 1944 with the photograph used for Map No. 4, taken in February.*





GERMAN MORTAR POSITION, *in the strongpoint on the bluff just west of Vierville draw, looking inland. The gunners had oil-painted panoramic sketches of ground features near the position, with ranges and deflections for hitting more important target areas.*

be limited to harassing raids by E-Boats on the flanks of the convoy lane, and underwater attack by U-Boats from bases in western France.

Pre-Assault Bombardment Plans

The assault landings on Omaha Beach were to be preceded by intensive air and naval bombardment in the half-hour before touchdown, designed to neutralize all known gun positions and to demoralize enemy troops in the beach defenses. For the period just previous to D Day air attacks were planned against coastal batteries in the NEPTUNE area, but only as part of a widespread program which put its heaviest attacks on the French coast north of the Seine. The Pointe du Hoe position, one of the priority targets in this pre-D-Day bombing had been hit on 15 April, 22 May, and 4 June. The RAF was to conclude the effort against coastal batteries with a concentrated attack between midnight and dawn of D Day; the coastal batteries from the mouth of the Seine to Cherbourg were the

target of 1,333 heavy bombers dropping 5,316 tons of bombs.

From H–30 to H–5 minutes heavy bombers of the Eighth Air Force would strike enemy beach defenses in the assault area between the Vire and the Orne. In the V Corps' zone 480 B-24's were to attack 13 target areas with 1,285 tons of bombs. Of these targets, 11 were between Pointe de la Percée and the eastern end of the Omaha landing zone, including every strongpoint in the system of beach defenses. The loading consisted for the most part of 100-pound fragmentation and high-explosive bombs, with some 500-pound high-explosive bombs for certain strongpoints. All loads were fitted with instantaneous fuze in order to prevent cratering of the beach and consequent delay in movement of traffic across it. West of Omaha, the battery positions at Pointe du Hoe would receive a final attack by 18 medium bombers of the Ninth Air Force, delivered between H–20 and H–5 minutes. In the same period, mediums would deliver a blow of equal weight at Maisy, and the gun positions there and at Géfosse-Fontenay were the targets of two squadrons of fighter-bombers.

Naval gunfire would commence at H–40 minutes and continue to H–3 minutes. The battleships *Texas* and *Arkansas* (mounting a total of ten 14-inch, twelve 12-inch, and twelve 5-inch guns) would fire from 18,000 yards off shore. About 600 rounds of their heaviest shells would be aimed at the enemy coastal battery at Pointe du Hoe and at the enemy strongpoints defending Exit D-3. Three cruisers, with 6-inch or 152-mm guns, had as targets for 950 rounds the enemy defenses near Port-en-Bessin and the strongpoints near D-3 and E-1 draws. Firing at 1,800 yards from swept lanes on the flanks of the landing-craft approach area, eight destroyers (4- and 5-inch guns) were to put 2,000 rounds on the beach strongpoints.

In addition to the ships, a large number of fire-support craft were to place area fire on the beach defenses, and point fire on certain other targets. Five LCG (L)'s with two 47-mm guns each, accompanying the leading assault wave, were scheduled to fire 630 rounds on selected strongpoints beginning at H—20 minutes. Sixteen LCT (A and HE)'s, carrying tanks to land in the first wave, were each fitted so that two M-4's could fire over the ramp, beginning from a range of 3,000 yards at about H—15 minutes; each gun had an allowance of 150 rounds. Ten LCT (5)'s carried the 36 105-mm howitzers (self-propelled) of the 58th and 62d Armored Field Artillery Battalions, due to land in the third hour of the assault. These howitzers were mounted to fire from the LCT's, opening at a range of 8,000 yards about H—30 and closing at a range of 3,700 yards by H—5 minutes. Their allowance was 100 rounds per gun. Finally, 9 LCT (R)'s stationed in positions 3,000 yards off shore were to fire 1,000 HE rockets each when the leading assault wave was 300 yards from the beach.

Analysis of the combined plans shows that the great weight of air and naval bombardment would fall on the immediate beach defenses in the Omaha area, including positions which could put flanking fire on the beach. All the main enemy strongpoints, and the Pointe du Hoe coastal battery, were targets for attack both from air and sea.

Beginning at H Hour naval fires would shift to inland targets such as possible assembly areas, or wait for direction by naval shore fire control parties. There were 24 of these, permitting an allotment of one to each battalion (including the Ranger Battalions) in the two assault divisions, excepting the regiment in corps reserve. High-performance spotting aircraft would be available up to H+5 hours. For purposes of supporting the attack inland, Fire Support

Group I, consisting of a battleship, cruiser, and four destroyers, would be on call for the 29th Division units and Fire Support Group II, a battleship, two cruisers, and four destroyers, for the 1st Division.

Plan of Assault Landings

Air and naval bombardment was designed to soften up the beach defenses; the main job of reducing them and breaking through inland would have to be done by the assault landing teams. These had been built up to include every type of specialized technique and weapon needed in the fight at the beach. Every unit, down to the smallest, had been trained to carry out a particular task in a definite area (Maps Nos. II, IV, V, VI).

For purposes of the landing operations, the whole Omaha area had been divided into beach sectors and subsectors, with six subsectors falling in the main zone of landings. The 1st Division planned an attack by two regiments abreast. On the two easterly subsectors (Easy Red and Fox Green), totalling about 3,000 yards, the 16th RCT would assault with two battalion landing teams abreast, one on each subsector; the support BLT would touchdown on Easy Red at H+70 minutes. On the four western subsectors (Dog Green, Dog White, Dog Red, and Easy Green), totalling about 3,000 yards, the 116th RCT would likewise assault with two BLT's abreast, the support battalion coming in on the three eastern subsectors.

The Provisional Ranger Force of two battalions (six companies each), attached to the 116th RCT, had special missions on the right flank. Three companies of the 2d Ranger Battalion were to scale the cliffs at Pointe du Hoe, three miles west of the main landings, and take the fortified battery positions. One company of the same unit would land just west of the 116th near Exit D-1 and assault the enemy positions at Pointe de la Percée. If the assault at Pointe du Hoe was successful by H+30 minutes, the 5th Ranger Battalion and the remaining companies of the 2d Battalion would land there; if not, they would come in on Dog Green at H+70 and proceed overland for attack on Pointe du Hoe.

Further break-down of the assault tactics can best be followed in terms of the landing schedule, which brought the BLT's and their specialized supporting attachments ashore in a pattern to conform to the expected needs and development of the battle. The schedule for the 116th RCT may be taken as representative. (See Landing Diagram, 116th RCT, and Maps Nos. V, VI.)

H Hour would be fixed so as to bring in the first landing waves as soon after dawn as possible, and under conditions of tide low enough to expose fully the underwater beach obstacles. This timing was an essential feature of the assault plans. It meant that the first waves would have to cross several hundred yards of open ground on the tidal flat, but it would allow an engineer task force to clear lanes through the obstacles before the arrival of larger forces and supplies at high water.

At H–5 minutes Companies B and C (DD tanks) of the 743d Tank Battalion would make the first touchdown on Dog White and Dog Green. These tanks, fitted to navigate on water or land, were to be launched from 6,000 yards out, swim ashore, and take up firing positions at the water's edge to cover the first phase of the assault. Their fire was to be placed on the main enemy fortifications, particularly those west of Exit D-1 which could bring flanking fire on Dog Beach. Moving up through the obstacles as the tide rose, the tanks would support the main assault and then clear the beach through Exit D-3. At H Hour eight LCT's would land Company A of the 743d

LANDING DIAGRAM, OMAHA BEACH

(SECTOR OF 116th RCT)



	EASY GREEN	DOG RED	DOG WHITE	DOG GREEN
H-5			◇◇◇◇ ◇◇◇◇ ◇◇◇◇ ◇◇◇◇ Co C (DD) 743 Tk Bn	◇◇◇◇ ◇◇◇◇ ◇◇◇◇ ◇◇◇◇ Co B (DD) 743 Tk Bn
H HOUR	T T T T Co A 743 Tk Bn	T T T T Co A 743 Tk Bn		
H+01	V V V V V V Co E 116 Inf	V V V V V V Co F 116 Inf	V V V V V V Co G 116 Inf	A A A A A A Co A 116 Inf
H+03	M M M 146 Engr CT	M M M M 146 Engr CT — Demolitions Control Boat	M M M 146 Engr CT	M M M A A 146 Engr CT — Co C 2d Ranger Bn
H+30	V V V V V AAAW Btry — CoH, HQ CoE, CoH — 116 Inf — AAAW Btry	HQ HQ HQ Co V V V V V V V V V 2d Bn CoH CoF CoH 2d Bn AAAW Btry 116 Inf	V V V V V AAAW Btry — CoH HQ CoG CoH — 116 Inf — AAAW Btry	A A A A A A A A V Co B HQ Co A Co B — 116 Inf — AAAW Btry
H+40	M 112 Engr Bn	112 Engr V V V V M Co D 81 Cml Wpns Bn — 149 Engr Beach Bn	V M 149 Engr Beach Bn — 121 Engr Bn	HQ A A A A M V V V V V V V 1st Bn 116 — 149 Beach Bn — 121 Engr — Co D 116 Inf
H+50	V V V V V V V Co L 116 Inf	V V V V V V V Co I 116 Inf	V V V V V V Co K 116 Inf	M V V V V V V V V 121 Engr Bn — Co C 116 Inf
H+57		V V V V V V V V V HQ Co 3d Bn — Co M 116 Inf		V V V V Co B 81 Cml Wpns Bn
H+60	T	V T T T T 112 Engr Bn	V HQ & HQ Co 116 Inf	T T T A A A A A 121 Engr Bn — Co A & B 2d Ranger Bn
H+65				A A A A A A A 5th Ranger Bn
H+70	I 149 Engr Beach Bn	I 112 Engr Bn	I Alt HQ & HQ Co 116 Inf	M T T A A A A A A A A 121 Engr Bn — 5th Ranger Bn
H+90			T T T T T 58 FA Bn Armd	
H+100			I 6th Engr Sp Brig	
H+110	D D D E D D D D D D D D D III FA Bn (3 Btry's in DUKWS)	D D D D D D D D AT Plat 2d Bn — AT Plat 3d Bn — 29 Sig Bn		D D D D D D D D D D AT Plat 1st Bn — Cn Co 116 Inf
H+120	T T T 467 AAAW Bn — AT Co 116 Inf — 467 AAAW Bn	T T T T T AT Co 116 Inf — 467 AAAW Bn — 149 Engr Beach Bn	T T 467 AAAW Bn	T T 467 AAAW Bn
H+150		DD Tanks T T T	I HQ Co 116 Inf 104 Med Bn	
H+180 to H+215	T T	D D D D D D D D D D D D 461 Amphibious Truck Co	M T M T M T Navy Salvage	T T T T T
H+225	D D D D D D D D D D D D D D D D D D D D 461 Amph Trk Co	T	T T	

I LCI — M LCM — A LCA — ◇ DD Tank

T LCT — V LCVP — D DUKW

Note. Plan as of 11 May

Battalion on Easy Green and Dog Red. This unit had a mission similar to that of the other tank companies. With Company A were landed eight tank dozers, towing trailers of explosive and scheduled for use by engineers in demolition work on obstacles. All three companies were attached to the battalion landing teams to insure closest coordination with the infantry assault.

At H+1 minute the first infantry assault wave would touch down: four companies, each loaded in six LCVP's and correspondingly organized in boat sections rather than platoons. Company A would land on Dog Green, spearheading the 1st BLT's attack on the important Exit D-1. Companies E, F, and G were on the three subsectors to the east. This primary assault force was to cross the tidal flat through the obstacles and make its attack immediately on the German defenses. The boat sections were to operate as tactical units, each carrying out a carefully planned assault mission in a well-defined sector. The sections would assist each other in the work of reducing the beach defenses, but no attempt was to be made to organize for action as companies until an inland assembly point had been reached. The infantry attack, together with the fire of the tanks, would occupy the attention of the German strongpoints and cover the work on demolition of beach obstacles by the Special Engineer Task Force.

That Force was to come in at H+3 to H+8 minutes in 13 LCM's. Army personnel (for this section of the beach) was composed of the 146th Engineer Combat Battalion, organized in eight assault and four support teams, and a control section.[7] Averaging 41 men each, 11 of the teams included a Naval Combat Demolition Unit of an officer and 12 men. They had a vital mission to perform: landing when the tide was below the obstacles, to clear and mark lanes through the beach obstacles so that craft could reach the upper sands at flood stage of the tide. In the 116th's half of the beach, they were to prepare eight 50-yard gaps through all obstacles (two gaps per subsector). The eight tank dozers would be used to push, break, and tow off obstacles at the lower edge of the beach. Demolitions would be used on other obstacles, and mine crews would take care of the mines on obstacles and (if found) in the sand.

A 30-minute interval would be allowed for the work of the Engineer Special Task Force. Beginning at H+30 minutes, the second and larger group of assault waves would come to shore in a sequence of 5 landings, spaced over 30 minutes. These would bring in the remaining units of the two assault BLT's and (behind the 2d BLT) the supporting 3d BLT. Also included were battalion and regimental headquarters, two companies of the 81st Chemical Weapons Battalion, and elements of the 112th and 121st Engineer Combat Battalions. This second contingent of engineers had the mission of assisting the assault infantry through minefields and obstacles on their route of advance, and of opening the beach exits for passage of vehicles by H+3 hours. They would then move inland with the 116th RCT, one of their first tasks being to open the transit vehicle areas.

Advance elements of still a third engineer force were due in with the second series of landings. This force comprised the Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group, commanded by Brig. Gen. William M. Hoge and organized in two brigades of three battalions each. They would aid in clearing the beach area of mines and obstacles and in opening exits; then, when the engineers attached to 116th RCT went inland, the

[7] In the 16th RCT's sector, the 299th Engineer Combat Battalion furnished the Army contingent for this force.

Brigade Group engineers would take over organization, operation, and maintenance of the beach installations up to the beachhead maintenance line.

Between H+90 and H+120 minutes the first artillery units would come in, led by the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which had taken part in the preparatory bombardment by fire from LCT's. Dukws would bring in the 111th Field Artillery Battalion, the 467th AAA AW Battalion, and the antitank and cannon companies of the 116th RCT. Some vehicles had been included in the second wave; however, the real influx of vehicles and supply would come from H+180 minutes on, in steadily mounting proportion. By H+240 minutes there would be cranes, tank-recovery vehicles, halftracks, and trucks of all types on shore. From that time on, rhino-ferries and dukws were to play a large part in transport of vehicles and supply.

On Easy Red and Fox Green, the 16th RCT (with attachments) was to land by a very similar plan. The differences in respect to infantry landings can be seen on Maps Nos. V and VI. Of the three companies of the 741st Tank Battalion, B and C (DD's) were to land on Easy Red and Fox Green respectively, with Company A astride the boundary of these sectors. The employment of engineer units was similar for both parts of Omaha Beach,[8] and artillery and supply elements would come in at about the same rhythm.

The larger support elements of the assault force were to start landings on Omaha at H+195 minutes, when the 18th RCT would reach Easy Red. The infantry elements of the 115th RCT were to touch down behind the 116th on orders of the commanding general, V Corps, and to operate initially under 1st Division control.

[8] The demolition teams had the mission of clearing six gaps on Easy Red and two on Fox Green.

Plan for Movement to Inland Objectives

As the landing schedule clearly shows, the two assault regimental combat teams were expected to break through the beach defenses within the first two hours after touchdown. The enemy strongpoints protecting the exit draws were to be neutralized early enough to permit their opening for traffic off the beach by H+3 hours. After reducing beach defenses in their allotted zones, the companies in the assault battalion landing teams were to make their way to battalion assembly areas, ordinarily about a thousand yards inland. From there on, the battalions would operate toward assigned missions inland (Map No. IV).

In the 16th RCT zone, the 2d BLT had the mission of seizing Colleville, then fanning out beyond and holding the high ground just south of that village so as to cover later landings against possible enemy counterattack from Trévières or Bayeux. The 3d BLT, once on the plateau, was to turn east and reduce the enemy defenses along the bluff as far as Ste-Honorine-des-Pertes; then, to cover the eastern flank of the division, along the army boundary, by occupying the high ground as far as Mount Cauvin. The 1st BLT, in support during the beach assault, would move through the 2d Battalion, capture Formigny on the main highway, occupy the high ground overlooking Trévières and the Aure Valley near that village, and secure the river bridges near Trévières. Positions for all-around defense against possible enemy counterattack were to be secured and organized by all battalions.

Of the other 1st Division units, the 18th RCT, assembling under cover of the advance made by the 16th RCT, would move across the Aure southeast of Colleville and occupy the high ground east of Trévières, patrolling to the D-Day phase line. The 26th RCT, loaded in Force "B" and landing when

ordered by corps, would revert on landing to the 1st Division. Its mission was to seize and organize for defense the area south and southeast of Tour-en-Bessin, in contact toward Bayeux with 50 (British) Division.

On the western flank of the beachhead, 29th Division units had the mission of occupying the important area between the flooded Aure Valley and the sea. After capturing Vierville the 1st BLT would move west along the coastal highway, and together with the Rangers clear out enemy defenses from the beachhead to the Vire Estuary. It would be ready to seize Isigny and the important bridge there and to make contact with VII Corps to the west. The 2d BLT had St-Laurent as its first objective and then the higher ground southwest of that point. The 3d BLT landing in support was to move through Longueville, occupy the high ground 2,500 yards to the west, and prepare for advance toward Isigny. The 115th Infantry, landing in attachment to the 1st Division, would assist if necessary in mopping up the beach defenses in the zone of either of the assault regimental combat teams. It would be prepared to move through Longueville to the la Cambe area, outpost the high ground south of the Aure, and patrol considerably to the south of the outposts. The 175th Infantry, in Force "B" and designated as corps reserve, was scheduled to land on D+1.

Artillery support would be given by five battalions of 105-mm howitzers landing in attachment to the regiments of the 1st Division, two each to the assault RCT's. These battalions were to move inland with the advance. Additional fire support would be rendered by the heavier guns of the Navy, directed by the fire control parties with the infantry battalions.

If successful, this plan put V Corps in position to advance on D+1 south beyond the Aure toward the key high ground in the Cerisy Forest area, and west through Isigny toward a junction with VII Corps. Corps plans did not contemplate movement in force beyond the Vire, as it was hoped that the southward advance would compel an early enemy retreat from the area between the Vire and Carentan.

D DAY: THE LANDINGS

THE SELECTION OF D DAY was governed by several factors, complicated by the need of satisfying Allied requirements in five different landing areas, each with its own problems. It was desirable that D Day fall during a period when the days were long, for maximum use of Allied air power; when the moon was near the full, for better maneuver of ships and for easier night landings of airborne troops; and when tides were strong, so that beach obstacles would be fully exposed at low water and the landing craft could be floated far up the beach for convenient unloading at high water. Further, D Day must be selected with reference to certain requirements for H Hour, the moment when the first assault units touched down on the beaches. These were: that there be an hour of daylight before H Hour so that the preliminary bombardment would be as accurate as possible, and landing craft could be more easily organized into formation for the assault; that the tide should be near half-flood, so that obstacles would still be exposed, but rock ledges near the shore in the British zone would not be dangerous; and that the tide be rising at H Hour, insuring two high tides during daylight to facilitate maximum unloading of supplies. Certain groups of days came nearest to satisfying all these requirements: 21-22-23 May, 5-6-7 June, and 19-20-21 June were closest to the target date of 1 June. On 8 May, D Day was fixed at 5 June.

V Corps units had been alerted on 23 March to be ready for movement to marshalling areas on short notice. Actually, movement began 7 May and was completed by 11 May for elements of the assault and follow-up forces ("O" and "B"). The pre-embarkment handling of 65,000 men and 7,600 vehicles was accomplished by the XVIII and XIX Districts of the Southern Base Section, Services of Supply. Once in the marshalling areas, troops were "sealed" in their camps, given final items of equipment, and thoroughly briefed on all phases of their assignments. During the last few days of May, they were moved from the marshalling points to the ports and "hards" [9] for embarkation, their places being immediately taken by units designated to follow across the Channel in build-up schedules. By 3 June all troops of Force "O" had been loaded, and some of them had been aboard several days. Portland, Weymouth, and Poole were the embarkation areas. On the night of 27 May, a small enemy air attack on the Weymouth area caused some losses of a few smaller craft by mines. Aside from this raid, the loadings suffered no interference from enemy action, and German air reconnaissance up to D Day was on a routine scale.

The story of the Navy's share in operation NEPTUNE must be told elsewhere. Western Task Force, commanded by Rear Adm. Alan G. Kirk, was responsible for the embarkation and landing of First U. S. Army

[9] Beach areas given a hard surface by wire mats, concrete blocks, or other treatment so as to permit direct loading of vehicles from sand to ships.

forces. Rear Adm. J. L. Hall, Jr., commanded Force "O," which would carry the assault against Omaha Beach. The magnitude and complexity of the movement may be suggested by figures. To lift and land this initial assault force of 34,000 men and 3,300 vehicles required 7 transports, 8 LSI's, 24 LST's, 33 LCI (L)'s, 36 LCM (3)'s, 147 LCT's, and 33 other craft, while the escort, gunfire support, and bombardment missions employed 2 battleships, 3 cruisers, 12 destroyers, and 105 other ships. Force "O" also included 33 mine-sweepers and 585 vessels used in service work.

The 16th RCT, including 3,502 men and 295 vehicles attached only for movement to the beach, numbered 9,828 personnel, 919 vehicles, and 48 tanks. To handle this one unit required 2 transports, 6 LST's, 53 LCT's (of various types), and 5 LCI (L)'s; small craft, to be launched from the larger ships in the transport area, included 81 LCVP's, 18 LCA's (British), 13 other landing craft, and about 64 dukws.

The assault of this armada was dependent on the weather, which could so easily influence both naval and air operations. At the last minute, with all assault forces loaded and waiting for the signal to start, Operation NEPTUNE was threatened with checkmate. On 3 June, his meteorological staff gave General Eisenhower an unfavorable forecast for D Day, predicting overcast skies and strong winds. At 0415 on 4 June he decided to postpone D Day 24 hours. One of the divisions of the assault convoy had already started out to sea, according to schedule, and had to be recalled.

LOADING LST'S FOR THE INVASION. *Southern ports of England were crowded with ships and craft in the weeks preceding D Day; the vehicles shown are "Weasels" (cargo carrier M–29) towing loaded trailers. Enemy air was unable to interfere with this activity.*





THE LANE OF SHIPS *from southern England to the assault area was protected by a screen of naval vessels and continuous air cover. Here, a number of LCI's (manned by personnel of the U. S. Coast Guard) each with its barrage balloon are under way toward France.*

Weather forecasts on 4 June held out hopes for a slight but temporary improvement. Beginning on 5 June and lasting about 24 hours, there would be an interval of better sky conditions, with broken clouds at a ceiling not lower than 3,000 feet. Seas were expected to moderate. Following this break, the prospects were for renewed cloud and stronger winds. Postponement to 7 June would therefore risk a deterioration of weather conditions, as well as fueling difficulties for some of the ships in convoys already at sea; further postponement would mean a delay until 19 June before tide and moon conditions were again suitable. General Eisenhower decided at 0415 on 5 June to accept the risks involved in making the assault under the conditions of sea and sky expected for the next day. H Hour for Omaha Beach was set at 0630.[10] Low tide would occur at 0525 and the first high water 1100. Sunrise was at 0558 and sunset 2207.

The main convoy of Force "O" cleared Portland Harbor on the afternoon of 5 June; movement across 100 miles of channel to the assault area was uneventful. The operation met no interference from action by enemy naval or air forces. Continuous air cover was provided for the shipping lane and for the Allied assault beaches. Spitfires protected the convoys at low altitudes; patrols of four squadrons of P-47's from the Ninth and Eighth Air Forces were over the shipping lane and its flanks at all times.

[10] The Allied assault forces used four different H Hours, to meet the differing conditions of tide and bottom on the main assault beaches. The hour was 0630 at Omaha and Utah, while the British landings came between 0700 and 0730.

The assault beach zones were to receive continuous cover by fighters, the Ninth Air Force detailing five groups for high cover, with the task of maintaining three squadrons over the Allied beaches at all times during daylight. Low cover was a British commitment. One of the most important contributions to the whole operation was performed by the sweepers of Western Task Force, which made possible the passage of the convoys to the assault beaches without loss from mines. The *Ancon*, headquarters ship for Admiral Hall and General Gerow, anchored at 0251 on D Day in the transport area, 23,000 yards off Omaha Beach.

In spite of some improvement over the previous period, weather conditions were far from ideal for the assault operations. Visibility was 10 miles, but there was a partial overcast to hamper bombing. The wind was still strong, coming from the northwest and therefore producing its full effects on the coastal waters off the Omaha sector. A wind force of 10 to 18 knots caused waves averaging 3 to 4 feet high in the transport area, with occasional waves up to 6 feet. On the beach, breakers were 3 to 4 feet. This condition of the sea persisted well into D+1 before the wind moderated. The effect on the landing plans was to be felt throughout D Day.

Approach to the Beach

The movement from transport area to shore proceeded according to a complex schedule, involving hundreds of craft and requiring the nicest timing to get the assault elements to the shore in their appointed order. One of the first steps was the loading of the assault infantry units from their transports into the small LCVP's and LCA's, which were launched from the larger mother ships. The process began three to four hours before H Hour and was rendered difficult by the choppy seas, which caused some minor delays. Carrying the early waves of 116th assault troops, the transport *Thomas Jefferson* was able to unload all its craft in 66 minutes, aided by the fact that 25 of the 33 craft could be "rail-loaded" and then swung overside. The *Thomas Jefferson's* craft left the rendezvous area at 0430, 25 minutes ahead of schedule, since control officers feared the conditions of sea would delay the approach run.

More serious effects of the rough seas were felt as the smaller craft moved in through the rendezvous area to the line of departure. The LCVP's and LCA's were drenched with spray from the start, and most of them began to ship enough water to demand full use of the pumps. In a good many craft the pumps would not carry the load, and the assault troops had to bail with their helmets. Craft having pump troubles were likely to be slowed down, and any attempt to raise the speed and catch up resulted in shipping more water than before. Only a small minority of the craft were in serious difficulties. Out of 180 to 200 craft used for the two assault RCT's, 10 carrying infantry are definitely known to have swamped, some almost at the start and others near the beach. Nearly all personnel from the swamped craft were rescued by naval craft or passing ships, often after hours in the water.

In most of the craft the soldiers were drenched from the outset by the cold spray, and seasickness overcame a great majority. Boat teams in the same formations, carrying men who had eaten the same breakfast and had the same training, were very unevenly affected, the "casualty" rates ranging all the way from zero to 100 percent. Men who had been chilled by their wetting, cramped by immobility in the small and fully loaded craft, and weakened by seasickness were not in the best condition for strenuous action on



LANDING CRAFT *were launched from transports 10 miles from the beaches. These craft, bucking rough seas, are passing by the cruiser Augusta, flagship of Western Task Force. The LCVP's in foreground would carry something more than a company of infantry.*

landing. Similar handicaps, however, had been met and overcome at training exercises, and many men, even among the seasick, were keyed up by the occasion. One officer remembered his troops chatting about "What a shambles the beach would be from the bombs and ships' guns," although his own impression was: "It looked like another big tactical scheme off Slapton Sands, and I couldn't get the feeling out of my head that it was going to be another miserable two-day job with a hot shower at the end."

As the landing craft carrying the 16th RCT units came within a few miles of shore they passed men struggling in life preservers and on rafts. These were personnel from foundered DD tanks, the first casualties of the rough seas. According to plan, Companies B and C of the 741st Tank Battalion were launched at H–50 minutes, 6,000 yards off shore, to lead in the first assault wave on the eastern beach sectors. In very short order the DD's began to suffer crippling damage in broken struts, torn canvas, and engine trouble from water flooding the engine compartment. Of the 32 tanks, 2 swam in and 3 others were beached from an LCT which could not launch its DD's because of a damaged ramp. In the 116th RCT zone, the officers in charge of the tank-loaded LCT's had decided not to risk the conditions of sea, and the 32 DD's of the 743d Tank Battalion were carried in to the beach.

In terms of ultimate effects, all these difficulties were minor by comparison with those of navigation. The plan called for landing each assault unit in a relatively small, defined area where it had a specific task to perform in reducing enemy defenses, opening gaps in obstacles, or clearing a section of the flat. Quick success on the beach was dependent on carrying out a large number of such small tasks, which were often correlated to lead to some major result such as the opening of an exit.



MIST AND SMOKE OBSCURED LANDMARKS *even as late as 0730, when the support BLT's were landing. This Coast Guard photograph shows LCVP's, from the transport Samuel Chase, landing troops of the 1st BLT, 16th Infantry on their assigned beach sector, Easy Red.*

Despite all the intensive study put on conditions of current and wind for this part of the coast, all the visual aids for spotting beachmarks by panoramic photographs, and all the experience with similar difficulties in training exercises, a great many landing craft of the first waves came in away from their target sectors. Smoke and dust along the beach from naval fire and a slight early morning mist made it hard to recognize landmarks as the shore was neared. One of the control vessels for Dog Beach drifted off its station, which may explain some of the later troubles of approach in that sector. The fact that practically all the mislanded craft were east of their targets points to the tidal current as a contributing factor. It was known that with a rising tide (low tide on 6 June was at 0525), a strong current ran laterally eastward along Omaha Beach, reaching maximum velocity of nearly 2.7 knots at 5 miles off shore; strong winds might increase its average velocity. That the current was very strong on D Day is indicated by the report of the destroyer *Satterlee*, which found it necessary to steer 20 to 30 degrees "up current" in order to maintain position in the firing lane.

Whatever the cause, a majority of landing craft during the first hour came in east of their appointed beach sector, and this majority included craft bearing engineers as well as infantry (Maps Nos. V, VI). Sometimes the margin of error was as much as a thousand yards or more; one company (E) of the 116th, destined for Easy Green, came in, boat sections scattered, on the 16th beaches as far east as Fox Green. More often, the error was in the order of a few hundred yards, but this could be enough to undo the

assignments for taking out a key strongpoint or opening an exit. It might also be enough to completely "lose" units which landed below an unfamiliar stretch of bluff, were consequently unable to identify the terrain, and so could not make a proper estimate of the enemy defenses with which they must deal. The resulting difficulties of the boat teams were heightened by the frequent separation of sections of the same company. Whether because of delays suffered by individual craft, straggling on the way in, or disagreement between coxswains in recognition of landmarks, some unit formations of landing craft were broken up enough to result in widely scattered landings. Under conditions prevailing at the beach, separation of craft by as little as 200 yards could easily bring about the complete isolation of a section. This would deny elements of a mislanded company the advantages of combining in order to improvise their assault if they came to shore in strange territory. Sections which suffered heavy casualties in leaders might be particularly affected by separation.

The landing craft came in under the comforting thunder of the tremendous fire support from naval guns, as well as the tank and artillery pieces firing from LCT's.[11] Up to within a few hundred yards of the water's edge, there was every reason to hope that the enemy shore defenses might have been neutralized. Then, many of the leading craft began to come under fire from automatic weapons and artillery, which increased in volume as they approached touchdown. It was evident at H Hour that the enemy fortifications had not been knocked out.

Just how much had been accomplished by the preliminary bombardment can only be determined later from enemy sources. Many gun positions and strongpoints certainly survived the early fire. The well-concealed emplacements were hard enough to locate later in the day, with better visibility and chances for observation. The tanks and artillery operating from LCT's in rough water were handicapped by conditions making accurate fire difficult. The rockets, according to most reports from the assault troops, made a heartening display but failed to hit defensive positions—an opinion which cannot be accepted as final and which runs counter to naval reports. The total bombardment had certainly had effect, and it may have been more considerable than the infantry could realize. Enemy guns had been sited to cover every part of the beach; nevertheless, there were sectors where units landed without meeting any artillery fire whatever. Furthermore, of the nearly 200 craft carrying the assault infantry to shore in the first 2 hours, only about 10 are known to have been hit by artillery before debarking their troops, none was sunk by this fire, and in only a few cases were the casualties serious. Larger craft, particularly LCI's, may have been a favored target for both shore and inland guns, and may have suffered relatively more.

The assault troops experienced their worst disappointment of the day when they found the beach unscarred by air bombardment; they were correct in concluding that the air bombardment had had little effect on the beach defenses. Overcast conditions forced the use of Pathfinder instruments by the Eighth Air Force Liberators. With that technique, the range of possible error in the drop would be so increased as to endanger the approaching waves of landing craft. A bombing plan had already been made to cover this eventuality, by delaying the time of bomb release enough to push the center of the estimated drop patterns well inland,

[11] The only reaction from enemy coastal batteries came earlier, and from eastward; at 0537 guns near Port-en-Bessin put 10 rounds close to the destroyer *Emmons* and bracketed the *Arkansas*. Answering fire, including 20 rounds of 12-inch and 110 rounds of 5-inch shells, promptly silenced the enemy guns, but more counterbattery work had to be done on this area later in the morning.

thus ensuring the safety of the craft. Varying inversely with the distance in time from H Hour, the delay ranged to as much as 30 seconds. The decision to use this alternate plan had to be made on the night preceding D Day and was approved by Supreme Headquarters. It meant that the impact of the bomb weight fell from a few hundred yards to three miles inland, and the main effect, difficult to evaluate without enemy records, was probably to disrupt enemy communications and rear assembly areas. Of 446 Liberators dispatched, 329 attacked, dropping over 13,000 bombs.Their attack had taken place between 0555 and 0614.

The Initial Assault Wave

Ninety-six tanks, the Special Engineer Task Force, and eight companies of assault infantry (1,450 men), landing just before and after 0630, were to carry out the first assault missions (Map No. V).

On the right, the 743d Tank Battalion brought in all its tanks on LCT's. Company B, coming in directly in face of the Vierville draw, suffered from enemy artillery fire. The LCT carrying the company commander was sunk just off shore, and four other officers were killed or wounded, leaving one lieutenant in Company B. Eight of that company's 16 tanks landed and started to fire from the water's edge on enemy positions. The tanks of Companies C and A touched down to the east at well-spaced intervals and without initial losses. In the 16th RCT zone, only 5 of the 32 DD tanks (741st Tank Battalion) made shore; of Company A's 16 standard tanks, 2 were lost far off shore by an explosion of undetermined cause, and 3 were hit and put out of action very shortly after beaching. The surviving third of the battalion landed between E-1 and E-3 draws and went into action at once against enemy emplacements.

The Army-Navy Special Engineer Task Force had one of the most important and difficult missions of the landing. Their chances of clearing gaps through the obstacles in the half-hour allotted were lessened by accidents on the approach to the beach. Delays in loading from LCT's to LCM's and in finding their way to the beaches resulted in half of the 16 assault teams reaching shore 10 minutes or more late. Only five teams hit their appointed sector, most of them being carried eastward with the result that Dog Beach (the 116th RCT zone) received much less than the effort scheduled. As a further effect of mislandings, at least three teams came in where no infantry or tanks were present to give protective fire.

Men burdened with equipment and explosives were excellent targets for enemy fire as they unloaded in water often several feet deep. Of 16 dozers only 6 got to the beach in working condition, and 3 of these were immediately disabled by artillery hits. Much equipment, including nearly all buoys and poles for marking lanes, was lost or destroyed before it could be used. Eight navy personnel of Team 11 were dragging the preloaded rubber boat off their LCM when an artillery shell burst just above the load of explosives and set off the primacord. One of the eight survived. Another shell hit the LCM of Team 14, detonating explosives on the deck and killing all navy personnel. Team 15 was pulling in its rubber boat through the surf when a mortar scored a direct hit and touched off the explosives, killing three men and wounding four. Support Team F came in about 0700. A first shell hit the ramp, throwing three men into the water. As the vessel drifted off out of control, another hit squarely on the bow, killing 15 of the team. Only five army personnel from this craft reached shore.

Despite such disasters and under continued intense fire, the engineers got to work on

obstacles wherever they landed and with whatever equipment and explosives they could salvage. Some of the teams arriving a few minutes late found the rapidly advancing tide already into the lower obstacles. Infantry units landing behind schedule or delayed in starting up the beach came through the demolition parties as they worked, and thereby impeded their progress. One of the three dozers left in operation was prevented from maneuvering freely by riflemen who tried to find shelter behind it from the intense fire. As a final handicap, there were instances where teams had fixed their charges, were ready to blow their lane, and were prevented by the fact that infantry were passing through or were taking cover in the obstacles. When Team 7 was set to fire, an LCVP came crashing into the obstacles, smashed through the timbers, and set off seven mines; the charge could not be blown. In another case, vehicles passed through the prepared area and caused misfire by cutting the primacord fuze linking the charges. A naval officer, about to pull the twin-junction igniters to explode his charge, was hit by a piece of shrapnel that cut off his finger and the two fuzes. The charge laid by Team 12 went off but at heavy cost. Their preparations completed for a 30-yard gap, the team was just leaving the area to take cover when a mortar shell struck the primacord. The premature explosion killed and wounded 19 engineers and some infantry nearby.

In net result, the demolition task force blew six complete gaps through all bands of obstacles, and three partial gaps. Of the six, only two were in the 116th's half of the beach, and four were on Easy Red (Map No. V), a fact which may have influenced later landing chances. Owing to the loss of equipment, only one of the gaps could be marked, and this diminished their value under high-water conditions. Their first effort made, the demolition teams joined the other assault forces on the shingle or sea wall and waited for the next low tide to resume their work. Casualties for the Special Engineer Task Force, including navy personnel, ran to 41 percent for D Day, most of them suffered in the first half-hour.

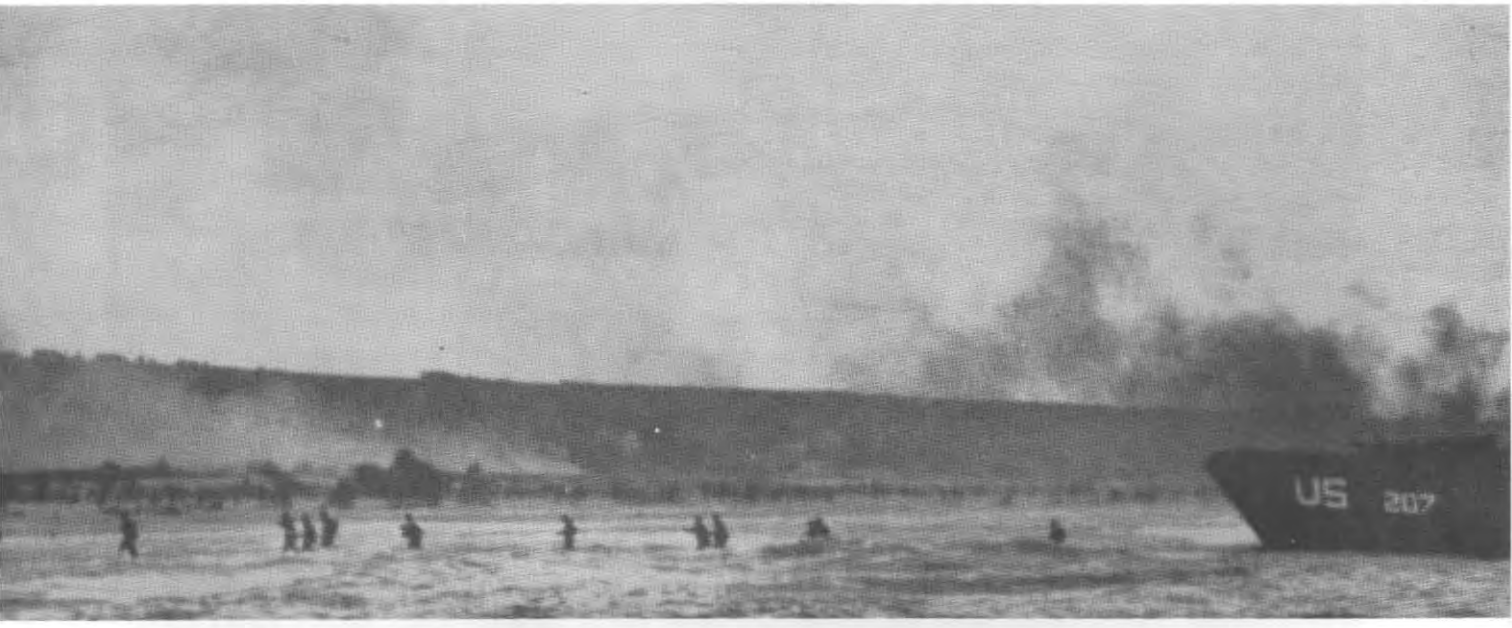
The infantry companies in the first wave came in by boat sections, six to a company, with a headquarters section due in the next wave (0700). Each LCVP carried an average of 31 men and an officer. The 116th assault craft were loaded so that the first to land would be a section leader and 5 riflemen armed with M-1's and carrying 96 rounds of ammunition. Following was a wire-cutting team of 4 men, armed with rifles; 2 carried large "search-nose" cutters, and 2 a smaller type. Behind these in the craft, loaded so as to land in proper order were: 2 BAR teams of 2 men each, carrying 900 rounds per gun; 2 bazooka teams, totalling 4 men, the assistants armed with carbines; a mortar team of 4 men, with a 60-mm mortar and 15 to 20 rounds; a flamethrower crew of 2 men; and, finally, 5 demolition men with pole and pack charges of TNT. A medic and the assistant section leader sat at the stern. Everybody wore assault jackets, with large pockets and built-in packs on the back; each man carried, in addition to personal weapons and special equipment, a gas mask, 5 grenades (the riflemen and wirecutters also had 4 smoke grenades), a half-pound block of TNT with primacord fuze, and 6 one-third rations (3 K's and 3 D's). All clothing was impregnated against gas. The men wore life preservers (2 per man in 16th Infantry units), and equipment and weapons of the 16th were fastened to life preservers so that they could be floated in.

As expected, few of the LCVP's and LCA's carrying assault infantry were able to make dry landings. Most of them grounded on sandbars 50 to 100 yards out, and in some

cases the water was neck deep. Under fire as they came within a quarter-mile of the shore, the infantry met their worst experiences of the day and suffered their heaviest casualties just after touchdown. Small-arms fire, mortars, and artillery concentrated on the landing area, but the worst hazard was produced by converging fires from automatic weapons. Survivors from some craft report hearing the fire beat on the ramps before they were lowered, and then seeing the hail of bullets whip the surf just in front of the lowered ramps. Some men dove under water or went over the sides to escape the beaten zone of the machine guns. Stiff, weakened from seasickness, and often heavily loaded, the debarking troops had little chance of moving fast in water that was knee deep or higher, and their progress was made more difficult by uneven footing in the runnels crossing the tidal flat. Many men were exhausted before they reached shore, where they faced 200 yards or more of open sand to cross before reaching cover at the sea wall or shingle bank. Most men who reached that cover made it by walking, and under increasing enemy fire. Troops who stopped to organize, rest, or take shelter behind obstacles or tanks merely prolonged their difficulties and suffered heavier losses.

ASSAULT LANDING. *This LCVP has grounded some distance out, and the men are wading toward the long stretch of open sands. A tank (No. 9, from Company A, 741st Tank Battalion) is on the edge of the tidal flat just ahead, on beach sector Easy Red. These troops are believed to be members of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, landing about 0730, when the tide was through the lower obstacles.*

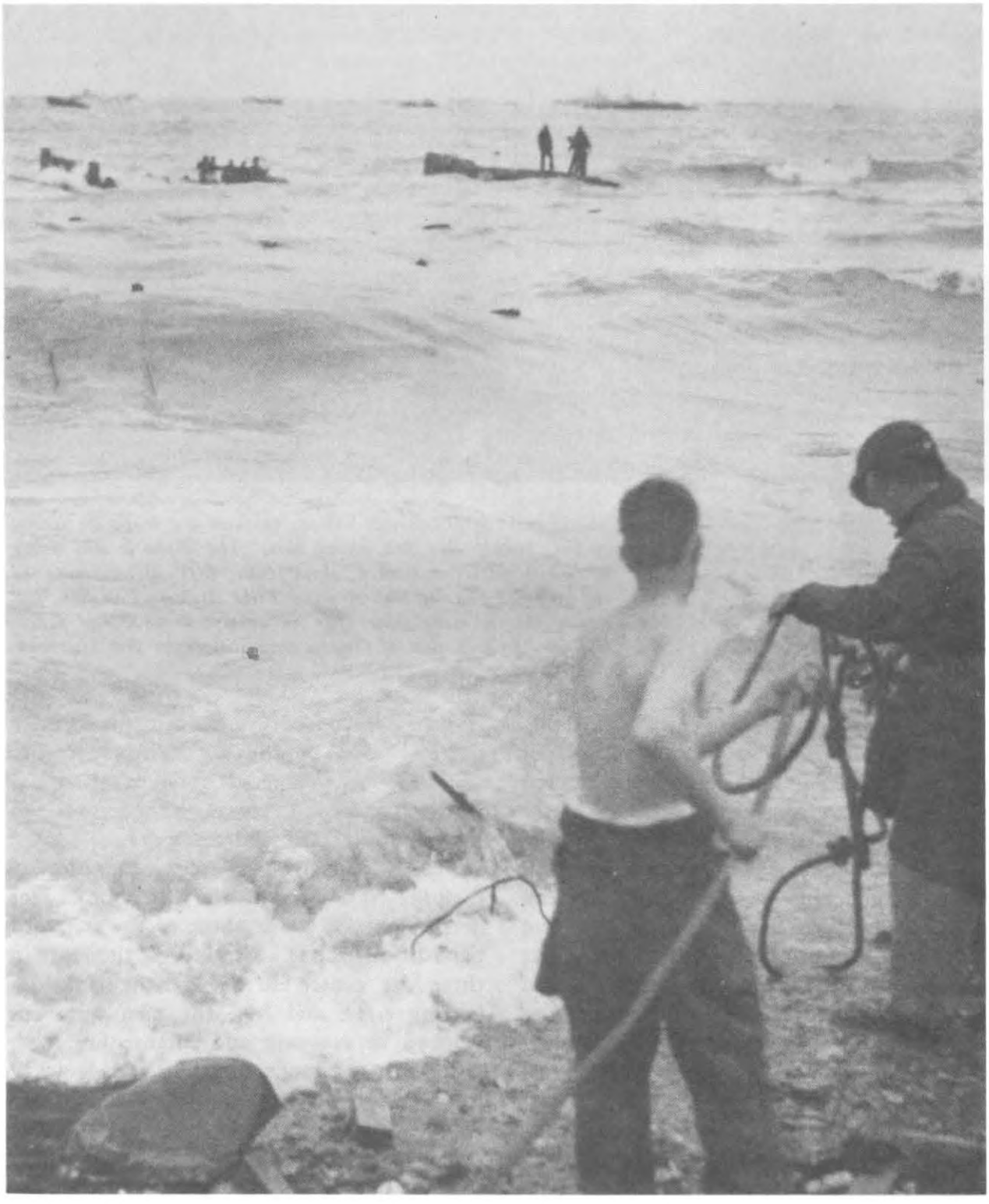




SMOKE FROM GRASS FIRES *obscured the bluffs on several sectors, notably Dog Red, shown here. The smoke is still visible when this picture was taken, about 1600. LCT 207, carrying the self-propelled guns of 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, was finally able to make shore after an attempt at 0800 had failed. Obstacles on this part of Omaha were still intact that afternoon.*

There were fortunate exceptions to this general picture. Several hundred yards of bluff west of les Moulins draw were obscured in heavy smoke from grass fires, apparently started by naval shells or rockets. Blanketed by this smoke, enemy guns and emplacements were unable to deliver effective fire on that end of Dog Beach, and units landing there were comparatively unscathed. At other places, what would seem to be an occasional "blind spot" in the enemy fire pattern let a craft get men ashore with few losses. In the main, the first wave was hard hit.

Perhaps the worst area on the beach was Dog Green, directly in front of strongpoints guarding the Vierville draw and under heavy flanking fire from emplacements to the west, near Pointe de la Percée. Company A of the 116th was due to land on this sector with Company C of the 2d Rangers on its right flank, and both units came in on their targets. One of the six LCA's carrying Company A foundered about a thousand yards off shore, and passing Rangers saw men jumping overboard and being dragged down by their loads. At H+6 minutes the remaining craft grounded in water 4 to 6 feet deep, about 30 yards short of the outward band of obstacles. Starting off the craft in three files, center file first and the flank files peeling right and left, the men were enveloped in accurate and intense fire from automatic weapons. Order was quickly lost as the troops attempted to dive under water or dropped over the sides into surf over their heads. Mortar fire scored four direct hits on one LCA, which "disintegrated." Casualties were suffered all the way to the sand, but when the survivors got there, some found they could not hold and came back into the water for cover, while others took



MEN FROM WRECKED LANDING CRAFT *are being rescued by life lines carried out to them from the beach. Medical corps personnel performed many acts of heroism, working under fire to bring up the wounded men left on the tidal flat and threatened by rising tide.*

refuge behind the nearest obstacles. Remnants of one boat team on the right flank organized a small firing line on the first yards of sand, in full exposure to the enemy. In short order every officer of the company, including Capt. Taylor N. Fellers, was a casualty, and most of the sergeants were killed or wounded. The leaderless men gave up any attempt to move forward and confined their efforts to saving the wounded, many of whom drowned in the rising tide. Some troops were later able to make the sea wall by staying in the edge of the water and going up the beach with the tide. Fifteen minutes after landing, Company A was out of action for the day. Estimates of its casualties range as high as two-thirds.

The smaller Ranger company (64 men), carried in two LCA's, came in at H+15 minutes to the right of Vierville draw. Shells from an antitank gun bracketed Capt. Ralph E. Goranson's craft, killing a dozen men and shaking up others. An enemy machine gun ranged in on the ramps of the second LCA and hit 15 Rangers as they debarked. Without waiting to organize, survivors of the boat sections set out immediately across 250 yards of sand toward the base of the cliff. Too tired to run, the men took three or four minutes to get there, and more casualties resulted from machine guns and mortars. Wounded men crawled behind them, and a few made it. When the Rangers got to shelter at the base of the cliff, they had lost 35 men.

An unscheduled gap of more than a thousand yards separated Company A from the next unit of the 116th RCT. Instead of coming in on Dog White, Company G landed in scattered groups eastward from the edges of Dog Red. The three or four boat sections nearest Dog Red, where smoke from grass fires shrouded the bluff, had an easy passage across the tidal flat. Most of the men were halfway up the flat before they became aware of sporadic and inaccurate fire, and only a few losses were suffered. In 10 to 15 minutes after touchdown this part of the company was behind the shingle bank, in good condition. Officers, knowing they were left of their landing area, were uncertain as to their course of action, and this hesitation prevented any chance of immediate assault action. Further east on Easy Green, the other sections of Company G met much heavier fire as they landed, one boat team losing 14 men before it reached the embankment.

Company F came into the beach almost on its scheduled target, touching down in front of the strongly fortified les Moulins draw (D-3). The 3 sections to the east, unprotected by the smoke, came under concentrated fire and took 45 minutes to get across the exposed stretch of sand. By this time half their number were casualties; the remnants reached cover in no state for assault action. The other sections had better fortune, but had lost their officers when they reached the shingle bank and were more or less disorganized.

This completes the story of the first assault wave on half of Omaha Beach, for the fourth company (E) of the 116th, supposed to land on Easy Green, veered a mile eastward from that sector. The three companies in the 116th's zone were in poor condition for carrying out their assault missions. By 0700 Company A had been cut to pieces at the water's edge, Company F was disorganized by heavy losses, and of the scattered sections of Company G, those in best shape were preparing to move west along the beach to find their assigned sector.

To the east, in the 16th RCT's area, the picture differed only in detail. Easy Red Beach, over a mile long and fronting E-1 draw, was assigned to the 2d BLT, with Companies E and F landing in the first wave.

The bulk of both companies landed far to the east. The only infantry to come in on Easy Red in the first wave were two lost boat sections of Company E, 116th RCT, and one section each of Companies E and F, 16th RCT. All of them were between E-1 and E-3 draws. Men from two of the craft were put out in waist-deep water, but hit a deep runnel as they waded in and had to swim through surf and a strong tidal current pulling them eastward. Flamethrowers, mortars, bazookas, and many personal weapons were dropped in the struggle. The two 116th sections lost only two men from enemy fire up to the shingle—an experience suggesting the ill-fortune of the first wave in that so few landings were made on Easy Red. A little to their left, the 1st Section of Company F came into the belt of heavy enemy fire that apparently extended from there on eastward to E-3 draw; of the 31 men unloading in neck-deep water, only 14 reached the shingle. Except for these four sections—about a hundred men—the only assault elements on Easy Red Beach for the first half hour were four DD tanks, one already disabled.

Very different was the record of the landings on Fox Beach. Whereas four scattered sections of infantry came into Easy Red without many casualties, the bulk of four companies (three of them scheduled for more westerly beaches) landed on Fox against every possible handicap of mislandings, delays, and enemy opposition.

Less the one section already accounted for (on Easy Red), Company E of the 16th RCT touched down on the western part of Fox Green, the craft badly scattered over a front of nearly 800 yards. The final run-in was not costly, but crossing bands of automatic fire caught most of the craft as the ramps were lowered, and from there on losses were heavy. Most of them were incurred in the water, and among men who stopped to drag the wounded ashore. So exhausted and shaken were the assault troops that when they reached the sand, 300 yards from the shingle bank, most of them stopped there and crawled in just ahead of the tide. The greater number of the company's 105 casualties for D Day were suffered on the beach, in the first stage of assault.

Four boat sections of Company E, 116th RCT, came in on the same beach sector and had much the same experience. From 3 of the sections, a total of 60 men reached the shingle bank. The company commander, Capt. Laurence A. Madill, already wounded crossing the beach, was hit twice by machine-gun bullets as he returned to salvage mortar ammunition. His last words were, "Senior non-com, take the men off the beach." The company's sections were separated, and it was some time before any contact was made between them.

Five sections of Company F, 16th RCT, landed on Fox Green scattered all the way from E-3 draw to a point a thousand yards further east. Two sections landed close together in front of the strongpoints defending E-3 draw. Mortars as well as machine-gun fire got about one-third of the personnel before they made the shingle. Further east, the other three parties fared as badly, only seven men from one craft getting through the fire to the shingle. Two officers survived among Company F's widely separated sections.

The two units scheduled to land on Fox Green, Companies I and L of the 16th RCT, were so delayed in the approach that they hardly figured in the first assault wave. Both, moreover, suffered from the eastward trend of all landings. Company I's craft, less two that swamped, headed almost as far east as Port-en-Bessin before the error was realized. An hour and a half was lost by this mishap. Company L touched down about 30 minutes late; supposed to land in

front of E-3, it came into the beach beyond the eastern end of Fox Green. One craft had foundered two miles off shore, losing eight men. Artillery fire came close as the remaining craft touched down, causing some casualties and destroying one craft just after the troops had debarked. Machine-gun fire caused heavier losses as the sections crossed 200 yards of beach to get to the shingle. The 3d Section, keeping extremely well spread out in movement, lost not a single man; the other sections had a total of 34 casualties. As a result of landing at the edge of Fox Green, the company was in a sector where the tidal flat almost reaches the bluff, and where the first rise of the bluff is cliff-like in steepness. In the defilade this afforded, the sections organized and started to move to the right where they could assault the bluff. Company L, reduced to 125 men, was the only one of the 8 companies in the first assault infantry which was ready to operate as a unit after crossing the lower beach.

The misfortunes of the first wave were bound to condition the further course of the assault. Landing schedules on many sectors would be affected by the failure to clear obstacles. Fire support from the tanks would be much less than planned on the eastern part of the beach. Mislandings of the infantry units had produced bad gaps in the assault line along the sea wall and shingle, leaving certain areas, notably Dog White and Easy Red, almost bare of assault troops. Above all, stiff enemy resistance and the disorganization caused by mislandings and heavy casualties had combined to prevent infantry units in this wave from carrying out their mission of immediate assault. All the more credit is due those elements, most of them facing unfamiliar terrain and enemy defenses, which surmounted the shock of the worst period on the beach and shared in the first advances inland.

The Later Assault Waves: 116th RCT

Beginning at 0700, the second group of assault waves touched down in a series of landings that lasted for 40 minutes, ending with the support battalions of the two regimental combat teams (Map No. VI). The later waves did not come in under the conditions planned for their arrival. The tide, flowing into the obstacle belt by 0700, was through it an hour later, rising eight feet in that period; but the obstacles were gapped at only a few places. The enemy fire which had decimated the first waves was not neutralized when the larger landings commenced. No advances had been made beyond the shingle, and neither the tanks nor the scattered pockets of infantry already ashore were able to give much covering fire. Consequently, much of the record of this period is a repetition of what had happened earlier. Casualties continued to be heavy on some sectors of the narrowing tidal flat, though unit experiences differed widely and enemy fire, diverted or neutralized by the troops and tanks already along the embankment, was not often as concentrated as earlier in the assault. Mislandings continued to be a disrupting factor, not merely in scattering the infantry units but also in preventing engineers from carrying out special assignments and in separating headquarters elements from their units, thus hindering reorganization.

Rifle companies in the later assault waves of the 116th Infantry were organized somewhat differently from those in the first landings. Two sections in each company were designated as "assault" units and carried the special weapons and equipment characteristic of the first wave. The assault sections had the mission of mopping up enemy emplacements bypassed by the first wave. The other four boat sections had the ordinary equipment of rifle units.

On the assumption that the first penetrations would already be made, support units were under orders to proceed as quickly as possible inland, by boat sections, toward battalion assembly areas. In the 16th Infantry, the support battalion (1st) was organized in assault sections exactly like those of the first wave; this arrangement may have reflected the experience of that regiment in its previous landings in Africa and Sicily, where plans had never worked out according to schedule.

In the 116th zone three companies of the 1st BLT were scheduled to land in reinforcement of Company A on Dog Green, facing the Vierville exit. In all, only two or three boat sections from these units landed on Dog Green.

Company B was due in at 0700. Its craft failed to pick up landmarks, scattered badly, and beached on a front of nearly a mile to both sides of the target area. Only three scattered sections on the flanks were to play much part in the later battle. The craft which touched down on or near Dog Green came under the same destructive fire which had wrecked Company A, and the remnants of the boat sections mingled with those of Company A in an effort for survival at the water's edge.

Company C came in at 0710 a thousand yards east of the Vierville exit, on Dog White, in a mislanding that was to work out to ultimate advantage. One of its 6 craft ran into a mined obstacle, and was delayed 20 minutes in maneuvers to get free without setting off the mines. The others came in fairly close together, suffering only one mishap when a craft thrown by the surf against a ramp turned over on its side, spilling men and equipment into water four to five feet deep. This boat section had been equipped for mopping-up work at the Vierville draw, and all its flamethrowers, demolition charges, bangalores, and mortars were lost. Enemy fire was surprisingly light, possibly because Company C was near the western end of the belt of smoke coming from grass fires on the bluff slopes. Only five or six casualties were suffered in disembarking and getting across the open sand. No other troops were near them; only four or five tanks were in sight. Bunched together on a front of about a hundred yards, Company C's men took shelter behind the four-foot timber sea wall and reorganized. Most of their equipment was intact, their sections were well together, and they were in relatively better shape for action than any unit so far landed in the 116th's zone.

Company D was not so fortunate. Three of its craft were in serious trouble as a result of shipping water; one of these was abandoned far out, and the section got in after noon. Another craft was sunk by a mine or an artillery hit 400 yards from shore, forcing the men to swim in under a barrage of mortar shells and machine-gun bullets. Half the personnel reached the sands. A third section was debarked 150 yards from the water's edge, saw riflemen ahead of them staying in the water, and followed their example, hiding behind obstacles. It was nearly two hours before the scattered survivors got to shore, with one mortar and no ammunition. The second platoon arrived on the beach with only two machine guns, one mortar and a small amount of ammunition. The first platoon got one machine gun and one mortar ashore during the morning. The heavy weapons of the 1st BLT were to take little part in the beach assault.

To complete the picture of misfortune for the 1st BLT, the three craft carrying the Headquarters Company, the command group, and the Beachmaster's party for Dog Green were brought in several hundred yards west of that sector and under the cliffs. Headquarters Company lost heavily among



THE OBSTACLES WERE USED AS SHELTER *by assault troops facing the task of crossing the tidal flat under full exposure to enemy fire, but the delay often resulted in heavier losses. Landing craft in the background are having trouble in the outer obstacles.*

officers and noncommissioned officers, including the commanding officer of the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. The crossing of the tidal flat to the cliff against concentrated small-arms fire cost one-half to two-thirds of the group. The survivors, reaching the base of the cliffs, took refuge in niches in the rock. Not only was the command group separated from all other battalion units, but the members of the group were so scattered that they had to use radio for inter-communication. Sniper fire from the cliffs was to pin the group here for most of the day.

Three companies of the 2d BLT had landed in the first wave. Completing the BLT, Company H got in at 0700, but in condition to furnish very little supporting fire for the rifle units. The 1st Machine-Gun Platoon and two mortar sections beached on Easy Red, where they helped the 18th RCT later in the morning. Other elements, landing on Dog Red and Easy Green, suffered heavy losses, one boat section getting only six men to the shingle. Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company came in on Dog Red at 0700. When the ramps went down, fire was so heavy that many men took refuge behind some tanks at the water's edge, only to find them favorite targets for artillery fire. Maj. Sidney V. Bingham, Jr., Battalion Commander, was among the first to reach the shingle, where he set to work trying to revive leaderless sections of Company F. For nearly an hour he had no radio working to contact the widely scattered elements of his battalion. During this period, the only part of the 2d BLT which had arrived at the embankment in good condition, four sections of Company G, set out to reach their planned assault sector on Dog White. To do so meant a lateral movement of several hundred yards behind the now crowded shingle bank and under small-arms fire. Starting out together and working slowly west, the four sections gradually lost all cohesion. One

after another, individuals or small groups stopped to take cover, and sections became mixed or separated. Only remnants were to reach Dog White, about 0830, after the main action on that sector was over.

Major Bingham's attempts to organize an assault at les Moulins were unsuccessful. He managed to get about 50 men of Company F across the shingle near the prominent three-story house at the mouth of the draw (see illustration, p. 12); a good system of trenches had been dug near the house and gave cover for the group. But their rifles, clogged with sand, failed to function well enough to build up any volume of fire. Although Bingham led a group of 10 men nearly to the top of the bluff just east of D-3 draw, they were unable to knock out an enemy machine-gun nest and had to return to the house.

The 3d BLT of the 116th was scheduled to land at 0720–0730 behind the 2d BLT, on Dog White, Dog Red, and Easy Green. Five to ten minutes late, the entire battalion came in to the east of les Moulins, with some elements on the edge of Easy Red.[12] Only a handful of assault troops from the first wave had come in between D-3 and E-1 draws: two or three scattered sections of G and the headquarters boat of Company E, which touched down at 0700 right on the target to find no trace of the E assault sections. Now, in contrast, this thousand-yard stretch was comparatively crowded, although there were gaps enough to give many boat teams the impression of being isolated. The craft of Companies K and I came in well bunched on the right wing. Enemy small-arms fire was light; K had no losses crossing the tidal flat to the shingle, and I took only a few casualties. Nevertheless, the men tended to become immobilized after reaching shelter, and reorganization of the boat teams was delayed by the fact that sections of different units had landed on top of each other.

Company L came in midway between the draws, its craft rather scattered, and enemy fire was so light and ineffective that some of the troops had been several minutes on the open sand before they became aware of machine-gun fire. Company M's boat sections were still further east, on Easy Red, one craft arriving in sinking condition from a mine explosion which wounded three men. The troops were tired and cramped by the trip in, and found their loads of weapons and ammunition heavy to get across the sand. As one of them put it: "The burdens we ordinarily carried, we had to drag." Enemy fire was more intense on this stretch of beach, near the E-1 strongpoints, and the sections hesitated near the water's edge, taking shelter behind obstacles. Machine-gun bullets were kicking up the sand ahead; some of the men, after studying the beaten zones, decided that the enemy guns were delivering fixed fire and figured out routes for avoiding the zones. When the tide began to push them forward, the company made the move to the embankment as a body. Only a few were hit; said one survivor, "The company learned with surprise how much small-arms fire a man can run through without getting hit."

Eighteen LCA's, carrying the 5th Ranger Battalion and Companies A and B of the 2d Rangers, had been waiting in the assembly area for word of the assault on Pointe du Hoe. One LCA had already been swamped further out, its men transferring to a passing LCT. After delaying 15 minutes beyond the time limit (0700), the Rangers still had no word and were forced to conclude that the assault had not succeeded. According to plan, they started in toward Dog Green to land behind the 1st Battalion of the 116th and go inland through the Vierville exit.

[12] In the case of one company, according to Navy reports, the company commander gave orders which were responsible for the landing eastward.

Approaching shore, Lt. Col. Max F. Schneider got a clear impression of the conditions on Dog Green and ordered the flotilla to swing east. Even so, Companies A and B of the 2d Rangers, on the right flank, came in on the edge of Dog Green and experienced what the 1st BLT of the 116th had already been through. One of their 5 craft was sunk by a mine in the outer obstacles, and the 34 men had to swim in under fire. Small-arms and mortar fire caught the other craft as they touched down. The small Ranger companies numbered about 65 officers and men each; some 35 in Company A and 27 in Company B got to the sea wall. Only a few hundred yards further east, on the favored section of Dog White, 13 out of the 14 craft carrying the 5th Battalion touched down close together, in two waves. LCI 91 was struck and set afire while the Rangers were passing through the obstacles beside it, but none of their craft was hit. The 450 men of the battalion got across the beach and up to the sea wall with a loss of only 5 or 6 men to scattered small-arms fire. They found the sea-wall shelter already fully occupied by 116th troops, and crowded in behind them.

By and large, the later waves of assault infantry on the western beaches had fared much better than in the first landings. Five of the eight companies of the 116th RCT had landed with sections well together and losses relatively light. Some had been shielded by the smoke of burning grass, but the better fortune was probably due also to the fact that, as landings increased in volume, enemy positions still in action were not able to concentrate on the many targets offered. By 0730, in contrast to the earlier situation, assault units were lined along the whole beach front in the 116th's zone. The weakest area was in front of Exit D-1; Dog Green, the zone of the 1st BLT, had almost no assault elements on it capable of further action.

Beginning at 0730, regimental command parties began to arrive. The main command group of the 116th RCT included Col. Charles D. W. Canham and General Cota. LCVP 71 came in on Dog White, bumping an obstacle and nudging the Teller mine until it dropped off, without exploding. Landing in three feet of water, the party lost one officer in getting across the exposed area. From the standpoint of influencing further operations, they could not have hit a better point in the 116th zone. To their right and left, Company C and some 2d Battalion elements were crowded against the embankment on a front of a few hundred yards, the main Ranger force was about to come into the same area, and enemy fire from the bluffs just ahead was masked by smoke and ineffective. The command group was well located to play a major role in the next phase of action.

The Later Assault Waves: 16th RCT

The first-wave landings of this combat team had veered so consistently eastward that Easy Red, longest of the beach sectors, had only a handful of assault infantry on it at 0700. The situation was largely corrected in the next 45 minutes by landings that concentrated between exit draws E-1 and E-3 (Map No. VI), where most of the surviving 741st tanks were available for support.

Company G beached on its target area at 0700, all craft together except for one delayed by shipping water. Some artillery shells hit near as they came close to touchdown, but there were no casualties before debarking. The craft were handled well; one of them hit a sandbar several hundred yards out, but the coxswain bumped his way through and made shallow water. Engineers were still at work on the obstacles as Company G passed through, and three

DD tanks on the sand were already disabled by enemy fire. The short passage from ramps to shingle bank was costly for the company; most of its 63 casualties for D Day came here, from small-arms and mortar fire. There was no way to avoid these losses; the men were cramped by the trip in, were heavily loaded, and had to make the distance at a walking pace. Nevertheless, the sections were well together and reached the shingle without being disorganized. In 15 minutes the supporting weapons were set up and were engaging enemy emplacements as soon as these could be spotted by their fire on later landings. Company G's men had come in almost on top of three sections left on the beach by the first wave, one from Company E and two from Company E of the 116th RCT.

Company H, due in on the same beach at 0710, was delayed in contacting the Navy control boat. Landing 20 minutes late a few hundred yards left of Company G, it lost a good deal of equipment including all radios in getting to the embankment. There, on a stretch facing E-3 draw where few troops had landed and enemy fire was heavy, the company was immobilized for the next few hours.

The 1st BLT, scheduled to reinforce and support the first assault units, came in on time about 0740 to 0800, between E-1 and E-3 draws, with Companies A and B on the right. Company D was boated so that its machine-gun sections came in attached to the rifle companies, and the heavy mortars with battalion headquarters. As far as incomplete evidence shows, casualties were much less heavy than in earlier landings.

Fox Green Beach already had elements of five companies, sections separated and scrambled (except for Company L) as a result of first-wave landings. Company K, arriving at 0700, added further to the mixture with sections bunching in two main groups that were not in contact until some hours later. That company took most of its 53 casualties for the day on the beach, including 4 officers. Company M's craft came in scattered, from 0730 to 0800. One capsized some distance from shore; the others, unloading in deep water and under fire, nevertheless got enough of their equipment ashore in time to be ready for effective support to the rifle units.

Company I, scheduled in the first assault wave, had gone off course to the east, lost two boats swamped, and finally came in to Fox Green about 0800. The four craft suffered heavily in the last yards of their approach. The command party craft struck a mine and was set afire by machine-gun bullets, two others received artillery hits (or struck mines), and the fourth was hung up on an obstacle, under machine-gun fire. Casualties were heavy. Captain Richmond, on landing safely, found himself senior officer on Fox Green and in charge of the intermingled elements of the 3d BLT on that beach. The command party of the battalion had been mislanded, this time to the west, and was unable to rejoin for hours.

Conditions on the Beach: 0730–0800

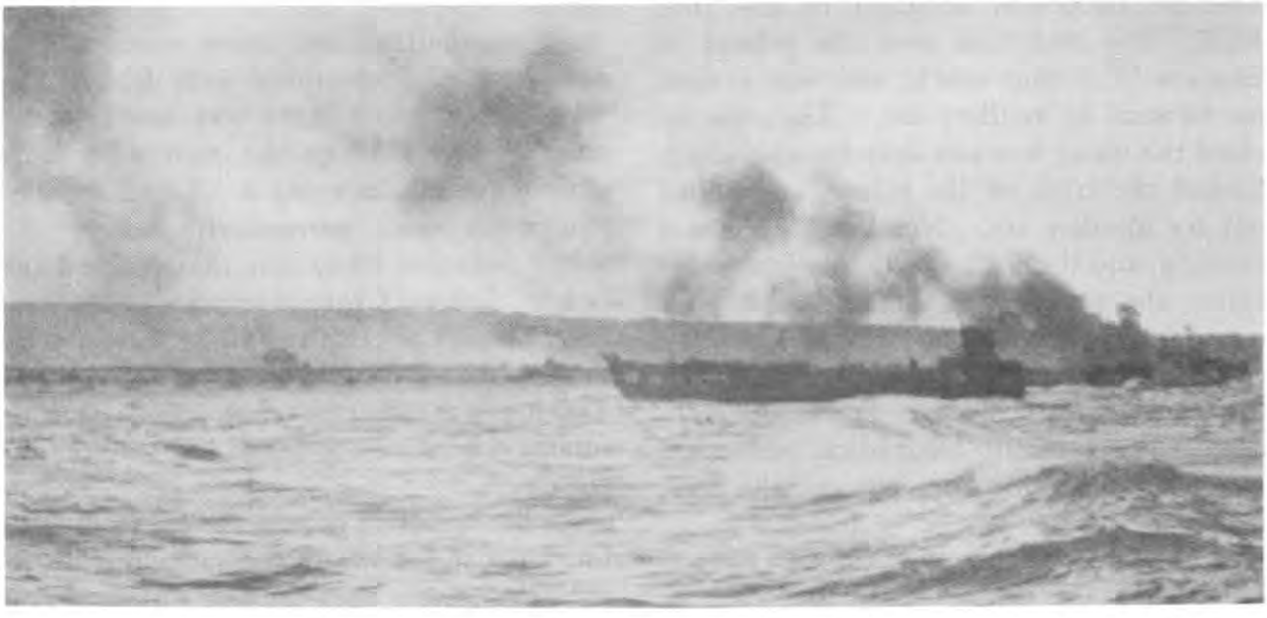
Infantry units were not the only assault elements to come ashore in the period from 0700 to 0800. The 81st Chemical Weapons Battalion, combat engineer battalions, advance elements of the Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group, naval shore fire control parties, advance elements of artillery units, medical detachments, and antiaircraft units were included in the landings before 0800, and artillery was due to start landing during the next hour. Mislandings of these elements operated, as they had with the infantry, to snarl the assault plans. Engineer units with special assignments to carry

out in clearing exits or marking beaches found themselves hundreds or even thousands of yards away from the targets, sometimes separated from their equipment or losing it in the debarkment. An engineer unit with panels for marking Dog Red Beach landed on Easy Red, over a mile away; they set up their panels anyway. About 0830 an officer on Dog White noticed two engineers making slow progress as they lugged a heavy box of explosives along the open beach behind the sea wall. As they stopped to rest, one of them wiped the sweat off his face and asked, "Where are we? We are supposed to blow something up down toward Vierville." They picked up the box and moved along toward the hottest section of the beach.

Navigational difficulties in landing increased as the tide advanced into and past the obstacles. On most of the beaches no gaps had been cleared. Landing craft, including now the larger LCI's and LST's, had to find a way through and avoid the mines affixed to the timbers. Some craft bumped on sandbars in the middle of obstacles and hurried to drop their ramps in deep water; others maneuvered somehow through the surf and got all the way in. There are not many recorded instances of craft sunk by the obstacles before getting their troops off, though on LCA 853 half of the 116th's boat team was killed by a mine explosion. However, crippling damage was inflicted on many craft, often in their efforts to retract after touchdown, or as a result of enemy artillery and mortar hits while the craft were delayed in the obstacles. Only a few were destroyed by this fire, but enough to make a vivid and discouraging impression on the men watching from the shelter of the embankment.

One of the spectacular disasters of the day was suffered by LCI 91, approaching Dog White about 0740 and carrying the alternate headquarters of the 116th RCT. Handled

ARTILLERY FIRE CONCENTRATED ON LARGER CRAFT. *Smoke is from burning LCI's (91 and 92) on Dog Red and Dog White. Hit about 0800, they were still burning at 1600 when LST 80 came in, after a delay of seven hours, with elements of 467th AAA AW Bn.*



by a veteran crew with experience at Sicily and Salerno, the LCI was struck by artillery fire as it made a first attempt to get through the obstacles. Backing out, the craft came in again for a second try. Element "C" was barely showing above the rising tide, and the LCI could not get past. The ramps were dropped in six feet of water. As some officers led the way off, an artillery shell (or rocket) hit the crowded forward deck and sent up a sheet of flame. Clothes burning, men jumped or fell off into the sea and tried to swim in under continued artillery fire. It is estimated that no personnel escaped from No. 1 compartment of the craft out of the 25 carried there.[13] A few minutes later LCI 92 came into the same sector and suffered almost the same fate, an underwater explosion setting off the fuel tanks. The two craft burned for hours. Much of the artillery fire at this end of the beach was coming from the enemy gun positions toward Pointe de la Percée. The tanks had been given those flank positions as a priority target, but they found themselves fully occupied by enemy strongpoints in front of the landings.

At the other end of the beach, LCI 85 came in to Fox Green with Company A of the 1st Medical Battalion, attached to the 16th RCT. The craft slid over the pilings of Element "C," then stuck, and was at once hit forward by artillery fire. The crew decided the water was too deep for unloading, backed the craft off the piling, and pulled out for another try. Number 3 hold was burning, and the craft was listing from a hit below the water line. On the second attempt only a few men had got off when the ramps were shot away, and fire broke out in the two forward holds. Practically rendered a hospital ship for medical personnel, LCI 85 backed off again, put out the fires, and managed to transfer its many casualties to another ship.

Conditions could hardly have been worse for the landing of vehicles, now beginning to arrive. If the halftracks, jeeps, and trucks survived the difficulties of getting close enough in to avoid deep water, and of unloading in surf under artillery fire, they found themselves on a narrowing strip of sand without any exits opened through the impassable shingle embankment. Wherever vehicles landed close together, a few were liable to be immobilized by engine trouble or artillery hits, and the others were then caught in a hopeless traffic jam. Enemy artillery and mortars had easy targets.

Losses in equipment ran high during the first landings, affecting all types of matériel. Engineer supplies, necessary for clearing the beaches, were seriously reduced. The 397th AAA AW Battalion lost 28 of its 36 machine guns disembarking, and infantry units experienced great difficulty in getting their heavy weapons ashore. All weapons were likely to be temporarily put out of action by the effects of water and sand; the first thing some units did on reaching cover was to strip and clean their rifles. Though much special equipment, such as bangalore torpedoes, ammunition, and heavy weapons, had been jettisoned when men were debarked in deep water, much more was saved at the cost of casualties to the men who were slowed down in carrying it. Losses in radio equipment were particularly heavy, and water damaged many sets that reached the beach. Colonel Canham reported that three-fourths of the 116th RCT's radios were destroyed or rendered useless in the landings. This loss was to hamper control of the assault infantry, both on the beach and throughout the day.

As headquarters groups arrived from 0730 on, they found much the same picture at whatever sector they landed. Along 6,000

[13] The report of LCI 91 attributes the explosion and damage to mines on the obstacles. The evidence suggests that there may have been both mine explosions and artillery (or rocket) hits.

yards of beach, behind sea wall or shingle embankment, elements of the assault force were immobilized in what might well appear to be hopeless confusion. As a result of mislandings, many companies were so scattered that they could not be organized as tactical units. At some places, notably in front of the German strongpoints guarding draws, losses in officers and noncommissioned officers were so high that remnants of units were practically leaderless. Bunching of landings had intermingled sections of several companies on crowded sectors like Dog White, Easy Green, and Fox Green. Engineers, navy personnel from wrecked craft, naval shore fire control parties, and elements of other support units were mixed in with the infantry. In some areas, later arrivals found it impossible to find room behind the shingle and had to lie on the open sands behind. Disorganization was inevitable, and dealing with it was rendered difficult by the lack of communications and the mislanding of command groups. However, even landing at the best point, a command party could only influence a narrow sector of beach. It was a situation which put it up to small units, sometimes only a remnant of single boat sections, to solve their own problems of organization and morale.

There was, definitely, a problem of morale. The survivors of the beach crossing, many of whom were experiencing their first enemy fire, had seen heavy losses among their comrades or in neighboring units. No action could be fought in circumstances more calculated to heighten the moral effects of such losses. Behind them, the tide was drowning wounded men who had been cut down on the sands and was carrying bodies ashore just below the shingle. Disasters to the later landing waves were still occurring, to remind of the potency of enemy fire. Stunned and shaken by what they had experienced, men could easily find the sea wall and shingle bank all too welcome a cover. It was not much protection from artillery or mortar shells, but it did give defilade from sniper and machine-gun fire. Ahead of them, with wire and minefields to get through, was the beach flat, fully exposed to enemy fire; beyond that the bare and steep bluffs, with enemy strongpoints still in action. That the enemy fire was probably weakening and in many sectors was light would be hard for the troops behind the shingle to appreciate. What they could see was what they had suffered already and what they had to cross to get at the German emplacements. Except for supporting fire of tanks on some sectors, they could count on little but their own weapons. Naval gunfire had practically ceased when the infantry reached the beach; the ships were under orders not to fire, unless exceptionally definite targets offered, until liaison was established with fire control parties. Lacking this liaison, the destroyers did not dare bring fire on the strongpoints through which infantry might be advancing on the smoke-obscured bluffs.

At 0800, German observers on the bluff sizing up the grim picture below them might well have felt that the invasion was stopped at the edge of the water.[14] Actually, at three or four places on the four-mile beachfront, U. S. troops were already breaking through the shallow crust of enemy defenses.

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[14] See the report that actually came to the German *Seventh Army* even later in the morning; p. 113.

ASSAULT OF THE BLUFFS

THE OUTSTANDING FACT about these first two hours of action is that despite heavy casualties, loss of equipment, disorganization, and all the other discouraging features of the landings, the assault troops did not stay pinned down behind the sea wall and embankment. At half-a-dozen or more points on the long stretch, they found the necessary drive to leave their cover and move out over the open beach flat toward the bluffs. Prevented by circumstance of mislandings from using carefully rehearsed tactics, they improvised assault methods to deal with what defenses they found before them. In nearly every case where advance was attempted, it carried through the enemy beach defenses. Some penetrations were made by units of company strength; some were made by intermingled sections of different companies; some were accomplished by groups of 20 or 30 men, unaware that any other assaults were under way. Even on such terrain as Omaha Beach, the phenomenon of battlefield "isolation" was a common occurrence, and units often failed to see what was going on 200 yards to their flanks on the open beach.

Various factors, some of them difficult to evaluate, played a part in the success of these advances. Chance was certainly one; some units happened to be at points where the enemy defenses were weak, where smoke from grass fires gave concealment, or where dangerous strongpoints had been partly neutralized by naval fire or by the tanks. At one or two areas of penetration, notably Fox Green, destroyers' guns and tanks were called on for support during the assault and rendered good service. Combat engineers blew many of the gaps through enemy wire, helped get across minefields, and took part as infantry in some of the fighting on and past the bluffs.

But the decisive factor was leadership. Wherever an advance was made, it depended on the presence of some few individuals, officers and noncommissioned officers, who inspired, encouraged, or bullied their men forward, often by making the first forward moves. On Easy Red a lieutenant and a wounded sergeant of divisional engineers stood up under fire and walked over to inspect the wire obstacles just beyond the embankment. The lieutenant came back and, hands on hips, looked down disgustedly at the men lying behind the shingle bank. "Are you going to lay there and get killed, or get up and do something about it?" Nobody stirred, so the sergeant and the officer got the materials and blew the wire. On the same sector, where a group advancing across the flat was held up by a marshy area suspected of being mined, it was a lieutenant of engineers who crawled ahead through the mud on his belly, probing for mines with a hunting knife in the absence of other equipment. When remnants of an isolated boat section of Company B, 116th Infantry, were stopped by fire from a well-concealed emplacement, the lieutenant in charge went

after it single-handed. In trying to grenade the rifle pit he was hit by three rifle bullets and eight grenade fragments, including some from his own grenade. He turned his map and compass over to a sergeant and ordered his group to press on inland.

One characteristic of these early penetrations was to influence the rest of the action on D Day at Omaha: the penetrations were made not at the draws but in areas between them, by advances up the bluffs. Mislandings may have had something to do with this, but the chief factor seems to have been the survival of the enemy strongpoints protecting the draws, for units which landed directly in front of them, especially at D-1, D-3, and E-3, had suffered crippling losses and were unable to press the assault. The first advances were effected in the intervals between strongpoints, where the enemy defenses were thin. The routes planned as exits for movement of tanks and vehicles from the beach were not cleared.

The Advance From Dog White

The most important penetration on the western beaches (Map No. VII) was made by Company C, 116th Infantry, and by the 5th Ranger Battalion, which had landed partly on top of Company C. Both units were in relatively good condition after the landings and had suffered only minor losses, but the men were crowded shoulder to shoulder, sometimes several rows deep, along the shingle at the base of the timber sea wall.

NOON OF D DAY, DOG WHITE. *This aerial, at 3,000 feet, shows the penetration area of Company C, 116th Infantry, and the 5th Ranger Battalion (left half of picture). The bluff is flattened out in this view, but the top edge can be followed along the ends of the fields, pocked with the craters of many shells and rockets. A wrecked craft (LCI 92) and the edge of les Moulins at right.*





PENETRATION AREA, 116TH INFANTRY, *on Dog White. Another view, facing the bluff, near the edge of Dog White. This photograph, taken 25 June 1944, shows the bluff slope denuded by grass fires that occurred on D Day. A military cemetery gives a background for religious services. The small building at top is near the left hand edge of the last illustration, showing the same area*

Intermingled with these troops were one or two boat sections from other units of the 116th, and some engineer elements. Reorganization for assault was spurred by the presence of General Cota and the command group of the 116th Infantry, who had landed in this area about 0730. Exposed to enemy fire, which wounded Colonel Canham in the wrist, they walked up and down behind the crowded sea wall, urging officers and noncoms to "jar men loose" and get moving.

The sector was relatively favorable for an advance across the beach flat and up the bluff. The nearest enemy strongpoints were several hundred yards off to either flank, and no concentrated fire was hitting the area congested with assault troops. In front of them, heavy smoke from grass fires on the bluff was drifting eastward along the face of the slope. From sea wall to the foot of the rise was only 150 yards, but the flat ground, with patches of marsh near the hill, was nearly devoid of cover. Along the whole stretch between D-1 and D-3 draws the bluff is steep and bare, but men climbing the slope would find small folds and depressions for defilade against small-arms fire. German defenses at this part of Dog White consisted of lightly manned rifle pits connected by deep trenches and placed just at the crest of the

bluff, with a few machine-gun emplacements sited for flanking fires on other stretches of beach rather than for dealing with troops coming directly from below.

Company C's movement began about 0750. Across the promenade road that edged the sea wall was a double-apron wire entanglement. Pvt. Ingram E. Lambert jumped over the wall, crossed the road, and set a bangalore torpedo. When he pulled the friction igniter, it failed to act and Lambert was killed by a machine-gun bullet. The platoon leader, 2d Lt. Stanley M. Schwartz, went over and fixed the igniter. The explosive blew a large gap. The first man to try it was shot down; others followed and took shelter in some empty trenches just beyond the road, where they were joined by another group that had got through the barrier by cutting the wire. After a delay of 5 to 10 minutes, while more troops crossed the road to the trenches, they started again toward the bluff, finding minor concealment from light enemy fire in the tall grass and occasional bushes. Once they were on the hillside, the defilade and smoke gave good protection, but progress was slowed by fear of mines. The men went up

PROFILE VIEW OF BLUFFS, DOG WHITE, *in the area where Company C, 116th, and the 5th Ranger Battalion assaulted the bluff. The picture was taken in June 1945 when vegetation had grown up heavily. View is toward east; beach flat shows in left rear.*



in a narrow column, searching the ground before them as they climbed and angling west to take advantage of a faint path. No enemy were found in trenches along the crest. The column went a couple of hundred yards into flat, open fields and stopped as it met scattered fire from machine guns at some distance to the flanks. This was the only sign of enemy resistance, and Company C had taken only half-a-dozen casualties after leaving the sea wall. Capt. Berthier B. Hawks, who had suffered a crushed foot in debarking, got to the top with his men.

The 5th Ranger Battalion joined the advance very soon after it started, and some of the Rangers were intermingled with Company C as they went forward. The battalion had reached the sea wall just before 0800, in platoon formations. Hasty preparations were made for assault, and Colonel Schneider passed the word "Tallyho" to his officers, this being the order for each platoon to make its own way beyond the bluffs to the assembly area south of Vierville. About 0810 the Rangers began to cross the road; what with the confusion at the beach and the smoke ahead, few of them realized that Company C was already on the move in the same zone. Four gaps were blown in the wire with bangalores and the men went across the beach flat at the double, then slowed to a crawl on the steep hillside. Heavy smoke covered them on the climb, forcing some men to put on gas masks. By the time the crest was reached, platoon formations were disorganized and contacts lost. Just over the bluff top, German warning signs enabled the Rangers to avoid a minefield from which engineers later took 150 mines. The first groups up, a platoon of Company A and some men of Company E, went straight on inland and disappeared. The other platoons were on top by 0830 and stopped to reorganize. On the left flank of the battalion, Company D's platoons had to clean out a few Germans from a trench system along the bluff edge, knocking out a machine gun sited just below the crest and firing along the beach. The battalion had lost only eight men, to small-arms fire that became more ineffective as the movement progressed across the beach flat.

The advance from Dog White Beach had taken place on a narrow front of less than 300 yards. By 0830 the last groups were leaving the sea wall, and the command party established itself temporarily halfway up the bluff. Unsuccessful efforts were made to reach 1st Division units by SCR 300. Fire from enemy mortars began to range in on the slope for the first time, killing two men standing near General Cota and knocking down the General and his aide. The headquarters party moved on up to the top, joined by some elements of Company G and a machine-gun platoon of Company H,which had reached Dog White after moving laterally along the sea wall from D-3 draw. The command party found work to do on the high ground. Company C, the 5th Ranger Battalion, and small elements of other units were intermingled in the fields just beyond the bluff, disordered by the advance and not sure of the next move. Scattered small-arms fire was keeping men down, and some shells began to hit in the vicinity.

Just east of Dog White, the penetration area was widened before 0900 by the action of small parties from Companies F and B. Remnants of three boat sections of Company F crossed the beach flat and got up the bluff; a short distance behind them came an isolated section of B. Neither group had to contend with enemy resistance at the crest. The Company F sections drifted right and eventually joined the 5th Rangers. The Company B party of a dozen men started left, toward les Moulins, and was stopped by a machine gun. 1st Lt. William B. Williams assaulted it single-handed, was wounded, and ordered his men to move to Vierville.

The Advance Between D–3 and E–1 Draws

The 3d BLT of the 116th had come in on a half-mile stretch of beach including most of Easy Green and the western end of Easy Red. All units were facing unfamiliar ground, east of their appointed landing sectors, in some cases as much as 1,200 yards. Losses had not been heavy in crossing the tidal flat. The boat sections of Companies K and I were fairly well together on Easy Green; L and M, more scattered, were to the east (Map No. VI). Since each boat team was supposed to make its own way past the bluffs to a battalion assembly area about a mile inland, no attempt was made to organize the companies for assault, and forward movement was undertaken by many small groups starting at different times, acting independently, and only gradually coming together as they got inland by different routes and with different rates of progress. By 0900, elements of all three rifle companies were past the bluff (Map No. 3, page 64).

Company I was nearest the strongpoints defending les Moulins draw, but was receiving little fire from that direction. Each of the two assault sections made breaches in the wire along the embankment, needing four sections of a bangalore in one case but only wire cutters in the other. The assault sections moved out onto the flat, followed a little later by the other sections as they found their way to the gaps. Not all of the men who had landed moved out from the embankment; control was difficult. One section leader of Company I moved a hundred yards west, found a gap in the wire, and came back for his men. Under the impression that they were following, he went through the gap and was out on the flat before he realized that he had only 10 soldiers with him. A sergeant who went back could not find the others, and the section leader did not see them again for two days.

EASY GREEN, *viewed from just east of les Moulins, was the penetration area of the 3d Battalion, 116th Infantry. The bluff on this sector was bare and had a "double" slope, with a terrace or bench halfway up (upper right). (Photograph taken in June, 1945.)*





MAP NO. 3 The Advance between D-3 and E-1 Draws

The beach flat was open, with some swamp and brush near the foot of the bluff, and there was little cover on the sharp slopes of the bluff. Fortunately, enemy small-arms fire was light and scattering, and there was no shelling. Minefields, encountered on the flat and on the bluffs, caused delays while the troops found a safe way around. Here as elsewhere on D Day, movement off the beach was not made by "charges." Each section of 20 to 30 men tended to advance in an irregular column, sometimes a single file, and was often checked by a burst of enemy fire or the discovery of mines. It took half an hour for leading elements to reach the bluff top, and much longer for some of the sections which started later. No enemy resistance was met at the edge of the high ground, where the troops came out in the open fields stretching toward St-Laurent. Elements of three or four sections came together soon after reaching the top, and took shelter behind an east–west hedgerow about 200 yards from the bluff. Few of the men knew where they were (afterwards, some described their position as being west of D-3), and there was no sign of enemy or friendly troops.

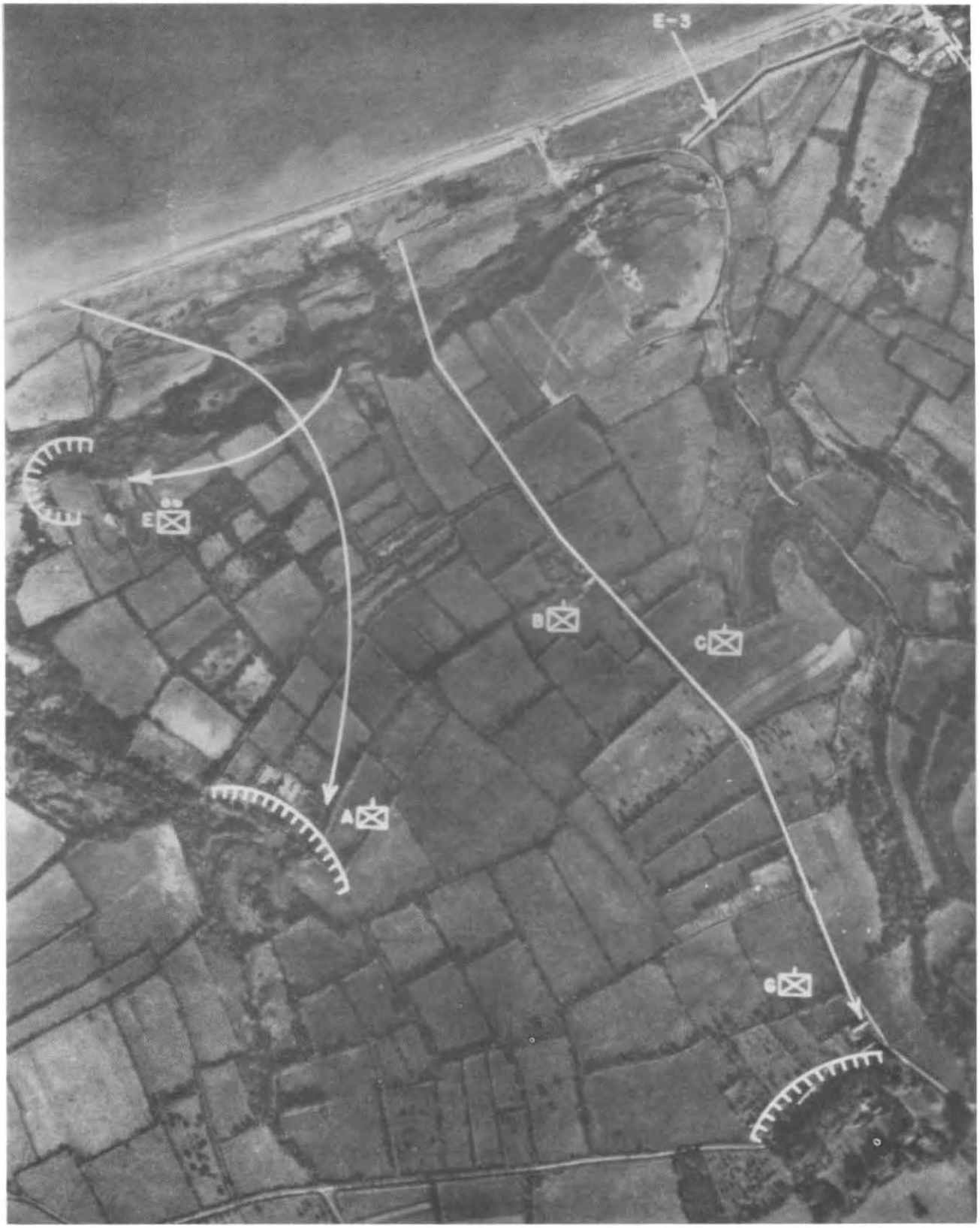
Company K's sections, close by I on the beach, were slow in getting started and had more trouble getting to the top. Sporadic machine-gun fire hit a few men on the beach, and mines, thickly sown, caused difficulty on the bluff slope. Although naval gunfire and rockets had torn up the slopes so much as to expose many mines, guides had to be placed to mark safe routes. K had lost 15 to 20 men when the sections got to the top, shortly after 0900. A stray group of Company G was just ahead of them. K's sections had begun to bunch together as they met on the climb or at the top, though there was no intention of organizing as a company. This was characteristic of the fighting that day; as one soldier described it, any small party seeing a bigger one "wanted company" and joined up, sometimes with units of a different company or battalion. K's sections made a couple of hundred yards beyond the bluff, then were pinned to the ground in open fields by scattered machine-gun fire and some shelling.

Company L's boat teams were somewhat more separated and so took longer in drawing together; otherwise, their story is much like K and I. Each boat team made its own way from the embankment to the high ground against ineffective enemy fire and with very few losses. Once on top the sections began to work to the southwest, knowing they had come in to the left of their target area. As they pushed inland, the teams began to meet resistance from small enemy pockets in prepared positions.

Company M's sections, most of them landed together, were near enough the E-1 strongpoints to be met by heavy fire as soon as they attempted to cross the beach flat. They managed to reach a gully which gave some defilade, and here they set up four machine guns and two heavy mortars. With these, they engaged the enemy emplacements near E-1, and snipers along the bluff. Six men were shot in attempts to find a route beyond the gully to reach the hill. The larger part of Company M was held here until later in the morning, when the arrival of massive reinforcements in front of E-1 broke the stalemate.

The Advance From Easy Red

Elements of three companies shared in the assault on the bluffs between E-1 and E-3 draws (Maps Nos. 4 and VIII). At this part of Easy Red, the beach shelf above the shingle embankment is more than a hundred yards wide, with areas of swamp along the inland edge of the flat. One hundred and thirty feet high on this sector, the bluff is reached



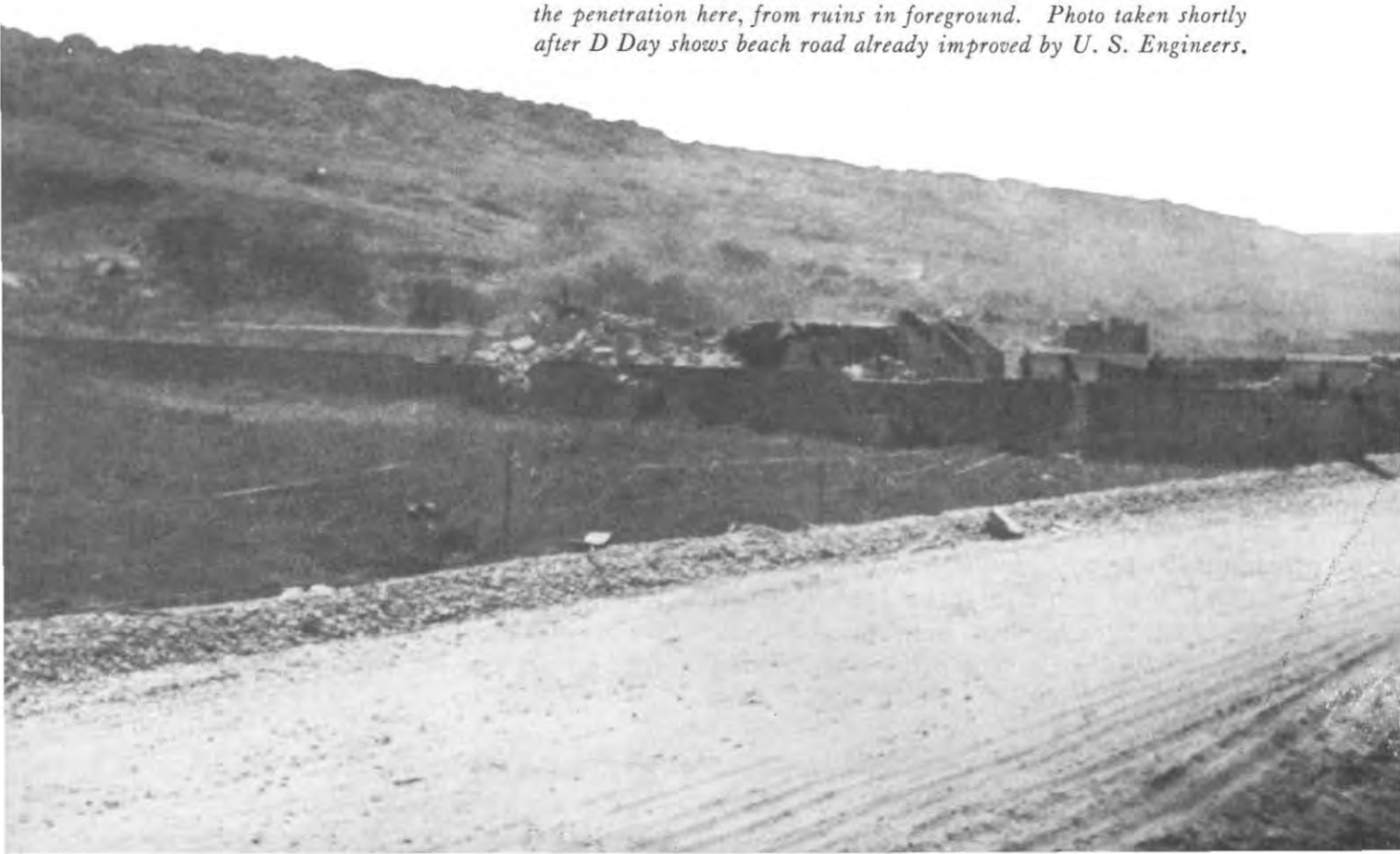
MAP NO. 4 Advance from Easy Red (Photograph of 15 February 1944)

by 200 yards of moderate slope, patched with heavy bush. Five hundred yards west of E-3, a small draw led up at a slight angle to the west, forming a possible corridor for advance to the bluff crest. Below the draw on the flat was a ruined house.

The 1st Section of Company E, 16th Infantry, and two of the scattered sections of E, 116th, had come to shore here in the first wave. The 16th's unit, led by 2d Lt. John M. Spalding, blew a gap in the wire above the shingle, made its way past the house, and then was held up by minefields in the marshy ground at the foot of the slopes. Intense small-arms fire came from an emplacement to the left, in the E-3 strongpoint. Spalding's men found a way past the mines and were beginning to work up the slope, using the defilade afforded by the small draw. To the west, and out of contact, the two sections from the 116th had cut the wire and dashed across the flat, but mines stopped them near the start of the hillside and they took shelter in a ditch. A soldier who went ahead to clear a path by use of a bangalore was killed by an antipersonnel mine.

Meanwhile Company G of the 16th RCT had landed (0700) and had reached the embankment in good order. The company's machine guns, set up behind the shingle, found no targets until LCVP's of the 1st Battalion, coming toward the beach (about 0730), drew enemy fire from 8 or 10 small emplacements along the half mile of bluff. While the heavy weapons built up a volume of supporting fire, a few men from each section blew gaps in the extensive double-apron and concertina wire beyond the shingle. Their work was made more difficult by antipersonnel mines set to detonate by trip wires.

EASY RED, *between E–1 and E–3 draws, was the area where the 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry reached the bluffs. Company G made the penetration here, from ruins in foreground. Photo taken shortly after D Day shows beach road already improved by U. S. Engineers.*





E–1 STRONGPOINT, *to the west of the draw, was neutralized by a boat team of Company E, 16th Infantry, which came on it from the woods to the rear. The photograph above, taken a day later, shows beach obstacles and wreckage along the top of the tidal flat.*

Four bangalores were required to cut one lane. Engineers of Company A, 1st Engineer Combat Battalion and Company C, 37th Engineer Combat Battalion helped in gapping and marking the lanes. When G's men reached the slopes they came in contact with Lieutenant Spalding's section of E and the two sections of the 116th. In an effort to coordinate the advance, an arrangement was made with these units to operate on Company G's right.

The mined areas, in which a part of the mines were faked, slowed up every unit that crossed the beach, then and for some time. Company G found one route through the mines by going over the dead bodies of two soldiers who had been caught there earlier. While the company was making its way across the flat, bothered more by the minefields than enemy fire, Capt. Joseph T. Dawson and one man went on ahead. When they were halfway up the hill, an enemy machine gun at the head of the small draw forced Dawson into cover. He sent his companion back to bring up the company and crawled on from one patch of brush to another. By the time he was 75 yards from the gun, the enemy lost sight of him. Circling to his left, he came to the military crest a little beyond the machine gun, and got within 30 feet before the Germans spotted him and swung their weapon around. Dawson threw a fragmentation grenade which killed the crew. This action opened the way up the little draw, but it took some time to get the company up as a result of

disorganization suffered in crossing the beach flat. The 5th Section, first to arrive, knocked out two more machine guns and took a prisoner. On the whole, enemy opposition had not been heavy, and cover on the slopes allowed Company G to make the crest with few casualties. Their movement forward, from embankment to the bluff top, had taken place between 0730 and 0830. Enemy fire died away as the troops emerged on the fields of the upland, reorganized, and started south in column of sections. Their principal concern was with the frequent indications of mined areas just beyond the bluff top.

To their right Lieutenant Spalding's section of Company E, 16th RCT, was getting up about the same time, helped by covering fire from Company G, and effecting a useful extension of the front of penetration. The section now numbered 23 men, having lost 3 at the beach and 3 more getting past an enemy machine gun on the bluff side. The gun was operated by a lone soldier

PATH THROUGH MINEFIELDS, *marked by engineers and followed by the assaulting units of the 16th Infantry from Easy Red. View taken from the foot of the slopes, looks directly up route taken D Day morning by units of the 16th Infantry (2d and 1st Battalions).*





ADVANCE FROM EASY RED *is under way up the slopes in background, as 1st Division reinforcements (probably 18th Infantry) land late in the morning. Note the shingle, which confined vehicles to a narrow sand strip just above high tide. Two dukws have made shore.*

who was captured and found to be Polish. He informed Spalding that there were 16 enemy in trenches to his rear. The Company E section got to the trenches, sprayed them with fire and found the Germans had withdrawn. Spalding turned west along the bluff crest, losing contact with Company G as that unit headed south. Moving through hedgerowed fields and wooded areas, the Company E group came up on the rear of the strongpoint guarding E-1 draw. The Germans were manning trenches overlooking the beach, and attack from the high ground caught them by surprise. In two hours of confused fighting, Spalding's men got through the outworks of this

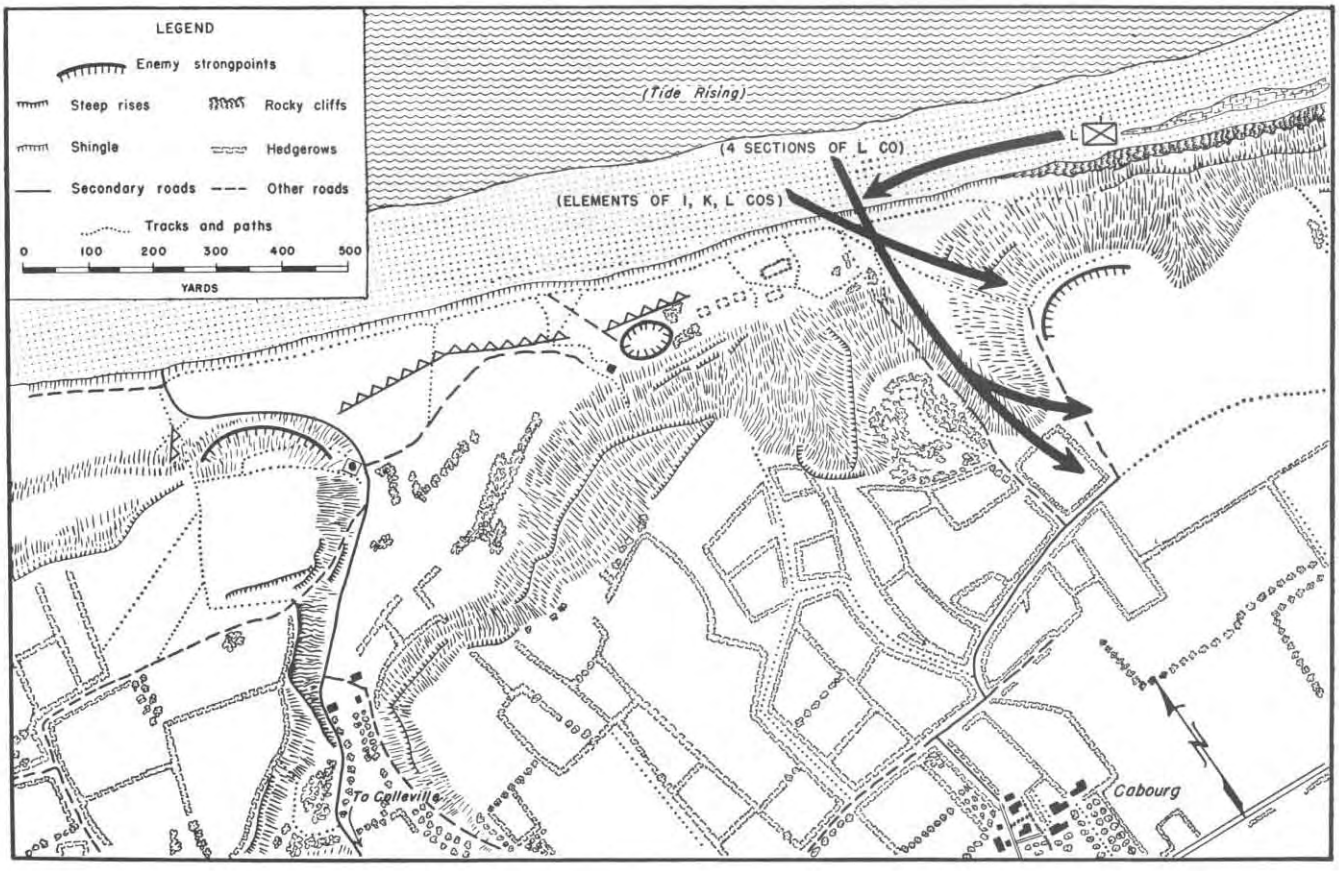


strongpoint and overcame opposition by close-in work with grenades and rifles. Naval fire, hitting in the parts of the strongpoint below the bluff top, helped to demoralize the resistance. Twenty-one prisoners were taken, and several enemy killed, without loss to the attackers. Although the fortified area was too extensive to be thoroughly cleaned out by Spalding's small force, the strongpoint east of E-1 had been effectively neutralized by midmorning, just when important reinforcements for the assault were beginning to land in front of the draw. About 1100 Spalding's section was joined by some other elements of Company E, which had come up from further east. They brought word from battalion to head south for Colleville.

The area opened up by Company G became a funnel for movement off the beach during the rest of the morning. The command group of the 16th RCT had landed in two sections; the first, coming in at 0720, lost the executive officer and 35 men on the tidal flat. Col. George A. Taylor arrived in the second section at 0815 and found plenty to do on the beach. Men were still hugging the embankment, disorganized, and suffering casualties from mortar and artillery fire. Colonel Taylor summed up the situation in terse phrase: "Two kinds of people are staying on this beach, the dead and those who are going to die—now let's get the hell out of here." Small groups of men were collected without regard to units, put under charge of the nearest noncommissioned officer, and sent on through the wire and across the flat, while engineers worked hard to widen gaps in the wire and to mark lanes through the minefields. Confusion prevailed all the way along the route to the bluff top, with enough scattered enemy fire from the flanks and mortar fire falling on the bluff slope to cause more delay and to give late-comers the impression that they were leading the assault. A traffic jam threatened to clog the trail through the little draw, as leaderless groups stopped to rest just below the shelter of the crest; one such group was picked up by an engineer platoon going inland as a security patrol and went on with them. Colonel Taylor's command



MAP NO. 5 { *(Below) The Penetration at Fox Green. Aerial photo (above), taken 31 May 1944, shows approximately same area as the map.*



post was set up just below the bluff crest, and regimental and battalion officers concentrated on getting men forward. Despite all difficulties, troops were brought up from both flanks of the penetration area and sent inland. During the morning a few scattered sections of Companies E, F, and H moved laterally along the beach from the east and took Company G's route; the 1st Battalion, 16th RCT, came over from the west.

The 1st BLT of the 16th landed between 0730–0800, with Company A just east of E-1, and B and C near the area where 2d BLT troops were then starting up the bluff. Company A moved across the flat and had serious difficulties after passing the antitank ditch below the E-1 strongpoint; mines and small-arms fire inflicted 48 casualties, including 3 officers. Reaching the bluff slope, Company A found more mines and to avoid them took a path that led eastward along the lower slope. Movement was slow, as the men went along the path in single file and had to cross areas exposed to enemy fire, and further difficulty was caused by meeting a party of 116th men going in the opposite direction. The other units of the 1st BLT got to the bluff crest about 0930, in the area where Company G had already passed inland.

The Advance From Fox Green

Fox Green fronted two exit routes: the fairly large valley (E-3) winding a mile inland toward Colleville and, 600 yards to the east, an area (F-1) where the bluff front was only slightly interrupted by a shallow and steep draw. Two main enemy strongpoints, one just east of F-1 and the other near the Colleville draw, commanded the narrowing beach flat (Map No. 5).

As a result of the eastward trend of landing approaches, elements of seven assault companies had come in on Fox Green by 0800. Behind the shingle embankment scattered sections from Company E, 116th RCT, and Companies E and F, 16th RCT, were intermingled with units of the 3d BLT of the 16th. The 3d Battalion command group had come in west at another sector. Most of the landings had been costly, and nowhere would discouraging conditions seem to have had better opportunity for checking assault. Nevertheless, by 0800, an assault was under way. Its main power came from Company L, which landed fairly well together, kept its organization, and led off the attack. But elements of Companies I, K, and E (116th) shared in the advance; the heavy weapons of Company M were used to support it; and both tanks and destroyers gave noteworthy assistance. Under most difficult circumstances, enough coordination was somehow achieved to make possible a successful advance.

Four sections of Company L had landed and reorganized on the western end of Fox Red sector, where the bluff, merging here into a partial cliff just beyond the high-water shingle, afforded good cover. The company commander was killed as he exposed himself to direct the fire of some nearby tanks, and 1st Lt. Robert R. Cutler, Jr., took command. The sections were moved west, out of the shelter of the cliff and to a position where they were just below the strongpoint commanding F-1 draw. Two tanks were called on for fire support. As a scheme of maneuver, Lieutenant Cutler sent three sections and headquarters, 2d and 3d Sections leading, up the draw a little to the west of the strongpoint. There were no hostile prepared positions at the head or the west side of the draw. The heavy brush gave good cover from enemy small-arms fire, and the 2d and 3d Sections worked to the top in squad columns without serious losses, despite crossing enemy minefields. Here the



ROCKY LEDGES *outcrop on the beach at Fox Red, where the foot of the bluff is cliff-like. Troops, carrying heavy weapons equipment, are coming in at the sector where Company L, 16th Infantry, found shelter before moving right to assault the F–1 strongpoint.*

2d Section moved left and got in position to take the strongpoint from behind; a little to the right, the 3d and 5th Sections moved a short distance inland and organized a hasty defensive position. The three sections kept in contact with each other and with the beach.

Other units were meantime starting up the slopes to assist Company L. The 1st Section of Company L, reduced to 12 men by early losses and separated from the rest of the company, had landed nearer E-3 and attempted to engage the enemy strongpoint on that side of the assault area, which had been Company L's original objective. Finding the fire too heavy, 1st. Lt. Kenneth J. Klenk moved his handful of men east along the beach, picked up some sections of Company E, 116th, and prepared to assault the F-1 strongpoint. Capt. Kimball R. Richmond of Company I, who had just reached Fox Green to find himself the senior officer present of the battalion, started to organize the follow-up of Company L's advance. Two sections of Company K, a handful from Company I, and Lieutenant Klenk's mixed detachment were involved in this second assault wave, which went straight up toward the strongpoint. Machine guns and mortars of Company M, the tanks, and naval guns combined to cover the advance, and enemy fire was light. The Company L sections already on the hill sprayed the strongpoint with BAR fire and helped to keep the Germans down.

A destroyer's fire, helpful in the first stages of the assault, now caused a halt. The 2d Section of Company L, from on top of the hill, telephoned the beach that it was ready to close on the strongpoint if naval fire could be lifted; the second assault wave was stopped short of the enemy positions by the same fire. When it lifted, the strongpoint was immediately stormed by the troops coming at it from below. Enemy resistance was broken; grenades and satchel charges cleaned out the trenches and emplacements, and 31 prisoners were taken, 15 of them wounded. About 0900 the battalion was informed that the strongpoint had been subdued, the action having required little more than an hour. Led by Company L, the 3d BLT at once started south for inland objectives.

Other Assault Actions

The penetrations described thus far opened the way for progress inland on an important scale, but they do not tell the whole story of the assault. At several parts of the beach lesser groups fought their way off the flat in isolated battles, often without knowing what was happening elsewhere. Stray boat sections of assault infantry, scratch parties of engineers, advance elements of artillery units, stranded Navy men, and other personnel took part in small actions which helped in weakening and disorganizing enemy resistance along the beaches. Few of these actions got into the records, and some cannot be located accurately in place and time. Two, involving Ranger units, can be taken as examples.

Company C, 2d Ranger Battalion, was probably the first assault unit to reach the high ground (beach sector Charlie) and did so in an area where cliffs begin to border the western beach (Map No. VII). Landing in the opening assault wave, about 30 men survived the ordeal of crossing the sands and found shelter at the base of a 90-foot cliff, impossible to climb except at a few points. Three men went off immediately to the west, looking for a spot to go up. Three hundred yards away they tried a crevice in the slope and made it by using bayonets for successive hand holds, pulling each other along. 1st Lt. William D. Moody, in charge of the party, brought along





4 toggle ropes and attached them to stakes in a minefield 15 feet below the crest. Enemy small-arms fire opened up from the left, near a supposedly fortified house. Moody and one Ranger went along the cliff edge toward the house, reached a point above Company C, and shouted down directions. The unit displaced to the ropes and monkey-walked them to the top; all men were up by 0730. While the movement was in progress, Capt. Ralph E. Goranson saw an LCVP landing troops (a section of Company B, 116th RCT) just below on the beach and sent a man back to guide them to the ropes.

Captain Goranson decided to go left toward the fortified house and knock out any enemy positions there which would cause trouble on Dog Beach; then, to proceed on his mission toward Pointe de la Percée. When the house was reached, the Rangers found that just beyond it lay a German strongpoint consisting of a maze of dugouts and trenches, including machine-gun emplacements and a mortar position. Captain Goranson put men in an abandoned trench just west of the house and started to feel out the enemy positions on the other side. This began a series of small attacks which continued for hours without any decisive result. The boat section of Company B, 116th RCT, came up early and joined in, but even with this reinforcement Captain Goranson's party was too small to knock out the enemy position. Three of four times, attacking parties got around the house and into the German positions, destroying the mortar post and inflicting heavy losses. Enemy reinforcements kept coming up along communication trenches from the Vierville draw, and the Ranger parties were not quite able to clean out the system of trenches and dugouts. Finally, toward the end of the afternoon, the Rangers and the Company B section succeeded in occupying the strongpoint and ending resistance. They had suffered only 2 casualties; a Quartermaster burial party later reported 69 enemy dead in the position. This action had tied up one of the main German firing positions protecting the Vierville draw.

Small elements of the 2d Ranger Battalion also fought their own way off Dog White, just west of the main penetration area. Less than half of Companies A and B had reached the shelter of the sea wall, about 0740. Some tanks, firing at enemy emplacements, were scattered along the beach, but the Rangers saw no other troops and had the impression of being alone on the beach; less than a quarter mile to their left, the 5th Ranger Battalion was touching down on a beach already crowded with assault infantry. Within a few minutes of reaching the wall, the survivors of Companies A and B dashed over the promenade road beyond

BEACH SECTOR CHARLIE, *west of Vierville draw, saw the assault by Company C, 2d Rangers. They lost nearly half of their men when landing in the middle of the stretch shown here; then moved west, scaling the cliff to reach the "fortified" house on the top.*

THE "FORTIFIED" HOUSE, *above Charlie Beach, although not actually fortified, was on the edge of a strongpoint (foreground) overlooking Vierville draw and connected with the draw by a maze of communications trenches. (Photograph taken in February, 1945.)*



THE BLUFFS ON DOG GREEN, *east of the Vierville draw, where Companies A and B, 2d Ranger Battalion, made their assault. The beach villas were wrecked by naval fire. Le Hamel strongpoint was on the bluff above the villas.* (*Photo taken in June, 1945.*)

the sea wall and got into the cover of shrubbery surrounding the wrecked villas that line this stretch of the beach flat. Eighteen Rangers of Company B turned right and, hugging the foot of the slope, went several hundred yards toward the Vierville draw, intending to go up that exit in accordance with original plans. Nearing the draw and facing heavy fire on an open stretch of the flat, the group retraced its steps. Meantime, Company A's men and a few from B, after crossing the road in several scattered groups led by noncommissioned officers, had worked through the villas and were trying the bluff at different points. They were joined by a machine-gun section of Company D, 116th RCT, and three DD tanks helped by silencing enemy positions on the flanks which had been giving trouble. Two Rangers of Company A reached the top above and found enemy trenches, containing two or three machine-gun emplacements, in plain sight just beyond the military crest. In a few minutes another group of six Rangers joined up, and they started out to investigate the apparently empty trenches. Machine-gun fire opened from two points as Germans came out of dugouts and manned their positions. They had waited too long. The leading Rangers were within 20 yards, and more small parties were coming up behind them. Working in twos and threes, they mopped up the enemy emplacements, taking six prisoners and killing as many more. Only three of the attacking force were casualties. Company B now came up, having got back from its try toward the Vierville exit, and the 5th Ranger Battalion was in sight on the bluff top to the left. The 2d Battalion men joined them for the move inland. This action took place between 0800 and 0830, widened the area of penetration on Dog White, and probably aided in the success of the larger advance to the east by covering its right flank.

The Beach: 0800–1200

The assault had gone forward, but not according to plan (Maps Nos. VII and VIII). Penetrations had been made where enemy defenses were thin and lightly held, on the long stretches of bluff between the draws scheduled for use as exits. The F-1 strongpoint was knocked out, but the exit route here was so steep that no plans had been made for its early use, and there were no engineer parties at hand. In the case of the main draws, only at E-1 was a strongpoint (on the east side) being reduced by flanking action of a force which turned aside for this purpose after getting up the bluff; elsewhere, the small and often scattered assault groups were fighting inland toward their assembly areas. As a result, nearly all the enemy strongpoints defending the vital draws were still in action, especially at E-3 and D-3 which were scheduled for use by the first movement of traffic off the beach. On large stretches of the beach there was still enough fire to make landings costly and to stop all movement in front of the draws. The engineers, hampered by landing on wrong beaches and by loss of equipment, were unable to start on their main job of opening the beach for traffic. At 0800, there were no gaps anywhere in the shingle embankment to permit movement onto the beach flat.

As a result, the penetrations made in the next two hours could not be followed up properly. Vehicles were beginning to arrive, but they found only a narrow strip of sand to occupy and nowhere to move even for shelter from enemy fire. This fire and the difficulties with obstacles in the higher water led many craft to come in on Easy Green and Easy Red instead of other sectors, thereby threatening to clog that beach with vehicles under destructive artillery fire from the flanks. Consequently, the commander of the 7th Naval Beach Battalion radioed an order (about 0830) suspending all landings of vehicles. During the next few hours scores of craft, including dukws and rhino-ferries, were milling about off the Easy Green and Easy Red sectors, waiting for a chance to come in. The dukws had particular difficulty in the rough seas, in which they had to run at least at half throttle to maintain steerage way. The consumption this entailed would exhaust a fuel tank in 10 to 12 hours, leaving the craft in danger of foundering.

The tie-up affected the heavier weapons scheduled to support the attack off the beach and inland. The Antitank Company of the 116th RCT landed one gun platoon of three 57-mm's, but they had to remain under fire for hours before they could move off the sand. Only two antiaircraft guns of the 16th RCT were landed out of two batteries, the others being sunk in the effort to unload. The Cannon Company of the 16th RCT got its halftracks ashore at 0830 after two attempts, but they could not move more than 50 yards through the litter of disabled vehicles. Its 6 howitzers were loaded on dukws, which were swamped one by one in the heavy seas with a loss of 20 personnel.

Artillery units of the regimental combat teams were having a hard time getting toward shore, where they were scheduled to land between 0800 and 0900. The 111th Field Artillery Battalion of the 116th RCT suffered complete disaster. The forward parties, including observers, liaison and reconnaissance sections, and the command group, landed between 0730 and 0830 in front of les Moulins. Remnants of the 2d BLT were immobilized there in front of the draw, and the artillery personnel suffered as heavily as had the infantry in getting from their craft to the shingle. They quickly decided that the guns could not land there, but their radio had been disabled by sea water and no radio

on the beach was working. Lt. Col. Thornton L. Mullins, commander of the battalion, said, "To hell with our artillery mission. We've got to be infantrymen now." Although already wounded twice, Colonel Mullins went to work organizing little groups of infantry. Leading a tank forward, he directed its fire against an emplacement and as he started toward another tank across an open stretch, was killed by a sniper.

The howitzers of the battalion were coming in on 13 dukws, each carrying 14 men, 50 rounds of 105-mm ammunition, sandbags, and all essential equipment for set-up and maintenance. This load made the dukws hard to maneuver from the start, especially for inexperienced crews. Five dukws were swamped within half a mile after leaving the LCT's. Four more were lost while circling in the rendezvous area. One turned turtle as they started for the beach; another got within 500 yards of shore, stopped because of engine trouble, and was sunk by machine-gun bullets. The last two dukws went on and about 0900 were close enough to see that there was no place to land on the beach. When they drew together and stopped to talk things over, one was disabled by machine-gun fire and then set ablaze by an artillery hit. Eight men swam ashore or to another craft. The surviving dukw had some near misses from artillery shells, turned away from the shore, and tried to find out from both shore and Navy where to go in. Shore gave contradictory advice; Navy had no ideas at all. The dukw pulled alongside a rhino-ferry to wait, but in a short time the crew realized the craft was in a sinking condition. Determined to save the howitzer, two or three men stayed on. They managed to move the dukw as far as another rhino with a crane aboard, and unloaded the howitzer on this craft. The one gun of the 111th got ashore that afternoon in charge of the 7th Field Artillery Battalion.

Several other artillery units fared almost as badly. The 7th Field Artillery Battalion (16th RCT) lost six of its 105's on dukws that swamped en route to shore; the others could not land. The 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion had taken part in the fire support of the first landings, firing from LCT's. The commanding officer and reconnaissance officer were casualties soon after landing at 0730. At 1030, three of its LCT's attempted to land and struck mines; one capsized, one sank in seven feet of water, and a howitzer on the third was jettisoned to keep the craft afloat. The 62d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, likewise involved in the preliminary bombardment, attempted no landings in the morning. Elements of two self-propelled antiaircraft battalions (the 197th and 467th) began to land after 0830. Losses in personnel and halftracks were considerable, but the guns were used in close support of infantry for fire on German emplacements.

Conditions on the beach improved in the later morning. Fire from the main enemy strongpoints was gradually reduced, as one gun emplacement after another was knocked out, often by tanks. Fighting both the enemy and the tide, the tanks were leading a hard life, caught on the sand between high water and the embankment, unable to get past the shingle to the beach flat, and an open target for enemy guns. Unit control was almost impossible, with tanks scattered over long stretches of beach and hampered in maneuver. The commander of the 741st Tank Battalion came ashore at 0820 with a 509 radio, but the radio was damaged by salt water and failed to function. The small command group had to contact individual tanks up and down the beach in an effort to control operations, losing three of its five members in the process. At the other end of the beach, Lt. Col. John S. Upham, Jr., commanding the 743d, was shot down as he

walked over to a tank for better direction of its fire. Nevertheless, the tanks kept on firing: one of them, disabled, until the rising tide drowned out the guns, others while the crew worked on dismounted tracks. Their achievement cannot be summed up in statistics; the best testimony in their favor is the casual mention in the records of many units, from all parts of the beach, of emplacements neutralized by the supporting fire of tanks. In an interview shortly after the battle, the commander of the 2d Battalion, 116th Infantry, who saw some of the worst fighting on the beach at les Moulins, expressed as his opinion that the tanks "saved the day. They shot the hell out of the Germans, and got the hell shot out of them."

The destroyer *Carmick*, by what was described as "silent cooperation," did her best to help some tanks on Dog Green which had managed to get up on the promenade road and were trying to fight west toward the Vierville draw. The destroyer's observers watched for the tanks' fire to show targets on the bluff edge, and then used the bursts as a point of aim for the *Carmick*'s guns.

Support from naval units, necessarily limited during the first landings, began to count heavily later on. Some of the landing craft had tried to support the debarking troops with the fire from their light guns. When Company G was landing near les Moulins, the infantry saw a patrol craft stand off directly in front of the enemy strongpoint to the east of the draw and pump shell after shell into it. German artillery got the craft's range and forced it

VEHICLES ARE HELD ON THE TIDAL FLAT, *unable to get beyond the shingle, which was reached by high tide about 1100, D Day. This sector is on Easy Red, and E-3 draw, still strongly defended by the German forces, is about a quarter mile to the east (left).*



ashore, still firing; it continued in action until a shell made a direct hit, setting the craft ablaze. Later in the morning, two landing craft made a conspicuous, fighting arrival in front of E-3 draw. LCT 30 drove at full speed through the obstacles, all weapons firing, and continued the fire on an enemy emplacement after touchdown. At the same time LCI (L) 544 rammed through the obstacles, firing on machine-gun nests in a fortified house. These exploits also helped demonstrate that the obstacles could be breached by larger craft, which had been hesitating at the approaches.

Naval gunfire became a major factor as communications improved between shore and ships. At first, targets were still hard to find; Gunfire Support Craft Group reported at 0915 that danger to friendly troops hampered fire on targets of opportunity; an NSFCP in contact with ships was told by General Cota (about 0800) that it was "unwise to designate a target." Between 1000 and 1100 two destroyers closed to within a thousand yards to put the strongpoints from les Moulins eastward under heavy, effective fire. All along the beach, infantry pinned at the sea wall and engineers trying to get at the draws to carry out their mission were heartened by this intervention. One result may have been the decision to try to get some tanks through E-3 draw. At 1100, Colonel Taylor ordered all tanks available to go into action at that exit route. Of the several tanks that were able to move along the beach to the rallying point, only three arrived, and two of these were knocked out as they tried to go up the draw.

One of the participants in this effort was Capt. W. M. King, who had been ordered to round up all the tanks and get them to E-3 draw. Captain King ran along the beach to the west, notifying each tank as he came to it. When he reached the last tank, he found the commander wounded and took over. Backing away from the shingle, King drove east, weaving in and out of the wreckage along the beach. He made 200 yards, then circled toward the water to avoid a tangle of vehicles and wounded men. A Teller mine, probably washed off a beach obstacle, blew the center bogie assembly off and broke the track. King and the crew proceeded on foot to E-3.[15]

The decisive improvement along the beach came at E-1 draw. The strongpoint on the east side had been neutralized by flanking action of the platoon from Company E, 16th Infantry, after it reached the bluff top. The unfinished strongpoint on the other side was still partly in action, but was being contained by fire from Company M, 116th Infantry. Engineers of the 37th Engineer Combat Battalion were able to bulldoze their first gap through the dune line, just east of this draw, about 1000. Company C of the 149th Engineer Combat Battalion made another gap to the west. The destroyers' intervention speeded up the progress; in the next two hours the antitank ditch was filled, mines were cleared, and the approach to the draw was made ready for vehicles. During the same period major infantry reinforcements were landing in front of E-1, and the last remnants of enemy resistance at that draw were about to be overpowered.

Landing of Reinforcements on Easy Red

The 18th RCT had been scheduled to land on Easy Red in column of battalions, beginning about 0930. After passing the line of departure, the first wave (LCVP's and LCM's) ran into difficulties in maintaining formation and steering a straight course; there was much congestion of traffic toward

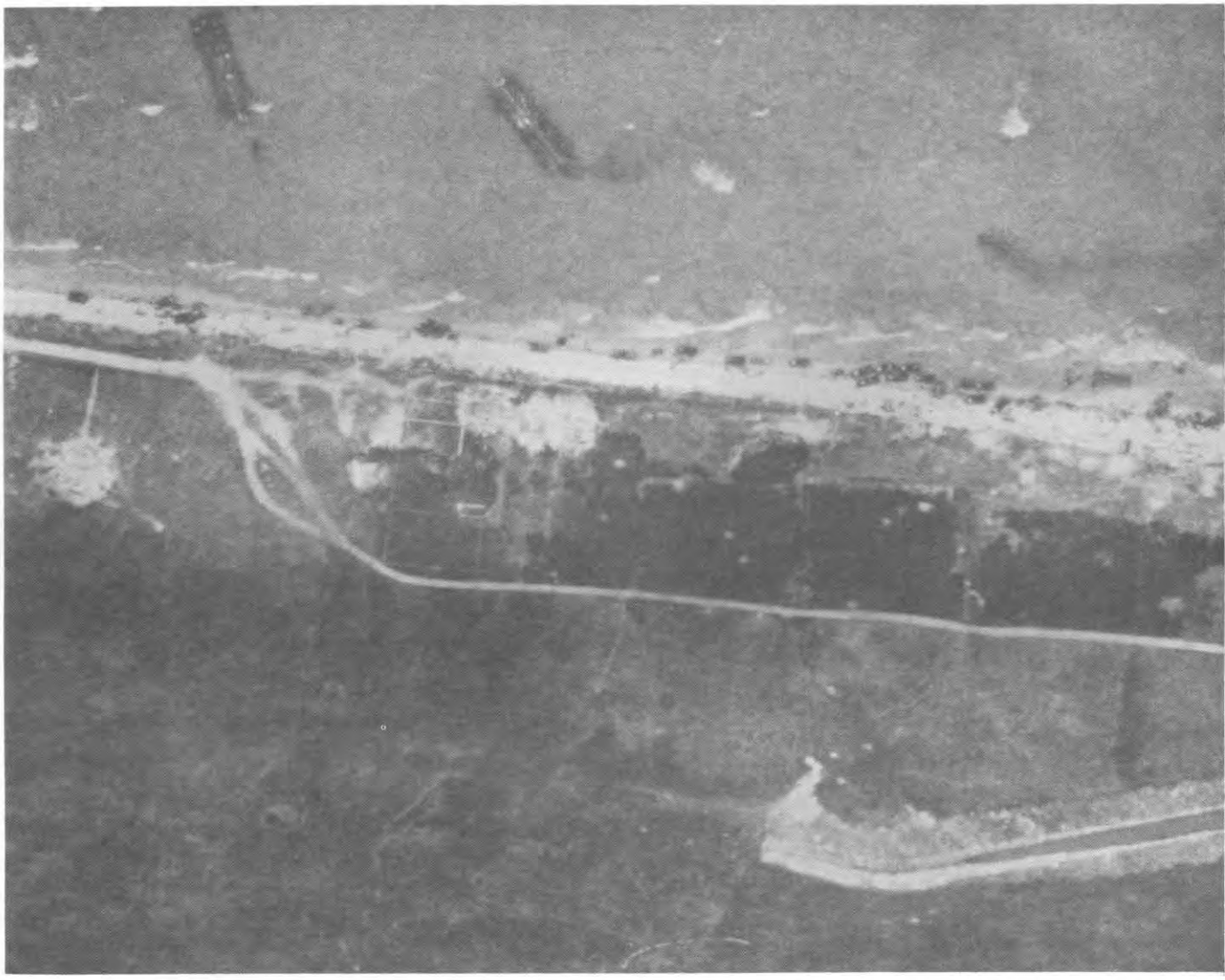
[15] In the illustration on p. 107, King's tank, No. 9 of Company A, 741st Tank Battalion, can be seen at the spot where it was left, disabled. It is believed that this same tank, No. 9, is the one shown in the assault landing on p. 44.



HIGH-TIDE LANDINGS *were hindered by the beach obstacles. LCI (L) 83, carrying combat engineers, approached Fox Green at 0830, was unable to get in, and debarked 72 men on LCVP's. An artillery hit on the port bulwarks caused 16 casualties. Finally beaching at 1116, the craft was further damaged on one side by a mine but all personnel debarked and the LCI was floated off that night.*

shore, with craft of all descriptions maneuvering in every direction. The 2d Battalion began landing just west of E-1 shortly after 1000. As they neared shore, troops of the 18th had no impression that any progress had been made from the beach: "The beach shingle was full of tractors, tanks, vehicles, bulldozers, and troops—the high ground was still held by Germans who had all troops on the beach pinned down—the beach was still under heavy fire from enemy small arms, mortars, and artillery." The underwater obstacles caused great difficulties, even though a narrow gap had been cleared near E-1; the Navy report for the transport group carrying the 18th Infantry lists 22 LCVP's, 2 LCI (L)'s and 4 LCT's as lost at the beach, nearly all from being staved in by log ramps or hitting mines. Nevertheless, personnel losses in the 18th Infantry were light.

On the right of E-1, the 2d Battalion found an enemy pillbox still in action. Fire from a tank supported the infantry in a first attempt, but the attack was stalled until naval fire was laid on. The NSFCP contacted a destroyer about 1,000 yards off shore and coordinated its action with the infantry assault. The affair was very nicely timed; the destroyers' guns, firing only a few yards over the crowded beach, got on the target at about the fourth round and the pillbox surrendered. Twenty Germans were taken prisoners. Thus, at about 1130, the last enemy defenses in front of E-1 draw



A CROWDED BEACH *resulted from landing of two infantry regiments (18th and 115th) in front of E-1 draw. This picture, taken at noon from 3,000 feet, shows the swarm of men, vehicles, and craft along 510 yards of shingle. The antitank ditch protects E-1 draw.*

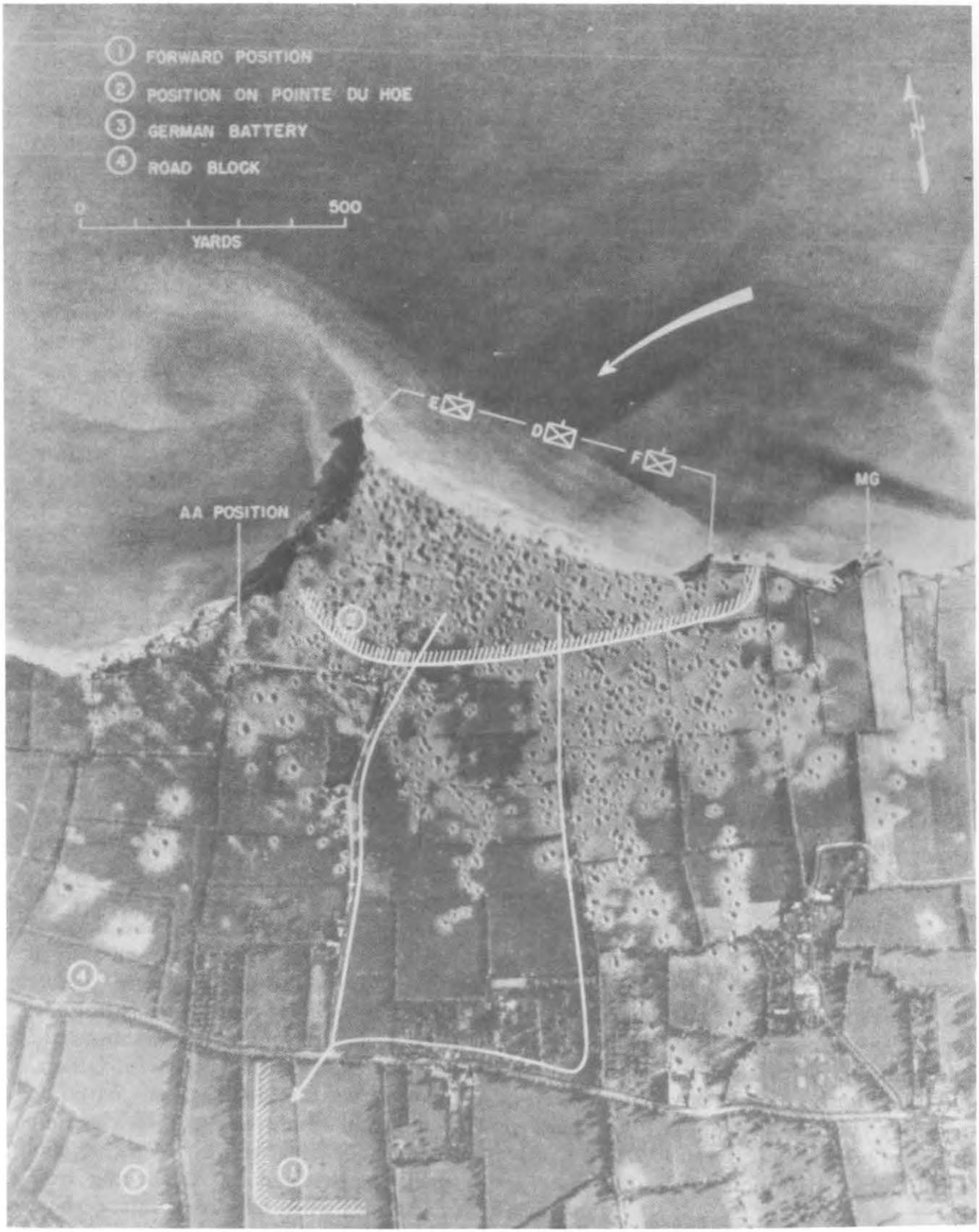
were reduced. Within half an hour, engineers of the 16th RCT were clearing mines in the draw, and the Engineer Special Brigade Group units were working dozers on the western slope to push through an exit. E-1 became the main funnel for movement off the beach, beginning with troops.

The troop movement inland, however, was slowed up by congested landings at this one area. Shortly after the first units of the 18th RCT had landed, the LCI (L)'s of the 115th Infantry began to touch down on top of them. The 115th, in reserve in Force "O," was scheduled by last-minute plans of V Corps to land at 1030 on Dog Red and Easy Green beaches. The LCI's were unable to find the control vessel for these sectors and came in very much to the east, on Easy



Red, where the 18th Infantry had started landing.[16] The result was further congestion and confusion off that sector, and considerable delays for both regiments, both in making shore and in getting off the beach. Instead of getting in between 1030 and 1130, the 3d and 1st Battalions of the 18th Infantry did not land until about 1300. Meantime, all the battalions of the 115th had come in together instead of at intervals, and the result was a partial scrambling of units on the beach. The 2d Battalion of the 18th got off before noon; it was nearly 1400 before the 115th had started inland, along with the remainder of the 18th. Reorganization and movement were complicated by enemy fire on the beach area and by the difficulties of getting through minefields on the narrow cleared paths. Fortunately, enemy mortar fire was apparently unobserved and ineffective, and artillery fire, now coming from inland, was directed at the landing craft. These suffered some hits, but casualties among the troops were light. Movement off the crowded beach took place on both sides of the draw rather than through it, since there were minefields and enemy emplacements up the draw inland. As the 2d Battalion of the 18th Infantry moved out, orders were received from Brig. Gen. Willard G. Wyman, assistant division commander of the 1st Division, to take over the mission of the 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry. The 18th Infantry unit therefore moved left down Easy Red to the penetration route of the 16th and followed it toward Colleville. The battalions of the 115th pushed off toward assembly points southeast of St-Laurent, where they planned to reorganize; Col. Eugene N. Slappey, commanding, found General Wyman on the beach and received orders to carry out his primary mission in the Longueville area. However, before Colonel Slappey left to follow his battalions, General Cota arrived with news from the 116th zone. On consultation with General Wyman, it was decided that one battalion of the 115th would be used to clean up St-Laurent. Radios were not working, and Colonel Slappey had heard nothing from his battalions when he started inland about 1600 to find them.

[16] LCI 553 beached almost as far east as the E-3 draw, where it was disabled by mines. (See illustration, p. 15).



MAP NO. 6 The 2d Ranger Battalion at Pointe du Hoe, 6 June (Photograph 15 June 1944)

News of the movement inland from Easy Red reached the higher command, and was doubly welcome because V Corps Headquarters had been sweating through the first hours of the assault with very little information on what was really happening ashore. Back on the *Ancon* direct messages from the beach were almost entirely lacking, and Headquarters depended on what it picked up from reports of the Navy and from its Forward Information Detachment under Colonel Talley. This detachment tried to get to shore early on two dukws, but decided that radio equipment would probably be lost under the conditions of landing. Therefore, the dukws were kept cruising up and down the beach a few hundred yards off shore. Unfortunately, information both from this source and the Navy were limited by the difficulties of observation, and delays in transmittal; early news at V Corps Headquarters was fragmentary and not encouraging. Messages brought word of craft sunk, of heavy enemy artillery fire, of dukws swamping, and of troops pinned down. The first penetrations were made by small units on slopes often obscured by smoke or brush, and apparently escaped all notice from seaward observers. Main attention was naturally focused on the exits, where no progress was being made. At 0945, V Corps made its first report to First Army: "Obstacles mined, progress slow. 1st Battalion, 116th, reported 0748 being held up by machine-gun fire—two LCT's knocked out by artillery fire. DD tanks for Fox Green swamped." At 1155 Corps was still so far behind the situation that its next report to Army reads "situation beach exits Easy Fox and Dog still critical at 1100. 352d Infantry Division (German) identified—115th Infantry directed to clear high ground southwest of Easy Red at 1131—16th and 116th ashore, fighting continuous on beaches, vehicles coming ashore slowly. Reported that some Germans surrendering Easy Green." From 1055 on, Colonel Talley had sent in some scraps of better news: "infiltration approximately platoon up draw midway between exits E-1 and Easy 3"; and "Men advancing up slope behind Easy Red, men believed ours on skyline." But these messages did not come into Corps Headquarters until 1225—1243. Not until 1309 could V Corps make its first favorable report to Army: "Troops formerly pinned down on beaches Easy Red, Easy Green, Fox Red advancing up heights behind beaches." From that time on the Headquarters begins to catch up more closely with the situation, and the further information becomes more reassuring.

Another example of the difficulties of ship-to-shore communications, and of the limited observation from seaward, is furnished by the report of a naval officer in the fire-support group. Shortly after noon, he came in close to shore, under fire from enemy guns. "Troops were plainly visible on the beach lying in the sand. So were the dead. Heavy machine-gun fire was coming from enemy positions halfway up the hill. Troops were unable to advance." Anxious to aid in breaking what seemed to be a stalemate, the officer requested permission from higher headquarters to lay down a rocket barrage. The request was denied because of the danger to assaulting troops "who may have filtered through."

The Rangers at Pointe du Hoe

While the main assault was proceeding on Omaha beaches, three companies (D, E, and F) of the 2d Ranger Battalion were engaged in an isolated action three miles to the west (Map No. 6). Led by Lt. Col. James E. Rudder, commander of the Provisional Ranger Force, about 200 men came in at Pointe

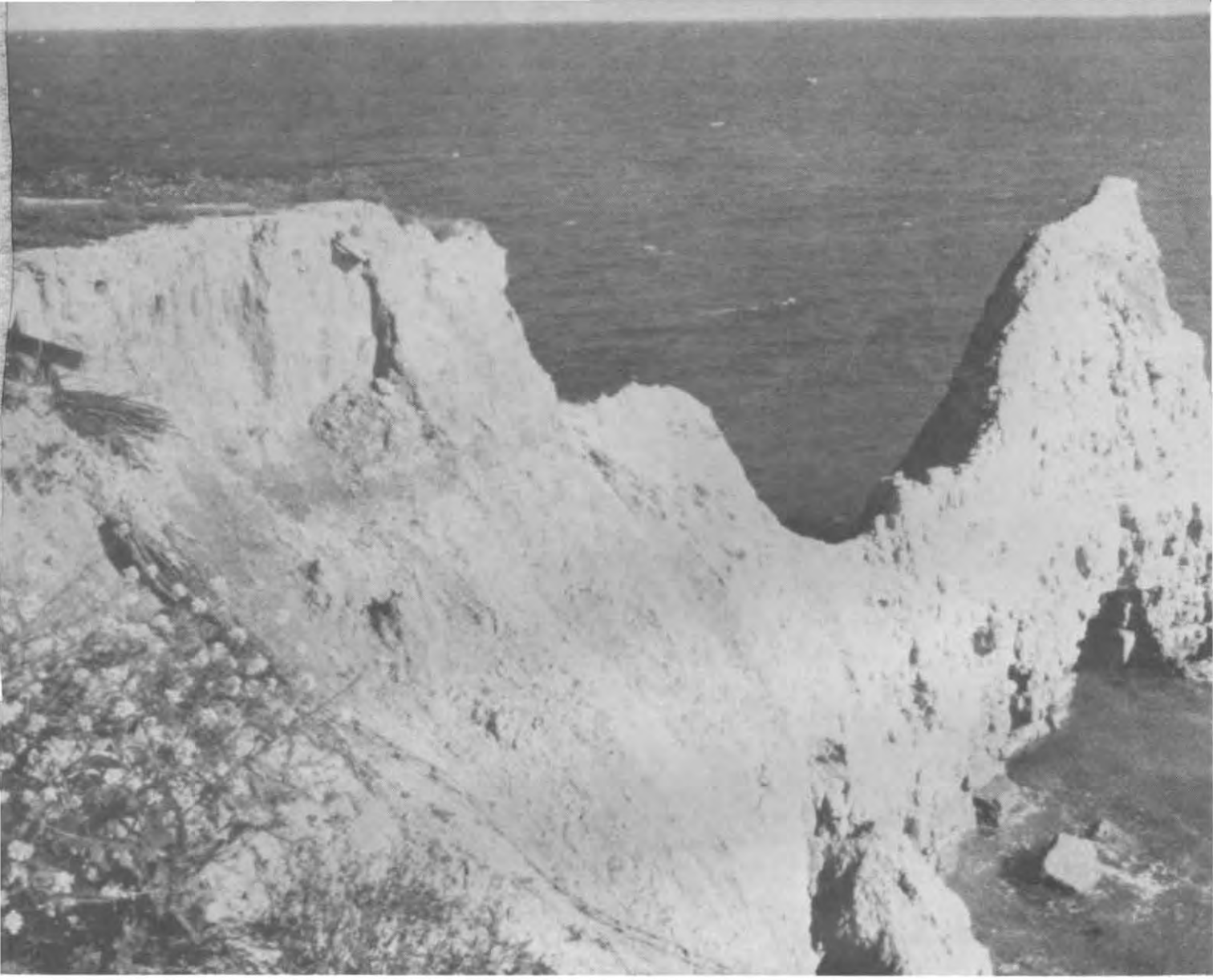
du Hoe. Their primary mission was to seize that fortified position and neutralize its battery of six 155-mm howitzers, which could put fire on the whole Omaha approaches, from the craft assembly area in to the beaches.

The mission presented special difficulties. The beach at the Point was a 25-yard strip, surmounted by sheer cliff 85 to 100 feet high. The Rangers had been training for several months on English cliffs of similar character, and, as a result of experiment aided by the experiences of British Commandos, they had developed special equipment for their task. Each of the 10 LCA's was fitted with 3 pairs of rocket guns, firing grapnels which pulled up (by pairs) ¾-inch plain ropes, toggle ropes, and rope ladders. In addition, each craft carried a pair of small hand-projector-type rockets, which could be easily carried ashore and fired small ropes. Each craft also carried tubular-steel extension ladders made up of light, four-foot sections suitable for quick assembly. Four dukws mounted a 100-foot extension ladder, fire-department type. Personnel of the assault parties carried minimum loads, with heavier weapons amounting to four BAR's and two 60-mm mortars per company. Two supply craft brought in packs, rations, demolitions, and extra ammunition for the three companies.

Their assault plan provided for landing at H Hour, Companies E and F on the east side of the Point, Company D to the west. Unfortunately, one of the accidents of misdirection befell the Rangers; they headed eastward so far that, when the mistake was corrected, they had to approach the Point from that quarter on a course close to and almost paralleling the shore. Under fire from strongpoints along the cliffs, the flotilla came in 40 minutes late. This delay meant that the eight other companies of Rangers (A and B of the 2d Battalion, and the entire 5th Battalion), waiting off shore for word of the assault, did not follow in to Pointe du Hoe but went toward Vierville.

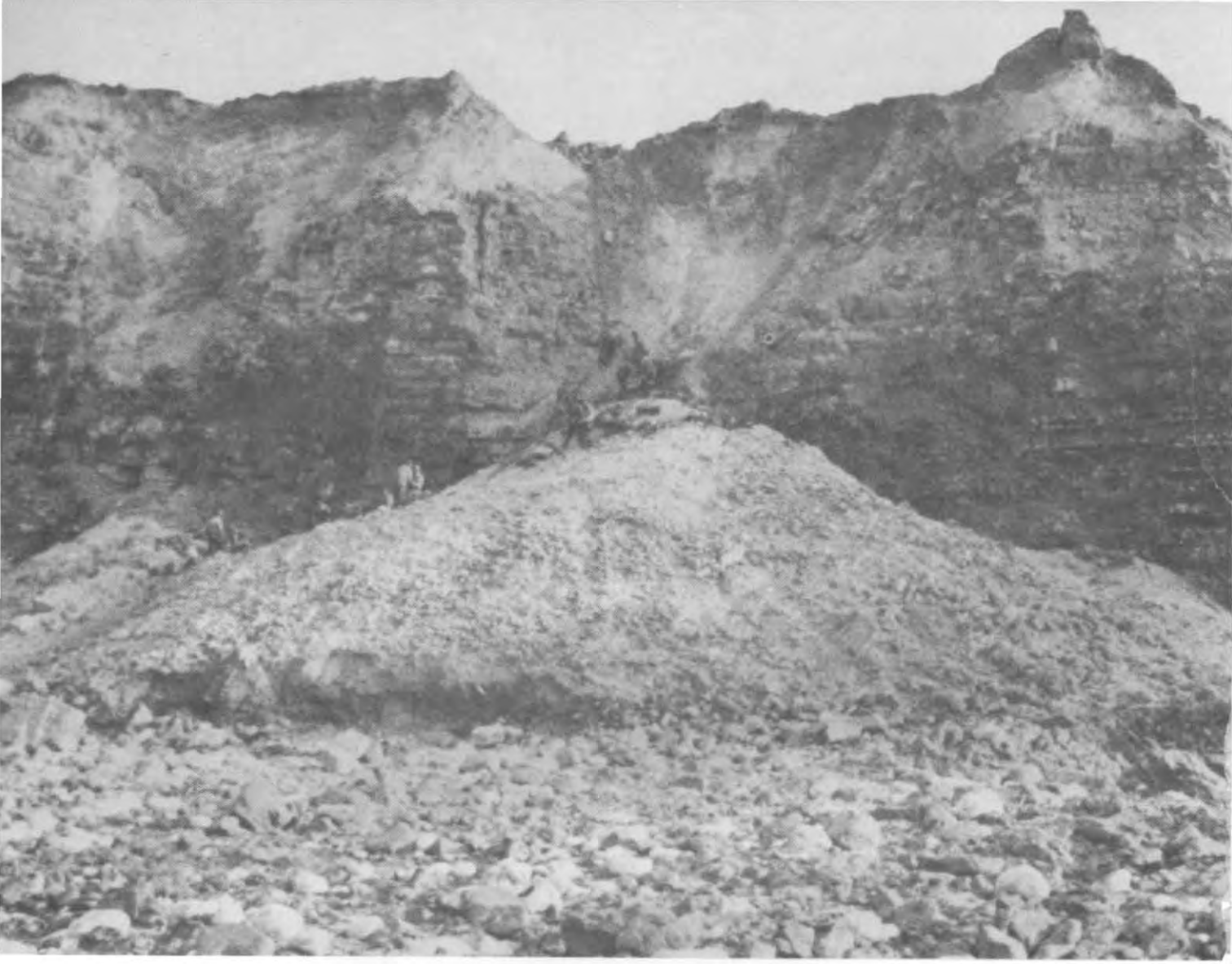
One LCA had been swamped, going down soon after leaving the transport area; one of the supply boats sank 15 minutes after the start, and the other jettisoned all packs aboard in order to stay afloat; one dukw was hit and sunk by 20-mm fire from a cliff position near the Point. The 9 surviving LCA's came in on a 400-yard front on the east side of the Point. Naval fire had been lifted since H Hour, and the enemy had been given time to recover and to man the trenches above the cliff. The destroyer *Satterlee* observed their movement and swept the cliff top with fire from all guns; nevertheless, scattered small-arms fire and automatic fire from a flanking machine-gun position beat around the LCA's, causing about 15 casualties as the Rangers debarked on the heavily cratered strip of beach. The rockets had been fired immediately on touchdown. Some of the water-soaked ropes failed to carry over the cliff, but only one craft failed to get at least one grapnel to the edge. In one or two cases, the demountable extension ladders were used. The dukws came in but could not get across the cratered beach, and from the water's edge their extension ladders would not reach the top of the cliff.

Germans appeared on the cliff edge and started to harass the Rangers directly below them with rifle fire and grenades. This show of enemy resistance was promptly discouraged; BAR men picked off the riflemen as they exposed themselves, and the destroyer *Satterlee*, coming in at close range, swept the cliff top with a few minutes of concentrated fires from all her guns. The escalade was not delayed. In less than five minutes from time of touchdown, the first Rangers, by one type of rope or another, were getting to the cliff top. Some, covered with mud from having fallen into deep crater-pools on the beach, had trouble in



THE TIP OF POINTE DU HOE *was ravaged by bombs and naval fire. LCA 861 of Company E, 2d Rangers landed just below. One of its rope ladders, attached to a grapnel carried over the cliff by a rocket, was still in place when photo was taken in June, 1945.*

climbing. A few ropes had been cut by the enemy or had slipped from the anchorage. The first men up waited no longer than it took for three or four to assemble, then moved out on prearranged missions toward the gun positions. They found themselves in a no-man's land of incredible destruction, all landmarks gone, and the ground so cratered that if men got 15 feet apart they were immediately out of contact. Only a few enemy were seen, and these were quickly driven to cover in a network of ruined trenches connecting deep dugouts and emplacements. One after another, the small advance parties reached their appointed gun emplacements, only to find them empty.



THE CLIFFS AT POINTE DU HOE *were assaulted under difficult conditions. Here, a section of cliff smashed off by bombardment made a mound from which Rangers worked to the top by ropes. Photo was taken after the first assault parties had captured the Point.*

The gun positions, three of them casemated, were partly wrecked; the guns had been removed. Without hesitation, the Ranger parties started inland on their next mission: to reach the coastal highway, set up a defensive position cutting that main route between Vierville and Grandcamp, and await the arrival of the 116th Infantry from Omaha Beach.

They were still proceeding by small parties which joined up gradually as they moved inland. Three hundred yards from the fortified area they came under small-arms fire and artillery fire from the south. Fifteen men were killed or wounded as they pushed straight on, wiping out two small nests of resistance. About 36 men from Companies D and E reached the highway shortly after

0800; farther west, a dozen or so from Company F came out on the blacktop at the same time and joined up. The force took up a defensive position in fields just beyond the road, putting one group in position to block the highway toward Grandcamp. A few enemy parties had been met and driven off with losses during the speedy advance.

Patrolling was started at once. About 0900, two Rangers went down a lane 200 yards off the main road and found the missing battery of 5 guns. Cleverly camouflaged, they were sited for fire on either Omaha or Utah Beach and large ammunition stocks were ready at hand, but there were no enemy in or near the position. The patrol put two guns out of commission with incendiary grenades and went back for more grenades. While they were gone, a second patrol finished the job of disabling the guns and set fire to the powder. Word was sent back to the Point that the main objective had thus been accomplished.

There was mounting evidence that the enemy on or near the Point was recovering from his confusion. East of the fortified area a machine-gun emplacement which had caused most of the losses on the beach was assaulted by some men of Company F. They were unable to reach it, and the position remained in action until the whole cliff edge was blown into the sea by naval fire late in the morning. Just west of the Point an antiaircraft emplacement near the cliff edge began to sweep the Point with fire. By 0740 all the Ranger boat teams were up, and a dozen men of the late-comers were diverted from going inland and sent to attack this antiaircraft position. As they worked toward it through craters, artillery and mortar fire stopped them and the party scattered. A few minutes later a German counterattack, emerging from tunnels or nearby trenches, overwhelmed and captured all but one man. So torn up was the ground that the command post group, in a crater only a hundred yards away, was unaware of what had happened until the survivor returned. Another assault was hastily improvised, consisting of a dozen riflemen and a mortar section. They got halfway to the strongpoint and were caught by artillery fire, which killed or wounded nearly every man in the party.

For the rest of the day the small force on the Point was in a state approaching siege. Enemy snipers appeared in the fortified area, and despite several attempts, the Rangers could never clean out the maze of wrecked positions. Three or four Germans still held out on the tip of the Point in an undamaged concrete observation post. During the afternoon two enemy counterattacks coming from the direction of St-Pierre-du-Mont were stopped, the most dangerous one by accurate and rapid fire from the Rangers' only remaining mortar. The antiaircraft position was still very much in action, and destroyer fire could not quite reach it. Communication with the advance party on the highway was intermittent, depending chiefly on patrols that occasionally had to fight their way through.

The command post on the Point was out of communication with the assault forces on the main beaches, but was able to contact naval support ships with blinker and (later) radio. Naval Shore Fire Control Party No. 1 was able to establish communications as early as 0728 with the *Satterlee*, which stayed on hand for the rest of D Day and gave extremely useful fire support. In the afternoon a message from the Point came through to V Corps via the Navy, "Located Pointe du Hoe—mission accomplished—need ammunition and reinforcement—many casualties." This, the only word received on D Day from Colonel Rudder's force, left considerable doubt and anxiety at headquarters.

ADVANCE INLAND

THE PENETRATIONS of the beach defenses made between 0800–0900 represented a definite success, achieved by determined action in the face of great difficulties. Nevertheless, the success was limited in certain respects that handicapped all later efforts to exploit the breakthroughs and attain D-Day objectives. Only fractions of the assault BLT's got up the bluffs in the morning, at first in scattered groups that were rarely of more than company strength and were sometimes only one or two boat sections. They had few heavy weapons, no tanks, and no supporting artillery, and it took time to establish communications well enough to make effective use of naval fire support beyond the bluffs. As a result of the loss of equipment, communications within and between units were to be very limited all through the day. Intermingling of units was common in the larger groups that reached the high ground, and the time spent in overcoming this difficulty was increased by the loss of officers, the scattering of headquarters groups, and the lack of communications. The fact that all the exits were still blocked and that the beach was still under fire prevented early reinforcement of the advance groups. Some elements of the assault waves were still behind the sea wall, mentally "pinned down," and it took time and effort to get them forward, often after lateral movement to reach the penetration areas. The reserve regiments, delayed by confusion that resulted from landing intermingled on a narrow sector, did not play much part until midafternoon. Even then, their strength was not fully used.

Enemy opposition was aided by these weaknesses in the assault and by terrain favorable for delaying action. Again and again, the advancing groups ran into small pockets of resistance in prepared positions, usually built around machine guns dug in along hedgerows and having good fields of fire. Locating these positions was difficult because of the confusion caused by many snipers in the area, and it took time to reduce the resistance with weapons available. Bypassing often resulted in the splitting up of assault groups and in progressive loss of control as movement proceeded inland. The difficulties of fighting in hedgerow country were not easy to solve under any circumstances, much less those of their first experience. Though the Germans were concentrated in as much as company strength at only one or two points, such as Colleville, they were able to stop the V Corps advance far short of D-Day objectives.

The battle inland can best be followed in terms of three areas, centering around the three villages on the coastal highway which were preliminary objectives in the advance. In two of these, Colleville and St-Laurent, main points of enemy resistance were encountered. In all three areas, the story is that of a number of assault units, usually in less than battalion strength, fighting more or less uncoordinated and separate actions (Maps Nos. VII and VIII for the morning period; Map No. IX for afternoon).

Vierville Area

In the period 0800–0900, upwards of 600 men went off Dog White Beach (Map No. VII). Besides Company C, which led the way, the advance included most of the main Ranger force (eight companies), 116th Headquarters, some engineer troops of the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion, and fragments of Companies B, F, G, and H. Reaching the top in small groups, the troops tended to stop and bunch in the first fields near the edge of the bluff. What little order they had was lost as they became intermingled with units arriving later, and reorganization was a slow process. Though there were no enemy positions in action near by, snipers, harassing long-range fire from a few machine guns, and a brief period of shelling from 88-mm guns contributed to the confusion, and it was two hours before much progress was made. One small group had long since gone inland by itself. A platoon of 5th Battalion Rangers, 1st Lt. Charles H. Parker, Jr., commanding, on reaching the bluff crest had seen no other troops, and immediately started southwest to get around Vierville and reach the battalion assembly area. After making a half-mile without meeting opposition, the platoon was stopped by enemy fire from hedgerows near the Chateau de Vaumicel, just south of Vierville. They spent the rest of the morning working past this fire toward the chateau grounds.

When the CP group of the 116th RCT came over the bluff after 0900 they found Rangers and 116th elements scattered all through the fields ahead, with leading elements near the coastal highway. The communications section of headquarters had landed on another beach; the only working radio belonged to the liaison officer of the 743d Tank Battalion. Completely out of touch with division, Colonel Canham had no contacts with any of his battalion headquarters, did not know what was happening at the exits in the 116th zone, and could only assume that the rest of the assault battalions were on their way to assembly areas.

Movement finally began between 1000–1100, with General Cota assisting in getting units started. The 5th Ranger Battalion planned to push across the coastal highway and go around Vierville to the south, while the 116th elements went toward the village. The Rangers' advance in column was stopped when the first elements reached the highway and an enemy machine gun opened up from the hedgerow one field to the south. The column halted while a platoon went after the machine gun by working down an axial hedgerow. In the course of this action, another enemy machine gun opened up to the left of the first. Another Ranger platoon attacked this gun, and once again uncovered new enemy fire positions along the hedgerows still farther east. A third outflanking attack was started, ran into additional machine-gun fire, and was called back pending an attempt to get artillery support. The 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion had just put some guns ashore, but the forward observer reported that their fire at this range was impossible because of the mask presented by the bluff. About four hours had been consumed in these efforts. At 1400 the Rangers gave up the attempt to move south from the highway and instead, followed the coastal highway into Vierville.

That route had already been taken several hours before. Company C and small elements of other 116th companies, some of them moving in isolated groups, had gone that way; so had Company B of the 5th Rangers, which headed down the Vierville highway under the mistaken impression that the Ranger battalion column was following just behind. With General Cota close behind the leading elements, Vierville was



THE VIERVILLE DRAW UNDER FIRE. *The time of the action pictured above is uncertain, but this may have been the bombardment between 1200 and 1300 that knocked out the strongpoints. The Vierville steeple, in the background, was later demolished by naval fire.*

entered before 1100. Except for scattered fire from the outskirts when the advance was starting, no enemy resistance was encountered. A platoon of Company B, 116th Infantry, went through Vierville out of contact with the rest and turned south toward the chateau. On the way, they encountered a German resistance nest, assaulted it, and took 14 prisoners. A little beyond the chateau, the platoon was attacked by Germans who had just deployed from three trucks coming up from the south. The Company B unit, reduced to 25 men and lacking automatic weapons, withdrew to the chateau and stopped the enemy attack with well-aimed rifle fire. Here they were joined about noon by Parker's platoon from Company A, 5th Rangers, which had been coming toward the chateau across country. Neither party knew there were any other friendly forces near Vierville.

Company B of the 5th Rangers and Company C, 116th Infantry, passed through Vierville before noon and started west on the coastal highway toward Pointe du Hoe. About 500 yards out of Vierville they were stopped by fire from prepared emplacements along hedgerows which ran at right angles to the highway. During the next few hours, the Rangers and Company C worked together in efforts to outflank or neutralize this position. Enemy machine-gun positions were well camouflaged and hard to locate; every time a move was started across open fields, it was checked by fire from German rifles and automatic weapons at ranges of two to three hundred yards. At 1700 the main Ranger force came up and plans for an attack were started, then called off later in the evening. Colonel Canham decided not to press the effort along the coastal highway toward Pointe du Hoe,

since the 5th Rangers constituted the larger part of his forces for defense of Vierville.

The command group of the 116th RCT had come through Vierville about noon on its way to the prearranged CP location, a little southwest of the village. When the small party reached that spot, sniped at all the way, they found themselves out of contact with any friendly units and uncomfortably isolated. A platoon of Company B, 5th Rangers, came by on a flanking maneuver and was impressed as a guard for the CP. Patrols sent towards Louvières to find the 2d Battalion fought their way for a thousand yards south through scattered opposition and returned without having seen any friendly forces. Small skirmishes took place near the CP all afternoon, and 15 Germans were killed in the immediate vicinity. At 1830, the commander of the 1st Battalion reported in, having got up from Charlie Beach, and Colonel Canham found out for the first time what had happened on the beaches in front of Vierville exit. Toward midnight, he learned that the 2d and 3d Battalions were near St-Laurent.

At nightfall the Vierville area was the weakest part of the beachhead. The 5th Ranger Battalion, remnants of the 1st Battalion, 116th, and a few small elements of engineer units and of the 2d and 3d Battalions (a group from Company K arrived in the evening and was used for headquarters security) were holding defensive positions west and southwest of the village. Separated during the day, these units were finally brought into contact, but no other friendly forces in any strength were nearer than St-Laurent. No reinforcements had landed in the Vierville sector, and the exit from the beach was only beginning to open for traffic by dark.

Yet, had there been any force on hand to use for the purpose, the Vierville draw could have been cleaned up any time during the afternoon. Between 1200 and 1300, heavy naval fire, directed by shore observers with the 116th and including the main batteries of the *Texas*, was put on the strongpoint guarding D-1 draw. After the first four salvos of four rounds each, the destroyer *McCook* radioed shore that Germans were leaving concrete emplacements to surrender, 30 prisoners being taken by engineers on the beach. Further fire completed the neutralization of the heavily fortified area. Shortly after the naval guns stopped firing, General Cota went down the exit road to the beach to find out why no traffic had yet come through. Accompanied by four or five men, he got all the way down, past the strongpoints and the antitank wall and out onto the beach flat, without drawing more than scattered small-arms fire. Five Germans, taken prisoner from holes in the cliff-side along the way, led the party through a minefield at the entrance. The general saw little activity on the beach flat at D-1. The only infantry nearby were the exhausted remnants of Company A, 116th, and the tanks were further east along the flat. General Cota walked along the promenade road to investigate conditions at les Moulins, after finding that engineer troops were about to start work on the obstacles in the Vierville draw.

The 121st Engineer Combat Battalion, responsible for the D-1 exit, had experienced the usual troubles in landing; its units were scattered as far as les Moulins, 75 percent of its equipment had been lost in landing, and personnel losses had run high. The battalion officers had spent several hours collecting their men, and salvaging explosives and equipment along the beach. The work of reorganization was made difficult by scattered fire from snipers along the bluff, and small combat patrols were used in an attempt to clean out bluff positions. One of the patrols entered the Hamel-au-Prêtre



HEAD OF D-3 DRAW, *on the edge of St-Laurent. The Germans held prepared positions on the high ground to the right, and the 3d Battalion, 116th Infantry, was unable to make much progress beyond here on the afternoon of D Day.* (*Photograph taken June, 1945.*)

strongpoint and found it wrecked by naval fire and almost abandoned. However, here and at the Vierville draw, long connecting tunnels, some of them going as far inland as the village, afforded a shelter for the enemy and made a quick clean-up of the fortifications impossible.

One 5th Ranger platoon (Company A) managed to get all the way to Pointe du Hoe, four miles through enemy-infested country. At 1430, Lieutenant Parker left the chateau south of Vierville and started for the 5th Rangers' assembly area. On the way, they encountered a small enemy strongpoint and overwhelmed it, killing 2 Germans and capturing 12. The 24 Rangers reached their assembly area, found no one there, concluded the 5th Battalion had gone on toward Pointe du Hoe, and decided to follow. Taking the prisoners with them and moving on secondary roads south of the coastal highway, the platoon got through Englesqueville and on to a point almost south of their goal before they were stopped by fire from prepared enemy positions. Trying again to "bull through" the opposition, the Rangers found themselves outflanked and nearly surrounded; they had to fight their way out and make a short withdrawal. They then left the roads, struck north across country, and about 2100 joined the inland group of 2d Battalion Rangers, in their defensive positions just south of the Grandcamp—Vierville highway. The Company A platoon had not seen the 5th Battalion since leaving the beach, but still believed it must be close behind and so informed Colonel Rudder at the Point.

St-Laurent Area

Except for Company M, pinned on the beach flat near E-1 draw, most of the 3d Battalion, 116th Infantry, had reached high ground by 1000 and were starting to push south. As a result of enemy resistance in and near St-Laurent, they were to make only a half mile of progress during the rest of the day.

No clear picture can be drawn of the confused fighting that took place during the morning, as a dozen or more groups, varying from one to four or five boat teams in size, worked south from the bluff toward St-Laurent, with the aim of reaching a battalion assembly area west of the village (Maps Nos. 3 and VII). The fields between St-Laurent and the bluffs are cut by unusually few hedgerows, and the open ground made the advancing troops more conscious of hostile fire, even when it was wild. Here and there, small enemy detachments with machine guns offered resistance from prepared and well dug-in positions, and a number of skirmishes were fought by sections of Company L and I. By noon most of Company L and several sections of I were at the edge of St-Laurent, on the northwest, where the road from les Moulins comes into the village at the head of the draw. An enemy rocket battery in this area had been disposed of by Company I's mortar fire and a naval shell. Company K was nearby, and the battalion command group was endeavoring to bring the units together and effect a preliminary reorganization. Major Bingham had worked east on the beach from les Moulins with a handful of men from F, H, and Headquarters of the 2d Battalion, and this group had now come inland.

Enemy resistance was stiffening. Snipers were in the straggling village, but the main trouble came from the western end of St-Laurent. Here, dug in on the high ground commanding the upper end of the draw, Germans estimated at a company in strength controlled the approaches to the main crossroad, and their machine guns had good fields of fire on all the upper draw. Two boat teams of K and a few men of I, trying to bypass the enemy resistance to the north, cut across the draw about halfway down toward les Moulins. Making their way across country, this group found its way to the coastal highway, sighted the 5th Rangers ahead, and tailed them into Vierville. On the way, the Company K group was attacked by a small enemy party from the flank and lost several men to surprise machine-gun fire. Eventually, the K group reached regimental headquarters and was used as its security detachment for that night.

The rest of the battalion was held at the crossroad all afternoon. Several attempts to advance were stopped by machine-gun fire, from positions which the men were unable to locate. Company L suffered most of its casualties for the day in these actions. At dark, the greater part of the 3d Battalion was still at the head of the draw, Company M having come up during the afternoon from E-1. Nearby, the command group of the 2d Battalion had a handful of men from G and F; the rest of that battalion was scattered all the way from Colleville to Vierville, and a few troops were still held on the beach at les Moulins.

St-Laurent had also proved a stumbling block for the 115th Infantry, coming at it from the northeast. That regiment, landing in front of E-1 draw just before noon, took three or four hours to clear the beach, going up mostly to the east of the draw. Somewhat disorganized by intermingling with the 18th RCT, the battalions were attempting to reach assembly points a thousand yards inland, and southwest of St-Laurent. The 115th's transportation was not due in

on D Day, so the men were carrying as heavy loads as possible; the heavy weapons sections were particularly burdened, with guns, mortars, and extra ammunition to hand-carry. Scattered harassing fire from snipers and occasional machine guns also slowed down the movement. The 2d Battalion reached St-Laurent, met opposition in the village, and spent the afternoon trying to clean out a small enemy force, estimated at not more than a company in strength. Once again, the main difficulty for the inexperienced troops was to locate enemy fire positions in terrain affording so much cover. Toward dusk when the attack was finally well started, naval gunfire hit in the village, caused a number of casualties in the 2d Battalion, and stopped the effort. The battalion was drawn south of St-Laurent for the night, where it joined the 1st Battalion. This unit had reached a position near the Formigny road a few hundred yards south of St-Laurent, making slow progress against snipers and some mortar fire. The 3d Battalion had not reached the St-Laurent–Colleville road by dark.

Elements of five battalions had spent the afternoon and evening of D Day fighting through an area of about a square mile which contained only scattered pockets of enemy resistance. The effectiveness of the attacking forces had been reduced by a number of factors, including lack of communications, difficulties of control, and the absence of artillery and armored support.

Colleville Area

When Company G got past the bluff and started inland, about 0900, they were bothered only by light sniping and occasional signs of minefields and made rapid progress for a thousand yards to the south. They were advancing in their designated zone and according to plan (Maps Nos. 4, p. 66, and VIII). The first objective was a German bivouac area a quarter-mile west of Colleville; from there the company would turn into Colleville. Company G approached the bivouac area about 0930 and received heavy fire from automatic weapons and mortars on both flanks of its advance. A two-hour action followed, with house-to-house fighting before the enemy was driven out of the area. The company suffered 12 casualties. Remnants of a Company F section and small elements of H, and two sections of Company E, 116th, had followed G's route from the beach and joined up during the morning, giving a strength of about 150 men for the attack on Colleville.

A little after noon, a section of G started into the western edge of the village, but was unable to progress against strong resistance after seizing the first few buildings. The rest of the company was extended to the west, and the section farthest out on that wing lost contact. By some misunderstanding, the two 116th sections withdrew toward the bivouac area. Small groups of enemy filtered through the gaps, a pillbox near the head of E–3 draw was still in action, and fire came from flanks and rear, giving the impression of encirclement. For the next two hours, Company G fought on the defensive, inflicting 18 casualties on the enemy. This action marked the nearest approach on D Day to a German counterattack made in any strength. At about 1500, the situation was relieved by the arrival of the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, which came up from E–1 draw with orders to take over the 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry's mission. But Company G was unable to get farther into Colleville, and suffered eight casualties when supporting naval fire hit the houses in the village. Enemy resistance was unshaken by the bombardment.

Company G had felt itself isolated during this period, an impression which was char-



ENTRANCE TO COLLEVILLE FROM WEST. *After advance from Easy Red Beach, Company G, 16th Infantry, fought into this village just after noon, then was held the rest of the day by bitter enemy resistance in houses just beyond church. (Photo taken June, 1945.)*

acteristic of most of the inland fighting on D Day. Actually, the advance from Easy Red had been followed up by a number of other units which by noon were not far from Colleville. Between Colleville and Easy Red Beach, battalion and regimental command groups were working hard to organize the scattered assault forces and build up support. However, contacts were irregular, the hedgerows cut off observation, and small enemy groups held on tenaciously in bypassed positions, from which they opened with harassing fire on the flanks or rear of advancing units and drew them into a mopping-up action that might consume two or three hours. Other enemy groups, trying to get back from the bluff positions, added to the confusion by appearing in areas supposedly cleared up. In this fashion, small separate battles were developing throughout the day almost anywhere between E-1 and E-3 draws and south beyond the highway. Advance under these conditions was more or less blind, and coordinated action by the assault forces became almost impossible.

Lt. Col. Herbert C. Hicks, Jr., commanding the 2d Battalion of the 16th RCT, had followed Company G toward Colleville and was endeavoring to get other units of his battalion toward that area. The only sizable group he could find during the morning was made up of about 50 men of Company E, including Lieutenant Spalding's section from the E-1 strongpoint. This party reached the coastal highway about noon and pushed several hundred yards beyond to cover the right flank of G. Moving with a section of G, the group came under sniper fire from the rear and lost contact with friendly units. Later in the afternoon, deciding that they were in danger of being cut off, the Company E detachment withdrew toward Colleville. Meantime, elements of the 1st Battalion were reaching the same general area. Companies B and C reached the highway by 1300, near the bivouac area through which G had already fought. They spent several hours cleaning snipers out of the woods in the vicinity, and made about 300 yards progress southward by dark. Company A, slowed in getting up the bluff, spent the morning and early afternoon fighting a machine-gun nest in the woods at the edge of E-1 draw, halfway to the highway. It rejoined the battalion late in the day.

The 18th Infantry had landed in front of E-1 draw from 1100 to 1400. One after another, as the battalions started inland, General Wyman turned them from their original missions to take over those of the 16th Infantry. The 2d Battalion of the 18th pushed toward Colleville to help the 2d Battalion of the 16th. Enemy groups were still scattered along the route of advance, inflicting casualties by rifle and machine-gun fire that seemed to be sited for covering the gates and hedgerow openings. By 1500, the battalion was passing west of Company G, 16th Infantry; at dark it was on the edge of the high ground 500 yards south and southeast of Colleville, with not much resistance to its front but a good deal of fire coming from the rear. The 1st Battalion ran into two platoons of Germans holding trenches near the head of E-1 draw, and was busy until late in the afternoon cleaning out that area and dealing with enemy parties who attempted to escape up the draw from bypassed positions. The 3d Battalion, moving in reserve, received orders at 1615 to take over the objectives of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry: capture of Formigny and Surrain. At 1800, the 3d Battalion, bothered by snipers, was still north of the coastal highway and received the more modest mission of reaching the high ground south of the highway and filling the gap between the 1st and 29th Division units. At midnight the 3d Battalion was still short of the highway. The 1st Battalion, having finished enemy

resistance near the head of the draw, was ordered to attack toward Surrain. By midnight, it was reportedly near the St-Laurent–Colleville highway.

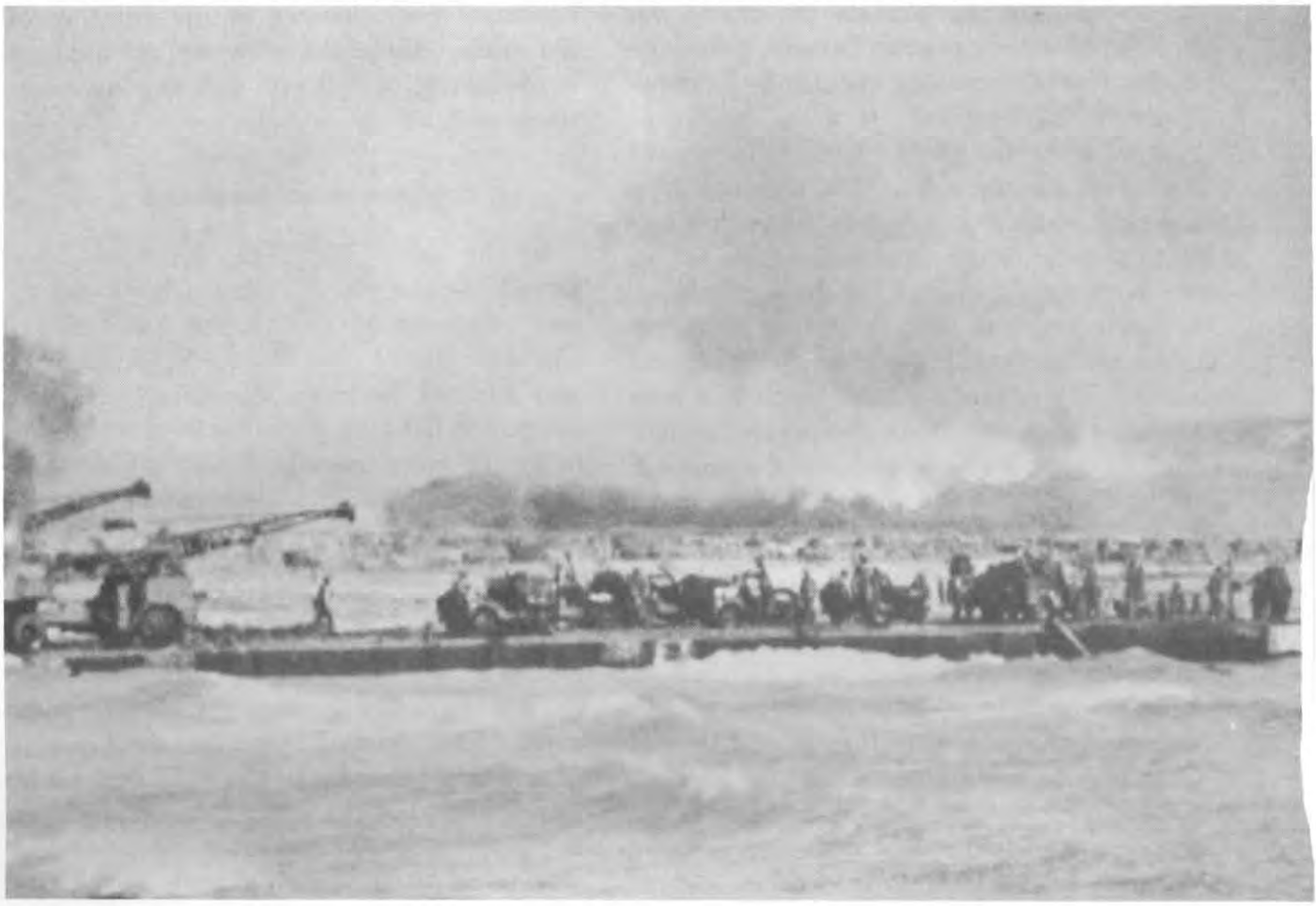
A mile to the east of Colleville, the 3d Battalion of the 16th Infantry had been fighting all day on its own, out of contact with the rest of the regiment. After taking the bluff strongpoint at F-1 draw, the intermingled units of the battalion were reorganized on the high ground behind the bluffs. The advance off the beach had been made by elements of six companies (including Company F of the 16th and Company E of the 116th), but the force that now moved inland numbered little over 100 men. Patrols were sent ahead, but the three men sent to Cabourg ran into a German strongpoint and were captured. Enemy groups were still to the rear near the bluffs and even attempted a counterattack in platoon strength. In the afternoon, the battalion moved into le Grand-Hameau. With the enemy holding Cabourg in some strength, there could be no question of further advance. During the evening, other elements got off the beach, some 17 tanks came up, and the 3d Battalion occupied defensive positions blocking the coastal highway at le Grand-Hameau.

The 26th Infantry, loaded in Force "B," arrived in the transport area at 1300 and was ordered to land at 1800 near E-3 exit. The regiment was ashore by 2100 and received orders to put the 3d Battalion in a defensive position on the road south from St-Laurent to Formigny, with the 2d Battalion close behind it ready to attack through the 3d Battalion in the morning. The battalions were moving toward their objectives during the night. The 1st Battalion went up east of E-3 exit to protect the left flank of the 16th Infantry.

General Huebner and the command group, 1st Division, landed on Easy Red at 1900 and joined General Wyman at the division command post, located in the entrance of E-1 draw. General Gerow and the advance headquarters of V Corps left the *Ancon* for shore at 2030.

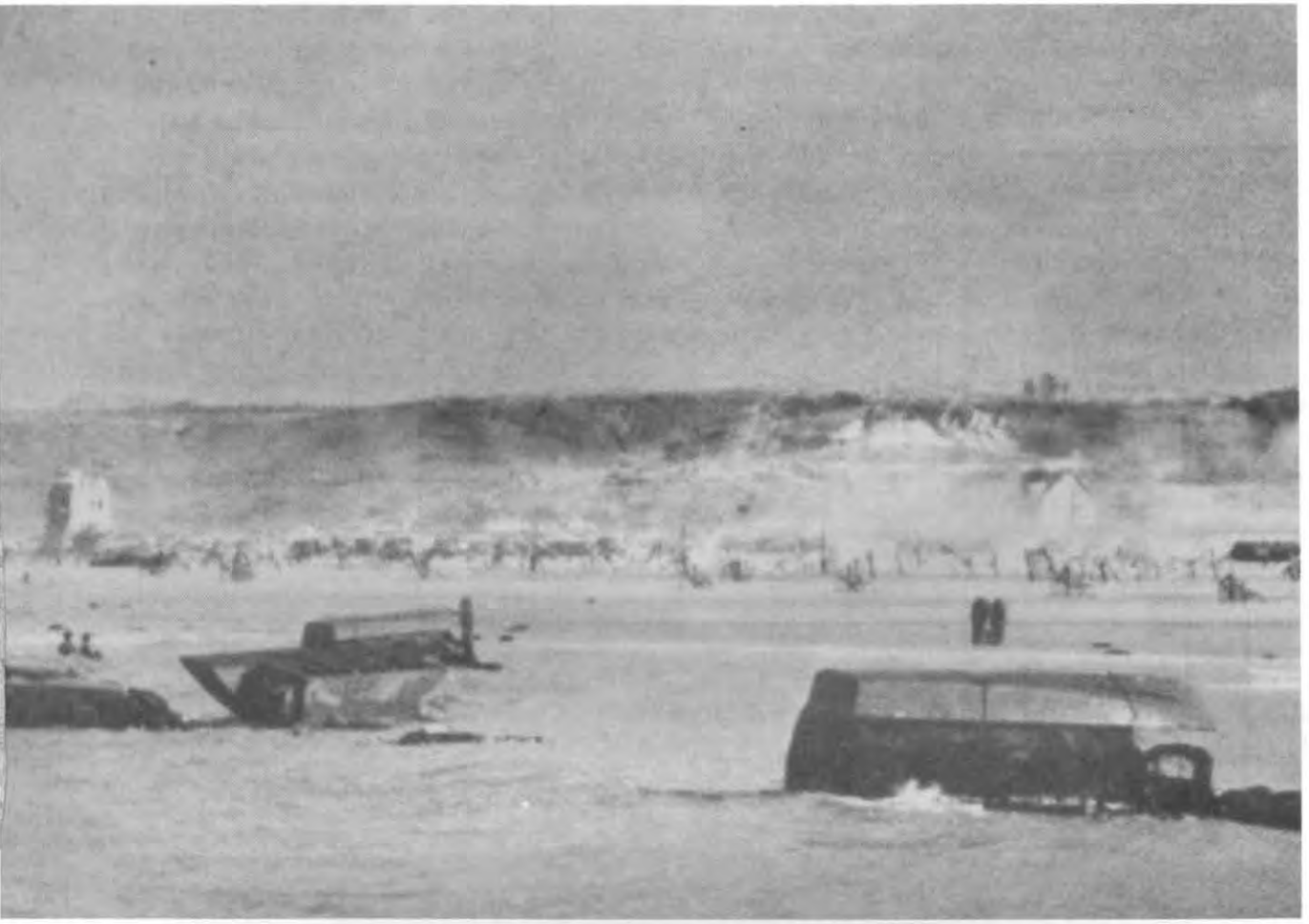
Afternoon on the Beach

In the early afternoon, destroyers continued their work of knocking out enemy gun emplacements along the beach front. The strongpoint guarding the Vierville draw was silenced by 1300; somewhat later, the dangerous flanking positions near Pointe de la Percée were literally blown off the face of the cliff. These actions greatly helped the situation on the beach, but by no means ended all enemy opposition. Though the most dangerous enemy guns were now neutralized and some emplacements were surrendered without a fight, there was still enough resistance to block three of the main exits. The Vierville draw, as General Cota's trip through it showed, was ready for opening, but there was not enough force at hand for systematic mopping-up of the weakened positions. Resistance at the D-3 and E-3 draws was still strong enough to block any movement through those exit routes. There and elsewhere, Germans made use of the maze of communications trenches and tunnels by emerging from dugouts to reoccupy emplacements believed neutralized. Snipers reappeared along the bluffs in areas where penetrations had been made. Above all, artillery from inland positions kept up sporadic harassing fire on the beach flat. Directed by observers in the remaining strongpoints, this shelling was most severe from Easy Green eastward and reached its height in the late afternoon. Hits were still occasionally made on landing craft, sinking or setting them afire; vehicles were struck as they jammed the approaches to the exits or tried to move laterally along the beach. Not heavy enough to inflict



major losses or to stop progress, this fire could still hamper and delay the effort to bring order into the confusion on the beach flat. Neither inland observers nor reconnaissance planes located the enemy batteries, and Navy guns could not intervene effectively. Throughout D Day, naval fire on inland targets relied mainly on observation by spotter planes. The destroyer *Carmick*, in contact with an NSFCP at 1720, made several attempts to locate the enemy battery firing on E-1 draw, but the observers' party finally gave up, admitting it was guessing as to location of the German guns.

Nevertheless, the engineers were able to make steady progress in their vital task of clearing and organizing the beach for movement inland. As the tide lowered, the remnants of the demolition teams went to work again on the exposed obstacles, although four parties had to interrupt their work to deal with harassing fire from enemy snipers on the bluff. They completed three gaps partially opened in the morning, made four new ones, and widened some of the others. By evening, 13 gaps were fully opened and

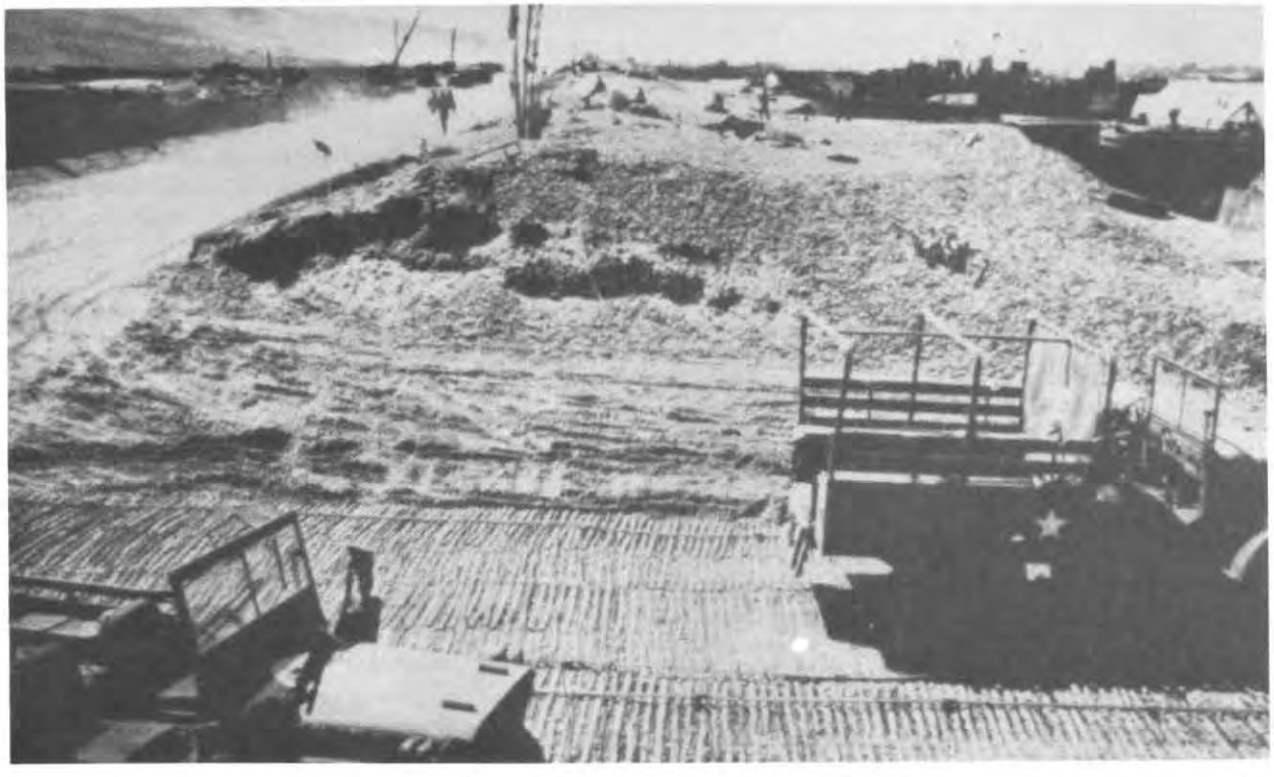


LANDINGS WERE DELAYED *and in the afternoon the approach to the beach was crowded with craft waiting to come in as the receding tide uncovered obstacles. A rhino-ferry, with cranes aboard, has come in near some drowned-out trucks. Les Moulins (D-3) at right.*

marked, and an estimated 35 percent of the obstacles on the beach had been cleared. Along the beach flat, units of the Engineer Special Brigade Group were making gaps in the embankment, clearing minefields, and doing what they could to get at the exits. More of their units and equipment were getting ashore, though mislandings still occurred to upset assignments. Fox Beach was ready for development, but the 336th Battalion, scheduled to land there, was brought in at the opposite end of Omaha Beach, 4,000 yards away. About 1500 the unit began a difficult journey to reach F-1 exit. Enemy artillery fire harassed it all the way, especially in front of D-3 and E-3 draws. At E-3 shelling was so heavy that men were sent across the exposed area in pairs. When about half had crossed, a dozer at work near the shingle was hit and burned, sending up clouds of smoke which covered the remainder of the movement. The 336th Engineers reached F-1 exit at 1700, with a loss of six men. A trailer loaded with explosives and towed by a tractor had made the trip unscathed.

The primary condition for improvement on the beach was to get vehicles started inland, thus relieving congestion and permitting further landings. This became possible after the fire of destroyers and the advance of the 18th Infantry had cleared up the last enemy resistance at E-1 draw. Gaps had already been cut through the embankment, and the engineers of the 1st, 37th, and 149th Battalions were ready to exploit the advantage. Between 1200 and 1300, dozers under fire from snipers cut a road up the western slope of the draw toward St-Laurent, and the movement of vehicles began almost at once. Landings were resumed on Easy Red and Easy Green, the first group of preloaded dukws coming in by 1400. Enemy artillery lacked observation on the E-1 draw, fortunately for the heavy traffic now starting. By 1500 new trouble loomed; the vehicles coming up on the plateau found themselves unable to get far toward St-Laurent because of continued enemy resistance in that village. For a time all movement was stopped. Vehicles jammed bumper to bumper all the way up the exit road, but by 1600, engineers had pushed a branch road south off the planned route toward the coastal highway. Vehicles were hastily shunted off this track into the adjoining fields, and movement continued for the rest of the day. At 1700, all remaining tanks of the 741st Tank Battalion were ordered inland via this exit, and four of them later took part in the unsuccessful attempt to clean out St-Laurent before dark.

BREACHES IN THE SHINGLE EMBANKMENT *were opened by bulldozers in the afternoon, permitting vehicles to reach the flat. This scene (Easy Red) taken some days later, shows ships unloading at the high-water line, where they were floated off at next high tide.*



THE E-1 EXIT ROAD *was opened on D Day by 1300, the engineers working under fire from snipers. This photo, looking down E-1 draw, was taken later in the week. A tape to mark mine-cleared areas was still needed, since this draw had been heavily mined.*

ROADBLOCKS WERE DEMOLISHED *at the mouth of D-1 draw by engineers of the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion. After the draw was open for traffic to Vierville by 1700, fire from the artillery inland demolished houses along the road, impeding its use until dark.*



Efforts to get other exits working were not successful until late in the day. At the Vierville draw, D-1 exit was cleared during the afternoon by the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion, but movement was impeded by artillery fire which blocked the road with fresh debris. By nightfall traffic was going up into the village, the 121st had partly opened a transit area, and the 743d Tank Battalion bivouacked near Vierville. Les Moulins draw (D-3) was still barred by enemy resistance in the weakening strongpoints. Work at E-3 exit was carried on in the intervals of considerable artillery and mortar fire. When this slackened at dark, the engineers developed the exit sufficiently for tanks to go up after midnight. After traversing the beach from the Vierville draw, the 336th Engineers went to work at F-1 exit, clearing mines and pushing a new road, 12 feet wide and one-third of a mile long, up the moderate slope of the bluff. Landing schedules were revised to take advantage of this exit. Company B of the 745th Tank Battalion landed on Fox Green at 1630 and was up on the high ground by 2000, losing three tanks disabled by mines. In most of their work during the afternoon, the engineers were harassed by small-arms fire and had to make full use of their security detachments for mopping up snipers and small bypassed emplacements.

Artillery, held off shore by the unfavorable conditions of the morning, began to land after noon in the E-1 area. Heavy losses had been sustained by some units before they were able to debark. The one remaining howitzer of the 111th Field Artillery Battalion came ashore attached to the 7th Field Artillery Battalion, which itself had lost six pieces on dukws that swamped in the rough seas. Landing after 1300, the other six howitzers of the battalion were tied in together to facilitate control, and fired their first mission from the beach at 1615 on an enemy machine-gun nest near Colleville. Because of difficult observation inland, this was their only mission of the day. The 62d Armored Field Artillery Battalion (self-propelled), firing from LCT's in support of the assault, was unable to unload its guns in the morning. From 1500 to 1830, six M-7 howitzers got ashore, two others having been lost. They were moved to firing positions 200 yards inland but fired no missions. The rest of the battalion (eight howitzers) landed on Fox Green at dark and moved toward Colleville. The 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (self-propelled) had lost five howitzers as a result of mishaps to the LCT's trying to land in the morning. The remainder of the battalion got ashore from noon onward, and one battery moved inland at 1800 to support the 115th Infantry near St-Laurent. The 32d Field Artillery Battalion landed in the evening and took positions northeast of St-Laurent. This unit lost 2 guns in the surf and 25 vehicles during the landing (some were later recovered), and had 28 casualties. By night there were elements of 5 artillery battalions ashore, but their combined losses had been 26 guns and a great deal of equipment. Except for the one mission fired by the 7th Battalion, they had played no part in the inland fighting. As for the two anti-aircraft gun battalions scheduled to land, these units were forced to wait for the next daylight.

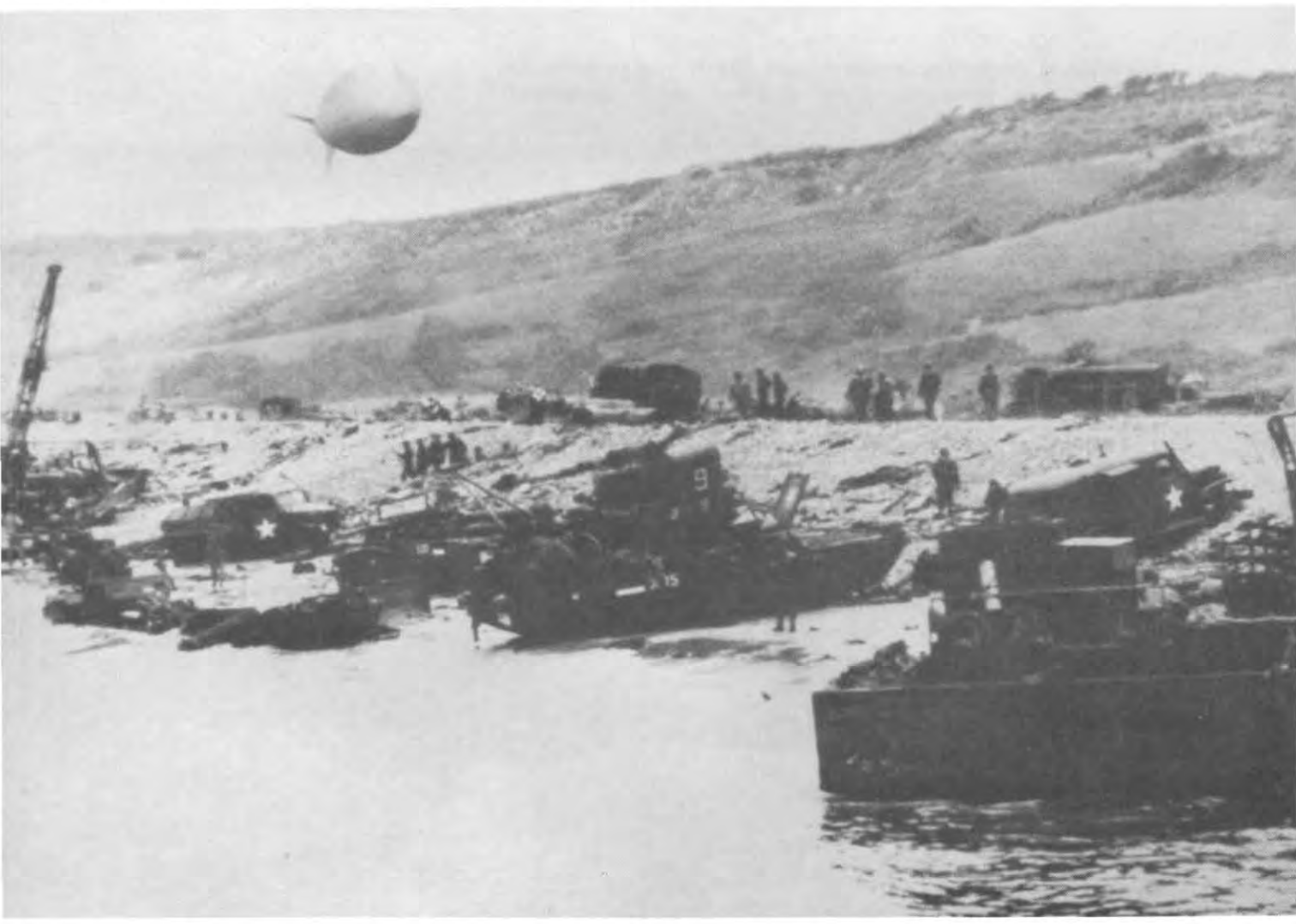
In general, only a start had been made in clearing and organizing the beaches. The main transit area in use, northeast of St-Laurent, was jammed with vehicles and equipment of all types. The beach flat near E-1 exit was crowded as a result of heavy landings late in the day; there and elsewhere, much of the disorder produced in the morning remained to be straightened out. Medical units had been unable to set up stations inland, supplies were waiting for the or-

ganization of dumps, and "lost" elements of assault infantry, reinforcements, and service troops were trying to find their units. Men dug in for the night wherever they could, some in the sand or on the bluff slopes. All through the shallow beachhead, along the bluffs, in the transit area, and around command posts, sniper fire caused alarms and started outbursts of firing. There were no "rear areas" on the night of D Day.

At the End of D Day

The assault on Omaha Beach had succeeded, but the going had been harder than expected. Penetrations made in the morning by relatively weak assault groups had lacked the force to carry far inland. Delay in reducing the strongpoints at the draws had slowed landings of reinforcements, artillery, and supplies. Stubborn enemy resistance,

WRECKAGE ON EASY RED *includes landing craft (right), trucks, and tank No. 9, Company A, 741st Tank Battalion, which had been disabled here in the morning. Much matériel was salvaged during the clean-up of the beach by the Engineer Special Brigade Group.*



both at strongpoints and inland, had held the advance to a strip of ground hardly more than a mile-and-a-half deep in the Colleville area, and considerably less than that west of St-Laurent. Barely large enough to be called a foothold, this strip was well inside the planned beachhead maintenance area. Behind U. S. forward positions, cut-off enemy groups were still resisting. The whole landing area continued under enemy artillery fire from inland.

Infantry assault troops had been landed, despite all difficulties, on the scale intended; most of the elements of five regiments were ashore by dark. With respect to artillery, vehicles, and supplies of all sorts, schedules were far behind. Little more than 100 tons had been got ashore instead of the 2,400 tons planned for D Day. The ammunition supply situation was critical and would have been even worse except for the fact that 90 of the 110 pre-loaded dukws in Force "O" had made the shore successfully. Only the first steps had been taken to organize the beach for handling the expected volume of traffic, and it was obvious that further delay in unloadings would be inevitable.

Unit records for D Day are necessarily incomplete or fragmentary, and losses in men and matériel cannot be established in accurate detail. First estimates of casualties

DEBRIS *of the landing assault on Dog Beach, with discarded life preservers most prominent. Boxes of demolitions in foreground.*





WRECKAGE LITTERED THE BEACHES, *at the end of D Day, on Dog Green Beach. On the right, a tank. The LCA carried in a boat team of Company B, 116th Infantry. Element "C" obstacles (left) show in water. Ships off the beach are ready to pour in materials.*

were high, with an inflated percentage of "missing" as a result of the number of assault sections which were separated from their companies, sometimes for two or three days. On the basis of later, corrected returns, casualties for V Corps were in the neighborhood of 3,000 killed, wounded, and missing. The two assaulting regimental combat teams (16th and 116th) lost about 1,000 men each. The highest proportionate losses were taken by units which landed in the first few hours, including engineers, tank troops, and artillery.

Whether by swamping at sea or by action at the beach, matériel losses were considerable, including 26 artillery pieces and over 50 tanks. No satisfactory over-all figures are available for vehicles and supplies; one unit, the 4042d Quartermaster Truck Company, got ashore only 13 out of 35 trucks (2½ ton), but this loss was much higher than the average. On the Navy side, a tentative estimate gives a total of about 50 landing craft and 10 larger vessels lost, with a much larger number of all types damaged.

The principal cause for the difficulties of

V Corps on D Day was the unexpected strength of the enemy at the assault beaches. By the middle of the morning prisoners had been taken not only from the *726th Regiment* but from all three regiments of the *352d Division* (the *914th*, *915th*, and *916th Regiments*). During May, when the *91st Division* was brought into the Cotentin peninsula and the *21st Panzer Division* to the Caen area, the German *Seventh Army* had also strengthened the beach garrisons between the Vire and Orne rivers. The *352d Division*, moving from the St-Lô area, had taken over the sector from Isigny to a point several miles east of Bayeux. Apparently units of the *726th Regiment* already holding the coastal strongpoints remained there but were reinforced by *352d* units. This meant that all strongpoints were completely manned, that reserve teams were available for some of the weapons positions, and also that there were units close behind Omaha Beach in support of the main defenses. How much of the *352d Division* was actually at Omaha is not yet known; certainly not the whole unit, for elements of it were encountered in the Bayeux area by the British, and the *915th Regiment* was ordered on D Day to guard the Carentan area. Nevertheless, the Omaha sector had been so strengthened as to account for the tough opposition both on the beaches and inland. Much of the heavy artillery fire during the afternoon was probably due to the *352d Divisional Artillery*, which included four battalions, one of medium guns.

In view of the German strength near the beaches, a surprising feature of the D-Day battle was the enemy's failure to stage any effective counterattack. The reason may have been that the *352d Division* units were too scattered; it may also reflect disorganization of the division and loss of control as a result of the inland air bombardment and the naval gunfire. Whatever the answer, not a single enemy attack in real strength had been met by the assaulting forces as they pushed south from the beach. Particularly in the morning, when the first penetrations were being made by small units without support of armor or artillery, determined counterblows of battalion strength in the Colleville or Vierville areas might have pushed the battle back to the beach. Enemy power had been frittered away in stubborn defensive action by small groups, which were nowhere able to do more than delay our advances. There is enough evidence to suggest that the *352d* units were committed piecemeal, in battalion strength or less, and that companies and battalions of different regiments were intermingled. Elements of the *915th Regiment*, for example, were identified east of Bayeux, in the Omaha sector, and near Isigny. Such disposition would not lend itself to coordinated attack in sizable force.

In any event, there were few indications of the aggressive defense called for by German tactical doctrine. All this was the more significant since the *352d Division* represented an offensive unit which the enemy had been expected to use for counterattack by the second day. Employed instead in close-up defense of the beach, it had made the initial assault phase harder but had not achieved a defensive success. In that respect, V Corps had surmounted a severe crisis, and the success of its hard fight should be measured in other terms than the size of the beachhead. To the extent that the *352d Division* had been used up on D Day, the enemy had lost in available strength for effective early countermeasures. If his local striking force, committed at the start of the invasion, had not been able to gain a decisive advantage, it was by that very commitment less likely to be as dangerous later on. The next few days would show whether the *352d Division* had been wisely used. It had delayed the whole assault schedule at Omaha,

but unless enemy reserves were available in time, this delay might mean little for the eventual outcome.

The Omaha assault was only one of several Allied landings, and the fortunes of each were important to the others. On the whole, the Allied operation had achieved a good measure of success in each main area (Map No. X). In the Cotentin, VII Corps' landing from the sea had been relatively easy, and part of the 4th Division was six miles inland near the Carentan—Cherbourg highway. The airborne divisions, however, had been hampered by scattered drops, and some of their vital objectives had not been attained, notably at the Merderet River crossings. Ste-Mère-Eglise was held, but only partial contacts had been made by the airborne units with each other and with the 4th Division. Losses had been severe in a score of separate battles waged by small units, and control had not yet been established over the large area involved in the air and sea landings.

To the east, British Second Army landings had scored impressive early successes. The airborne units had seized the Orne crossings north of Caen, and a wide breakthrough was made in coastal defenses by the assault troops landed from sea. Nevertheless, the *716th Division*, perhaps strengthened by the shortening of its sector, had held out tenaciously in some of the bypassed strongpoints. In the later afternoon, elements of the *21st Panzer Division* counterattacked in the Caen area and were checked after some initial success. Stopped short of their main objectives, Caen and Bayeux, the British Second Army was nevertheless inland at some points as far as six miles and had cut the Bayeux–Caen highway. Four of its divisions were in action and another was scheduled to start landing on D+1.

The complete absence of enemy air from the assault area of V Corps was an outstanding feature of the day's action. It is easy to imagine what the intervention of enemy fighters and fighter-bombers would have meant in the critical morning hours, when the assault forces were crowded on the narrow beach flat. Allied air supremacy on D Day had been absolute. Only three FW-190's had been sighted and chased off by the U. S. patrols covering the shipping area, and enemy air efforts to get near the battle zone had been negligible. Not until nightfall was there any German air activity near Omaha; then 22 enemy planes attacked shipping without causing any serious damage, though one bomb from a JU-88 landed only 35 yards from the battleship *Arkansas*. Intense antiaircraft fire shot down three planes.

In contrast, Allied air forces had carried through a day of heavy and far-ranging offensive activity, initiating the program, to be carried on for days to come, of isolating the battle area and hampering the movement of enemy troops and supplies in or near it. Eighth Air Force bombers carried out three major missions after the opening assault bombing. On two of these, involving 1,264 heavies, choke points for traffic behind the assault area were hit from Brittany to the Seine; among them were St-Lô, Vire, and Coutances. On similar missions, the Bomber Command of the Ninth Air Force dispatched 1,011 aircraft on D Day, many crews flying 2 missions. Two thousand and sixty-five fighter-bombers of the Ninth attacked, including among their missions 11 flown on request for air-ground cooperation by ground forces. Their efforts included attempts to deal with enemy batteries between Isigny and Bayeux, and with the guns near Maisy and Géfosse-Fontenay. British planes in the tactical air force (A. E. A. F.) flew 2,489 sorties on D Day.

The Enemy Side[17]

The enemy had been aware of impending Allied invasion since the late winter. The German High Command believed that the most likely area for the blow was the Pas-de-Calais coast. Hitler, on the other hand, regarded Brittany and the Cotentin area of Normandy as more likely targets. As a result of his views, reinforcements were brought to that area in May. The 91st Division was placed in the Cotentin. The 2d Paratroop Division was ordered from the eastern front, but only the 6th Regiment had arrived by June, to be stationed near Carentan. By May, intelligence had revealed the movement of troops into southern England, and other preparations for the assault. Rommel's Army Group "B" was put in a state of readiness by the end of May, and Rommel himself expressed his complete satisfaction with the preparations for defense. The arrival of reinforcements had permitted him to plan for tactics which he had long advocated: that of making a "more tactical defense" of the coast, with reserves as close as possible to the more vulnerable areas. The keynote of his defensive plans was struck in a letter of 22 April 1944 to commanders of coastal units: "We must stop the assaulting forces in the water, not only delaying, but destroying all enemy equipment while still afloat." On 6 June Rommel was absent from France on a visit to Hitler's headquarters, and had stopped in Stuttgart on his way back, to celebrate his wife's birthday.

Plans for use of the German air force in the event of an invasion had been embarrassed by a number of factors. Goering was afraid of shifting fighters to France before the last moment, since this move would expose them to attack by superior Allied air power. Furthermore, Allied attacks on airfields in France had wrecked so many installations that the Luftwaffe would have great trouble in finding bases for operation close to the coast. Finally, it was difficult to plan on weakening the fighter defense of Germany against Allied airblows. As a result of these considerations, German air strength in France in early June was weak.

According to a statement made in 1945 by a high German staff officer, radio intercepts had yielded the German High Command information on the afternoon of 5 June that led them to expect an invasion the next morning. Col. Gen. Alfred Jodl, Chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff, did not deem it necessary to inform the local commanders in France, since their state of readiness was regarded as sufficient without further notice; furthermore, there had been several false alarms earlier.

At 0130 on 6 June the German Seventh Army received word from LXXXIV Corps that landings from the air were under way from Caen to the northern Cotentin. Despite many early reports of an erroneous nature, and despite the wide distribution of the landings, by 0230 Army felt able to designate the focal areas as the Orne River mouth, and the Ste-Mère-Eglise sector. In contrast to Seventh Army's views that the Allies were attacking to cut off the Cotentin peninsula, Army Group and Western Command (Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt) were of the opinion that a major enemy action was not in progress. By 0250 coastal stations were reporting movement at sea east of Cherbourg and north of Caen, but no detailed appreciations reached Corps then or later.

Despite further reports of parachute landings at inland points all through western Normandy, at 0400 Gen. Erich Marcks (LXXXIV Corps) confirmed the first impression that the focal points were the Caen sector and around Ste-Mère-Eglise. He reported that the 915th Infantry, corps reserve, had been ordered to occupy the Carentan area with the mission of maintaining communications through that point. Army Group alerted

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[17] *Captured documents and PW interviews already yield much information on the German reactions to the Allied assault, particularly at Army level. What follows is a summary of the action from the enemy point of view and of all important measures taken by the enemy command at higher levels. The summary must include the whole Normandy assault area, for from the standpoint of both Seventh Army and LXXXIV Corps, the Omaha sector was only one part of a complex defensive problem. From D Day on, enemy reactions in the sector facing V Corps can only be understood in reference to the larger problem faced by the German command.*

the 21st Panzer Division, attached it to Seventh Army, and ordered it to attack in the Caen area with main effort east of the Orne. Measures were taken to deal with the air landings in the Cotentin by counterattack, and the 30th Mobile Brigade was set in march toward Périers. At 0515, Seventh Army reaffirmed its earlier view to Army Group: a major offensive was in progress with landings by sea expected. The 21st Panzer Division had begun movement northward for immediate counterattack east of the Orne River.

At 0600 Corps reported heavy naval gunfire from Grandcamp to the Orne; at 0645 Army told Army Group that the Allied intentions were still not clear and expressed an opinion that the naval gunfire might be part of a diversionary attack, to be followed by the main effort in some other area. German air and sea reconnaissance, active since daylight, had furnished no new information. Not until 0900 did Army hear from LXXXIV Corps that heavy landings from the sea had taken place from 0715 on; the sectors reported were from the Orne to northeast of Bayeux and at Grandcamp. The number of ships involved was uncertain; some 60 were indicated at Grandcamp. At 0925, Corps reported the situation as very threatening north of Caen, with Allied armor reaching artillery positions, and asked for a mobile reserve to be constituted at once west of Caen. Penetrations in the forward positions of the 352d Infantry Division were reported at this time but were not regarded as dangerous. At 1040 the naval command reported enemy ship movements at the mouth of the Vire Estuary.

Corps reported at 1145 an Allied bridgehead 16 miles wide and over 3 miles deep north and northwest of Caen; no information was on hand from the 352d Division, and communications were out with the eastern Cotentin area. Both Army and Corps were convinced that the Caen landings presented the main threat; the 21st Panzer Division was headed for the beachhead both east and west of the Orne, and the 30th Mobile Brigade was ordered to come up to support the 716th Division. Army endeavored to get Army Group's approval of a plan whereby the 711th Division would take care of the east bank of the Orne and the 12th SS Panzer Division would be committed in the Caen sector. At noon, Corps stated that attempted sea landings from the Vire to the coast northeast of Bayeux had been completely smashed and the only critical area was that near Caen.

The 352d Division advised Army at 1335 that the Allied assault had been hurled back into the sea; only at Colleville was fighting still under way, with the Germans counterattacking. This reassuring view was sent on to Army Group.

At 1500 Army Group decided to put I SS Panzer Corps in charge of the Caen area.[18] *It would include the 716th Division, the 21st Panzer Division, and the 12th SS Panzer Division, to which would be added the Panzer Lehr Division. Its mission was to attack and wipe out the Allied beachhead on both sides of the Orne. The 12th SS Panzer would move at once from the Alençon area toward Caen; Panzer Lehr was to come behind it. The 21st Panzer Division had elements north of Caen by 1600 and was expected to enter the battle at any moment.*

At 1620 Army gave Army Group a general estimate of the situation: the situation in the Cotentin was noted as reassuring, and German forces on hand there were regarded as adequate; Army expressed its surprise that no landings by sea had supported the airborne troops, and hazarded the view that the Allied operation in this sector was diversionary. Twenty minutes later, this conclusion was upset by word from Corps that sea landings had taken place in the Madeleine area, just north of the Vire mouth.[19] *At 1800 more bad news came from the 352d Division: Allied forces had infiltrated through the strongpoints, and advance elements with armor had reached the line Colleville–Louvières–Asnières;* [20] *the objective of this attack was believed to be*

[18] *For enemy reinforcement plans, see Map XIII.*

[19] *I. e., Utah beachhead.*

[20] *Village one mile west of Louvières.*

Bayeux. At the same time the right wing of the 352d Division was threatened by advance of Allied troops toward Bayeux from the northeast. Ryes had been taken, and the 352d was mounting a counterattack to recover it. This effort came to nought; at 2100 Corps reported a heavy Allied penetration toward the Bayeux–Caen highway at the expense of the 915th Regiment. As for the evening attack of the 21st Panzer Division, that unit had at first made progress and nearly reached the coast; it then met heavy resistance and was forced to yield ground.

Army Group at 1700 had transmitted von Rundstedt's demand that the Allied bridgehead be wiped out that evening; also, the order of General Jodl that all available forces be thrown into the battle. Army replied that it was impossible to clean up the penetration area on 6 June, but that all measures were set for a counterattack at the earliest moment.

By midnight Seventh Army and Army Group had made plans for a heavy armored counterattack on 7 June against the British landing area by I SS Panzer Corps, with the 716th Division attached. The 21st Panzer Division would attack east of Caen; 12th SS Panzer and Panzer Lehr west of Caen. Steps had been taken during the day for setting in motion other units to reinforce the battle area (Map No. XIII). Battle groups (Kampfgruppen [21]) from the 266th and 77th Divisions were put in a state of readiness, and those from the 275th and 265th Divisions were started by rail transport as reinforcement for LXXXIV Corps. All these units were in Britanny, and some hesitation was felt by Army Group in taking too much strength from that area before Allied intentions were fully clarified.

Corps and Army had already received preliminary explanations from the 716th Division on reasons for the success of the Allied assault. (This report may have related only to the British zone.) Particular stress was laid on the devastating effects of the naval gunfire; in addition, it was claimed that "special bombs" had set off German minefields, and that the assault troops had used new tactics in bypassing strongpoints with strong armored units and then attacking the coastal defenses from the rear. German efforts to counterattack had been stopped with high losses, mainly by the action of Allied air and the naval fire. In a further report, made about a week later for submission to Hitler himself, the same unit went into more detail. It was fully alerted on 6 June, and there was no question of being caught unprepared or by surprise. German reconnaissance by sea and air failed completely to produce any information. Defensive obstacles, not yet completed, were not effective, and the minefields had been partly detonated by gunfire and air bombardment. Smoke screens hindered the coastal guns from aimed fire on the ships, and German artillery was put out of action at an early stage by bombing and naval gunfire. The loss of two antitank companies as a result of the air bombardment was keenly felt when it came to meeting armored attack. According to this report, the Allies obviously knew every weak point in the German defensive positions and had made good use of this intelligence in the assault. Because of the lack of a second defensive line, fortified in depth, penetrations were extended rapidly to the proportions of a breakthrough, and air and naval gunfire had greatly hindered the bringing up of operative reserves for counterattack.

At the end of D Day the German Seventh Army had decided that the landings near the Orne constituted the main threat, and had taken steps to commit its strongest and most readily available reserves in that sector. The situation in the Cotentin was not causing particular worry. Information as to the Omaha Beach sector had been scanty throughout the day, and both Corps and Army tended to pay little attention to develop-

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[21] *Units of irregular composition and temporary in character, created for a special mission or in view of an emergency. In this case, the battle groups probably consisted of the more mobile elements of the divisions concerned, and the best fighting troops. A "battle group" has no fixed size, and there is no indication as to what proportion of the divisions mentioned here was included.*

ments there, even after the evening news of Allied penetrations. The evidence suggests that both Corps and Army regarded the assault in this area as a mere adjunct of the main effort directed at Caen and Bayeux. Communications were evidently poor in the 352d Division's sector, and no inkling had come back to Corps of the scale of landings in progress at Omaha.

When Hitler, on 6 June, received word of the invasion he was about to appear at a reception near Salzburg of the new Hungarian prime minister. Hitler came in to the meeting with a radiant face and announced "It's begun at last." He was confident that all measures were being taken to meet the crisis, and that by 13 June counterattacks would wipe out any beachheads.

A PILLBOX USED AS HEADQUARTERS. *This emplacement (now a battle monument) which protected E–1 draw (west side), was employed temporarily as CP for the Engineer Special Brigade Group. This unit operated Omaha Beach as a port of supply until December.*



ATTAINMENT OF D-DAY OBJECTIVES (7-8 JUNE)

THE OUTCOME of the assault on Omaha Beach was not clear at the end of D Day. A shallow lodgement had been secured, 1,500 to 2,000 yards deep in the area of furthest advance near Colleville. Weak enemy forces were still holding out in remnants of the beach defenses, and artillery fire could still harass any section of the landing area. Unloadings of vehicles and supplies had fallen far short of the D-Day schedule. Artillery and tank support for the infantry ashore was reduced by severe losses of matériel. Enemy troops had shown plenty of determination and fighting spirit; if the Germans could muster sufficient force to counterattack this beginning of a beachhead, they might imperil its existence.

Therefore, the action of the next few days would be decisive. For success, two things were essential: advance inland far enough to put the beach area out of artillery range and to secure maneuver room for further progress; and organization of the beach for maximum landings of supply and reinforcement. The first phase of the effort was to carry forward the original plan and reach D-Day objectives.

Trévières–Tour-en-Bessin

Certain readjustments had to be made in the 1st Division's plan for attaining its objectives (Map No. XI). The 16th Infantry had been badly used up in the assault and needed time to get its scattered units reassembled; therefore, its assignments were turned over in part to units of the 26th RCT. The 1st Battalion of the 26th was attached to the 16th, and at 1100 on 7 June received the mission of taking the high ground west and southwest of Port-en-Bessin, including Mount Cauvin, and linking up with British XXX Corps. The 3d Battalion of the 26th had moved during the night to a position south of St-Laurent on the flank of the 18th Infantry. Attached to the 18th, the battalion was ordered to take Formigny and cover the right flank of the 18th's attack south. This attack, the main effort of the day, was aimed at the original objectives of the 18th RCT: the high ground just north of Trévières, and the Mandeville–Mosles area south of the Aure. Elements of the 7th, 32d, and 62d Field Artillery Battalions were ashore and available for support, and the 5th Field Artillery Battalion landed during the day and went into action. Only five tanks of the 741st Tank Battalion were ready for action on 7 June, but the 745th had landed during the night and was attached to units of the attacking infantry, mainly the 18th.

Mopping up of the ground occupied on D Day was a time-consuming process. All during the night, small enemy groups had been trying to escape from the area north of the Colleville–St-Laurent highway, filtering

through the 16th Infantry's scattered units and starting sporadic fire fights. In the early morning, as drivers of the 1st Battalion Headquarters were getting ready to move toward a new motor park, they found and captured 30 Germans in the field next to their night position. Back at the beach, enemy snipers were so troublesome to the gunners of the 7th Field Artillery Battalion that they were forced to organize an attack on the bluff with artillery personnel. These were typical of many small incidents that prolonged the confusion in rear areas. The major job was the pocket of resistance at Colleville, which was dealt with during the morning of the 7th by the 2d Battalion of the 16th. Company G was through the village by 1000, and found enemy resistance weak. Some 52 Germans of the *726th Infantry* gave up without a fight; the Company L patrol, captured at Cabourg the day before, had talked the enemy into a receptive mood for surrendering. The main damage to German forces in Colleville was inflicted by the 2d Battalion of the 18th Infantry, posted south and southeast on the escape route from the village. During the night and morning, 160 Germans were captured and 50 killed in this area. The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 16th Infantry spent all of the day in mopping-up work, moving short distances south and southeast from Colleville behind the advancing 18th Infantry. At dark, they were still encountering scattered machine-gun and sniper fire.

The advance eastward toward Port-en-Bessin was accomplished without meeting enemy resistance in any strength. The 3d Battalion of the 16th, supported by Company B of the 745th Tank Battalion, went straight down the coastal highway and occupied Huppain for the night. Supporting this advance, the 62d Armored Field Artillery Battalion fired five missions, expending 683 rounds, and reported the destruction of an enemy battery of medium artillery. The 1st Battalion of the 26th went south to Russy (reached at 1705), and then east to a position about 1,000 yards from Mount Cauvin. British commando units were reported on the edge of Port-en-Bessin, and by evening a juncture between V Corps and the British 50 Division was in sight.

The attack of the 18th Infantry was slow in getting started but made good progress during the afternoon. The 1st Battalion met only small and isolated groups of enemy resistance and was effectively aided in dealing with these by the five tanks of the 741st Tank Battalion. The battalion crossed the Bayeux–Isigny highway shortly after noon and ambushed some cyclists from reconnaissance units of the *352d Division*. The tanks reached the vicinity of Engranville at 1400 and shelled the village. Enemy resistance lasted until evening, when Company C attacked and forced an enemy platoon across the river. The Germans had 15 casualties. The battalion then occupied a defensive position on ground which dominated the approaches to the Aure. The situation on its right flank was somewhat unsatisfactory, as the enemy still held Formigny. The 3d Battalion of the 26th Infantry, advancing down the St-Laurent road, had been stopped a half-mile short of Formigny by strong resistance from machine-gun nests and made no progress for the rest of the day. This left the 18th at Engranville exposed to attack from its rear.

The 3d Battalion of the 18th Infantry kept pace with the 1st Battalion, going through Surrain at 1215 and reaching the Bayeux highway just north of the Aure at 1700. The river crossing was made without meeting effective resistance, and by 2400 the battalion was in defensive positions southeast of Mandeville, on the flank of the important enemy base at Trévières. Casualties of the



TANKS ROLL THROUGH COLLEVILLE. *This road, just beyond the church shown in an earlier photograph, is the coastal highway leading toward Cabourg. Enemy resistance was cleared up in this part of Colleville on the morning of D+1 by troops of the 16th Infantry.*

battalion in the day's advance were 4 killed and 27 wounded.

Still further east, a second crossing of the Aure was effected by the 2d Battalion of the 18th Infantry. Supported by a platoon of tanks from Company C, 745th Tank Battalion, the battalion left the Colleville area at 1000 in two columns and reached the Aure at 1440. No resistance was met until Company G in the western column reached Houtteville, where enemy mortar and machine-gun fire from across the river forced deployment. The second column, however, reaching the river south of Bellefontaine, rushed a platoon across the 300 yards of causeway and bridge before meeting enemy fire. Tanks went across to support the platoon, the rest of the company followed, and Company G side-slipped east to take the same route. Driving the enemy out of their

defensive positions, Companies F and G moved on promptly toward Mosles, leaving Company E to clean up bypassed pockets of resistance. Mosles, the objective, was entered at 1700. Thirty enemy dead were found after the sharp action at the crossing, which cost the 2d Battalion only a few men and one tank. A patrol sent down the Bayeux road reported enemy in Tour-en-Bessin.

By nightfall on 7 June, a part of the D-Day objectives had been reached. Even more encouraging were the indications of badly disorganized enemy resistance. Not only had the Germans failed to develop any counterattack, but they had shown little strength in opposing an advance made on a broad front by widely separated battalions. This advance had cut the main highway for lateral communications near the beachhead and had accomplished two crossings of the Aure. Only in the Formigny–Trévières area was the enemy in force sufficient to check the 1st Division's progress. Intelligence estimates put the *1st Battalion* of the *726th Infantry* south of Port-en-Bessin, elements of the *916th* south of the Aure from Tour-en-Bessin to Trévières, and elements of the *915th* at Formigny. Enemy artillery fire had been light, though the beaches were still under harassing fire.

In response to a request by V Corps, the Ninth Air Force flew 35 missions of squadron strength on 7 June in the zone from Bayeux west along the Aure valley, with one squadron always over the target area. Enemy gun positions were priority targets in these missions, but were difficult to locate. Highway and rail targets, as well as enemy concentration areas in Cerisy Forest, received most of the weight of attacks by 467 planes, using 1,000-pound general-purpose bombs and fragmentation clusters.

The situation at Formigny was cleared up during the early morning hours of 8 June. About midnight Company B of the 18th, helped by tanks of Company B, 745th Tank Battalion, attacked from the southeast and drove out a small enemy force, which lost 10 killed and 15 prisoners. North of the village, enemy machine-gun positions continued to block the 3d Battalion, 26th Infantry, until late in the morning. In part, the delay at Formigny was due to lack of contact between the two battalions attacking from different sides of the village.

A counterattack "scare" developed early in the morning of 8 June at Mandeville. At 0200 a large combat patrol infiltrated the defensive positions of the 3d Battalion, 18th Infantry. Some personnel in the rear command post and motor park were temporarily captured, but after daylight the patrol was overpowered and driven out with enemy losses of 25, killed and prisoners. In the confusion, the 18th Infantry Command Post near Surrain received reports of German tanks in "severe attack." With every staff briefed to expect counterattacks, this news caused a severe flurry back through corps headquarters; between 0600 and 0800, V Corps Headquarters was taking active measures to assemble tanks, antitank guns, and tank destroyer units for meeting a possible emergency south of the Aure. By 0850, the situation was cleared up and orders were issued to resume normal missions. For the rest of 8 June, the 1st and 3d Battalions held their positions north and east of Trévières, patrolling to the outskirts of that town. Trévières was shelled by naval guns in the afternoon, and there were indications that only minor enemy forces remained there.

On D+2, main action in the 1st Division zone shifted to the left flank, where the 26th RCT went after its D-Day objectives in the Tour-en-Bessin area. The movement had begun late on 7 June, when the 2d Battalion of the 26th Infantry, released at 1745 from division reserve, was ordered to seize the

high ground at the crossroads between Mosles and Tour-en-Bessin. The battalion moved southeast along the front of the 16th Infantry, crossed the Aure at midnight a little west of Etreham, and reached its objective about 0530 on 8 June.

Enemy artillery and infantry were reported in some strength at Tour-en-Bessin, and the 26th Infantry at 0800 requested an air mission. Division notified the regiment that adequate fire support from artillery and naval guns would be available if the air mission failed. The air attack was made by fighter-bombers shortly before 0900; an armored patrol got into Tour-en-Bessin by 1140, reporting the town "empty and flat." The 2d Battalion, reinforced by a company of the 635th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company C of the 745th Tank Battalion, waited on the advance of the rest of the regiment before moving into the town.

The other two battalions of the 26th were slow in reaching the scene. The 1st Battalion, its objective the ground northeast of Tour-en-Bessin, pushed patrols through Etreham about noon, encountering only snipers; then, determined resistance from prepared positions stopped the battalion at the river crossing. The rest of the day was spent in efforts to get across, with artillery support made difficult by the presence of 2d Battalion units not far to the southwest. By evening only one company of the 1st Battalion was across the Aure. The 3d Battalion was held up north of Formigny all morning, pending arrival of a battalion of the 115th Infantry which was countermarching from Louvières to Formigny for

OBSERVATION WAS DIFFICULT *in a country of hedgerows and orchards. This picture is taken near Etreham, looking south across the Aure River. The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, encountered heavy enemy resistance here in its effort to reach Tour-en-Bessin on 8 June.*



the purpose of strengthening the sector north of Trévières. Released to the 26th Regiment at 1340, the 3d Battalion started down the Bayeux highway toward its objective, Ste-Anne, just beyond Tour-en-Bessin. It reached the 2d Battalion position at 1800 and was ordered to jump off at 2040 for attack straight through Tour-en-Bessin, supported by Company C of the 745th Tank Battalion. The force went through the town about midnight, the infantry moving in two files on either side of the road, with six tanks between the files at the head of the column. Directed by the battalion commander, the tanks sprayed sniper positions and suspected strongpoints. Light enemy resistance was brushed aside, and the column reached Ste-Anne about 0130, in contact with enemy patrols retreating to the east.

The enemy-held corridor north of Tour-en-Bessin was now in great danger of being cut. At the end of 7 June the Germans still held Port-en-Bessin and south of it the high ground along the Drôme Valley. During 8 June this salient was steadily reduced. The British 47 Commandos entered Port-en-Bessin about 0800 and fought through the day to clear the area south from the port to the Aure River, while the 3d Battalion, 16th Infantry, blocked enemy escape to the west. Further south the British had entered Bayeux on 7 June, and were approaching the Drôme crossings at Vaucelles and Sully by late afternoon of the 8th. The narrowing enemy pocket was held by remnants of the *1st Battalion, 726th Infantry*, reinforced on 7–8 June by some elements of the *517th Battalion, 30th Mobile Brigade*, rushed up from reserve positions near Coutances and St-Lô. By evening of the 8th there was a chance that much of this force might be trapped by an advance of the 26th Infantry. The plan was checkmated. Very determined enemy resistance held off the 26th at Etreham and stopped the British efforts to get past the Drôme. A violent action at Ste-Anne, in the early hours of 9 June, kept the base of the corridor open.

The 3d Battalion of the 26th Infantry had dug in hastily at Ste-Anne to meet an expected counterattack, with Company L just north of the village, Company I facing east, and Company K to the south. A light rain began to fall and visibility was bad. About 0300 Company L's position was overrun by a strong German column including ammunition trucks, bicycles, and other vehicles, the presence of which suggested that the enemy was withdrawing from the north and had blundered into the American lines. What followed was a wild fire-fight, at close range, with both sides hampered by surprise and confusion. The 2d Battalion held on in the village; tanks were of little use in the darkness, but effective aid was rendered by area fire from six battalions of artillery and naval guns, directed northeast and east of the village. Casualties in Company L were severe, due mainly to shells hitting two trucks loaded with men temporarily captured by the Germans. By 0630, the 3d Battalion had restored its positions, taking 125 prisoners who testified to the effectiveness of the artillery fire.

Although the enemy had lost heavily in men and vehicles in this action, the corridor stayed open, and Vaucelles, a mile east of Ste-Anne, was retaken from the British in the same period. During the night and early morning, the enemy managed to withdraw most of his force from the salient, at the cost of considerable losses and further disorganization. When the 1st Battalion of the 26th resumed its attack south of Etreham on the morning of 9 June, only light resistance was met from the remnants of enemy forces north of the highway.

With the 26th Infantry beyond Tour-en-Bessin, the 1st Division had reached its

D-Day objectives. This mission had been largely accomplished by two regiments, with all battalions committed and moving on a front so wide that intervals between battalions were as much as 3,000 yards. No enemy counterattack had developed, though it was known from intercepted messages that attack was ordered for 8 June. There was further evidence of disorganization among the regiments of the *352d Division*, strung out on a front of some 25 miles between Isigny and Bayeux. Elements of the *915th*, *916th*, and *726th Infantry* were in the sector Trévières–Bayeux. On 7 June they received their first reinforcement in the *517th Battalion* of the *30th Mobile Brigade*, rushed north from Coutances in time to be badly mauled in the Port-en-Bessin salient. The other two battalions of this brigade were identified the next day in the Tour-en-Bessin and Bayeux areas, where they were unable to restore the situation.

Intelligence reports by 9 June warned of possible concentration of reinforcements, including armor, in Cerisy Forest. However, barring arrival of reinforcements, all evidence indicated that the Germans had now lost whatever chance they once had of passing to the offensive on the 1st Division front. They had continued their policy of the first day in offering dogged resistance at tactically important points, often from prepared positions. In hedgerow country, this had slowed down the 1st Division's progress, and the delay was increased by the willingness of small enemy groups and individuals to fight on in bypassed positions. Nevertheless, these tactics could not stop the advance, and they steadily wore down enemy strength. Most troops of the bypassed groups never got back; a major proportion were killed, and by 9 June the 1st Division had taken over 600 prisoners. Enemy artillery, so effective on D Day, was less and less in evidence thereafter. In contrast, by 8 June five battalions of artillery were in support of the 1st Division and adding to the powerful fire of the naval guns.

Grandcamp—Isigny Area

General Gerhardt, commanding the 29th Division, had landed on the evening of D Day and set up his command post near the Vierville exit, waiting for orders to take over command of the 29th Division. General Cota made several trips from his headquarters in St-Laurent to 1st Division and V Corps Headquarters during the night and early morning and saw General Gerhardt twice to keep him informed of plans. These could be formed only gradually, in view of the uncertain situation around Vierville and St-Laurent and of continued difficulties in communications. When Col. Canham came to St-Laurent at 0930 to see General Cota and find his 2d and 3d Battalions, the road between Vierville and St-Laurent was still under enemy fire and he was forced to make the trip along the beach to D-3 exit.

Plans for D+1 had to be adjusted to meet a number of limiting circumstances (Map No. XII). Of the two regiments ashore, the 116th had been severely used and most of its units were still badly scattered; the 1st Battalion started the day with about 250 men. Two artillery battalions (58th and 111th) were ashore, but with less than half their guns. The 175th Infantry was still afloat, scheduled to begin landing at 1030. A number of pressing tasks faced these units as a preliminary to moving against D-Day objectives. The enemy still held a strongpoint at the western edge of St-Laurent. Small parties of riflemen, with occasional support from machine guns and mortars, were reappearing at points along the bluffs to harass the beaches. D-3 exit was not yet fully opened. That the enemy was still close to Vierville, on the south,

was proved early (0530) on 7 June when an attack forced Company B of the 121st Engineers out of the Chateau de Vaumicel and back into the village. At Pointe du Hoe, three companies of the 2d Rangers were known to be isolated, weakened by heavy casualties and in need of ammunition.

Measures to deal with these initial problems were taken by early morning. The 1st Battalion of the 116th, the 5th Ranger Battalion, and Companies A, B, and C of the 2d Rangers, supported by tanks, were ordered to drive west on the highway toward Pointe du Hoe. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 116th were to mop up remnants of enemy resistance along the bluffs, while the 3d Battalion, 115th Infantry, cleaned out St-Laurent and then moved to Vierville for any similar work needed there. The rest of the 115th would push on toward Longueville, its objective on the Isigny highway.

The mopping-up work consumed most of the day. After a heavy naval bombardment, the 3d Battalion of the 115th moved on the enemy strongpoint blocking the St-Laurent crossroad and encountered opposition only from snipers. By 0900 St-Laurent was cleared and the 3d Battalion moved toward Vierville, followed by the 1st. Nearing Vierville and receiving word that they were not needed there, they turned south toward Longueville. The enemy counterattack at Vierville had not been in strength, and the situation had been restored by keeping four companies of Rangers and some tanks to protect the village. The 3d Battalion of the 116th, only partly assembled, went after the remnants of enemy resistance along the bluff west from D-3, finding a few machine-gun positions still in action and taking some prisoners. The 2d Battalion went into Vierville and then started south with the 3d toward Louvières. Enemy resistance was encountered, and at 1700 the 2d and 3d Battalions were pulled back for the night to form a perimeter defense at Vierville. After 2000, Vierville was heavily shelled by medium artillery from the Trévières area, and considerable damage was inflicted on the heavy traffic moving up through the exit road. Some ammunition trucks were exploded and three antiaircraft guns destroyed. In the 110th Field Artillery Battalion, which had just landed to support the 115th Infantry, Battery B lost 2 howitzers and 17 men from the enemy shelling. Immediately following the shelling the Germans made a final attack in company strength from the south. It carried past the chateau before being stopped by mortar and rifle fire.

South of Vierville the 115th Infantry was able to make only slow progress toward Longueville. Communications worked badly, and the battalions were out of contact with each other most of the day. The 2d Battalion moved cross-country on a broad front, hoping that this would prove an effective way of brushing off light opposition. At Vacqueville a small enemy force used the stone farm buildings as strongpoints and held up the battalion with small-arms fire until late afternoon. One battery (C) of the 110th Field Artillery Battalion was available for support; firing two unobserved missions from positions near St-Laurent, it aided the 2d Battalion to clear the hamlet. At 1930 the battalion resumed its advance, which was continued through the night to reach Montigny at 0300. This had been a strongly prepared defensive area, including wired-in trench systems, but the enemy had withdrawn. The 1st and 3d Battalions had been stopped east of Louvières by small-scale enemy opposition and were out of contact with the 2d Battalion until the morning of 8 June. Still without transport, and hand-carrying ammunition and heavy weapons, the 115th had been chiefly handicapped by difficulties of communication and control.



MAP NO. 7 The Relief of Pointe du Hoe, 7-8 June

The force which started west on the Grandcamp road to relieve Pointe du Hoe was stopped just short of its goal on 7 June. As a result of the enemy's early morning thrust at Vierville, four companies of the 5th Ranger Battalion had been left to guard the village, where they spent the day in mopping-up operations. The remainder of the relief force, amounting to about 500 men, began its march about 0800, headed by Companies A, B, and C of the 2d Rangers moving in a double file on each side of the highway. Ten tanks of Company B, 743d Tank Battalion, followed close behind the point, ready to move up or down the column as needed. Many small enemy positions were passed, some almost at the edge of the road, but they were not allowed to hold up the advance. The tanks sprayed them with heavy fire to cover the infantry, which was never forced to deploy and did not stop to clean up bypassed enemy groups. Good progress was made with this system, and at 1100 the column reached St-Pierre-du-Mont, only a thousand yards from Pointe du Hoe.

Conditions at the Point had become more critical over night (Map No. 7). When the platoon of Company A, 5th Rangers, reached the Point at dusk of D Day, they believed the rest of the 5th Rangers were just behind.

TYPICAL NORMAN ORCHARD. *This one was on the south edge of the 2d Ranger's position, the night of 6 June, near the coastal highway. Germans approaching the position through the orchard were able to get close before they were spotted. (Photo taken June, 1945.)*



Colonel Rudder therefore decided to leave his advance party where it was for the night, south of the coastal highway and reinforced by the 5th Ranger platoon. Amounting to about 85 men, this force was hit by a counterattack after dark. The Rangers were dug in on an L-shaped position, sides about 300 yards long, behind hedgerows overlooking slopes toward the southwest. The Germans made two preliminary probing attacks, beginning at 2330, to draw the Rangers' fire and locate their positions. Despite partial moonlight, the enemy were able to crawl up in the orchard grass to within 25 yards of the Ranger lines before being observed. At about 0300 a final assault was made at the angle of the Rangers' position. The enemy force, more than a company in strength, used at least six machine guns and some mortar fire, but the action was largely close-in fighting with much use of grenades. The angle was overrun and 25 Rangers were killed or captured. In the confusion of a night action, coordinated defense was difficult; the rest of the line crumbled and less than 50 men found their way back to the Point in small groups. Fourteen Rangers stayed in their original fox holes under a dense hedge, where they were able to avoid enemy notice. They were to spend the next 36 hours in these hide-outs.

At morning of 7 June, the force on the Point numbered 90 to 100 men available for action, many of them with light wounds. They had no food, their ammunition supply was short, they had brought no machine guns in their landings, and only two mortars were left. They were pinned on a strip about 200 yards deep and 500 yards wide, including in it the wrecked enemy fortifications. Snipers were still appearing inside this area, and enemy movements indicating preparation for attack could be seen close by. Naval fire support, rendered at different times by the destroyers *Barton*, *Thompson*, *Harding*, and *O'Brien*, was the Rangers' main defense and was called on heavily to shell suspected assembly areas. With this aid and maximum use of their two mortars, which fired 300 rounds during the day, enemy attack was held off.

Their communications still limited to occasional contact with passing naval vessels, the Rangers on the Point were unaware through most of the day that a relief force was very near and was battling to reach them. After reaching St-Pierre-du-Mont before noon, the relief column planned to push along the coastal highway to the junction of the exit road from Pointe du Hoe. Company A of the 2d Rangers, forming the column's point, got to a hamlet within 200 yards of the exit road, when heavy interdictory fire from medium howitzers fell on the highway behind them, forcing the tanks to withdraw. Reforming at St-Pierre, the column tried again. This time the tanks got past the exit road, but the 1st Battalion of the 116th was caught by well-directed artillery fire which blanketed a quarter-mile stretch of the highway, and lost 30 or 40 men. This forced another withdrawal. The 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and naval guns endeavored to locate the enemy batteries, somewhere to the southwest. Efforts were made to organize a third attack, again along the highway, but the afternoon ended with the relieving force still in St-Pierre-du-Mont. Its advance had undoubtedly taken some of the pressure off the Point, and patrols made contact that night with the beleaguered force. During the afternoon, two LCVP's landed at the Point with food, water, ammunition, and about 30 reinforcements picked up at Omaha Beach. The worst of the situation was over.

The 175th Infantry landed east of D-3 between 1230 and 1630, losing several craft to mines and encountering occasional machine-gun fire at the beach and on the march

inland through Vierville to Gruchy, which was reached at 2000. Elements of the 224th and 227th Field Artillery Battalions also landed during the afternoon, giving the 29th Division a total of 29 howitzers from 5 battalions ashore and ready for fire.

Anticipating these reinforcements, V Corps issued Field Order No. 1, at 2100, 7 June, covering the next phase of operations for the 29th Division. The division's chief objective was Isigny, an important road center for enemy communications and the key to eventual junction with VII Corps. Released from corps reserve to the 29th Division, the 175th Infantry, with two companies of the 747th Tank Battalion attached, was ordered to move via Englesqueville–la Cambe and capture the town. The 115th Infantry had the mission of protecting the flank of this advance by seizing the high ground north of the Aure from Longueville to Normanville. The 116th and Rangers were ordered to continue westward on the axis of the coastal highway, clearing out enemy resistance from Grandcamp to Isigny. The 9th Infantry of the 2d Division, just starting to land, was given the mission of further mopping-up in the Vierville–St-Laurent area.

General Gerhardt, assuming command of the 29th Division at 1700, implemented the corps order with 29th Division Field Order No. 3, issued at 2330. In this, the 115th Infantry was directed to move one battalion north of Formigny for protection of the the division flank near the boundary with the 1st Division. Enemy forces in the 29th Division zone were estimated as including elements of the *914th*, *916th*, and *726th Infantry*. An important aspect of the next day's operation was the prospect of clearing out enemy artillery positions in the Grandcamp–Maisy area, for despite all efforts of naval fire, enemy batteries in this area were still active on 7 June.

The 175th Infantry and the attached tanks started their march from Gruchy at 2130 and reached their objective within 36 hours, an advance of some 12 miles. Turning off the coastal highway beyond Gruchy, the regiment reached Englesqueville at 0200 on 8 June, brushing aside light resistance. Staying on the roads, with tanks leading the column of battalions, the force pushed south to hit the Isigny–Bayeux highway west of Longueville. The advance echelon of tanks reached la Cambe at 0300, but an attempt to enter the village at 0530 was held up by antitank guns. The 747th Tank Battalion knocked out five of these for the loss of one tank, and during the morning the infantry-tank team succeeded in capturing la Cambe. Aircraft bearing friendly insignia strafed the column as it passed through the village and inflicted 20 casualties.

Enemy resistance stiffened west of la Cambe, and artillery fire from 88-mm guns disabled six tanks of Company C of the 747th Tank Battalion. A small enemy force supported by a few mobile 88's held the St-Germain-du-Pert area. On the other flank an enemy strongpoint protected the radar station at Cardonville. At Osmanville, enemy strength estimated at a company and disposing of antitank guns blocked the main highway. Too separated to give each other support, none of these enemy positions was able to cause more than temporary delay. The 3d Battalion of the 175th drove the enemy from St-Germain across the Aure by 1600. Aided by naval fire from the British cruiser *Glasgow*, the 2d Battalion captured Cardonville late in the evening. Resuming its advance after nightfall and encountering only weak enemy parties, at 0200 the 3d Battalion was within half a mile of Isigny, and leading tanks entered the town during the next hour. As a result of heavy naval bombardment, Isigny was in flames. The bridge over the Aure was intact, and no



DAMAGE IN ISIGNY *inflicted by a naval bombardment just before the 175th Infantry went through the town in the early morning of 9 June. Though they offered little organized resistance here, German riflemen were still sniping from houses later in the day.*

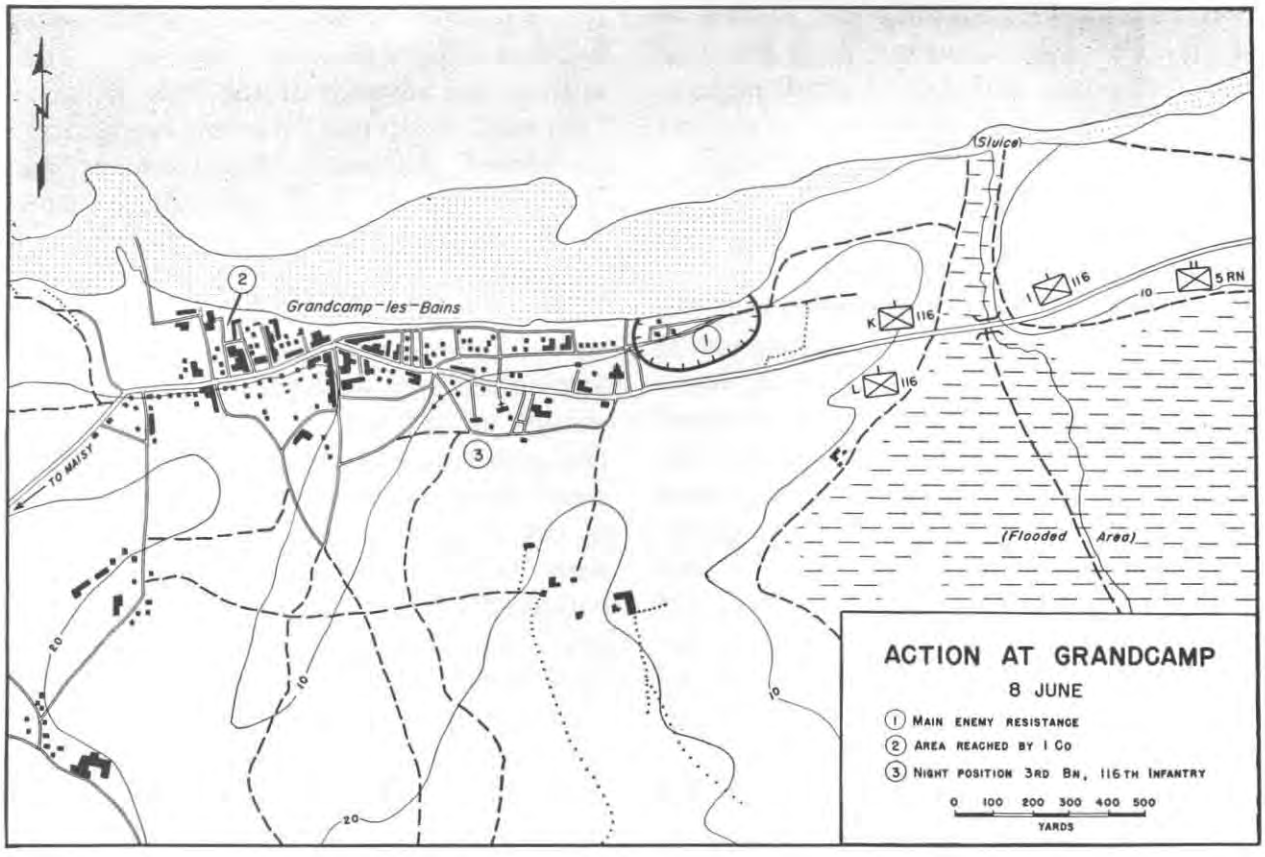
organized resistance was met in the town. By 0500, infantry and tanks were cleaning the houses of snipers; a weak enemy counterattack about 0800 was stopped by rifle fire. Some 200 prisoners taken in the town included naval, marine, and air force personnel. While the tanks started south toward Lison, Company K of the 175th pushed on a mile to the Vire River crossing and found that the bridge had been burned.

To strengthen the drive of the 116th Infantry along the coastal highway, the 2d and 3d Battalions, the remainder of the 5th Rangers, and two companies of the 743d Tank Battalion moved up from Vierville early in the morning of 8 June. At about 1000 a coordinated attack was started toward Pointe du Hoe; the 5th Rangers and the 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry, struck across country from St-Pierre-du-Mont; the

3d Battalion and five tanks attacked from south and southwest of the Point; and the destroyer *Ellyson* put 140 rounds on the German cliff positions. The right wing of the maneuver reached the Point without opposition; unfortunately, the tanks and the 3d Battalion in their outflanking approach became confused as to the location of friendly positions and started firing on the Point as well as on the enemy emplacements just west of it. The fact that the 2d Rangers were firing captured German machine guns at the enemy west of the Point may have contributed to the mix-up. Communications failed to function well, and some casualties were suffered before the situation was cleared up. Three tanks were disabled by mines in the effort to reach the Point. Enemy resistance had faded quickly and Pointe du Hoe was cleared by noon.

Movement toward Grandcamp started at once. Taking that small resort town promised to be difficult, since the approach by the coastal highway led across a small valley with flooded areas on both sides of the road, and the enemy strongpoints west of the valley had extensive fields of fire from higher ground (Map No. 8). The enemy had failed to destroy the bridge, but the 5th Rangers were checked at this crossing by machine-gun and mortar fire, and lacked heavy weapons to deal with the enemy resistance. The British cruiser *Glasgow* rendered assistance by fire on the German strongpoints near Grandcamp, expending 113 rounds between 1455 and 1600. Late in the afternoon the 3d Battalion of the 116th took over the job. Tanks of Company C, 743d Tank Battalion, led across the bridge, losing one vehicle to a mine; then Companies

MAP NO. 8



K and L of the 3d Battalion worked over to the west bank and attacked abreast on either side of the road, under covering fire by machine guns and BAR's which displaced rapidly. Enemy emplacements north of the highway had to be taken by close-in fighting, and snipers in the town continued to resist. Company I came up after the others had entered the town; one platoon of I, led by 2d Lt. Norvin Nathan, drove all the way through to the west end of Grandcamp and forced the surrender of a pillbox at the edge of the beach. Organized resistance was over by dark. In the action, which some soldiers of the 5th Rangers and 3d Battalion, 116th, described as more severe than their D-Day fighting, the Germans had lost one of their strongest coastal positions in the V Corps zone.

During this attack along the coastal highway, the 1st Battalion of the 116th was making a wide sweep to the south, not only outflanking Grandcamp but aiming at Maisy. Paced by Company A of the 743d Tank Battalion, they moved south to Jucoville and then swung west through an area which was practically undefended. Heavy naval guns had torn Maisy to pieces, and the tanks were able to deal easily with resistance from enemy machine guns. Just west of the village an enemy strongpoint blocked the Isigny road and was supported by mortar and 88-mm fire, including interdictory fire behind Maisy which prevented reinforcement of the leading infantry elements. Since the tanks were running short of fuel, advance was halted for the night. Supporting the 116th on 8 June, the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion fired 123 rounds from positions north of Longueville. On 9 June, the 116th and Rangers cleaned up the last enemy resistance around Grandcamp, Maisy, and Géfosse-Fontenay.

The 115th accomplished its mission on 8 June without much difficulty. Longueville, abandoned by the enemy, was reached at 1100 by the 2d Battalion which took up defensive positions west of the village. The 1st Battalion followed to the same area, approached the Aure Valley at Ecrammeville, and began to patrol in preparation for crossing the flooded lowlands. The 3d Battalion, ordered toward Formigny in the morning to guard against possible enemy attack from Trévières, reached Formigny at noon and at 1630 was moved west again to Deux-Jumeaux. It arrived there at 1900, only to be sent south to Canchy, with orders to reconnoiter the inundated area for crossings that night. The tired battalion, which had received no rations that day, got to Canchy at midnight. Regimental transport for the 115th was reaching the battalions that evening. The 110th Field Artillery Battalion fired 178 rounds in support of the regiment on 8 June.

A document captured by the 175th Infantry laid down a German defensive policy which had been illustrated by enemy action against the advance of the 29th Division: "Do not," it advised, "become engaged in a positioned defense." The Germans had tried to stop the U. S. columns by use of small parties, well equipped with automatic weapons, supported by a few self-propelled guns, and ready to retire under strong pressure. These tactics, intended to delay by forcing repeated deployments, worked well enough up to 8 June, but then failed against the gathering momentum of the 29th Division's attack. On that day, enemy defenses in the whole area north of the inundated Aure Valley, from Isigny to Trévières, were collapsed by the rapid 12-mile advance of the 175th Infantry on a route which may have taken the Germans by surprise. At nightfall, the enemy forces still in this area were scattered and disorganized, and in one case prisoners accused their officers of leaving the men to shift for themselves in an effort

to get south and west of the Aure. Several hundred enemy were captured north of the Aure in mopping-up operations during the next two days. Elements of the *914th*, *915th*, and *726th Regiments* had been involved in the vain effort to check the 29th Division. Enemy losses in artillery had been considerable, including two horse-drawn batteries of 105-mm guns found deserted near Osmanville on 9 June. One of the most important results of the advance was to deprive the enemy of the coastal defenses and artillery positions between Grandcamp and Isigny, from which fire had been harassing both Omaha and Utah beachheads.

In contrast to the loss of enemy fire power, the artillery support of the 29th Division continued to build up on 8 June. By nightfall, six battalions of artillery, including three of 155-mm howitzers (two attached from Corps Artillery), were available. Use of artillery on 8 June had still been relatively light, but the difficulties in getting observed fire were being overcome as communications improved. The first aircraft used for artillery observation was flown that afternoon, and several more planes were ready by 9 June.

Improvement at the Beach

Tactical advance and the arrival of supplies were mutually dependent conditions of success for the operation. Until the advance pushed far enough to free the beaches for normal operation, the supply and reinforcement necessary for sustained attack could not be unloaded. Deepening of the beachhead on 7–8 June was reflected in the progress made at the landing beaches.

ORGANIZING THE BEACH *involved clearing mines and debris, salvage jobs, and building roads. Supplies had to be kept moving while all the other work was being carried on. Scene in front of E–1 draw, an exit much photographed in the early days of the invasion.*



On D+1, the Engineer Special Brigade Group was still operating under great difficulties, and all beach work was far behind schedule. The engineer units were short of equipment, were handicapped by the wreckage and the congestion on the beach, and had to improvise new methods of dealing with the complex problems of unloading and routing men and matériel. Carefully arranged priority schedules for discharging cargo broke down under the difficulties of communicating information as to arrival of ships and contents of cargoes. Enemy artillery kept up harassing fire, and snipers along the bluffs were not entirely cleaned out for two or three days. With the larger part of the beach-maintenance area still held by the enemy, emergency dumps were opened on the beach and in nearby fields. Nevertheless, all exit roads were opened and working

LANDING SUPPLIES *from ships at the edge of the beach flat. Ammunition was particularly needed in the first days. Remnants of the shingle still show; later the embankment was entirely removed by beach engineers organizing Omaha as a port of entry for supplies.*



by noon, and vitally needed matériel, particularly artillery and ammunition, was landed in sufficient quantity for immediate needs. A great deal of effective work was done to salvage matériel left on the beach from D-Day landings. Priority of unloading was given throughout these first days to ammunition, in which the supply situation was serious until 10 June. Only on 8 June did ammunition begin to reach shore on craft other than the pre-loaded dukws. The reserves of rations and gasoline, which had been provided to the units making the landings, had helped tide over the critical initial stages in these classes. Each organization had brought in five days' rations and extra gas supplies on each vehicle.



On 8 June, as a result of the advance inland, of the engineers' work, and of a moderating sea, conditions were measurably better. Enemy batteries were no longer firing on the landing area; the beach was nearly clear of debris and mines; a lateral road, running the length of the beach, was being rapidly constructed for two-way traffic; and many access roads had been built from the tidal flat to the lateral for facilitating discharge of craft. Transit areas were beginning to function as planned. An emergency landing strip, prepared on the high ground near E-1 exit, was operational by 1800 on 8 June, and wounded were evacuated by air from this field as early as 10 June. Communication facilities, essential for managing flow of traffic on the beach, were partly installed. Tonnage moved for the day was only 1,429, a small figure in view of needs but the start of rapid expansion to a level of 7,000 tons by D+5. The situation was under control, and a major supply channel for the coming months of operations began to take organized shape.

During these two days, Allied air forces continued their offensive against enemy communications. The Eighth Air Force and RAF began to work on the Loire River bridges, while the Ninth Air Force went after the railroad bridges between the Seine and the Loire (Map No. XIII). Marshalling yards and traffic centers from Brittany to Paris received attacks, and choke points were bombed up to points as near the beachhead as St-Lô, Lison, Carentan, and le Molay. Fighter-bombers carried on the task of interdicting rail and road movement west of the

Seine and north of the Loire. Taking 8 June as a sample of the range and intensity of Allied air effort in the period following D Day, 262 B-26's and A-20's engaged in close cooperation with ground forces, dropping 442 tons on tactical targets in the battle zone; 735 Eighth Air Force heavies hit bridges and traffic centers from Brittany to Orléans with 2,000 tons; 129 Ninth Air Force mediums put 245 tons on railway yards and bridges near the invasion area and along the Seine; 492 RAF heavies dropped 1,851 tons in a night attack on communications centers such as Rennes and Alençon; 1,335 fighters and fighter-bombers of the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces and 1,797 planes of the Second Tactical Air Force (British) made sorties against communications near the battle line and against tactical targets. Seven bridges in the Carentan area were attacked by fighter-bombers of the Ninth Air Force on 7–8 June, with three reported gapped. Two groups of Ninth Air Force medium bombers attacked Isigny on 8 June with the aim of blocking the highway; on the same day, the marshalling yard at St-Lô was destroyed and all rail connections cut at that junction. Fighter-bombers stopped all rail movement through Lison on 7–8 June. Enemy air activity showed only slight increase, the Eighth Air Force reporting 130 German sorties on 8 June in the vicinity of the beachheads.

The Enemy Side

On 7–8 June, the German command was still chiefly concerned about the Caen and Cotentin sectors, and neither Army nor Army Group showed much interest in the area between Bayeux and Isigny. Comparatively few references were made in Seventh Army estimates and situation reports as to what was happening near the Omaha sector. In part, this may have been due to scanty information from lower units, but it may also be a result of conclusions which Seventh Army had drawn on D Day as to the relative strength of the Allied beachheads.

The counterattack planned for 7 June in the Caen sector did not come off. By that morning forward elements of the 12th SS Panzer Division were between Villers-Bocage and Caen, while Panzer Lehr was beginning to reach Thury-Harcourt. But the columns were delayed by air attacks both on the march and in the assembly area, and the counteroffensive was postponed to 8 June. Meantime, the 711th Division east of the Orne, and 21st Panzer and 12th SS Panzer (elements) north of Caen, stopped further British advance. On 8 June, there was little change in the Caen area, and, with Panzer Lehr still unable to get into the battle zone, there was again no start of the expected counterattack. Allied pressure northeast of Bayeux increased, and, despite all efforts of the 352d Division, that town fell to the British by the night of 7–8 June.

In the Cotentin, information of 7 June indicated Allied reinforcement by air and by sea. On the next day, heavy Allied pressure was exerted from the Ste-Mère-Eglise area in attacks north toward Valognes and south toward Carentan. German units which had been attempting to organize counterattacks against the Utah beachhead were thrown on the defensive and began to lose ground. Growing concern was felt at Army over this situation, particularly after studying a (U. S.) VII Corps operations order, washed in on the beach on 8 June, which made it clear that Cherbourg was a main Allied objective.

Seventh Army had little news on 7 June from the Colleville–Vierville area, though it was aware that Allied landings had strengthened the forces ashore there. A good deal of misinformation came from this sector; at 1740 Army informed von Rundstedt that Grandcamp had been recaptured. In the situation report to Army Group at 0810 on 8 June, Seventh Army reported that Allied paratroopers had been landing in the Colleville–Russy–Surrain area, and were pushing westward. Meantime, Seventh Army had decided from the

captured operations order of VII Corps that the landings east of the Vire were by the British V Corps, including five British and two United States divisions, and that one of their objectives was to reach contact with VII Corps at Carentan. The Allied push south from Colleville was interpreted as an effort toward Carentan, designed to roll up German coastal defenses by passing to rearward of them. It was recognized that a "wide hole had been torn between Bayeux and St-Lô." Although no particular anxiety about that sector was yet expressed, plans for commitment of the reinforcements under way from Brittany were somewhat modified (Map No. XIII).

Part of these reinforcements were under II Paratroop Corps: the 3d Paratroop Division, the 77th Division, and the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division. Rommel decided on the morning of 7 June that Brittany was not in danger of early attack and started these offensive units on the way to Normandy, the 17th SS to come from positions south of the Loire River. Plans for use of II Paratroop Corps were reshaped during the next few days in view of changing appreciation of the battle. At first, because of reported paratroop landings in the Coutances area, the corps was ordered to that region to guard against any Allied attempt to cut off the Cotentin peninsula. Such an attempt was feared by Rommel himself.

On 8 June Seventh Army notified Army Group of its intentions as follows: to annihilate the Allied beachhead north of Caen and then turn toward Bayeux; to hold the VII (U. S.) Corps attack toward Cherbourg by means of the units already in the Cotentin; and to bring II Paratroop Corps up to the St-Lô region, where it could help I SS Panzer Corps in the attack on Bayeux, or if not needed there, smash the Allied bridgehead north of Carentan. Rommel approved this plan, but by evening of 8 June the increasing Allied pressure toward Montebourg was already causing Army to think in terms of using II Paratroop Corps to protect the Cotentin.

Seventh Army plans were increasingly affected on 7–8 June by difficulties encountered in moving its reinforcements toward the battle fronts. In part this was due to shortage of transportation facilities, particularly for the troops coming from Brittany. In even greater measure, however, Allied air power was hindering movement by attacks on columns, on bridges and railroads, and on important communications centers. As a result, I SS Panzer Corps had so far failed to mount its counterattack. Movement of II Paratroop Corps was "greatly delayed by air bombing and sabotage of communications." Army Chief of Staff urgently requested Army Group for strong air protection of moving columns, but was told that all available air strength was already being used. The Luftwaffe was in process of transferring units from east to west, to assist the battle, but was having its own delays.

One result of the Allied air effort on 8 June was so bad a breakdown of communications as to hinder all command functions. For hours Army had no contact with I SS Panzer Corps or with II Paratroop Corps, and was unable to determine their positions. Particular trouble was caused by bombing attacks at Avranches, bottleneck on main routes leading from Brittany to Normandy. By attacks on the evening of 7 June, Allied air had severed communications across the lower Loire River, where the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier had just brought forward elements across at Angers. By evening of 8 June, apparently none of the reinforcements coming from Brittany had yet reached the Avranches area.[22]

Last-minute reports of that night brought disturbing news from the Bayeux–Trévières sector. Allied units pressing southwest from Bayeux, and also south of the Bayeux–Isigny highway, were making "rapid progress westward toward Trévières and to the northwest of Trévières." Parts of the 916th and 726th Infantry had been cut off and received orders to fight their way back. Seventh Army's attention was about to be drawn more than before to the Omaha area.

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[22] *The location of the 275th Battle Group is not clear from the records, and that unit may have cleared Avranches.*

THE ATTACK OF 9-11 JUNE

AT 1700 ON 8 JUNE, warning orders were issued by V Corps; the second phase of the beachhead operations was to begin the next day. The delay of two days in reaching the initial objectives gave urgency to the situation. German resistance was weakening, but reinforcements could change the whole picture. The beachhead was still far short of its desired depth, and the landing area could still be reached by enemy artillery fire from the Trévières positions. V Corps had reckoned with enemy capabilities of attack by three divisions, including armor, by evening of 8 June. So far previsions of counterattack had not been realized, a tribute to the effective work of the Allied air forces on enemy communications. However, V Corps intelligence noted enemy troop movements 70 miles south of the battle front, and the *12th SS Panzer* and the *SS Hitler Jugend Divisions* were believed moving from the east, with possibility of reaching the battle front on 9 June. In the corps zone, Cerisy Forest was suspected of being an area of assembly for enemy forces, including armor. The *30th Mobile Brigade*, which had just begun to make an appearance in the fighting, represented the last known local reserves at the enemy's disposal.

There was, of course, no assurance that reinforcements coming from a distance would be used against V Corps, for the Germans had a much wider front to consider in committing their available strength (Map No. XVI). To the east, British Second Army was six to eight miles inland on a considerable front, had crossed the Caen–Bayeux highway, and was within two miles of Caen. That city was of vital importance to the enemy, and north of it the Germans were offering strong resistance based on the *21st Panzer Division*, with evidence of other armored reinforcement coming up. To the west, VII Corps was still fighting to consolidate the assigned beachhead area, was short of its original objectives, and was opposed by elements of at least three divisions. Carentan was still in enemy hands.

Although build-up had been affected by the delay in all landing schedules during the first days, V Corps disposed of considerable increase in strength for attack beyond D-Day objectives. Four battalions of 155-mm howitzers (corps artillery) were getting ashore on 8 June. The 2d Division, originally due by D+2, was estimated far enough along in landing to be operational by the next day. The 9th Infantry had landed the evening of 7 June, and used two battalions on 8 June in clearing out snipers behind the beach between St-Laurent and Vierville. The 38th Infantry had two battalions ashore by evening of the 8th, and the 23d had started landing. Two batteries of divisional artillery were arriving. Behind the 2d Division, the 2d Armored was ready to bring in its first elements on 9 June.

In V Corps Field Order No. 2, issued at 2115 on 8 June, General Gerow directed an attack at noon the next day by three divisions abreast (Map No. XIV). The 2d Division, taking over a 5,000-yard front



THE 2D DIVISION STARTS INLAND *from the beach in front of E–1 draw. At the curve of the column, the troops are passing pillbox used as headquarters by the engineers. The 2d Division, landing 7–8 June, had to be used in mopping up enemy resistance near the beach.*

north of Trévières, was to capture the key high ground at Cerisy Forest. The 1st Division was to put its main effort on the right, thus assisting the 2d Division, and to protect the east flank of V Corps along the Drôme River. The 1st Division's objectives lay along the high ground west of the Drôme River between Cerisy Forest and the Army boundary. On the right wing, covering the drive south to Cerisy Forest, the 29th Division would cross the Aure and reach the edge of the Elle River valley; at the same time, it was to capture Isigny and establish contact with VII Corps toward Carentan. Enemy counterattack was still regarded as highly possible, and each attacking division was ordered to be ready for defense of D–Day positions in its sector with one to three battalions (one in the 2d Division sector), these units to remain in D–Day positions until relieved by Corps order.

This attack plan was designed to continue forward movements already under way, with a minimum of delay. In two cases, verbal

orders of the Corps Commander had anticipated Field Order No. 2; the 29th Division had been ordered to cross the Aure on the night of 8–9 June, and the 1st Division to seize high ground southwest of Tour-en-Bessin as a preliminary to the jump-off on 9 June. There was thus no sharp dividing line, in time, between the completion of the operation toward D–Day objectives and the start of the new phase.

Advance to Cerisy Forest

After receiving warning orders at 1700 on 8 June, the 1st Division units had a considerable task of preparation in order to attack at noon next day. They were somewhat short of the assigned line of departure: Moulagny–Courtelay–Grivilly–Cussy. On the afternoon of the 8th, the 2d Battalion received orders to occupy high ground a mile southwest of Mosles, in what would be the assembly area for the 18th Infantry. The battalion met determined resistance near Moulagny and dug in for the night a little north of its objective. The other battalions of the 18th had to wait for relief by the 2d Division. This took place on the morning of the 9th, delayed by the fact that the 3d Battalion was engaged in a fire fight at the time of relief; furthermore, both 1st and 3d Battalions then had to cover some distance to reach their assembly area. As for the 26th Infantry, D-Day objectives were just being reached on the morning of 9 June; the 3d Battalion had been in a severe action with the enemy at Ste-Anne early that day, while the 1st Battalion was still slowed by light enemy resistance north of Tour-en-Bessin during the morning. As a result, the jump-off on the 1st Division front was delayed one to two hours. By Field Order No. 36, the 1st Division planned its attack with two regiments abreast. The 18th RCT, with Company C, 745th Tank Battalion, Battery A of the 62d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, and Company B, 635th Tank Destroyer Battalion, attached, and the 32d Field Artillery Battalion in direct support, was to advance on a front of about 4,000 yards, with Vaubadon and la Commune as objectives, on the Bayeux–St-Lô highway The 26th RCT, with equivalent attachments and the 33d Field Artillery Battalion in direct support, was aimed at Dodigny and Agy, on the same highway. Two battalions of the 16th, with the 7th Field Artillery Battalion in direct support, had the mission of clearing enemy resistance up to the Army boundary from Port-en-Bessin to Vaucelles, maintaining contacts with the British on that flank, and organizing defensive positions in the Tour-en-Bessin area. The 2d Battalion of the 16th was held in division reserve. Four battalions of artillery (three of them 155-mm howitzers or guns) were in general support, two of them reinforcing the fires of the 32d and 33d Battalions.

Due to make the main effort with Cerisy Forest as its objective, the 2d Division was hampered by lack of weapons and equipment as the hour of jump-off approached. The 9th and 38th Infantry, scheduled to attack abreast in the Trévières area, had no transportation by the morning of 9 June and most of the battalions lacked heavier automatic weapons, mortars, and communications equipment. Only two battalions (15th and 38th) of the divisional artillery were ready and in position: medical, signal, engineer, and reconnaissance units were only partially ashore. The 23d Infantry, designated as division reserve, had just landed the evening before and was assembling near St-Laurent by noon. Attachments to the 2d Division for the attack included a company each from the 747th Tank Battalion and the 635th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Delayed in starting, the attack made slow progress during the afternoon of 9 June;

then gathered momentum as it was pressed during the short night (twilight lasted until 2300). The enemy at first offered stubborn resistance from a number of organized positions, but these were widely separated, not held in strength, and given only weak artillery support. Once they were bypassed or overwhelmed, little further opposition was encountered. Enemy weakness was indicated by identification of the replacement battalion of the *915th Regiment*, the reserve battalion of the *916th*, and the reconnaissance battalion of the *352d Division*, as well as remnants of the *517th Mobile Battalion*. Evidently, with no fresh troops at hand, the Germans were throwing in their last resources in a fashion that spelled disorganization.

Along the front of four regiments, advance was progressively slower from the left to the right flank. By the end of the afternoon, resistance began to fold in front of the 26th Infantry, attacking with the 2d and 3d Battalions abreast. At 2140 the 3d Battalion had reached its objective, Agy; the 2d got to Dodigny at 0150. The 18th Infantry was held up by a strongpoint near the line of departure; this had to be bypassed and cleaned up by the reserve battalion (2d), which took 30 prisoners and counted 20 enemy dead. By 2100 the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 18th were two miles behind the 26th Infantry units on their left, and Corps gave permission for the 16th RCT to move from reserve to a position where it could guard the open flank and help the 18th Infantry if necessary. The 18th, however, made better progress as night fell, and kept on pressing against diminishing opposition. By daylight it was abreast of the 26th. Its objectives on the St-Lô–Bayeux highway were reached at 1000 and 1600 on 10 June. The 3d Battalion, on the edge of Cerisy Forest, met signs of increased resistance near its objectives. In an advance of 6 miles, losses had been slight; the 18th Infantry reported 50 casualties for 9 June. Enemy prisoners stressed the effectiveness of artillery support given the advance; fires had been concentrated on strongpoints, assembly areas, and road movements. The 7th, 32d, and 33d Field Artillery Battalions fired 22 missions on 9 June for a total of 976 rounds. The batteries of the 62d Armored Field Artillery Battalion (self-propelled 105-mm howitzers) had been divided between the 1st Division regiments, to be used for direct fire in close support against enemy strongpoints. As a result of the character of the opposition, however, these batteries were not needed. The three artillery battalions used in general support still found observation a problem and delivered for the most part unobserved fires. Naval fire, using 6-inch guns of the cruisers, was again very helpful, one of the targets being a battery south of the 26th Infantry's objective. According to enemy prisoners, many field pieces of the *352d Division's* artillery had been destroyed and all their gun positions had been abandoned. Enemy artillery action on the corps front was limited to occasional fire by single guns.

The 2d Division, led by Maj. Gen. Walter M. Robertson, went into its first action of the war under serious handicaps. Its initial objective was Trévières, a key position if the enemy planned to hold along his present line. While the 38th Infantry attacked from the north and west, the 9th Infantry would outflank Trévières by seizing Rubercy, to the southeast.

The 9th Infantry had relieved the 18th at Engranville and Mandeville that morning and had planned an attack by the 2d and 3d Battalions abreast, 2d to the west. The attack order did not reach the 2d Battalion at Engranville until 1100, and that unit was far short of its line of departure, the Trévières–Mandeville road. When the battalion



THE APPROACH TO TRÉVIÈRES *from the high ground just north of the Aure River was strongly defended by the Germans until 10 June, when the 2d Division outflanked and captured the town. This marked collapse of the enemy resistance north of Cerisy Forest.*

crossed the Aure, it came under heavy flanking fire of automatic weapons from the strong German defenses east of Trévièrēs. Supporting tanks, held up by the steep banks of the Aure, were unable to get into position to help, and the 2d Battalion immediately felt the lack of its mortars and machine guns. The right wing of the advance was pinned down for most of the afternoon but managed to disengage and reach the line of departure about dark. Company E had suffered 20 casualties in the fight. When the battalion was ordered to resume the attack at 2200, preliminary artillery fire was misdirected, the first rounds falling into the CP area and inflicting 17 casualties. Recovering from this incident, the battalion pushed on and reached the Rubercy–Trévières road at midnight. Heavy weapons were now beginning to arrive, but the unit was still without communications and out of contact with the 3d Battalion on its left.

The 3d Battalion, starting its attack from the area Mandeville–Moulagny, was fortunate in having most of its heavy weapons and equipment. Companies K and L attacked abreast on the Mandeville–Rubercy road, but K lost its direction and sideslipped to the east, forcing the use of I to fill a wide gap in the front. At the village of Haut-Hameau, enemy small-arms fire stopped Company L for several hours. When four tanks came up to deal with the resistance, the Germans put in an unusually heavy concentration of artillery fire, with eight guns reported as firing from the south and southwest. A tank was knocked out; Company L lost 20 men and was disorganized. Contacts with K and I were made and a coordinated attack by Companies I and L was prepared for 1900, preceded by support fires from a 4.2-inch mortar platoon, the Cannon Company, a battery of the 15th Field Artillery Battalion, and several destroyers. When L advanced after this fire, German resistance was slight. Fifteen enemy dead were found, and two machine guns and a few prisoners taken. The battalion was near Rubercy by dark, out of contact with the 1st Division on its left. The 9th Infantry lost 10 killed and 80 wounded for the day's action.

To the west of this advance, the 38th Infantry had made slow progress against Trévières, where the enemy resisted stubbornly from well dug-in positions. The 2d Battalion, attacking from the north, was fighting into the village by nightfall. Two machine guns and some bazookas borrowed from an engineer unit were put to use, and the heavy mortars of Company C, 81st Chemical Weapons Battalion, helped to neutralize enemy strongpoints at the edge of the village. The 3d Battalion crossed the Aure southwest of Trévières, attempting to outflank the village on that side. During the day, the 15th and 38th Field Artillery Battalions had been called on very heavily for supporting fires, mostly against Trévières, and had used 3,652 rounds up to midnight.

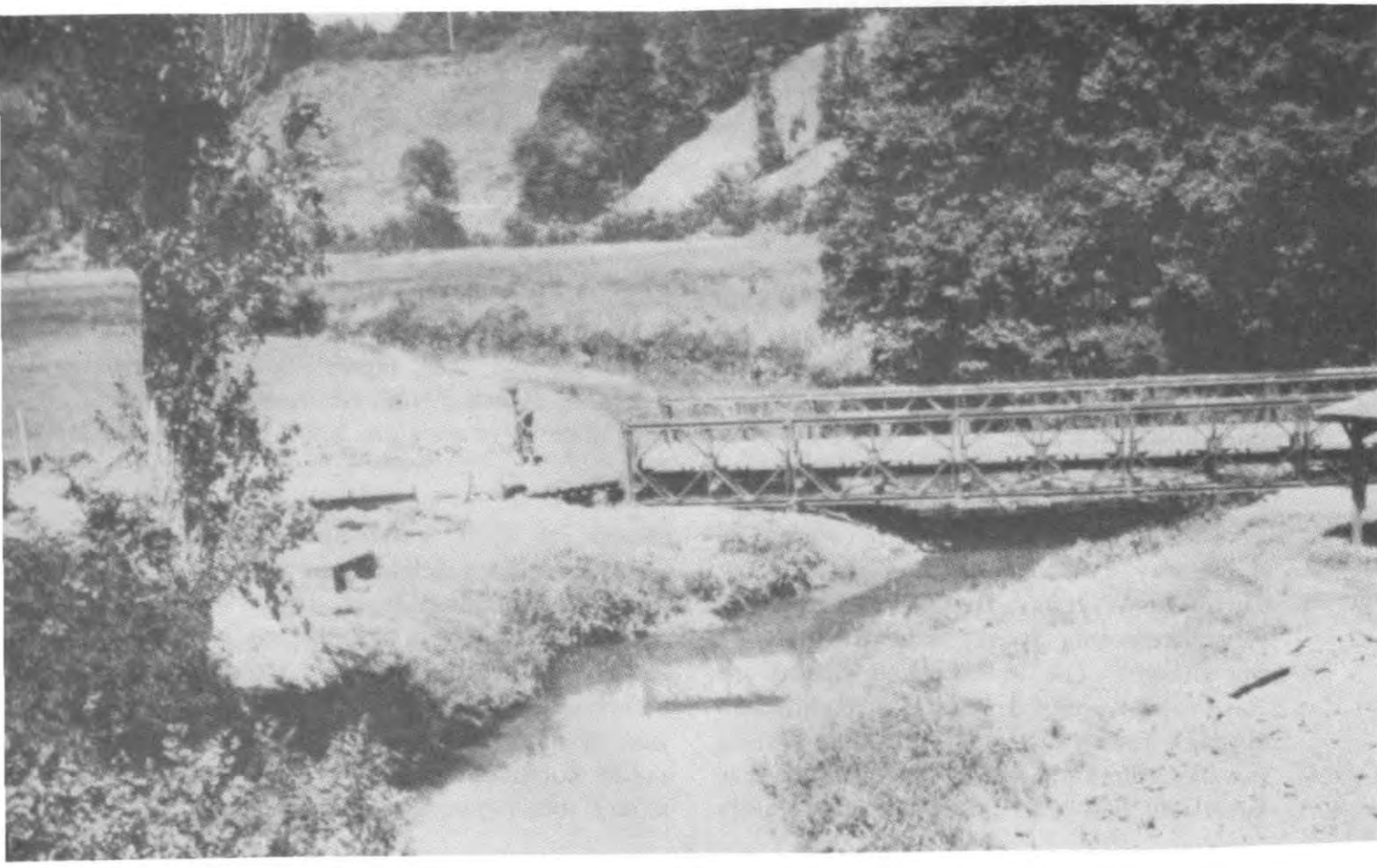
By 10 June the 2d Division had received much of its missing equipment and transportation, and the attack was renewed in greater strength. A prisoner captured on the evening before had stated that the *916th Regiment* was withdrawing from the Trévières area to the Cerisy Forest, and the lack of enemy resistance on 10 June confirmed this statement. The advances east and west of Trévières had left the enemy there in an untenable salient. After a heavy artillery concentration fired before 0700, the village was cleared out by 0845, and the 2d Division went forward with no opposition except from isolated snipers and an occasional machine gun holding a delaying position. The result was the most extensive advance of the operation. The 9th Infantry got through Cerisy Forest after skirmishes with enemy scout cars, and bivouacked southwest of Balleroy with losses for the day of six wounded. The 38th Infantry reached the village of Cerisy-la-Forêt, and at 2100 the 1st Battalion was pushing on with orders to seize Haute-Litée at the southwest corner of the woods. Only in this area was there any sign of organized enemy opposition, offered by the *Engineer Battalion, 352d Division.* Prisoners for the day numbered 90, and their reports indicated considerable disintegration of enemy means of resistance: remnants of units were intermingled, supplies were lacking, and some prisoners had no knowledge of the whereabouts of their units and commanders. German artillery delivered no fires on front-line troops and engaged in no counterbattery on 10 June. Only enemy weakness could explain the fact that Cerisy Forest had been practically undefended. Possession of the area by U. S. forces denied the enemy commanding ground from which to mount counterattack against the beach-

head; furthermore, it lay athwart the best direct route between St-Lô and the German forces defending south of Bayeux.

On 11 June, the 1st and 2d Divisions organized the ground won in their rapid advance. On most parts of the front there was no contact with the enemy, and patrols which pushed several miles southward found no opposition in any force. Despite the reports on previous days of the approach of armored units, these were still not in evidence. Enemy artillery fire was almost nonexistent, being reported only twice on the 2d Division front.

The only serious fighting of the day took place on the right flank, where the 1st Battalion of the 38th Infantry was completing its attempt to secure the crossroads at Haute-Litée. This area was stoutly defended all day by Germans holding prepared positions. When the crossroads were passed at noon, the enemy still resisted in the forest fringes to south and west, holding up further advance by mortar fire. Heavy concentrations by the 38th and 12th Field Artillery Battalions neutralized the mortars and allowed the 1st Battalion to reach objectives west and south of the crossroads. The 38th

THE AURE RIVER *though small was enough of an obstacle to hold up tanks in the attack on Trévières. North of the town, afterwards, the 246th Engineer Combat Battalion put over this double-single Bailey bridge, important in a major north-south supply channel.*



Field Artillery Battalion fired 1,015 rounds during this action. By nightfall, the 23d Infantry had moved up to join the division; its vehicles and equipment were expected to arrive in a matter of hours.

On the 1st Division front, preparations were made on the afternoon of 11 June for the corps attack the next day. Balleroy, found held by an enemy patrol in the morning, was occupied in the afternoon without resistance. The division was strengthened by the arrival of the 1st Reconnaissance Troop and the 102d Cavalry Battalion, which were immediately put into use for reconnaissance missions. During the evening, the 18th and 26th Infantry Regiments moved across the Drôme to the line Planqueray–la Butte, without encountering opposition. At 2030 some alarm was caused by reports of a German counterattack with armor in the British area, headed west for the left flank and rear of the 1st Division. The report turned out to be unfounded.

British advance south and southeast of Bayeux was, however, being slowed by heavy resistance. On 10 June, the main effort, led by the 7 Armoured Division, reached the area Tilly-sur-Seulles–Lingevres and began to encounter enemy armor. On the First Army's flank, elements of the British 231 Brigade reached la Belle-Epine on the 11th and were momentarily checked there by the enemy counterattack which occasioned concern for V Corps' flank. British XXX Corps had been, so far, abreast of V Corps' advance, but there were indications that further progress might be uneven in the two zones.

Across the Lower Aure (29th Division)

V Corps Field Order No. 2, directing a general attack at noon on 9 June, included as preliminary to the attack certain movements already under way by the 29th Division. One was the capture of Isigny; the other was the crossing of the flooded part of the Aure Valley by the 115th Infantry, to be accomplished during the night of 8–9 June.

According to advance intelligence, the lowland between Isigny and Trévières had been inundated to a depth of two to three feet, over a width varying from a half mile to two miles. When the Aure Valley was reached, conditions were found not as bad as had been reported, since the waters had receded. However, large patches of shallow water remained, the mud was deep everywhere, and the close network of drainage ditches between the two main streams (Esque and Aure) would hamper movement, even though the ditches were not wide. The four bridges along the causeway between la Cambe and Douet had been destroyed. Patrols were sent out on the evening of the 8th to reconnoiter for crossings, and heavy artillery and naval fire was laid on the south bank of the flood plain, particularly near Bricqueville, Colombières, and Calette Wood. This preparatory fire included 150 rounds from destroyers' guns and 208 rounds of the 110th Field Artillery Battalion.

2d Lt. Kermit C. Miller took a combat patrol of platoon strength from Company E, 115th Infantry, crossed the valley south of Canchy after dark, and went into Colombières. Already hit hard by artillery concentrations, the enemy force there was disorganized; the patrol took it completely by surprise, ambushed enemy reinforcements, and inflicted more than 40 casualties before withdrawing with 11 prisoners. The 3d Battalion also sent out small reconnaissance patrols of two or three men, who reported getting across at several points but were dubious about being able to guide the battalion.

About first light on 9 June, the 3d Battalion started out over the flats south from

Canchy, with the Cannon Company of the 115th as near as possible to the valley for close support. Visibility was good, and enemy opposition in any strength could easily have made the advance very costly. Halfway across, the battalion reached a stream too deep to ford, and stopped while Company A of the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion rigged 10 improvised foot bridges, using assault-raft equipment, pneumatic floats, and bridge timbers. "Weasels" (M-29)[23] were used to get the materials forward. These bridges got the troops over the deeper streams and ditches, but the smaller ones still caused plenty of delay, two hours being required to put the battalion across the exposed flats. Fortunately, the area was practically undefended. No artillery fire was encountered and only scattered rifle fire. The 2d Battalion followed the 3d, and both were over by 1100.

Further east, the 1st Battalion tried to find a passage across the narrower part of the Aure Valley, south of Ecrammeville, but the enemy holding the Trévières area repulsed this effort with machine-gun and rifle fire. The 1st Battalion then marched to Canchy and followed the route taken by the rest of the regiment. Along the causeway, four short treadway bridges were started by the 254th Engineer Combat Battalion and were ready for vehicles that night.

By Field Order No. 4 of the 29th Division, initial objectives assigned to the 115th were Bricqueville, Colombières, and the Calette Wood; these were supposed to be occupied by noon as bases for the next phase of the attack. The 1st Battalion marched to Bricqueville, repulsed a weak enemy attack with the aid of close-support fire by the regimental cannon company, and organized defensive positions. The 3d Battalion arrived at Colombières by 1020, encountering no opposition. The battalion did not move out on the attack until 1700 and reached its next objective, la Folie, at 2300. Its position that night was to be somewhat exposed, since the enemy still held Trévières, and on the right the 2d Battalion had met disaster.

That battalion had a hard day's work. After crossing the Aure Valley, it turned west toward Calette Wood, from which enemy harassing fire was holding up the bridging work at the causeway. En route, the battalion met considerable opposition near Vouilly, from riflemen and bicycle troops armed with machine pistols. Only scattered resistance was met at Calette Wood, which had received two concentrations of fire from the division artillery. The battalion spent three hours in beating the thick brush for snipers, and cleared out the woods enough so that the bridges could be completed. About 1900 the 2d Battalion returned to Vouilly, where enemy snipers were still active, and started south for its next objective, le Carrefour, six miles south. A wrong turn took the unit off the route and added three miles to the march. It was 0230 before the exhausted troops reached their objective and began to move off the road for a brief rest.

The night was overcast and very dark, making it difficult to reconnoiter the ground for temporary defensive positions. The two leading companies were ordered to take positions to the east and west sides of a large orchard, and it was planned for Company E and Headquarters Company to complete a perimeter defense. These units were still halted on the road, waiting to move into the field, when officers standing near the rear of the column (where two quarter-ton trucks had just brought up some rations from Bricqueville) heard a slight noise of traffic about 40 yards north. They believed it was the 3d Battalion coming up. Almost immediately a column of enemy infantry,

[23] *A full-track, light cargo carrier with 1,200-pound capacity.*

with some type of armored vehicles in it, appeared around a bend in the road and a machine-pistol was fired. When U. S. troops fired a few shots in return, they heard an uproar of voices and the sound of many vehicles shifting gears. The enemy immediately swept the road with machine-gun fire and then sent armored vehicles down it, firing 88-mm guns into the hedgerows and adjacent fields. Company E scattered off the road into the fields; the companies already in the orchard were caught completely by surprise and had no chance to organize for effective defense. Most of the men had thrown themselves on the ground and had gone to sleep as they dropped; wakened by artillery and machine-gun fire at point-blank range, they were confused and stupefied. First efforts at resistance only gave away their positions to the German guns, and some groups were caught in wild rifle fire from friendly units. Heavy weapons were not in position to be used. The battalion commander was killed, control was never established, and men began to drift out of the orchard in all directions. In a short time the battalion was dispersed into scattered groups, making their way back north and west through the night. Losses were 11 officers and 139 enlisted men.

It was afterwards estimated that the 2d Battalion had been hit by a German column retreating from the Aure Valley and bent on escape to the south. By all evidence, the encounter was a surprise for the Germans as well, but circumstances favored the enemy. In march formation, with armored vehicles leading (probably about eight self-propelled 88-mm guns), they were able to use the heavy and demoralizing fire of these guns in the first, decisive minutes. The Germans suffered casualties, and two armored vehicles were knocked out by bazookas.

Fortunately, the enemy had no resources on this front to take advantage of his local success. On 10 June, the 2d Battalion was reorganized, received 110 replacements, and moved back into line in the afternoon. No enemy resistance was met, and the 115th Infantry reached its final objectives during the afternoon: the 2d Battalion near Ste-Marguerite-d'Elle; the 3d east of it along the river; and the 1st at Epinay-Tesson. That night, the 2d Battalion outposts were attacked by small German forces which crossed the Elle River, and skirmishing lasted all night.

To the west of the 115th, the 175th Infantry Regiment had secured the corps' flank along the Vire River. After Isigny was taken on the morning of 9 June, the regiment turned south toward the objective area, Lison—la Fotelaie, moving in column of battalions, with the 747th Tank Battalion attached. Resistance was met south of la Hérennerie, where elements of the *352d Divisional Artillery*, acting as infantry, were swept aside with an estimated loss of 125 killed. Forward elements of the armored units reached Lison at noon but were temporarily checked by artillery fire. Although Lison was then bombed and strafed by Allied planes, an enemy force of about company strength delayed the advance for a few hours. Both Lison and la Fotelaie were occupied by nightfall.

West of Isigny, Company K had been sent toward the bridge over the Vire River at Auville-sur-le-Vey, with orders to seize the crossing as a means for contact with VII Corps. The bridge had been burned, and the enemy held machine-gun emplacements on the other bank. On the morning of 10 June intense mortar and machine-gun fire stopped the first effort to cross the stream. Company K was reinforced by a platoon of tanks, a platoon of Company E, and the 29th Reconnaissance Squadron. At 1800, under covering fire of the mortars and automatic weapons of the 29th Reconnaissance

Squadron, the reinforced company forded the 40-foot stream at low tide and advanced into Auville-sur-le-Vey, which it held that night to cover bridging operations by Company C of the 254th Engineer Combat Battalion. Company K suffered about a dozen casualties in the crossing. Despite vigorous German resistance 500 yards to the west, a patrol of the 29th Reconnaissance Squadron made first contact with patrols of the 101st Airborne Division that afternoon (1500) near Catz. The 101st was still fighting toward Carentan from the north but had put small forces across the Douve Estuary east of Carentan. On 11 June, the situation on this flank was strengthened by the arrival of a battalion of armored infantry from Combat Command A of the 2d Armored Division, which took over the bridgehead west of the Vire.

The 116th Infantry, with the Ranger Force attached, engaged in mopping-up operations between Grandcamp and Isigny on 9 June, overcoming final enemy opposition at Maisy and Géfosse-Fontenay; thereafter, it went into division reserve, moving south of the Aure on the afternoon of 11 June.

As on the rest of the corps front, enemy resistance in the 29th Division's zone had shown less and less strength as the attack progressed. Evidences of disorganization mounted, particularly with respect to intermingling of units. Elements of the *915th Infantry* were identified west of the Vire as well as on the 1st Division front; according to prisoners, the *915th* and *916th Infantry*

CERISY FOREST, *lying on high ground within artillery range of the beachhead, was a key objective in V Corps operations. This crossroad is near the northeastern edge of the forest. The enemy failure to defend this important area was a surprise development.*



were being merged. Enemy artillery was little in evidence.

Except for harassing night raids against Allied shipping off the beachheads, German planes were still unable to intervene effectively in the battle zone. All air activity was restricted by weather on 9 June. On 10–11 June, Allied air forces resumed their work of bombing airfields, cutting communications, and carrying out tactical missions against supply dumps, road junctions, and assembly areas close to the front. By 11 June, bombers of the Royal Air Force had set a new record for weight of bombs dropped in a week: 17,268 tons, of which only 1,444 tons had been directed against targets in Germany. The best testimony on the effectiveness of the Allied air action, and the major results it was beginning to achieve, comes from the complaints of high German commanders in Normandy on their situation in respect to supply, transportation, and reinforcements.

The Enemy Side

These three days, 9–11 June, marked a period of disillusionment for the German command. On 8 June, they had still been looking forward to the imminent counteroffensive which was to destroy the Allied beachheads, beginning at Caen. In the succeeding days, these hopes had to be given up, and Seventh Army concentrated on efforts to bring enough strength into Normandy to prevent further loss of vital ground. The delays in arrival of German reinforcements were a cause of increasing difficulty and anxiety (Map No. XVI).

On the morning of 9 June the sector south of Omaha Beach loomed into prominence for the first time at Seventh Army Headquarters. At 1035 General Marcks reported from LXXXIV Corps: Isigny had been taken by a surprise attack; tanks were reported on the Lison–St-Lô road, so that the commanding general of Seventh Army was advised not to make a trip to St-Lô as planned; Allied intentions were probably to cross the Vire and link up with the western bridgehead, and LXXXIV Corps had no available force to stop them, the 352d Division having been reduced to "small groups" and the 726th Infantry having practically disappeared. General Marcks wanted to withdraw behind the Vire and assemble II Paratroop Corps for later counterattack, with one of its divisions (77th Infantry) to go to the Valognes area. He also asked that LXXXIV Corps be freed of responsibility for action east of the Cotentin, suggesting that II Paratroop Corps be put under I SS Panzer Corps and take over the sector east of Carentan. Army disagreed with all these proposals except that of using the 77th Division to meet the growing pressure of Allied attack toward Montebourg. Army was aware that the "hole between Isigny and Bayeux had now been widened," but still planned to assemble II Paratroop Corps at Balleroy for a counteroffensive toward Bayeux. It was beginning to doubt, however, whether this would be practicable, since the corps was so strung out on the road that its units would not arrive in fashion to permit concentration of offensive effort.

At 1730, General Marcks reported again. This time he was more reassured about the Carentan area, for the Allies showed no tendency to push beyond Isigny. The 352d Division believed it might be able to hold the attack in progress at Trévières, but an Allied breakthrough threatened at Montebourg.

This was the background for an appearance of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel at Seventh Army Headquarters. Briefed on the situation, the Army Group Commander stressed two points: The Allies must not be allowed to get Cherbourg; and every effort must be made to prevent their linking up bridgeheads west of the Vire. He agreed with the Seventh Army viewpoint that counterattack by II Paratroop Corps had better be postponed until the corps was fully assembled and its action could be coordinated with that of

I SS Panzer Corps. Rommel expressed his conviction that this counteroffensive, when staged, would be successful. Von Rundstedt, he reported, believed the Allies were about to make a major assault on the Pas-de-Calais coast.

Following this conference, Army ordered II Paratroop Corps to change its direction of advance from Balleroy toward the Isigny area, while the 77th Division was to go to Valognes. Rommel emphasized that the problem at the moment was to prevent linking of the bridgeheads, however serious the situation at Montebourg. That evening, nevertheless, saw II Paratroop Corps still far from the threatened area, despite urgent orders to make all possible speed. The 77th Division was near Avranches; one regiment of the 3d Paratroop Division was nearing St-Lô, but the rest of the division was still in Brittany. Advance elements of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division were approaching Balleroy, with main units near Avranches and Laval and location of its halftracks and heavy equipment (coming by rail) unknown. All these movements were hampered by shortage of fuel, as well as air attacks and sabotage along the line of march.

In the Caen area, I SS Panzer Corps was still unable to start its attack, and the 21st Panzer and part of the 12th SS Panzer lost some ground north and west of Caen in defensive fighting. The 346th Division had been ordered (8 June) to move to the assistance of the 711th Division east of the Orne River, with the aim of freeing elements of 21st Panzer in that sector.

General Marcks had expressed the conviction that 10 June would be the day of crisis in the battle on the approaches to Cherbourg. Rommel on that morning expressed a change of view with regard to the mission of the oncoming II Paratroop Corps; his main concern now was not so much to prevent linking of the bridgeheads as to forestall any Allied effort to cut off the Cotentin peninsula by pushing westward. Army ordered the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division to move to a position just southwest of Carentan, while the 3d Paratroop Division assembled on St-Lô.

At the end of the day, Seventh Army felt that things had not gone as badly as had been feared. The German units had managed to hold on at Montebourg in heavy fighting; the Allies had crossed the Vire near Isigny but were not pressing in that area. I SS Panzer Corps' attack in the Caen area still failed to materialize; Allied pressure in that sector kept the German troops on the defensive and indicated preparations for a major attack on Caen. Reinforcements were now in sight of the threatened areas. Advance elements of the 77th Division were nearing Valognes, though the rest was strung out all the way to Avranches; 3d Paratroop Division had some units at Berigny and the main body had cleared the Avranches corner, coming out of Brittany; elements of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division were between Balleroy and Coutances. In addition, the 2d Panzer Division (from northern France) had been ordered to Seventh Army [when the order had been issued is not stated], and its halftrack elements were at Alençon.

Army Command West was making further efforts to reinforce the Normandy battle. The XXXXVII Panzer Corps Headquarters had been ordered to the Seventh Army, and the 353d Division was now ordered from Brittany to join II Paratroop Corps. A number of artillery and antiaircraft units were also on their way.

With this strength coming up, Army's appreciation of the situation showed moderate confidence: the armored divisions, once ready, would be able to wipe out the Allied lodgement in the Caen–Bayeux area; the forces in the Cotentin, though not strong enough for counterattack, would suffice to hold Cherbourg. Army indicated to Army Group its need for mobile artillery, antitank weapons, and antiaircraft. The overwhelming importance of having more fuel, both for operation of armored units and for faster movement of reinforcements, is stressed several times during the day's communications from Seventh Army to higher headquarters. One of the difficulties underlined by Seventh Army is that reinforcements were having so many delays that

units arrived in driblets and had to be committed piecemeal. On 10 June, the advance elements of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division bogged down at St-Lô for lack of fuel, and an engineer battalion had to be rushed to the Carentan area.

The 352d Infantry Division on this day (10 June) advised Army that it was "not probable that much resistance was still being offered in the coastal defenses."

The Allied progress on 10 June in the Cerisy Forest–Balleroy area was not known to Seventh Army until the morning of the 11th. Then LXXXIV Corps reported (0530–0630) that the situation on its right flank was serious. The fighting value of the 352d Division was now very slight, and the hole between it and its right-hand neighbor (I SS Panzer Corps) was larger. The reaction at Seventh Army was that reinforcements on the way would take care of this hole in time, although Allied armored reconnaissance activity indicated their intention to exploit the gap. At the end of 11 June, Army reported that Allied forces were regrouping and that they had made no significant gains during the day, though Carentan was threatened. Army's intention was to hold the Vire–Elle line and Carentan. LXXXIV Corps had the mission of blocking the road to Cherbourg and, with II Paratroop Corps under its command, of preventing any drive to sever the Cotentin peninsula. Its right wing was to push toward Balleroy and seek contact by reconnaissance elements with I SS Panzer Corps southeast of Bayeux. By the close of the day, main elements of the 3d Paratroop Division were northeast of St-Lô; the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division was reaching assembly areas southwest of Carentan, ready to attack to east or north; and battle groups of the 265th and 275th Divisions were arriving westward of St-Lô. The 266th Division (battle group) was released for ultimate commitment in the St-Lô area. In the Caen area, the plan of early attack against the Allied bridgehead was finally abandoned, Army deciding that the Allied strength in that area was too great. The Panzer Lehr Division had arrived in the Tilly-sur-Seulles area, but Army's intention for the time being was to assume the defensive in this sector. Mobile elements, particularly tanks, were to be withdrawn as soon as possible from the battle and assembled in preparation for a later counteroffensive.

The Seventh Army War Diary for 11 June devotes much space to a lengthy review of the effects of enemy air attacks, particularly on lines of communication. By 9 June rail transport anywhere near the battle zone had been rendered impossible. Elements of the 265th and 275th Divisions coming from Brittany had been forced to unload from trains after getting only a quarter of the way to the front. The 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division had also been forced to unload before it reached Seventh Army's rear boundary. The result put a heavy strain on motor transport, and this strain was increased by Allied air attacks which took heavy toll of vehicles. The results showed in delays and in loss of supplies, including fuel, which in turn seriously crippled the fighting ability of the armored units as they arrived. All time schedules for arrival of reinforcements had been thrown off; movement by motor transport was possible only at night, and even marches conducted at night could be hindered by bombing of communications centers. Allied air observation also precluded movement by day near the battle front and led to attack on assembly areas, sometimes from the air. Army concluded this review with the demand that the German air forces intervene, by both day and night, to break this "unbearable" superiority of Allied air. In the meantime, Army was undertaking drastic measures to reorganize control of roads and transport in its rear areas and was trying to get Army Group to take over responsibility for a larger area in bringing up supply, so that Seventh Army's overtaxed transportation could be used only for the immediate needs of the battle zone. The fuel shortage was stressed, and Army stated the "outcome of the battle for the coast" depended on speedy supply of fuel to give arriving armored units the mobility necessary for an offensive.

THE ATTACK OF 12-13 JUNE

BY 11 JUNE, V Corps had won the ground essential for security of its beachhead. The advance had carried over 12 miles inland and had conquered the dominating terrain at Cerisy Forest, while the right wing rested securely on the Vire–Elle river line and was ready to link up with VII Corps. But the attack was to continue without pause; on 11 June preparations for a new effort were under way, directed by Field Order No. 3 issued at 1700 (Map No. XV).

The principal objective in this next phase was the Caumont area, assigned to the 1st Division with, in addition to previous attachments, the 102d Cavalry Squadron and three battalions of tanks. . To the right of the main effort, the 2d and 29th Divisions were ordered to take objectives south of Cerisy Forest and the Elle River. In general effect, the advance would be echeloned from east to west, with Caumont at the apex of a salient. The 2d Armored Division, as corps reserve, would be held in readiness to use if necessary as a counterattacking force.

V Corps' attack was closely related to plans of the British XXX Corps for 12 June. In hard fighting on the 11th, the British had been unable to dislodge the *Panzer Lehr Division* from positions between Lingevres and Tilly-sur-Seulles. This effort was to be renewed on the 12th, with the aim of flanking the whole German defense of the Caen area. V Corps' advance in the adjoining zone would materially aid XXX Corps by threatening the enemy flank southwest of Tilly-sur-Seulles.

Furthermore, the attack of 12 June was designed to assist in the development of VII Corps' offensive toward Cherbourg. Enemy attention and reinforcement might be diverted from that area if V Corps exploited the enemy weakness now apparent in its zone. The remnants of the *352d Division*, showing signs of increased disorganization every day, were still the only important German force on a front of more than 25 miles. They were short of ammunition, and they had almost no artillery support. What small reinforcement they had received, mainly the three battalions of the *30th Mobile Brigade*, had been wholly insufficient to remedy the situation. Enemy morale, according to evidence of prisoners, was steadily declining. According to the same source, to a certain extent supported by reports of troop movement south of the battle front, enemy armored units were on their way toward this front. They were believed to be the *17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division;* some prisoners had been taken from its reconnaissance battalion in Cerisy Forest.

Apart from the wider considerations governing this attack, the objectives of V Corps represented valuable tactical goals. A road junction of some importance, Caumont lies on a hill mass more than 750 feet above sea level, overlooking the Cerisy Forest and controlling the upper Drôme Valley. Its capture would make V Corps' hold on the beachhead doubly secure; as a base for further offensive operations into

the hilly country to the south, possession of Caumont would threaten the enemy's main lateral communications from Caen to the St-Lô–Vire–Avranches region. In the zones of the 2d and 29th Divisions the most important objective was Hill 192. This dominating height afforded observation over the whole area between the Elle and Vire Rivers, and was key terrain for any offensive operations aimed at St-Lô.

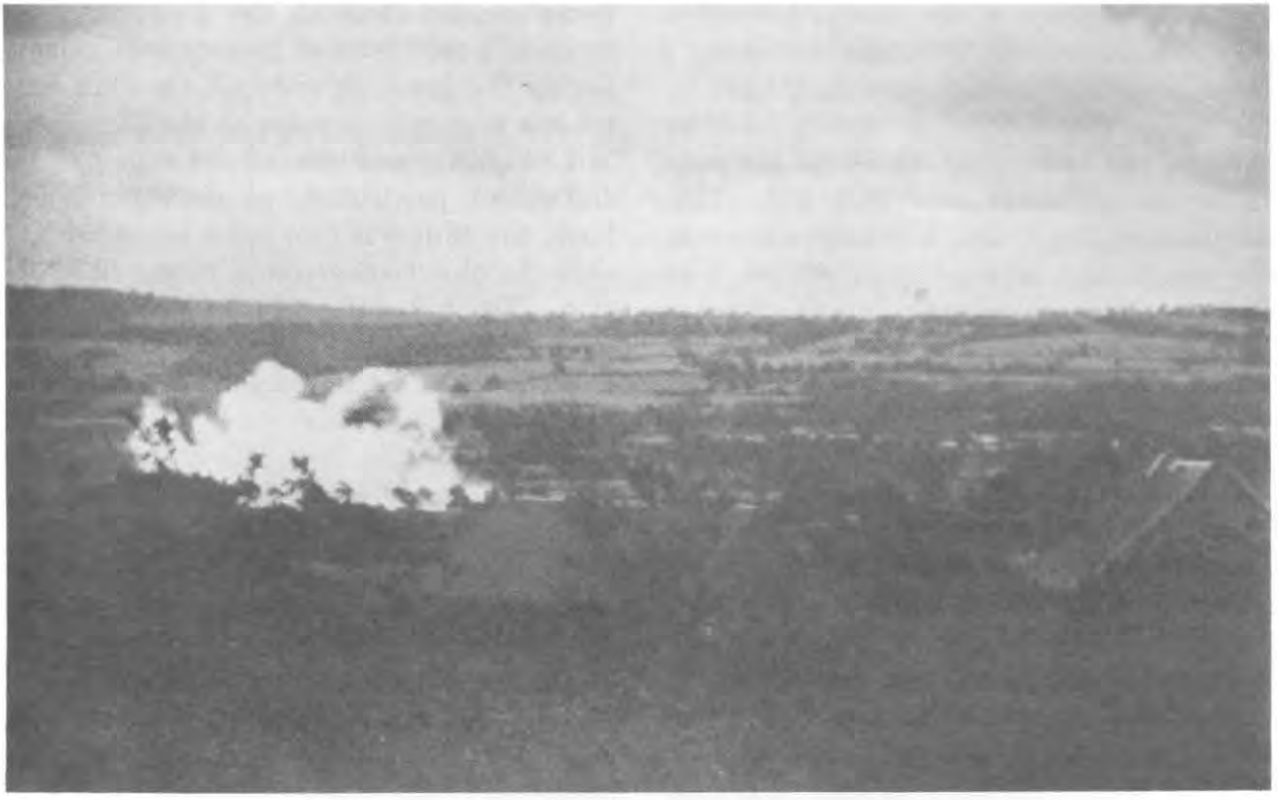
Advance to Caumont

By Field Order No. 37, issued at 2400 on 11 June, General Huebner planned the 1st Division's attack in essentially the same formation used before: the 18th and 26th RCT's abreast on fronts of about 3,000 yards, with the 16th RCT in reserve, ready to assist either attacking regiment and to protect the flanks. The left flank was to be guarded by the 1st Reconnaissance Troop, and two troops of the 102d Cavalry Squadron were to patrol in advance of the attacking units. Each regimental combat team included a tank battalion; the 18th and 26th had each a company of tank destroyers from the 635th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Six battalions of artillery were in direct or general support. Movement toward the line of departure (le Planqueray–la Butte) had begun during the evening of 11 June, but the 26th Infantry experienced road difficulties which caused a two-hour delay in the jump-off, scheduled for 0600.

On the right, the 18th Infantry had a comparatively easy advance, led by the 1st and 2d Battalions abreast. No prepared enemy defenses were encountered, and opposition was offered only by light mobile screening forces, operating in patrols supported by armored cars and an occasional tank. This opposition was handled in well-organized fashion, pulling back on what appeared to be a prearranged schedule. The 745th Tank Battalion, attached to the 18th Infantry, reported a minimum of contact with enemy during the day. By evening, the 18th had made a four-mile advance to the Caumont–St-Lô highway and was ordered to stop there and patrol, particularly on the right flank. Here, the 18th was two miles farther south than the objectives assigned to the 2d Division. Troop B of the 102d Cavalry Squadron established a screen to protect this flank along the Drôme River and made contact with the 2d Division.

On the left, the 26th Infantry met much the same type of light, delaying resistance, built around reconnaissance cars and a few tanks. By dusk the 2d Battalion was on the edge of Caumont. Patrols, probing into the village, found it held by the enemy in small force. During the night the battalion endeavored to capture the village but was held off by determined resistance estimated at two companies, supported by five or six tanks or self-propelled guns. Company F penetrated into Caumont but was then forced back. With elements of the 743d Tank Battalion leading, the infantry cleaned out the village by 0900, in house-to-house fighting. The enemy lost several vehicles and an 88-mm gun in attempts to stop the tanks. Artillery observers, entering Caumont with the advance, reported that they had excellent observation into enemy positions for the first time since D Day.

The 18th and 26th Infantry spent 13 June in organizing their positions for all-around defense and in patrolling forward and to the flanks of the salient created by their advance. By afternoon, strong enemy patrols were taking offensive action all along the 1st Division front, probing vigorously to find its positions and in some cases infiltrating well beyond the outposts. Patrol activity was so lively as to give the impression of counterattacks, and supporting artillery was called on much more frequently than during



CAUMONT *lay on high ground, looking toward hilly country to the south. Enemy artillery fire is hitting American forward positions just below the village. German plans for recapturing this village in a counteroffensive after 13 June were never put into operation.*

the previous day. The 33d Field Artillery Battalion, attached to the 26th Infantry, fired 895 rounds as against 39 on 12 June, most of it about 1500 when a "counterattack" was signaled. Enemy artillery showed signs of revival, putting some accurate fire into Caumont. Although no real counterattack developed, it was clear that the enemy was sensitive to the advance into Caumont and that a new quality of resistance was beginning to show. Elements believed to be from the *3d* and *4th Companies* of the *2d Reconnaissance Battalion*, *2d Panzer Division*, were identified. In fact, the bulk of that division was moving across the 1st Division front during the day, from west to east, and was being committed just east of Caumont in an action that was critical for the whole Allied front.

The British, on 12 June, had begun a maneuver closely related to the 1st Division's attack on Caumont. Finding the *Panzer Lehr Division* holding strongly on the line Tilly-sur-Seulles–la Senaudière, XXX Corps planned to slip the 7 Armoured Division south along the Army boundary, with Villers-Bocage as objective. This move would put them on the Avranches–Caen highway and threaten to outflank not merely the Tilly positions but the enemy lines as far as Caen. Protected on the west flank by the 1st Division's progress to Caumont, this maneuver began on the afternoon of 12 June, aided by arrangements for using one road

that lay in First Army's zone. By dark, leading elements of the 7 Armoured Division were two miles northeast of Caumont, and prospects seemed good for a decisive envelopment.

These hopes were dashed on 13 June. The 50 Division, renewing the attack from the north, made no progress at Tilly-sur-Seulles. The *2d Panzer Division*, arriving at the last minute on the highway from the southwest, was thrown at Villers-Bocage just after the advance elements of 7 Armoured Division reached the village. The enemy attack was repelled in heavy fighting, but the British could not both hold this position and continue their thrust to envelop the *Panzer Lehr Division* at Tilly-sur-Seulles. The 7 Armoured Division was withdrawn and occupied defensive positions two miles northeast of Caumont. The timely arrival of the *2d Panzer* enabled the enemy to retain an area which they evidently regarded as having major importance. Both Tilly-sur-Seulles and Villers-Bocage remained, until the great Allied offensive in late July, as the western bastions for German defense of the Caen–Orne Valley sector.

On the 2d Division front, the 9th Infantry attacked south on an axis parallel to the Caumont thrust. The 9th's objective was the Littcau ridge, which was close to the Cerisy Forest and detached from the hills to the south and east. Nearly 500 feet above sea level, its position made the ridge important both for observation and for protecting the flank of the Caumont salient. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 9th Infantry advanced two miles to their objective by 0940, 12 June. Enemy opposition had been very light, but by afternoon vigorous offensive patrolling was initiated by elements identified as belonging to the *3d Paratroop Division*. This activity continued through 13 June, especially against Company C, which had moved to an advance position on dominating ground at Montrabot Hill. Supporting the 9th Infantry, the 15th Field Artillery Battalion fired 828 rounds on the 12th and 1,320 the next day. Enemy artillery action was light; no counterbattery fire was reported.

Crossing the Elle River

As it worked out, the attack of V Corps on 12–13 June shows marked contrast between developments on the right and left wings. The main effort toward Caumont, involving the 1st Division and the 9th Infantry of the 2d Division, reached its objectives with only slight difficulty. To the west, the 29th Division and the 38th Infantry of the 2d Division met a type of enemy resistance which spelled the end of the rapid advances made since 7 June. The Germans defended the approaches to Hill 192 with a vigor proving the importance they attached to St-Lô, committing in this area the first considerable reinforcements to be used against V Corps. Although the Elle River was a small, fordable stream, its crossing involved a number of bitterly contested actions.

On the 2d Division's right, the 23d Infantry had the mission of passing through the positions of the 38th, attacking across the Elle, and occupying the Berigny–Hill 192 area. As planned, the attack was to be made in rather separated thrusts by two battalions of the 23d: the 1st would cross the Elle southwest of Cerisy-la-Forêt and move south toward the hill; nearly three miles away, on the far side of Cerisy Forest, the 2d Battalion was to strike west across the Elle on the St-Lô highway, through Berigny. The attack jumped off at 0600 after a 20-minute artillery preparation by the 37th and 38th Field Artillery Battalions. The 1st Battalion got across the small stream but was not far past the line of departure

when it began to meet effective resistance. Helped by patches of woodland which concealed their movements, enemy infantry counterattacked the 1st Battalion on its western flank and threatened its rear. The battalion fell back a mile, staying south of the river. The 2d Battalion, coming out of Cerisy Forest on the Berigny highway, was stopped practically at the line of departure by heavy machine-gun and mortar fire from the west bank of the Elle. The 3d Battalion was then moved through Cerisy Forest to attack between the other two; its advance got as far as the Elle by early afternoon and was stopped there on the east bank.

The enemy was benefiting greatly by observation from Hill 192, and an air mission of fighter-bombers was directed against that height before dark. Supporting artillery was very active during the day, the 37th and 38th Field Artillery Battalions firing over 2,600 rounds. The artillery effort was increased late in the day as a result of requests for fire to stop local enemy counterattacks, which amounted to aggressive thrusts by small units. The enemy kept the initiative through the night, alarming the 2d Battalion at 0151 with a heavy burst of small-arms fire, and probing at other points along the line. Enemy artillery, though light, showed increased activity. Identifications of prisoners revealed that elements of the *352d Division* were north of Hill 192, but that units of the *8th Paratroop Regiment*, *3d Paratroop Division*, were in the Berigny area. This division was regarded as a first-class unit of very high fighting quality.

General Robertson planned to resume the attack on 13 June, with two battalions of the 38th Infantry moving on Hill 192 from the north. Starting at 0800, these units passed through the 1st Battalion of the 23d Infantry and made good progress for two miles south of the Elle. They were hitting stronger opposition when the attack was stopped in the afternoon by division order; the 38th and 23d Infantry Regiments were to prepare their present positions for defense against possible enemy attack. Artillery support of this action had been heavy and effective; the 12th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzers) fired 1,445 rounds, the 37th Field Artillery Battalion 4,400 rounds, and the 38th Field Artillery Battalion 841 rounds. The 2d Division had made some progress on 13 June, but was still two miles north of Hill 192 and had not succeeded in getting possession of the Berigny–St-Georges-d'Elle area. Losses reflected the heavier fighting on these two days, the 23d Infantry reporting 211 casualties and the 2d Division totals being 540. In the same period the 1st Division lost 92 men.

To the northwest of Berigny, the 29th Division encountered similar difficulties in crossing the Elle River. In the attack plan for 12 June, the division's main effort was to be made by the 115th Infantry, with the 175th in defensive positions on the west flank of V Corps and the 116th in reserve. The 747th Tank Battalion was held in division reserve to be in readiness for counterattack. Three (plus) battalions of division artillery were to render close support for the 115th Infantry. That unit was ordered to attack across the Elle at 0500, its objectives St-Clair-sur-Elle and Couvains, in an operation which would protect the right flank of the 2d Division as it advanced on Hill 192.

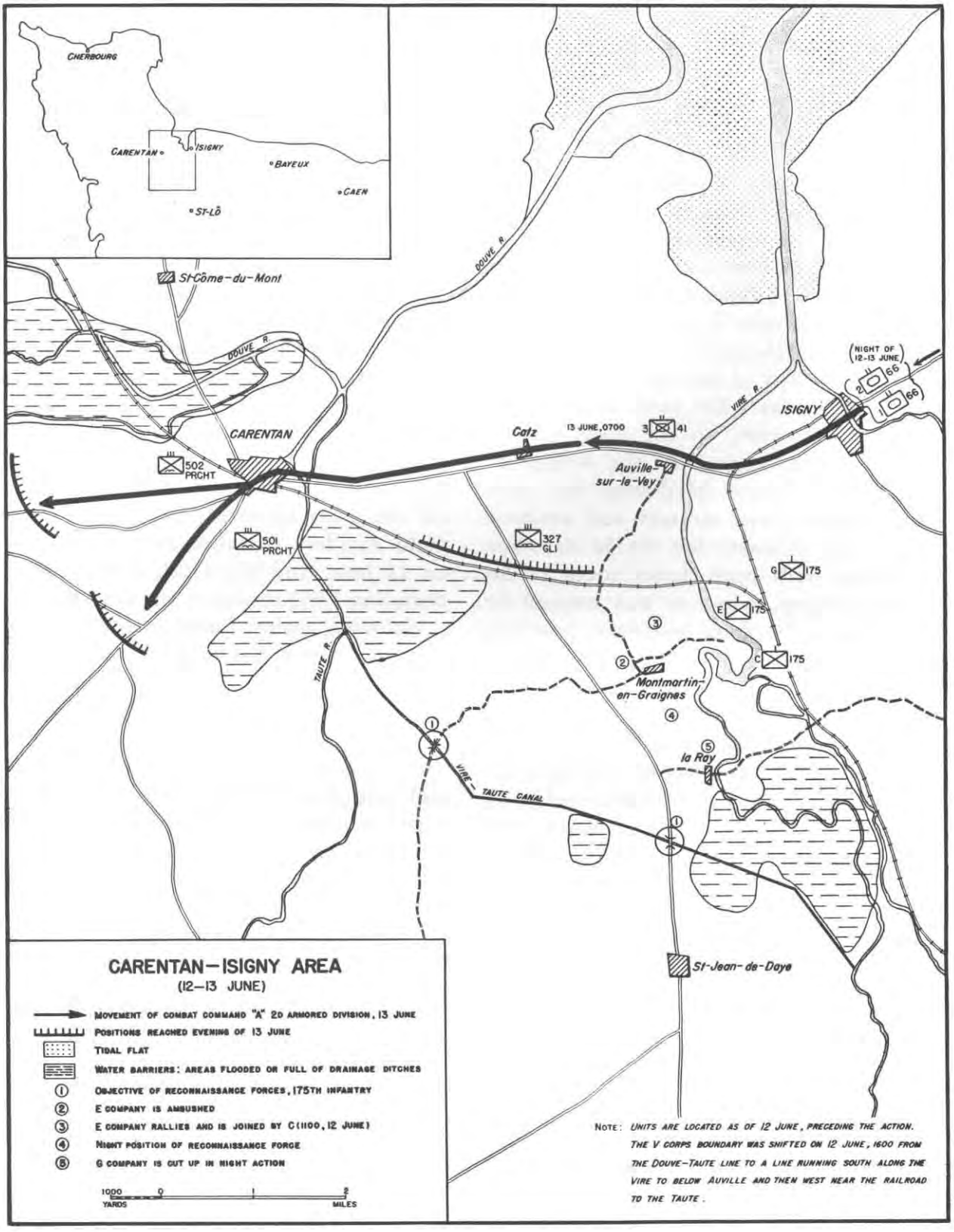
Because of the opposition offered by the Germans, the Elle River crossing was to be more difficult than those of the Aure and Vire, much larger streams. The Elle itself was only 10 feet wide, but the very steep and wooded southern bank gave good ground for well-concealed emplacements. During the night, 29th Division artillery placed interdictory fire once an hour on St-Clair-sur-Elle, St-Jean-de-Savigny, and Couvains.

The 115th Infantry attacked with 2 battalions abreast, after 20 minutes of heavy preparatory fires by 4 artillery battalions. Company K, leading the 3d Battalion, was disorganized and suffered 32 casualties from shells which it believed to be "shorts" from friendly guns; this belief was later disproved, but by timing their own fire with the U. S. artillery preparation the Germans had affected the morale of the assault force.

Despite these difficulties, Company I and a platoon of Company K got across the stream east of the north–south road to St-Jean-de-Savigny; the rest of the battalion followed and by 0830 was 1,200 yards south of the crossing. However, to the right the 1st Battalion was stopped at the stream by heavy and accurate small-arms fire, with some support from mortars and antitank guns. This situation left the 3d Battalion advancing with open flanks south of St-Jean-de-Savigny, where it was stopped by machine-gun fire from hedgerow positions that could not be located. An enemy column, including some armored vehicles, came north on the road from Couvains and deployed in the hedgerows to east and west. By the end of the morning the 3d Battalion was fighting on the defensive to avoid being cut off from the rest of the division, was short of ammunition, and was suffering from accurate mortar fire and close-up shelling from antitank or self-propelled guns. In the early afternoon, K and I Companies withdrew to the starting positions; other elements failed to receive the withdrawal orders and came back two hours later in some disorder. The battalion's losses had been severe.

Division had begun by noon to take measures for rebuilding the attack. Two platoons of the 747th Tank Battalion were sent forward; attempting to spearhead the 1st Battalion of the 115th, the tanks were stopped by skillful use of antitank guns, three vehicles being knocked out, with nine casualties. Alerted at 1630, the 116th Infantry took over the attack in the evening. At 2200 it had two battalions across the Elle, and the 3d Battalion of the 115th (now attached to the 116th) had recrossed the river. By daylight of 13 June the attack had neared its objectives. That morning, coordinating its efforts with the 2d Division's attack just to the east, the 116th managed to fight into St-Clair-sur-Elle and Couvains. Division artillery continued to deliver heavy fires in support of the attack; its 6 (plus) battalions (of which one was supporting the 175th Infantry) fired 125 missions during the 2 days, and rounds expended after 1000, 12 June, included 2,736 high explosive and 400 white phosphorus. Of the units involved, the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion fired 1,952 rounds on 12 June, and the 110th Field Artillery Battalion 1,053 rounds in the same period.

No fresh enemy forces had appeared in this area despite continued reports on 12–13 June indicating the approach of armor, believed to be the *17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division*. Elements of several units of the *352d Division* and of the *30th Mobile Brigade* had rallied after their earlier reverses and were putting up determined resistance. North of St-Clair-sur-Elle, the Germans had made maximum use of prepared positions, with well-placed fields for automatic fire. In the St-Jean-de-Savigny area, the enemy had employed mobile tactics, involving infiltration and counterattack by small units on the flanks of advancing U. S. forces. German artillery support was still weak, with some self-propelled guns in use. It was clear that the enemy was prepared to hold Hill 192 with every means at his disposal. The engagement at the Elle on 12–13 June was, in fact, a foretaste of the bitter fighting to come in this sector. Most of the 29th Division's 547 casualties for the 2 days were


CHERBOURG
CARENTAN
ISIGNY
BAYEUX
CAEN
ST-LÔ
St-Côme-du-Mont
DOUVE R.
CARENTAN
502 PRCHT
501 PRCHT
327 GLI
Cotz
13 JUNE, 0700
3 41
VIRE R.
ISIGNY
NIGHT OF 12-13 JUNE
2 66
1 66
Auville-sur-le-Vey
G 175
E 175
C 175
TAUTE R.
Montmartin-en-Graignes
la Ray
VIRE - TAUTE CANAL
St-Jean-de-Daye
CARENTAN—ISIGNY AREA
(12—13 JUNE)
MOVEMENT OF COMBAT COMMAND "A" 2D ARMORED DIVISION, 13 JUNE
POSITIONS REACHED EVENING OF 13 JUNE
TIDAL FLAT
WATER BARRIERS: AREAS FLOODED OR FULL OF DRAINAGE DITCHES
① OBJECTIVE OF RECONNAISSANCE FORCES, 175TH INFANTRY
② E COMPANY IS AMBUSHED
③ E COMPANY RALLIES AND IS JOINED BY C (1100, 12 JUNE)
④ NIGHT POSITION OF RECONNAISSANCE FORCE
⑤ G COMPANY IS CUT UP IN NIGHT ACTION
1000 0 1 2
YARDS MILES
NOTE: UNITS ARE LOCATED AS OF 12 JUNE, PRECEDING THE ACTION. THE V CORPS BOUNDARY WAS SHIFTED ON 12 JUNE, 1600 FROM THE DOUVE—TAUTE LINE TO A LINE RUNNING SOUTH ALONG THE VIRE TO BELOW AUVILLE AND THEN WEST NEAR THE RAILROAD TO THE TAUTE.

MAP NO. 9

suffered in their first battle for the approaches to St-Lô. Five miles from that town on 13 June, the 29th Division entered it on 18 July, while Hill 192 was captured by the 2d Division on 11 July only after costly fighting for every hedgerow on its slopes.

Action West of the Vire

The Allied invasion began with three separate beachheads; these had to be welded into one before the first phase of operations could be considered accomplished. V Corps and the British Second Army had met at their boundary on 8 June in the Port-en-Bessin area, but four days later, solid junction with VII Corps was still to be achieved. The main obstacle was enemy resistance at Carentan, defended by the *6th Paratroop Regiment*. From 10 to 12 June, the 101st Airborne Division was attempting to capture Carentan and reach the neck of land between the Douve and Vire rivers. On 10 June the 327th Glider Infantry had crossed the Douve between Carentan and the sea, contacting V Corps' bridgehead at the Vire, but this link was slender (Map No. XIV).

On the next two days the 327th was putting its main effort west toward the town, and V Corps units were called on for some assistance in protecting its flank. The small bridgehead at Auville-sur-le-Vey, established by the 175th Infantry on 10 June, was strengthened at 1700 the next day by arrival of the 3d Battalion, 41st Armored Infantry (2d Armored Division). On 11 June, the 29th Division was ordered to send a rifle company over the Vire south of the railway crossing, with missions of reconnoitering the area near Montmartin-en-Graignes and capturing two highway bridges southwest of it on the canal connecting the Vire and Taute Rivers (Map No. 9). By holding these two bridges, First Army would be more secure against the threat of an armored attack from St-Lô into the thin area of link-up between V Corps and VII Corps. This small operation, ordered to be carried out on 12 June, turned out to be much more than a routine reconnaissance in force.

The area of Montmartin had not been adequately patrolled, so the 175th Infantry decided to send a task force of two companies, E and C, each reinforced by a section of heavy mortars and one of heavy machine guns; Company C of the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion was to provide the equipment for crossing the stream at two selected sites. As a result of various delays in assembling and getting started, the units did not reach the river in time to make the crossing under cover of darkness, as planned. Engineer trucks, carrying assault boats, got to the Vire about 0700. This tidal stream, about 150 yards wide in the area, flows between 10-foot dikes bordering flat expanses of marshland on both sides. With four assault boats to a company, each carrying about ten riflemen, the crossing had to be effected in a series of waves. Not until the first started was there any sign of the enemy, who then opened up with ineffective machine-gun fire at long range. The enemy evidently had outposts along the edges of the marsh flats some 500 yards to the west, but their few machine guns could not reach the level of the river below the dikes. Company E, accompanied by General Cota and by Col. Paul R. Goode, commanding the 175th Infantry, got across without losses. Enemy rifle fire began to build up as the attacking troops started across the marshes, making short zigzag dashes and using cover afforded by the many drainage ditches. The German machine guns were not sited for grazing fire on the flat, and casualties were only six or seven men. The enemy fire died out as the company reached the edge of the higher ground. A quarter mile to the south, Company C crossed against similar resistance, but

radio communications were not working between the units as they advanced to make a prearranged junction in Montmartin. General Cota decided to continue with Company E.

Company E got near Montmartin about 0800 and started to work around it to the north. Enemy fire reopened from the west, at about 300 yards range, and again stopped as Company E pushed against it. It was decided not to wait for Company C, but to go after the objective at the canal bridge. In approach-march formation, Company E started south down a road banked with deep hedgerows, planning to turn west just beyond the village. Before they had gone a hundred yards, heavy enemy fire from machine-pistols and rifles came out of the hedges on both sides of the sunken road. Caught in an ambush of a type easily set in hedgerow country, Company E was cut up and badly scattered. It withdrew to reorganize, north of Montmartin, but some of the troops went all the way back to the river and recrossed. The remnants of Company E were joined at 1040 by a part of Company C, which had experienced somewhat similar opposition as it neared the village. At 1100 the group started south to try to get past Montmartin on the river side. About 400 yards southeast of the village they were brought under machine-gun fire from prepared emplacements, ahead and to the west. Several concentrations by the 224th Field Artillery Battalion were called for, but failed to neutralize the enemy positions. The terrain lacked cover affording an approach to the enemy position, so the task force decided to withdraw and try once again to pass the village on the north. At 1600 they were back where the morning fight had taken place; once again enemy machine guns and rifles stalled advance westward. A brisk fire fight was heard to the north, and word reached the task force that units of the 327th Glider Infantry were fighting south from the railroad. But no contact was made other than by patrols, and toward nightfall the 175th's task force was reduced to about 150 men and was running short of ammunition, water, and food. General Cota ordered them into the village. Light enemy resistance, of a type which had often managed to impose considerable delay, was quickly disposed of by combining movement with the fire of every available small-arms weapon. Later in the evening General Cota decided the village was undesirable for purposes of a night defense and moved to a slight rise, covered by an orchard, just southeast of Montmartin.

Considerable anxiety concerning the Vire–Taute area was felt at higher headquarters that night. Carentan had been entered from the north, but German troops were reported counterattacking into the town. There were indications of a possible enemy counterattack by armor from south of Carentan, and even reports of enemy patrols infiltrating into the Isigny area. At midnight of the 12th, First Army telephoned General Gerow of the possiblity that the enemy might launch a strong counterattack between Carentan and Isigny next morning, and directed him to send a battalion of tanks and one of armored infantry to that area from the 2d Armored Division. Their mission was to assist the 327th Glider Infantry and the 175th Infantry in defense of the thinly held corridor connecting V and VII Corps. This order was carried out by Combat Command A, 2d Armored Division, which sent the 2d Battalion of the 66th Armored Regiment to join the armored infantry already west of Isigny; by 0630 this force was ready to move south to meet the presumed German armor. Before Combat Command A could launch an attack planned to strike south from Auville, its mission was changed by orders from First Army. Joined by a second battalion of

tanks, the combat command went to assist the 101st Airborne Division in securing Carentan. The 327th Glider Infantry, after nearly reaching Montmartin on 12 June, withdrew next day to its former line protecting the highway.

Meantime the 175th Infantry had made an attempt to relieve the remnants of the task force near Montmartin-en-Graignes. Colonel Goode himself took Company G, reinforced with heavy weapons, across the river at midnight on the 12th. The company moved south close to the river and past General Cota's night position. About a mile south of Montmartin they ran into a German bivouac and inflicted many casualties in a surprise encounter. Rallying, the Germans came back and surrounded Company G, which fought on until its ammunition ran low. Scattered groups made their way back in the morning; Colonel Goode was taken prisoner.

These developments left General Cota's group in dangerous isolation, nearly surrounded and still short of ammunition and food. Division ordered it to withdraw and had supplies dropped from planes. Fighting their way back to the Vire, 110 men rejoined the 175th Regiment at midnight of 13 June.

In the action at Montmartin, the reconnaissance force had been engaged with elements of a mobile unit (estimated at a company) which had operated according to prearranged defensive plans. These involved a thin screen of outposts along the river, to observe and delay a crossing. Main defensive forces, using bicycles, were then rushed up from rear posts to the threatened area and used for counterattack. Armed with a high proportion of machine pistols and machine guns, the German units made maximum use of the defensive possibilities offered by hedgerows, supplemented by prepared emplacements, echeloned in depth, at points offering good fields of fire along the roads. While part of the defenders used these positions for delaying action, other groups would make probing attacks on the flank and rear of an advancing column, attempting to surround and cut it off. Depending on aggressive maneuver by very small units, these tactics were particularly effective against a force like the reconnaissance groups of the 175th Infantry, which lacked the numerical strength and fire power to "bull through" and disorganize the enemy screen.

The check at Montmartin was not important in the perspective of the main action on 13 June. While the 175th Infantry's task force was fighting for survival at Montmartin, Combat Command A and the 101st Airborne Division had settled the main issue: possession of Carentan. Their coordinated attack had carried two miles southwest of the town and insured its capture. No enemy counterattack from the south had developed to split the link between the corps, and Army now had resources sufficient to enlarge the corridor of communication between Isigny and Carentan. That mission was assigned on 13 June to XIX Corps, which became operational at noon the next day.

The Enemy Side

At the opening of the period, Seventh Army learned that Carentan had fallen on 11 June and that there were clear indications of Allied preparation for attack in the Caen–Bayeux sector (Map No. XVI).

During the morning of 12 June, Army received word that weak Allied reconnaissance elements had pushed close to Caumont. General Marcks, commanding LXXXIV Corps, was killed in a strafing attack. Army informed his successor that the 2d Panzer Division was on the way to fill the hole between the 352d and Panzer Lehr, with reconnaissance elements already near Caumont. According to Army's views at the mo-



A GERMAN 88-MM *in a favorite position, near a bend in road and well hidden from observation. Prime mover and service vehicles were across the road. Counterbattery by U. S. artillery often forced enemy to shift the guns to new positions after firing a few rounds.*

ment, the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division was not likely to be used in a counterattack to retake Carentan; instead, it must be held in readiness to keep open the corridor north of la Haye-du-Puits in the western Cotentin. Army was apprehensive of a new Allied landing operation in the Cherbourg area, in which air landings might be combined with assault from sea west of the port.

Higher headquarters, on the other hand, showed more concern over the Allied advance in the Caumont area, and Army Group sent orders that all possible measures be taken to plug the gap on the right of the 352d Division. Army informed von Rundstedt that reconnaissance elements of the Panzer Lehr and 2d Panzer Divisions had been put into that area, as well as some elements of the 3d Paratroop Division. Halftrack elements of 2d Panzer were expected to arrive by 14 June, and first elements of the 2d SS Panzer on the 15th; the latter unit was on its way from the mountains of central France, where it had been dealing with French Resistance groups. In Army's view, there was now no reason for alarm with regard to the gap.

The principal fighting of 12 June took place between the Elle and Tilly-sur-Seulles. As Seventh Army viewed it, the Allies were making a main effort to exploit the gap. They had

managed to reach Caumont, and the flank of Panzer Lehr was exposed. In the Elle sector, local attacks were regarded as checked, although LXXXIV Corps warned that the Allies evidently planned a drive to seize St-Lô.

Orders from Hitler came that evening to Seventh Army: the Allied bridgehead between the Orne and Vire Rivers must be attacked and destroyed piecemeal, beginning with the area east of Caen. Hitler also stressed that in future any German units cut off or surrounded must be prepared to fight where they stood, to the last man and the last bullet. No orders for withdrawal would be tolerated.

Seventh Army's intentions for 13 June were: attack east of the Orne by the 21st Panzer Division; preparations for an attack by 2d Panzer Division in the Caumont area; and use of parts of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division for recapture of Carentan.

From Seventh Army's viewpoint, 13 June was characterized by a defensive success which ended its worries over the gap in the Caumont–Villers-Bocage area. Elements of the 2d Panzer Division had arrived to fill the hole; admittedly just in time. With the 2d SS Panzer Divison coming up to the same area and expected shortly, Army now envisaged an attack northward toward Balleroy to shorten the line. In the Elle sector, some penetrations had been made by Allied units in what is described as bitter fighting, but the 3d Paratroop Division was in position to defend that area. The German attempt to retake Carentan had failed. Allied gains had been made west and north of Ste-Mère-Eglise, and this area was now Seventh Army's main concern.

A curious report from LXXXIV Corps informed Army that the U. S. 1st Division was "newly identified" in the fighting northeast of St-Lô, and that the U. S. 29th Division, exhausted, was reported to have left the line.

On 13 June, the enemy forces in the sector between the Vire and the Taute comprised a battlegroup ("Heintz") made up of elements of both the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division and the 352d Division, attached to the 17th SS for operations but under the 352d for administration. The battle group included two infantry battalions (one newly arrived), elements of two engineer battalions, and some remnants of the 352d Divisional Artillery (4th Battalion). Their mission was to hold the ground from Montmartin-en-Graignes to the western end of the Vire–Taute Canal, against "continuous" Allied attacks "in battalion strength," supported by tanks.

The status of the reinforcing columns at the end of 13 June was as follows: wheeled vehicles of the 2d SS Panzer were at Tours; wheeled vehicles of the 2d Panzer were at Caumont, but tracked vehicles still at Paris, where they had detrained for march by road; the battle group of the 265th Division had reached Coutances; that of the 266th was still in the Brittany area; the 353d Division was near Rennes. All small mobile units of the divisions and corps still in Brittany were to be organized into battalions and made ready for departure to the Normandy battle.

On 14 June, Corps reported that the 352d Division was completely used up and should be taken out of line. On account of delays in reaching the battle area, the 2d Panzer Division was still lacking its heavier antitank guns, armored artillery, and heavy tanks. So far, it had been operating with its armored infantry units, which had taken heavy losses. In Army's opinion, the effectiveness of the other elements of the division was likely to be reduced by the fact that they were being forced to make a long overland march to reach the battle area; in particular, it was noted that the average life of the motor in Panther tanks was estimated at 500 miles. Allied air attacks were still causing major complications, including command problems. Not only had General Marcks (LXXXIV Corps) been killed by strafing planes, but bombing of a Panzer Corps headquarters (British zone) had forced a transfer of command to a new headquarters. As for German air, Army was informed that it could not intervene in the battle because of the distance from its (usable) bases.

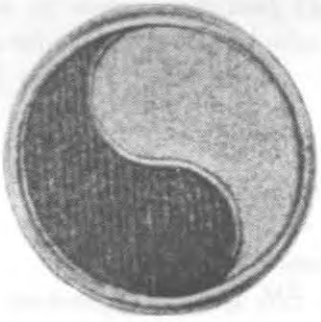
INSIGNIA OF DIVISIONS TAKING PART IN OMAHA BEACHHEAD OPERATION

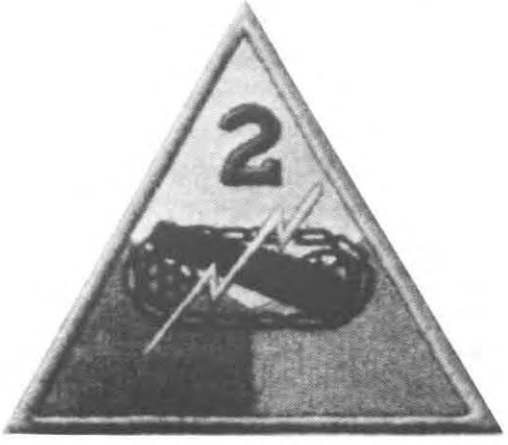


1st Division



2d Division





2d Armored Division



*Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group**

**This shoulder patch is worn by all Army personnel assigned to amphibian units.*

CONCLUSION

AT 0125 ON 13 JUNE, V Corps received instructions from First Army, immediately communicated to subordinate units, which had the effect of marking the end of the Omaha beachhead operation (Map No. XVI). For the time being V Corps was to hold in its present positions, employing aggressive action by strong patrols to keep the enemy uncertain of our intentions. The First Army's offensive effort was concentrated on the right flank, where VII Corps continued its drive toward Cherbourg. XIX Corps was to become operational at noon, 14 June; consisting of the 30th and 29th Divisions, its mission was to secure and enlarge the Carentan–Isigny corridor. First Army's instructions were confirmed by V Corps Field Order No. 5, published at 2100 on 13 June. The operations already under way on 13 June, in the Caumont and Hill 192 sectors, had been allowed to proceed during the day; the effect of Field Order No. 5 was to stop the effort toward Hill 192 at the positions reached that evening.

Starting from the smallest of footholds on D Day, V Corps had in one week driven inland 15 to 20 miles on a broad front. Junction had been firmly established with Allied forces on both flanks. The crisis of the whole operation had come at the very start, when unexpected enemy strength was met at the beach and the American troops had been called on for their utmost effort. Thereafter, the task of V Corps became progressively easier; the German 352*d Division* was pushed south at increasing speed and given no time to organize a defense. V Corps' advance was halted by decision of the higher command in view of overall tactical considerations. Its mission of capturing an adequate beachhead had been achieved.

In the course of a week's fighting casualties had mounted to 5,846 of which 1,225 were killed in action; more than half of these casualties came in the first day. Heaviest losses had fallen to the 29th Division, with 2,440 for the period; the 1st Division had 1,744 casualties, and the 2d Division 855. Enemy prisoners amounted to about 2,500, and casualties of the 352*d Division* had reduced that offensive unit to a shadow of its former strength.

Weeks of hard fighting were ahead, but the foundation for the final success of the Allied campaign in France had been firmly set. Scene of one of the hardest assault landings in military history, Omaha Beach was now part of a solid base for offensive operations which three months later reached the borders of Germany.

ANNEX NO. 1

Omaha Beachhead Unit Citations

(Published in War Department General Orders up to 15 September 1945)

1st Engineer Combat Battalion
1st Platoon, 30th Chemical Decontamination Company
1st Platoon, Company A, 203d Quartermaster Gas Supply Battalion
2d Ranger Infantry Battalion
5th Ranger Infantry Battalion
16th Infantry Regiment
18th Infantry Regiment
20th Engineer Combat Battalion
37th Engineer Combat Battalion
81st Chemical Battalion, Motorized
112th Engineer Combat Battalion
115th Infantry Regiment
116th Infantry Regiment
146th Engineer Combat Battalion
147th Engineer Combat Battalion
149th Engineer Combat Battalion
1st Battalion Team, 293d Joint Assault Signal Company
1st Platoon, 31st Chemical Decontamination Company
2d Platoon, 634th Medical Clearing Company
2d Squad, 1st Medical Depot Company
3d Battalion Team, 293d Joint Assault Signal Company
3d Platoon, 607th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company
27th Ordnance Bomb Disposal Squad
88th Quartermaster Railhead Company
214th Military Police Company
293d Joint Assault Signal Company (3 Battalion Teams)
461st Amphibious Truck Company
500th Medical Collecting Company
618th Ordnance Ammunition Company
967th Quartermaster Service Company
3205th Quartermaster Service Company
3704th Quartermaster Truck Company
3820th Quartermaster Gas Supply Company
Company B, 7th Naval Beach Battalion
Company C, 7th Naval Beach Battalion
Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 6th Engineer Special Brigade
Headquarters & Headquarters Detachment, 95th Quartermaster Battalion
Reconnaissance Platoon, 3565th Ordnance MAM Company

Surgical Teams, 3d Auxiliary Surgical Group
299th Engineer Combat Battalion
397th Antiaircraft Artillery Provisional Machine Gun Battalion of the 49th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade
741st Tank Battalion
743d Tank Battalion, Medium
834th Engineer Aviation Battalion

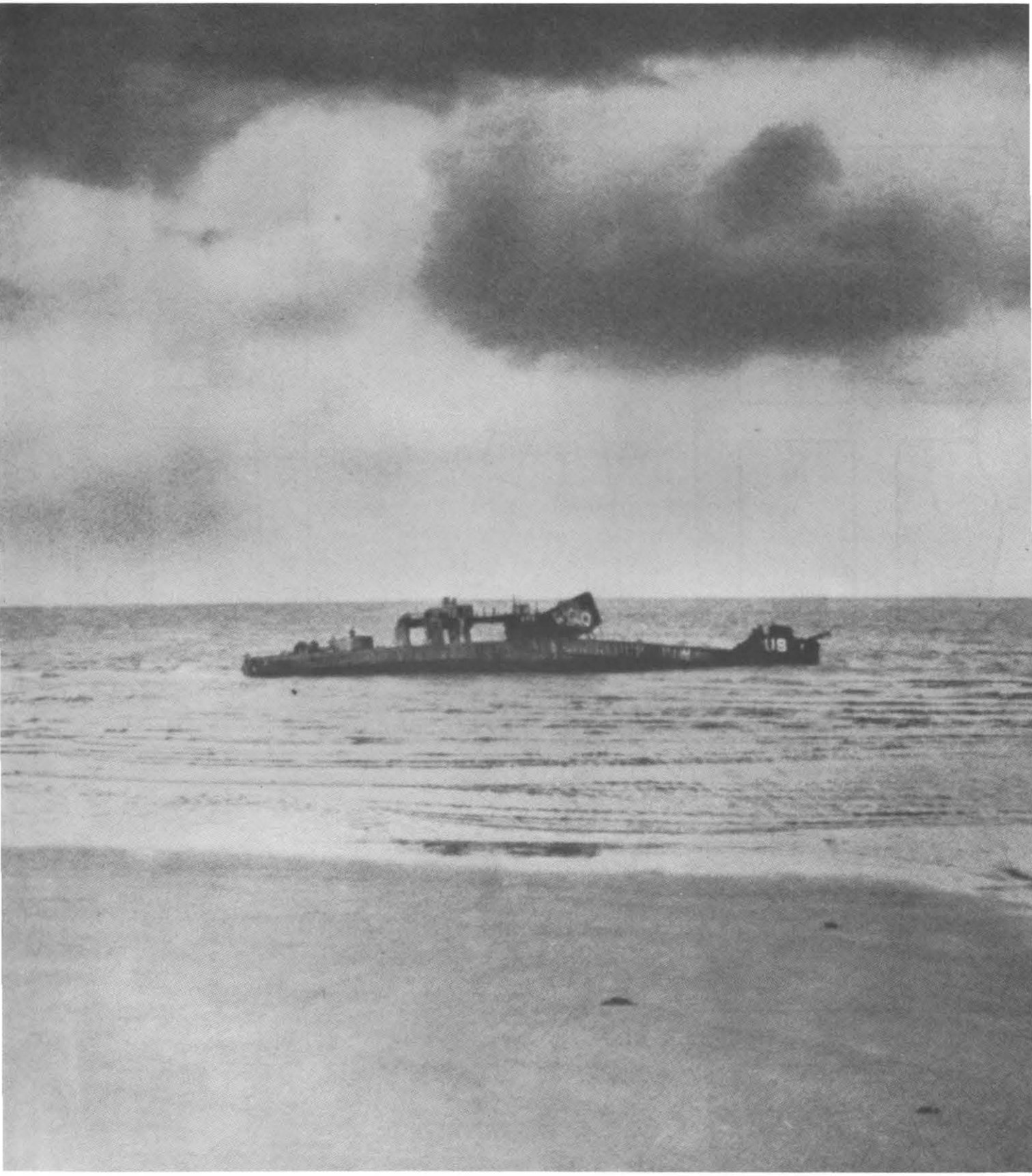
ANNEX NO. 2

Abbreviations

A. E. A. F.	Allied Expeditionary Air Force
LCA	Landing Craft, Assault
LCI	Landing Craft, Infantry
LCI (L)	Landing Craft, Infantry (Large)
LCG (L)	Landing Craft, Gun (Large)
LCM	Landing Craft, Mechanized
LCM (3)	Landing Craft, Mechanized (Mark 3)
LCT	Landing Craft, Tank
LCT (A)	Landing Craft, Tank (Armored)*
LCT (HE)	Landing Craft, Tank (Modified)*
LCT (5)	Landing Craft, Tank (Mark 5)
LCT (R)	Landing Craft, Tank (Rocket)
LCVP	Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel
LSI	Landing Ship, Infantry
LST	Landing Ship, Tank
NSFCP	Naval Shore Fire Control Party
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
BLT	Battalion Landing Team

*LCT (A) and LCT (HE) are modifications of the LCT used for close-in fire support.

LCI 91, *victim of a spectacular disaster about 0800 on D Day, as it looked in February 1945 when supply landings at Omaha had ceased.*



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INVASION AREA

Main landing beaches

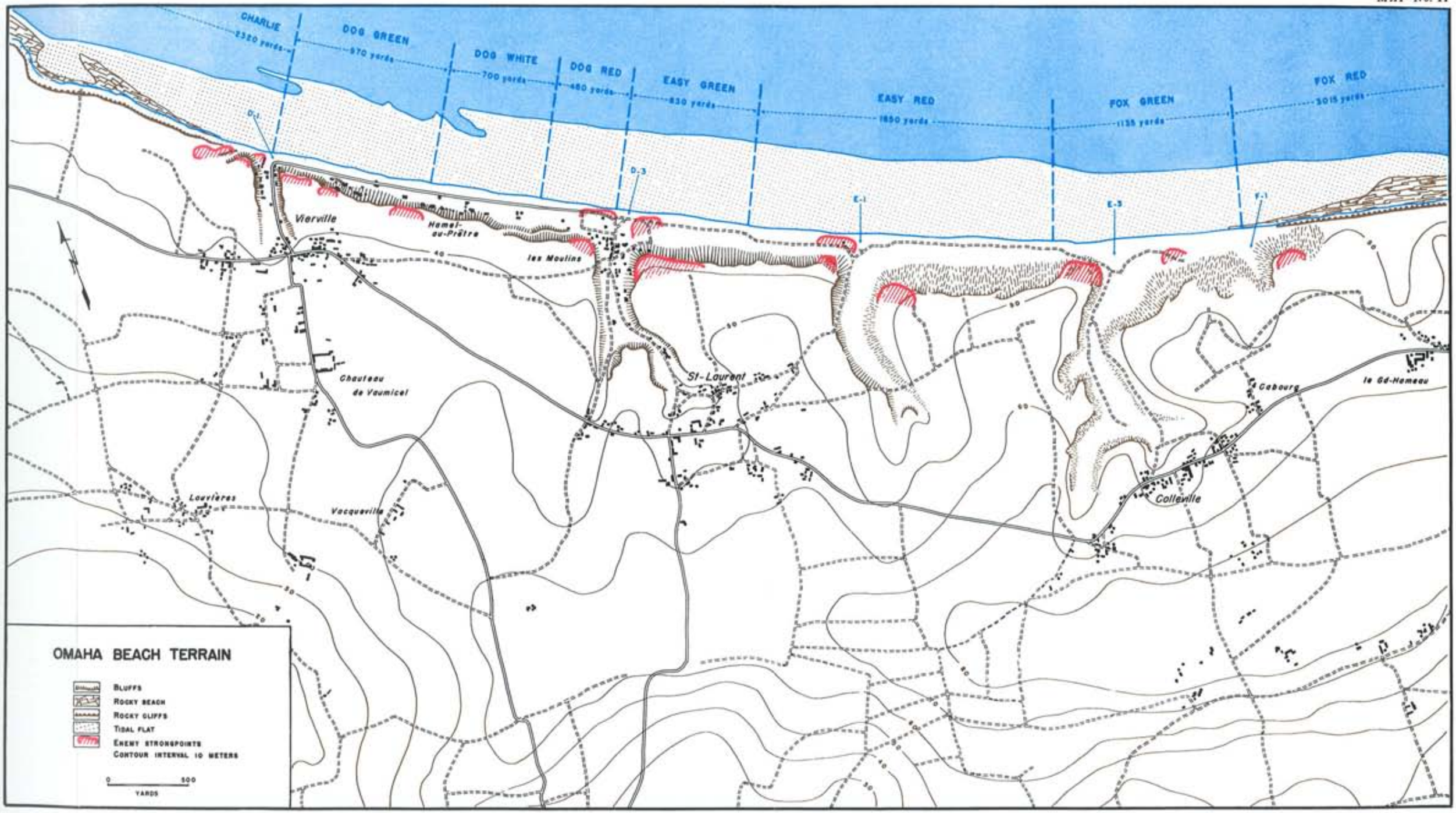
Air Drops

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Miles

NOTE: Positions of enemy units as estimated prior to D Day.
Allied units shown are those scheduled to land on D Day.

Cherbourg
709
COTENTIN
Valognes
Montebourg
243
Ste-Mère-Eglise
82
101
91
Carentan
la Haye-du-Puits
Lessay
Périers
Coutances
345
50
St-Lô
352
Isigny
Trévières
Grandcamp
Port-en-Bessin
Rye
716
Bayeux
Balleroy
Caumont
Villers-Bocage
Caen
6(-)
Cabourg
711
21
UTAH
VII
4
OMAHA
V
29-H
1+
FIRST U.S
SECOND BR.
30
60
5 CDN
3
1
N

MAP No. 11


CHARLIE
2320 yards
DOG GREEN
870 yards
DOG WHITE
700 yards
DOG RED
480 yards
EASY GREEN
830 yards
EASY RED
1850 yards
FOX GREEN
1135 yards
FOX RED
3015 yards
D-1
D-3
E-1
E-3
F-1
Vierville
Hamel-au-Prêtre
les Moulins
St-Laurent
Chateau de Vaumicel
Gabourg
le Gd-Hameau
Colleville
Louvières
Vaquerville
OMAHA BEACH TERRAIN
BLUFFS
ROCKY BEACH
ROCKY CLIFFS
TIDAL FLAT
ENEMY STRONGPOINTS
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 METERS
0
500
YARDS

TERRAIN INLAND FROM OMAHA BEACH

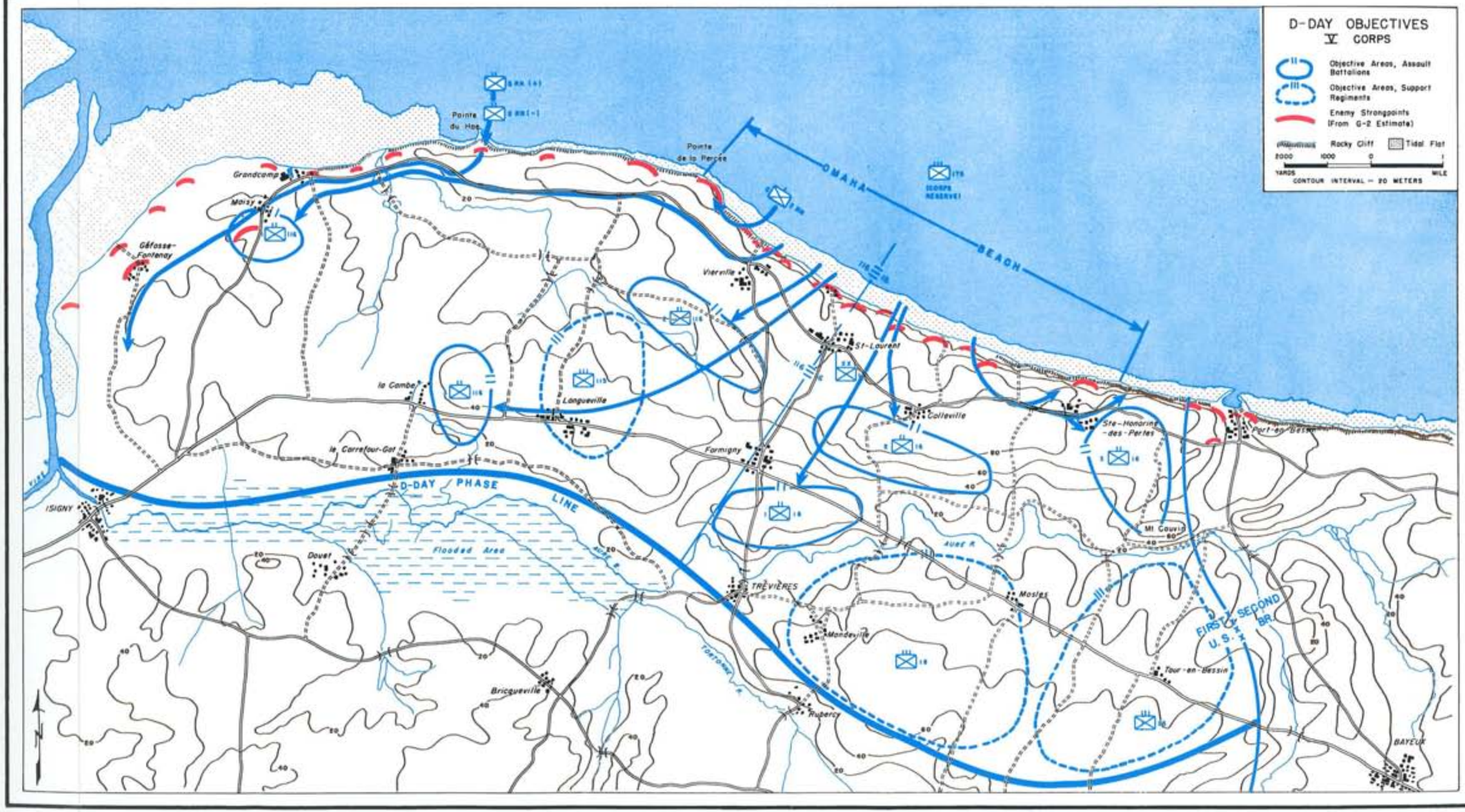
ALTITUDE (IN METERS)

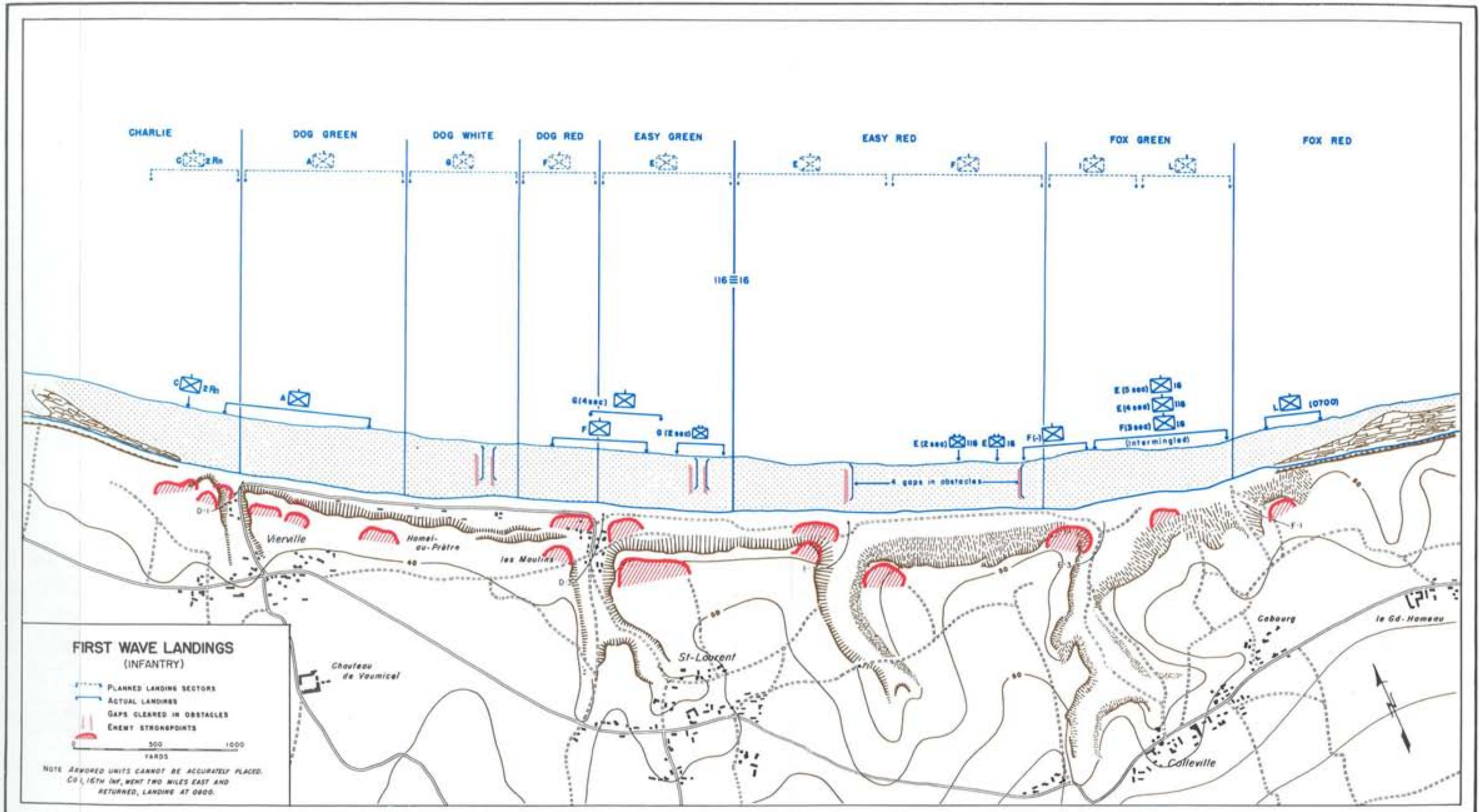
120+
80-120
40-80
0-40

MILES

OMAHA BEACH

Pointe du Hoe
Pointe de la Percée
Grandcamp
Maisy
Vierville
St. Laurent
Port-en-Bessin
Longueville
Colleville
Ste-Honorine-des-Pertes
Formigny
Isigny
Carentan
Trevieres
Colombières
Tour-en-Bessin
Bayeux
VIRE-TAUTE CANAL
Lison
St. Jean-de-Daye
TO ST-LO (9 MI)
CERISY FOREST


D-DAY OBJECTIVES
V CORPS
Objective Areas, Assault Battalions
Objective Areas, Support Regiments
Enemy Strongpoints (From G-2 Estimate)
Rocky Cliff
Tidal Flat
2000 1000 0
YARDS
MILE
CONTOUR INTERVAL — 20 METERS
OMAHA BEACH
Pointe du Hoc
Pointe de la Percée
Grandcamp
Maisy
Géfosse-Fontenay
Vierville
St-Laurent
Colleville
Ste-Honorine-des-Pertes
Port-en-Bessin
la Cambe
Longueville
le Carrefour-Gal
Formigny
ISIGNY
D-DAY PHASE LINE
Flooded Area
Douvet
Aure R.
TRÉVIÈRES
Mosles
Mondeville
Tour-en-Bessin
Bricqueville
Rubercy
Tortonne R.
FIRST U.S. SECOND BR.
BAYEUX
Mt Couvin
ISCORPS RESERVE


CHARLIE
DOG GREEN
DOG WHITE
DOG RED
EASY GREEN
EASY RED
FOX GREEN
FOX RED
116 ≡ 16
C 2 Rn
A
G (4 sec)
F
G (2 sec)
E (2 sec) 116 E 16
F (-)
E (5 sec) 16
E (4 sec) 116
F (3 sec) 16
(intermingled)
4 gaps in obstacles
L (0700)
Vierville
Hamel-au-Prêtre
les Moulins
St-Laurent
Chateau de Vaumicel
Gabourg
le Gd-Hameau
Colleville
FIRST WAVE LANDINGS
(INFANTRY)
PLANNED LANDING SECTORS
ACTUAL LANDINGS
GAPS CLEARED IN OBSTACLES
ENEMY STRONGPOINTS
0 500 1000
YARDS
NOTE ARMORED UNITS CANNOT BE ACCURATELY PLACED.
CO I, 16TH INF, WENT TWO MILES EAST AND
RETURNED, LANDING AT 0800.

CHARLIE | DOG GREEN | DOG WHITE | DOG RED | EASY GREEN | EASY RED | FOX GREEN | FOX RED

116≡16

Hq, 1st Bn

A-1 B-1 C-1 D-1 F-1 G-1 E-1 E-3

Vierville | Hamel-au-Prêtre | les Moulins | St-Laurent | Château de Vaumicel | Cabourg | le Gd-Hameau | Colleville

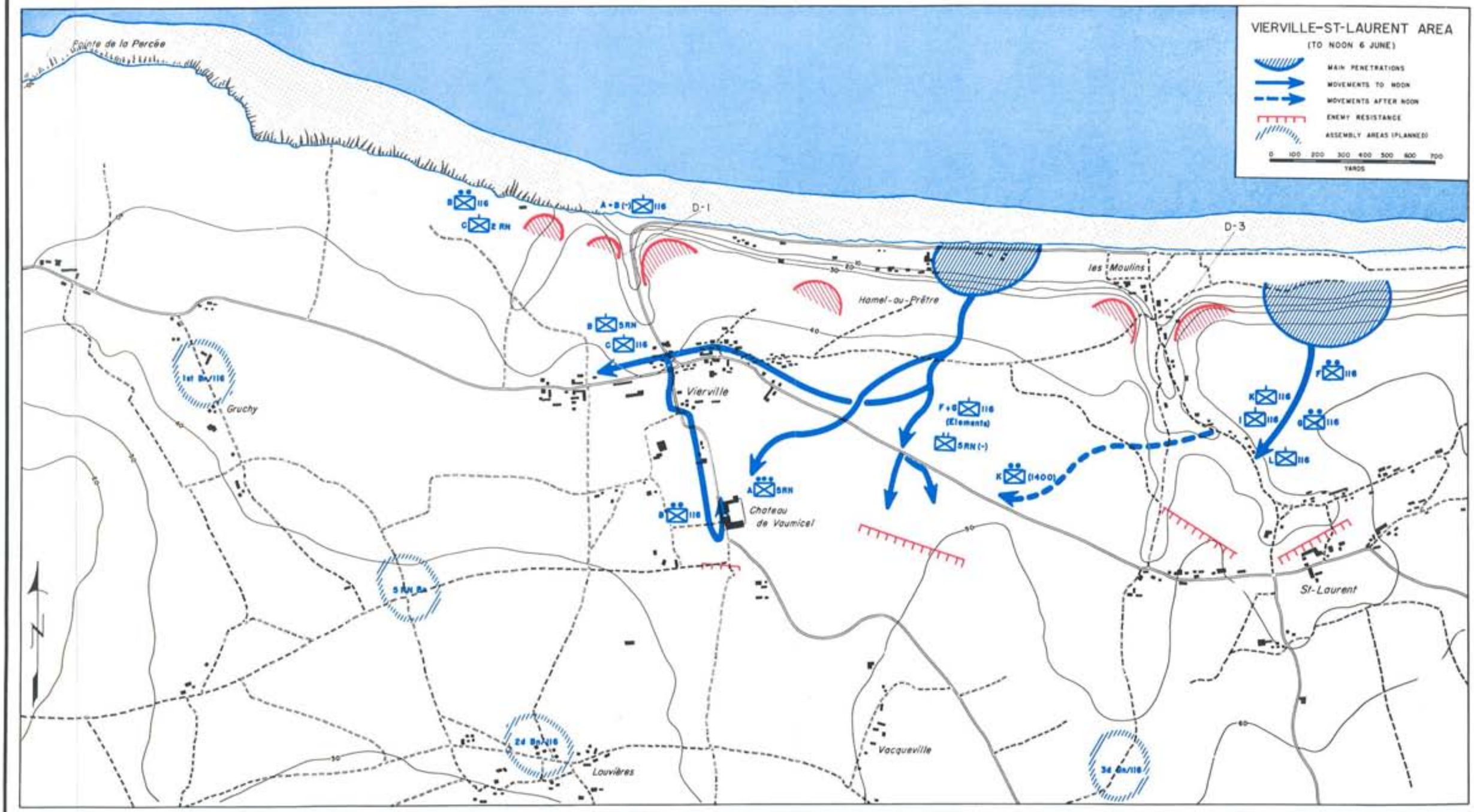
(E/116th, E+F/16th, intermingled)

LATER ASSAULT LANDINGS
(INFANTRY)

PLANNED LANDING SECTORS
ACTUAL LANDINGS

0 500 1000 YARDS

NOTE: PLANNED LANDING SECTORS, WITHIN EASY RED, OF G AND H COS, 16TH INF, ARE NOT CERTAIN. D CO, 116TH INF, LANDED SCATTERED FROM DOG GREEN TO DOG RED; H CO, 116TH INF, FROM DOG RED TO EASY GREEN


VIERVILLE-ST-LAURENT AREA
(TO NOON 6 JUNE)
MAIN PENETRATIONS
MOVEMENTS TO NOON
MOVEMENTS AFTER NOON
ENEMY RESISTANCE
ASSEMBLY AREAS (PLANNED)
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700
YARDS
Pointe de la Percée
B 116
C 2 RM
A + B (-) 116
D-1
D-3
les Moulins
Hamel-au-Prêtre
B 5 RN
C 116
Vierville
1st Bn/116
Gruchy
F + G 116
(Elements)
5 RN (-)
K (1400)
A 5 RN
Château
de Vaumicel
F 116
K 116
I 116
G 116
L 116
St-Laurent
5 RM Bn
24 Bn/116
Louvières
Vacqueville
34 Bn/116

DOG RED

EASY GREEN

EASY RED

FOX GREEN

FOX RED

D-3

E-1

E-3

les Moulins

St Laurent

Colleville

le Gd-Hameau

Cabourg

(PATROL)

(PATROL)

ST-LAURENT–COLLEVILLE AREA

(TO NOON 6 JUNE)

MAIN PENETRATIONS

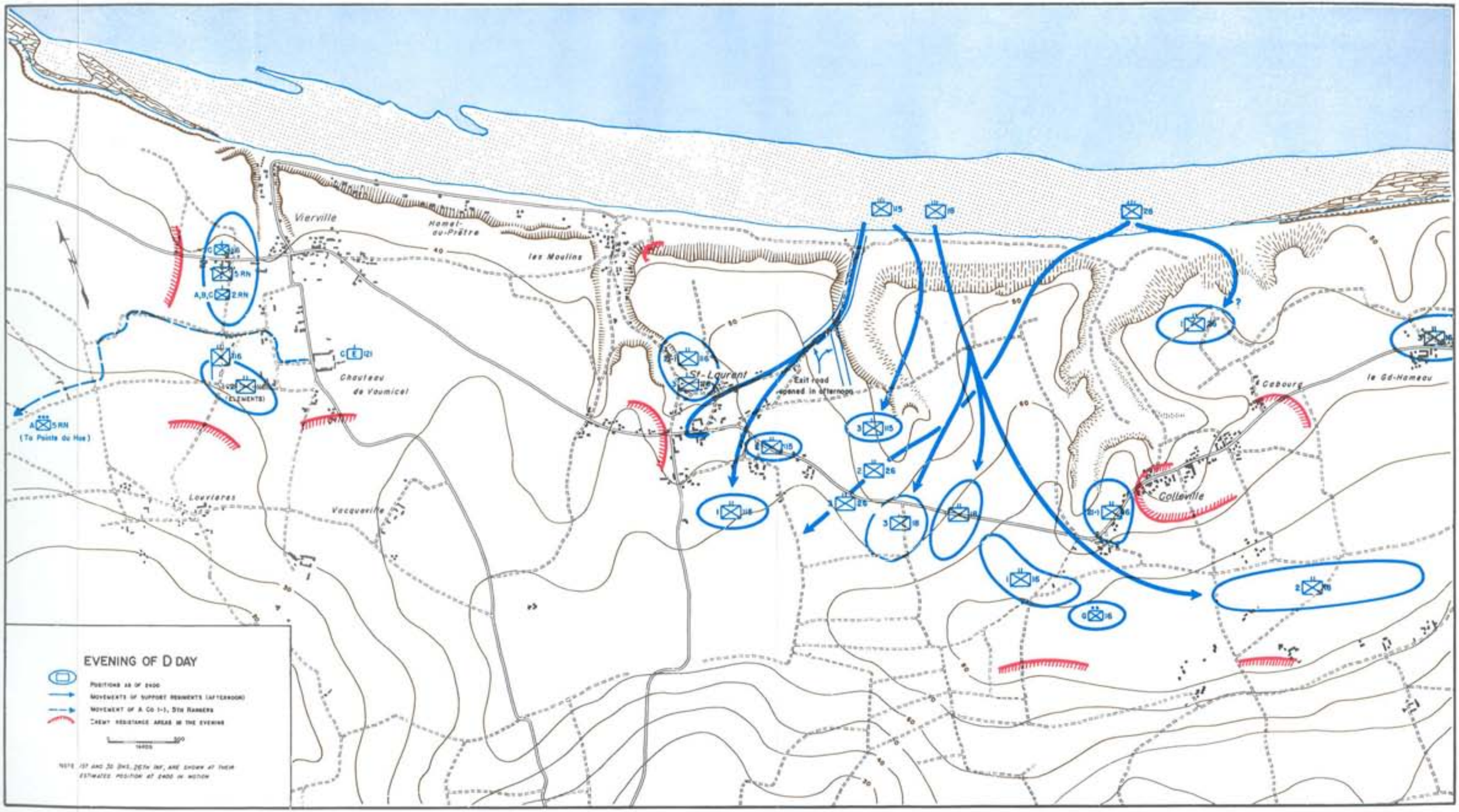
MOVEMENTS TO NOON

ENEMY RESISTANCE

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800

YARDS

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 METERS


Vierville
Hamel-du-Prêtre
les Moulins
St-Laurent
Exit road opened in afternoon
Chouteau de Vaumicel
Louvières
Vaquerie
Colleville
le Gd-Hameau
Gaburge
5 RN
2 RN
(ELEMENTS)
(To Pointe du Hoe)
EVENING OF D DAY
Positions as of 2400
Movements of support regiments (afternoon)
Movement of A Co 1-5, 5th Rangers
Enemy resistance areas in the evening
1000 yards
NOTE: 1st and 2d Bns, 26th Inf, are shown at their estimated position at 2400 in motion

THE D-DAY BEACHHEADS

Allied positions at 2400, 6 June

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 MILES

NOTE: POSITIONS OF AIRBORNE DIVISIONS OF U.S. VII CORPS, AND LOCATION OF GERMAN 914 AND 916 INFANTRY REGIMENTS ARE APPROXIMATE

COTENTIN

Cherbourg

Valognes

Montebourg

Ste-Mère-Eglise

Carentan

la Haye-du-Puits

Lessay

Périers

Coutances

Isigny

Trévières

Grandcamp

Port-en-Bessin

Bayeux

Ryes

Caumont

Balleroy

Villers-Bocage

Caen

Cabourg

St-Lô

Gonfreville

FIRST U.S. SECOND BR.

245

709 (-)

91

101 (-)

4

6

352

915 (-)

916

726 (-)

914

ZRN14

29

1

50 BR

3 GDN

716 (-)

3 BR

6 BR

711 (-)

21

LXXXIV

30

VII

V

DOUVE R.

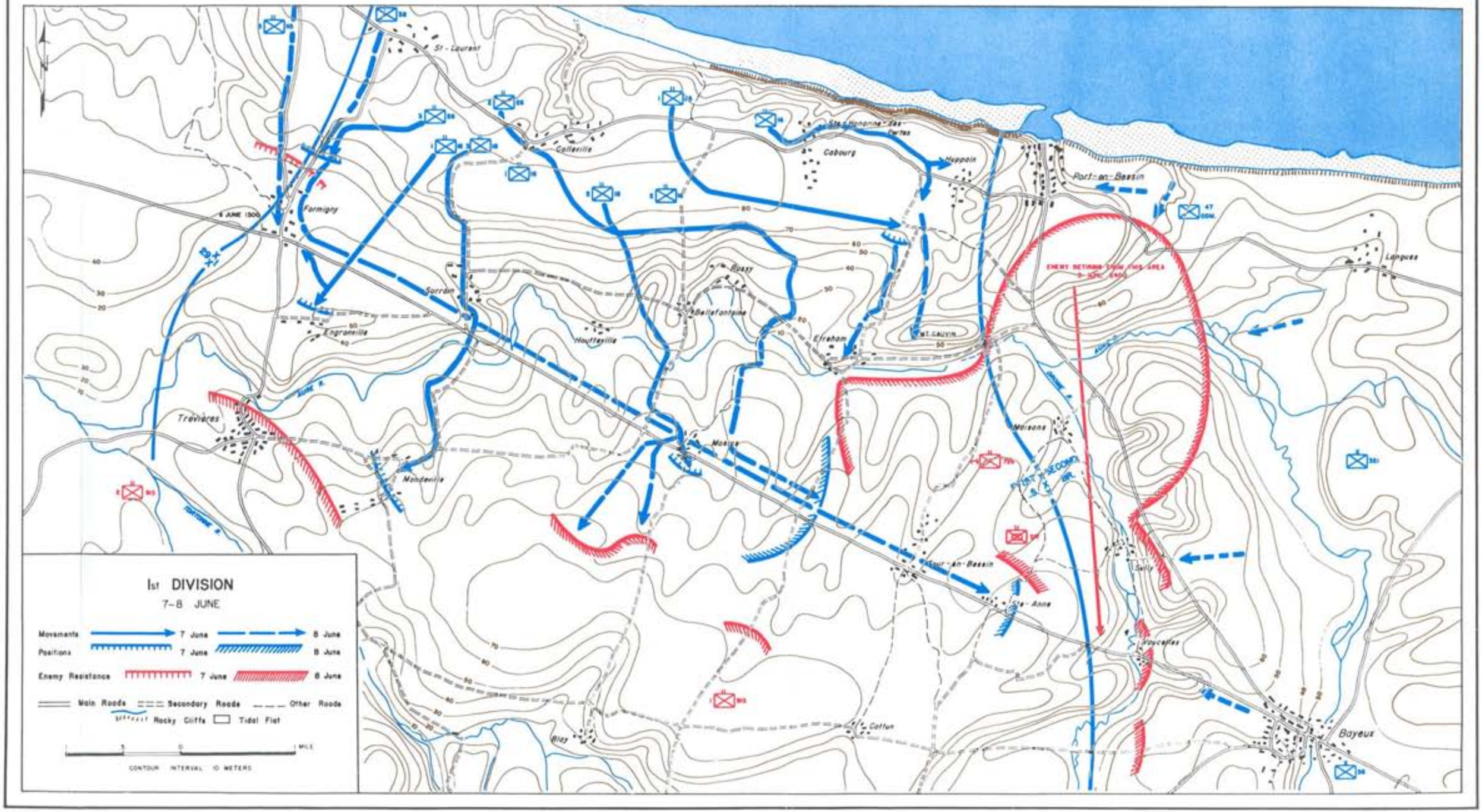
AURE R.

TAUTE R.

VIRE R.

DROME R.

ODNE R.


St - Laurent
Colleville
Cabourg
Houtteville
Formigny
Sommervieu
Engranville
Tréviéres
Moulins
Moulinville
Blay
Cottun
Bayeux
Longues
Maisons
Ste - Anne
Vaucelles
Port-en-Bessin
Huppain
Ellefontaine
Etreham
MT. CAUVIN
6 JUNE 1300
ENEMY RETIRING FROM THIS AREA
1st DIVISION
7-8 JUNE
Movements 7 June 8 June
Positions 7 June 8 June
Enemy Resistance 7 June 8 June
Main Roads Secondary Roads Other Roads
Rocky Cliffs Tidal Flat
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 METERS

29th DIVISION
7-8 JUNE

- Axis of U.S. movements on 7 June
- Axis of U.S. movements on 8 June
- U.S. night positions 7 June
- Enemy resistance areas
- Tidal flat

Contour interval – 10 meters

4000 0 1
YARDS MILE

Pointe du Hoc
Pointe de la Percée
Grandcamp
Maisy
Géfosse-Fontenay
Englesqueville
St-Pierre-du-Mont
Grucheville
Vierville
Chateau de Vaumicel
Louvières
Vaquerville
St-Laurent
Deux-Jumeaux
Montigny
Formigny
Normanville
Longueville
Canchy
Ecrammeville
Treviéres
Cardonville
Dumanville
La Combe
St-Germain-du-Pert
Isigny
VIRE R.
AURE R.
FLOODED AREA
Exit D-1
Exit D-3
Landing 7-8 June
(071630)
(090800)
20 X
Height

ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS
6–8 JUNE

- Units alerted as reinforcement
- Movement to 8 June (2400)
- Movement started; position reached is uncertain
- Areas of main allied air attacks on bridges
- Important railroads — Highways

0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES

Note: Positions of enemy units are approximate, and are shown to correspond with allied estimate of 3 June. (Except 245th Division) 353 Infantry Division alerted 10 June, 2SS Panzer Division alerted by 11 June. (Toulouse area).

GREAT BRITAIN

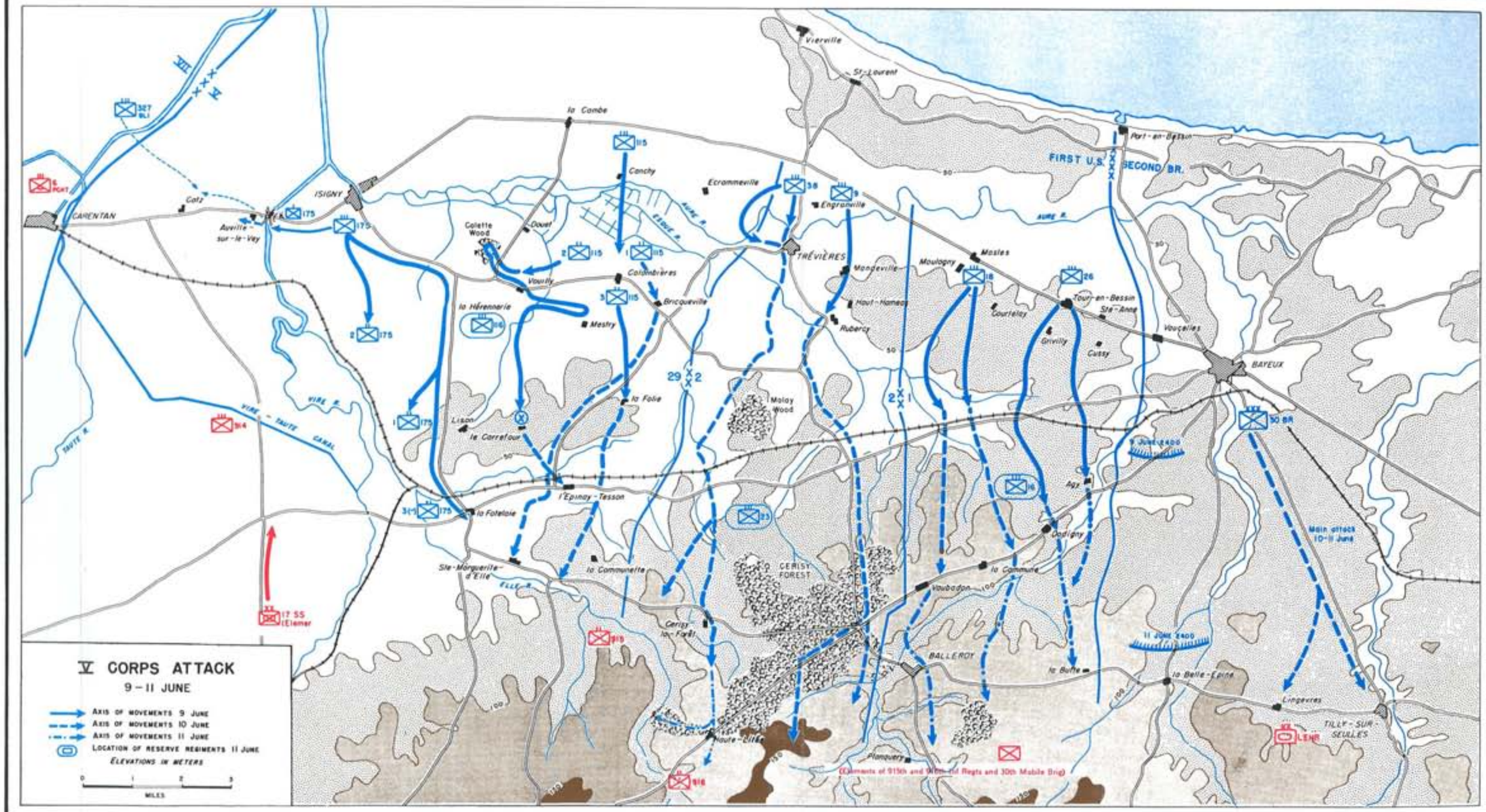
ENGLISH CHANNEL

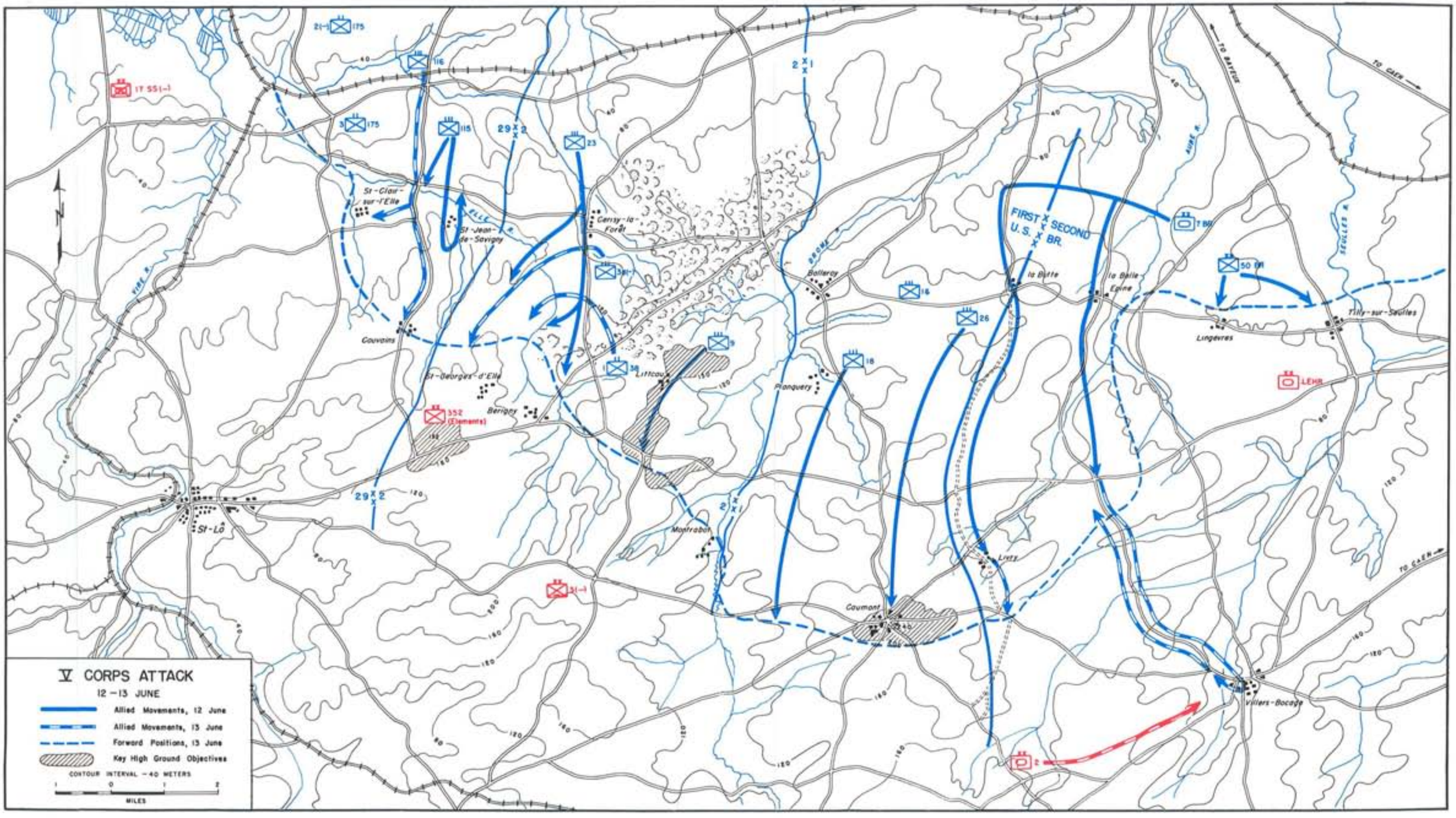
Units in or adjacent to Battle Zone

709 | 6 | 716
243 | 352 | 21
91 | 30 | 711

Cherbourg
Le Havre
Caen
Falaise
Argentan
Evreux
Dreux
Chartres
Paris
Rouen
Seine
Amiens
Lille
Reims
Marne
Loire
Avranches
Alençon
Le Mans
Laval
Orléans
Angers
Nantes
Brest
Rennes
Portiers

48 | 18 GAF | 19 GAF
47 | 331 | 102 | 55
49 | 326
344 | 85
348 | 2
245
17 GAF
346 | 84
353
266
7
3
343
5
265
275
156
12 SS
LEHR
17 SS


CARENTAN
Catz
Auville-sur-le-Vey
ISIGNY
la Combe
Vierville
St-Laurent
Port-en-Bessin
FIRST U.S. CORPS
SECOND BR.
Ecrammeville
Engranville
TRÉVIÈRES
Colette Wood
Douet
Vouilly
Calvados
Bricqueville
Mestry
la Hérennerie
Lison
le Carrefour
la Folie
Molay Wood
Mosles
Moulogny
Mondeville
Haut-Hamel
Rubercy
Courtelloy
Tour-en-Bessin
Ste-Anne
Grivilly
Cussy
Vaucelles
BAYEUX
VIRE - TAUTE CANAL
VIRE R.
TAUTE R.
AURE R.
l'Epinay-Tesson
la Fotelaie
Ste-Marguerite-d'Elle
ELLE R.
la Communelle
GERIST FOREST
Gerist-la-Forêt
Haute-Ellé
Planquery
Vaubadon
la Commune
Agy
Godigny
BALLEROY
la Butte
la Belle-Epine
Lingevres
TILLY-SUR-SEULLES
Main attack 10-11 June
9 June 2400
11 June 2400
(Elements of 915th and 916th Regts and 30th Mobile Brig)
17 SS (Elemer
V CORPS ATTACK
9 – 11 JUNE
Axis of movements 9 June
Axis of movements 10 June
Axis of movements 11 June
Location of reserve regiments 11 June
Elevations in meters
0 1 2 3
MILES


1T 551(-)
St-Clair-sur-l'Elle
St-Jean-de-Savigny
Cerisy-la-Forêt
Couvains
St-Georges-d'Elle
Berigny
Littcau
St-Lô
Montrabot
Planquery
Bollerey
la Butte
la Belle Epine
Lingèvres
Tilly-sur-Seulles
Lytot
Caumont
Villers-Bocage
FIRST X X SECOND U.S. X X BR.
TO BAYEUX
TO CAEN
VIRE R.
ELLE R.
DROME R.
AURE R.
SEULLES R.
LEHR
V CORPS ATTACK
12 – 13 JUNE
Allied Movements, 12 June
Allied Movements, 13 June
Forward Positions, 13 June
Key High Ground Objectives
CONTOUR INTERVAL – 40 METERS
MILES

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEACHHEADS

ALLIED FORWARD POSITIONS, MORNING 9 JUNE

ALLIED FORWARD POSITIONS, EVENING 13 JUNE

ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS, 7-13 JUNE

0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

NOTE: LINES IN BRITISH AND VII CORPS ZONES ARE APPROXIMATE. ALLIED UNITS ARE SHOWN IN POSITION OF 9 JUNE, WITH DATES OF REINFORCEMENTS AS LANDED. GERMAN UNITS ARE SHOWN IN POSITION OF 13 JUNE, WITH DATES INDICATING PERIOD OF ARRIVAL IN BATTLE AREA.

Valognes
709
Montebourg
(11 JUNE)
Ste-Mère-Eglise
Pont-l'Abbé
101
Carentan
Isigny
Trévières
Bayeux
50 BR.
7 BR
(6-10 JUNE)
51 BR.
(6-11 JUNE)
FIRST U.S. XXXX SECOND BR. XXXX
Cabourg
711
346
(13 JUNE)
3 CDN.
3 BR.
6 BR.
La Haye-du-Puits
265 (-)
(13 JUNE)
17 SS
(10-12 JUNE)
Périers
Carisy Forest
Balleroy
716 (-)
CAEN
21
12 SS
(7-8 JUNE)
Tilly-sur-Seulles
Troarn
Lehr
(10 JUNE)
275 (-)
(11 JUNE)
352 (-)
St-Lô
3 (-)
(10-11 JUNE)
Caumont
21 (-)
(13 JUNE)
Villers-Bocage
Coutances
Torigny-sur-Vire