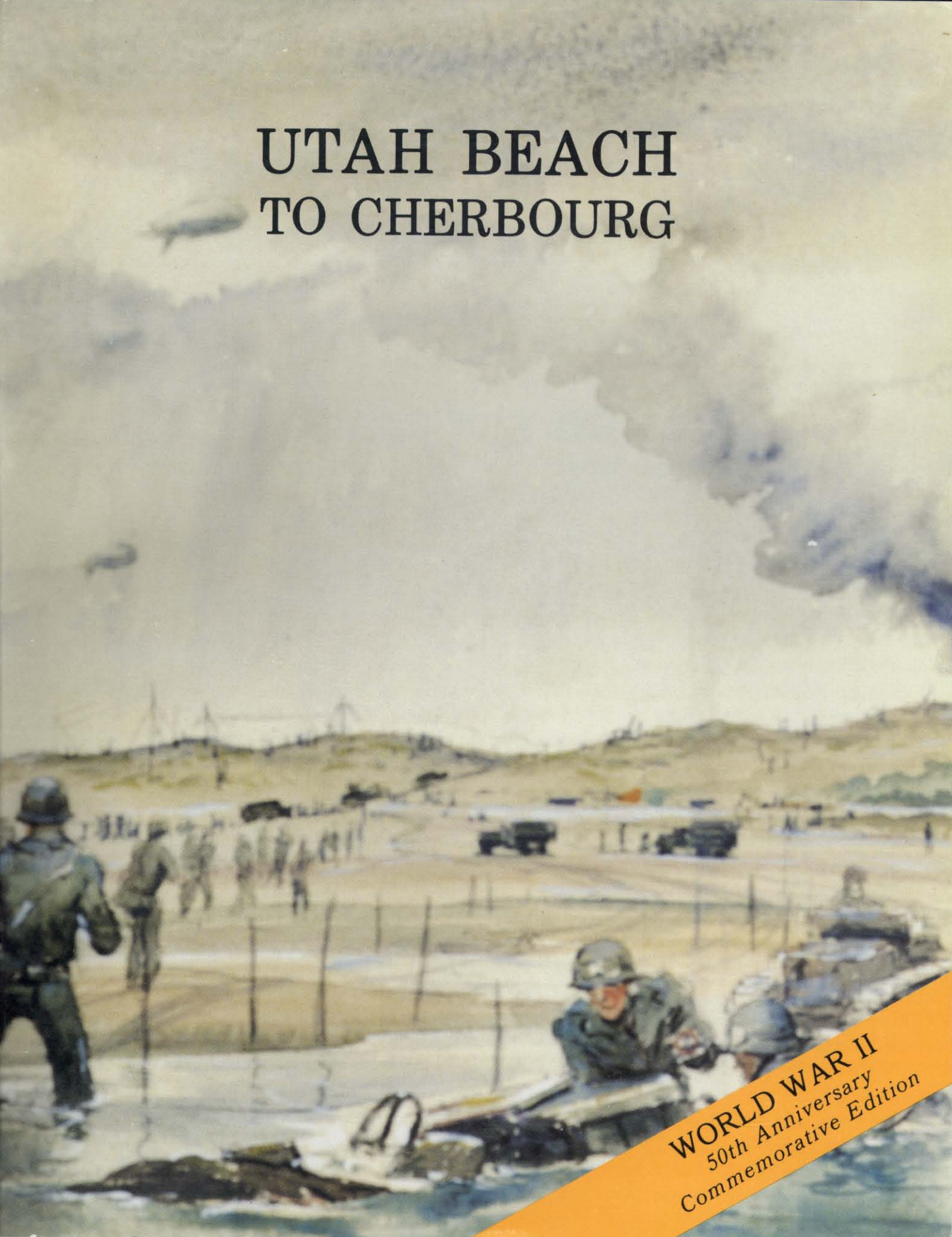
UTAH BEACH TO CHERBOURG



WORLD WAR II
50th Anniversary
Commemorative Edition

UTAH BEACH TO CHERBOURG

6 - 27 JUNE 1944



CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

UNITED STATES ARMY

WASHINGTON, D.C., 1990

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Foreword to CMH Edition

Utah Beach to Cherbourg is one of a series of fourteen studies of World War II operations originally published by the War Department's Historical Division and now returned to print as part of the Army's commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of that momentous clash of arms. These volumes, prepared by professional historians shortly after the events described, provide a concise summary of some of the major campaigns and battles fought by American soldiers. The skillful combination of combat interviews with primary sources, many of which are now lost, gives these unassuming narratives a special importance to military historians. The careful analysis of key operations provides numerous lessons for today's military students.

I am pleased that this entire group of studies will once again be available. I urge all military students and teachers to use them to enhance our collective awareness of the skill, leadership, daring, and professionalism exhibited by our military forebears.

Washington, D.C.
15 September 1989

HAROLD W. NELSON
Colonel, FA
Chief of Military History

FOREWORD

In a nation at war, teamwork by the whole people is necessary for victory. But the issue is decided on the battlefield, toward which all national effort leads. The country's fate lies in the hands of its soldier citizens; in the clash of battle is found the final test of plans, training, equipment, and—above all—the fighting spirit of units and individuals.

AMERICAN FORCES IN ACTION SERIES presents detailed accounts of particular combat operations of United States forces. To the American public, this record of high achievement by men who served their Nation well is presented as a preface to the full military history of World War II. To the soldiers who took part in the operations concerned, these narratives will give the opportunity to see more clearly the results of orders which they obeyed and of sacrifices which they and their comrades made, in performance of missions that find their meaning in the outcome of a larger plan of battle.



DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
Chief of Staff
United States Army

Department of the Army
Historical Division
Washington 25, D. C.
1 October 1947

Utah Beach to Cherbourg, thirteenth in the series called *American Forces in Action,* is the last of three narratives dealing with U.S. military operations in Normandy. Intended as a companion volume to *Omaha Beachhead,* published in 1946, the present study rounds out the account of the landings at corps level and below and relates the course of VII Corps combat operations which resulted in the capture of Cherbourg on 27 June 1944. The third volume, *St-Lô,* relates the operations of a single corps in the First Army's offensive during the first three weeks in July, designed to deepen the lodgment area preparatory to the great breakthrough from Normandy.

Utah Beach to Cherbourg is the work of Maj. Roland G. Ruppenthal, member of the 2d Information and Historical Service, attached to the First Army. The manuscript was edited under the supervision of Lt. Gordon Harrison of the Historical Section, European Theater of Operations, and in the Historical Division, War Department Special Staff. Although as published this book contains no documentation, the original manuscript, fully documented, is on file in the Department of the Army. The sources on which the narrative is based consist primarily of the official records of the units involved and of data collected by the writer and other historical officers in the field through interviews with participants in the action. Material on the enemy was derived chiefly from the War Diary of the German *Seventh Army,* which was captured in August 1944 by Polish forces at Falaise; from interviews with high-ranking German commanders; and from the war diaries of divisional units encountered in the Cotentin Peninsula. Of the American division records, only those of the 9th and 4th Divisions constitute adequate historical evidence. Only the barest outline of the 79th Division's operations is obtainable from official documents, and there were only scattered official records of the two airborne divisions. The gap in the records of the airborne division was largely filled by voluminous material gathered in interviews by Col. S. L. A. Marshall in the field shortly after the action. Supplementary data on the 9th and 4th Divisions were gathered by the author in the field, and additional material on the 4th Division made available by its historian, Lt. Col. William T. Gayle. No interviews were held in the 90th Division, and in the 79th Division a first-hand account of one regiment's action was not obtained until 1947. The paucity of material on these two divisions was keenly felt because of the inadequacy of their official records.

Despite prolonged research and care exercised in the assembly of materials, it is recognized that the information is not complete in all details and may involve minor errors of fact. Since the present narrative constitutes a preliminary study on which will be based a portion of the final Department of the Army history now in preparation, readers who have additional or corrective information are urged to send it directly to the Historical Division, Department of the Army, Washington 25, D. C.

The maps were prepared in the Cartographic Section of the Historical Division, under the supervision of Mr. Wsevolod Aglaimoff. Photographs were selected by Capt. Robert Bodell from the following sources: Army Signal Corps, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, Acme News Pictures, The Associated Press, and *Life*.

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U. S. COMMANDERS IN THE UTAH BEACHHEAD OPERATION. *Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins. (Ranks as of June 1944; photograph taken June 1944.)*

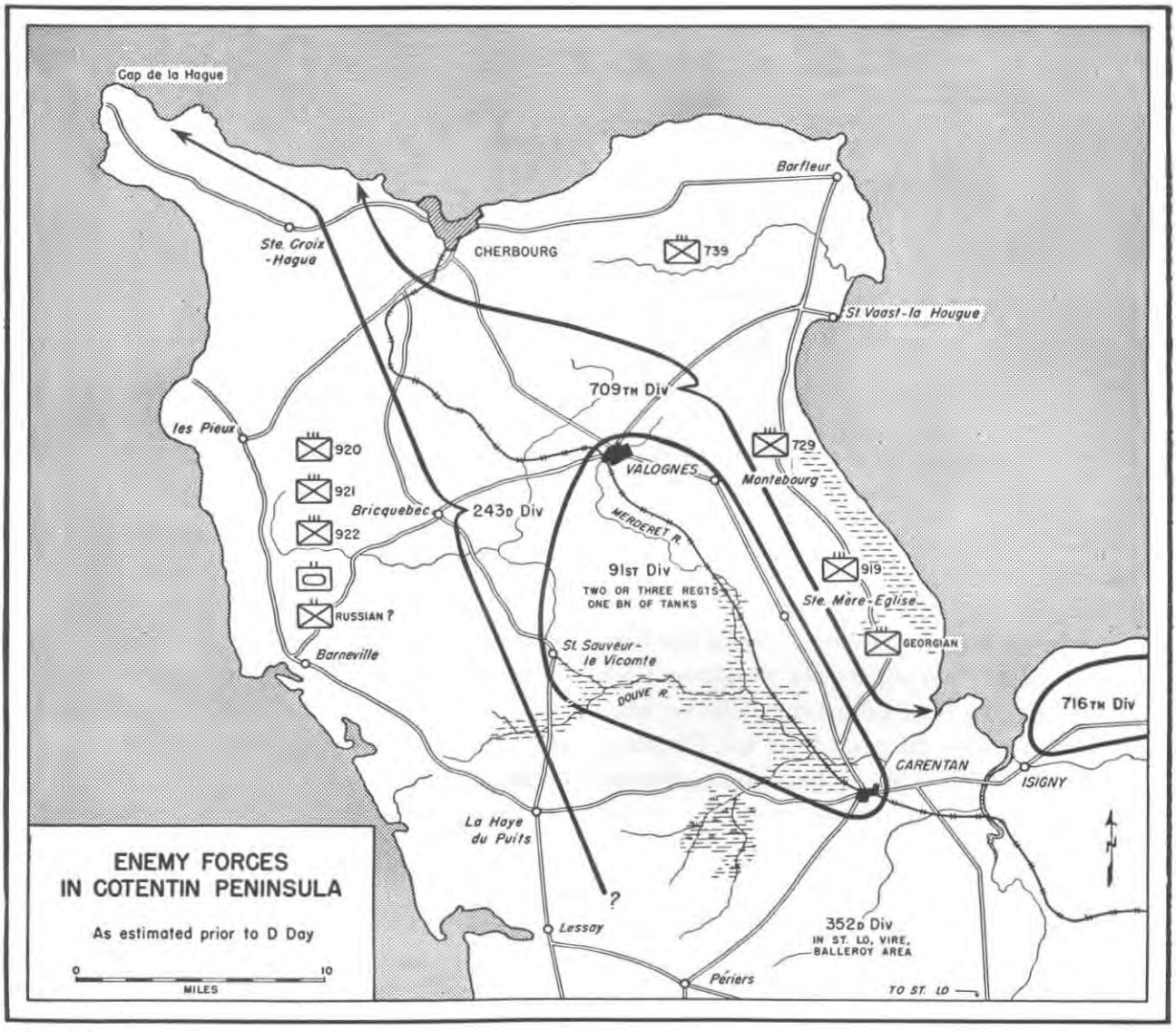
LAUNCHING THE INVASION

"I am ashore with Colonel Simmons and General Roosevelt, advancing steadily (0940). . . . Everything is going OK (1025). . . . Defense is not stubborn (2400)." Thus did Col. James A. Van Fleet report the progress of his 8th Infantry to his commanding officer, Maj. Gen. Raymond O. Barton of the 4th Division, on D Day, 6 June 1944. These messages were confirmed by liaison officers returning to the headquarters ship, U.S.S. *Bayfield*, after trips to the beach: "Everything is moving along very nicely." To Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, commanding the VII Corps, these reports were reassuring indications that at least a foothold had been secured on the Cotentin Peninsula and with less difficulty than had been feared (Map I).[1]

The comparative ease with which the 4th Division had come ashore on "Utah Beach" was, however, only a part of the story of the VII Corps assault. Hard fighting in the Cotentin Peninsula had preceded the seaborne landings, as two airborne divisions, the 82d and 101st, had been dropped into the beachhead area several miles inland beginning at about H minus 5 hours. Their mission was to seize crossings or destroy bridges over the Merderet and Douve Rivers and secure vital exits of causeways leading inland from the beach across inundated areas, and thus facilitate the expansion of the beachhead by the 4th Division. The mission of the airborne divisions was a key one, for the success of the Utah assault was largely dependent on the success of their operation.

The VII Corps assault on the east Cotentin constituted the right flank of the larger Allied invasion known as Operation NEPTUNE. The original plan for the 1944 invasion of the Continent, known as the OVERLORD Plan, did not include an assault on the beaches of the east Cotentin, largely because, when the plan was written in the summer of 1943, it was believed that with the resources then allotted to the operation it would be sounder to concentrate on the landings over the beaches between Grandcamp and Caen. On the other hand it was recognized that a landing on the Cotentin proper, on beaches northwest of the Carentan estuary, would be highly desirable in order to insure the early capture of the port of Cherbourg. Tactical planning had been dominated from the beginning by the need for adequate port capacity, on which the later build-up of forces in the lodgment area largely depended. When Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower

[1]Maps numbered in Roman are placed in inverse order inside the back cover.



MAP NO. 1

assumed supreme command for OVERLORD in January 1944,[2] it seemed to him and his subordinate commanders that the Cotentin assault was not only desirable but essential for the success of the invasion. Additional resources were found and the original three-division assault was increased to five. The assault front was widened both eastward to include additional beaches in the British sector and westward to include the east Cotentin. Equally important, the provision of additional air transport made it possible to land two and two-thirds airborne divisions simultaneously. Two of these airborne divisions were to land in the American sector to reduce the admitted risks of the west flank assault, where troops for some time after landing would be separated

[2]By September 1943 the name OVERLORD had come to be used in two senses: to refer to the specific operation with specific assault areas and target date, and also to the general concept of a cross-Channel invasion in 1944. Since security considerations made it desirable to restrict the number of persons having access to information on the specific operation, the new code name NEPTUNE was adopted to refer to this operation. OVERLORD was retained thereafter to apply only to the general concept and to be used only in documents that did not directly or by implication refer to the assault area or the target date. The special security procedure, called BIGOT, which reduced circulation of top secret documents to a minimum, was thereafter applied to NEPTUNE, but not to OVERLORD.

from the main body of Allied forces by the Carentan estuary and would attack in an area where the enemy had formidable defensive advantages.

One of the factors which had dominated the tactical planning for NEPTUNE was that the assault area itself did not include a port, which was so necessary for sustained operations. The first mission of the invasion force following the consolidation of a beachhead was therefore the capture of Cherbourg. This mission was assigned to VII Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins. The VII Corps, together with V Corps, which was to land at Omaha Beach, constituted the First U.S. Army under Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley. On General Bradley's left was the Second British Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Miles C. Dempsey. The two armies together constituted 21 Army Group under Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, who, for the assault phase, was the over-all ground commander.

Tactical Aspects of the Terrain

The dominant terrain feature of the south Cotentin is the Douve River which, together with its principal tributary, the Merderet, drains the major portion of the peninsula, flows south and southeast, and then turns toward the sea (Map I). Neither river has high banks or is sufficiently wide to present insurmountable obstacles, but through much of their course these rivers flow through flat bottom lands and water meadows. A lock and dam at la Barquette, just north of Carentan, controls the drainage of most of these bottom lands. At high tide the low marshlands of the Douve and the Merderet are below sea level, and by opening the lock these lands can be converted into shallow lakes, which, supplemented by the water meadows and undrained swampland of the Prairies Marécageuses to the south, effectively isolate the Cotentin, restricting all land traffic to established routes through Carentan and Pont l'Abbé on the east and to a narrow strip of land between St. Lô-d'Ourville and St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont on the west. The blocking of these routes and the seizure of the la Barquette locks intact would permit the establishment of an easily defended military line to the south, protecting the rear and the west flank of forces pushing northward against Cherbourg.

On the east coast of the Cotentin a belt of low-lying meadow land, from the mouth of the Douve to Quinéville, had been subjected to shallow flooding. This area of inundation, running parallel to Utah Beach, had been created by the obstruction of several stream exits about fifty yards to the rear of the beach, resulting in the flooding or complete saturation of the soil for a width of one to two miles. Travel in this area was restricted to a few causeways which cleared the inundations by approximately one foot but could be easily obstructed by blocks or demolitions.

Critical areas of the Cotentin therefore were: (1) the Carentan–la Barquette area, with its control of the water level in the low marshlands along the Douve and Merderet, which was the key point in the east for passage into or out of the peninsula; (2) the dry ground between St. Lô-d'Ourville and St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont, which controlled the western approaches to the peninsula; and (3) the inundated area between the mouth of the Douve and Quinéville, which not only restricted the exploitation of an initial landing by canalizing any advance from the beachhead but also facilitated the enemy's defense of the area.

The VII Corps' original plan of attack was designed to gain immediate control of these critical areas. Briefly, it provided for an assault on Utah Beach by the 4th Division (with attached tanks and combat engineers) and two predawn airborne landings: one by the 101st Airborne Division southeast of Ste. Mère-Eglise, with the task of capturing the vital beach exits and blocking the eastern approaches

to the peninsula; and the other by the 82d Airborne Division west of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte, with the mission of sealing the western approaches to the peninsula.

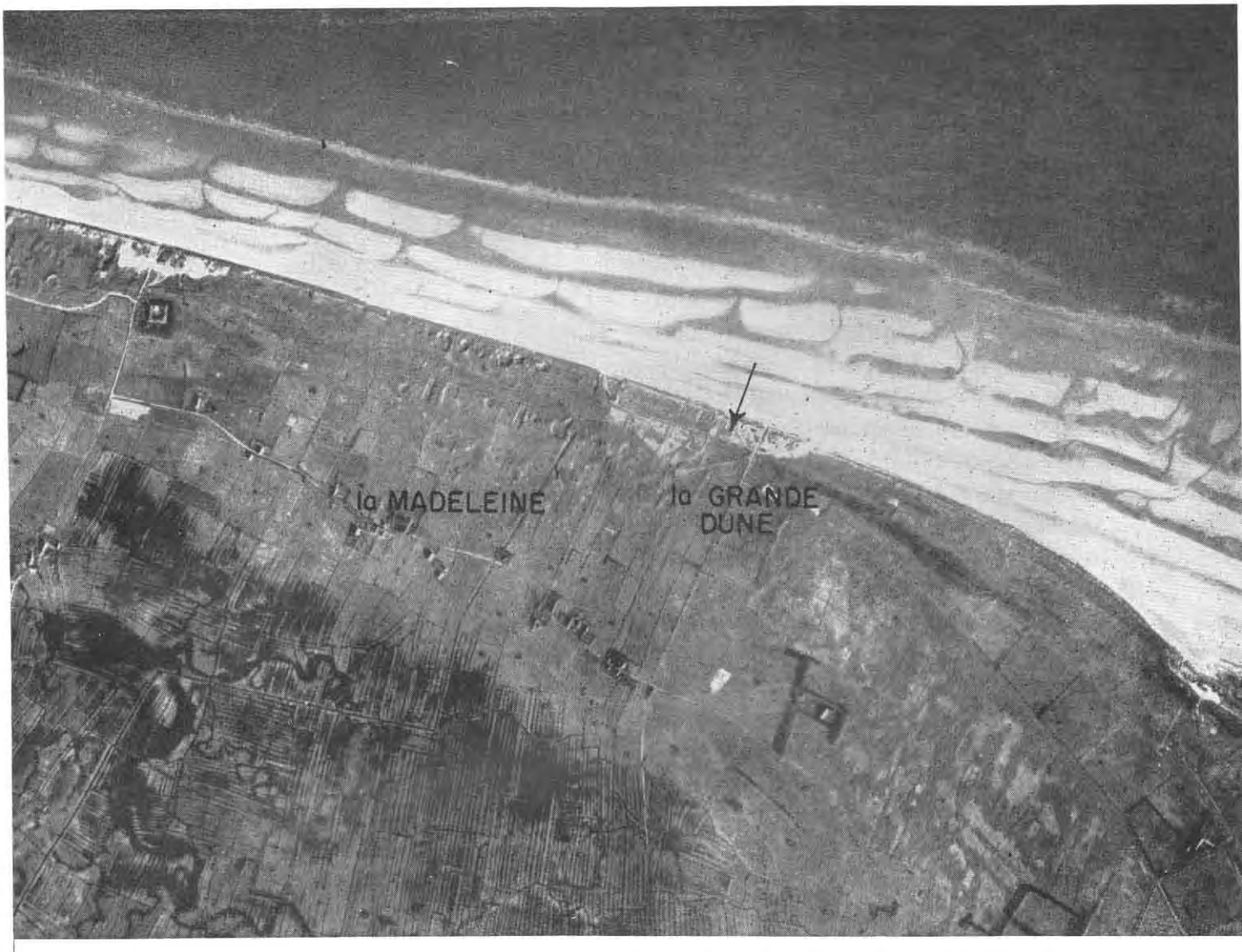
Utah Beach, located directly east of Ste. Mère-Eglise, is a smooth beach with a shallow gradient and compact grey sand between high and low water marks. It differs from Omaha in that the terrain along the shore is not high; there is no dominating ground to assault and secure. Direct access to the beach is hindered only by the Iles St. Marcouf. The beach is backed for nearly 10,000 yards by a masonry sea wall, which is almost vertical and from 4 to 8 feet high at the proposed landing point. Sand is piled against the sea wall face in many places, forming a ramp to the top, which has a wire fence. Gaps in the wall mark the termini of roads leading to the beach, but these gaps were blocked. Behind the wall, sand dunes, from 10 to 20 feet high, extend inland from 150 to 1,000 yards, and beyond them were the inundated areas whose western banks and exits might be easily defended by relatively small enemy forces.



Enemy Defenses

Man-made defenses along the coast took various forms. Since the beginning of 1944 construction activity had increased markedly in the defensive belt. On the beach itself rows of obstacles had been emplaced at a distance of from 50 to 130 yards to seaward. These obstacles were in the form of stakes or piles slanted seaward, steel hedgehogs and tetrahedra, and Element "C" or "Belgian Gates," which were barricade-like gates constructed of steel angles and plates and mounted on small concrete rollers. The gates were used also to block roads or passages where a mobile obstacle was needed to make a defensive line continuous.

Defenses immediately behind the beach along the sea wall consisted of pillboxes, tank turrets mounted on concrete structures, "Tobruk Pits," firing trenches, and underground shelters. These were usually connected by a network of trenches and protected by wire, mines, and antitank ditches. Concrete infantry strong points provided interlocking fire, and were armed with both fixed and mobile light artillery pieces. The strong point at les Dunes de Varreville, directly opposite "Green Beach" and first objective of the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, combined most of



UTAH BEACH FROM THE AIR, *several weeks before the invasion, showing inundations (dark areas). Landings were planned to take place just south of les Dunes de Varreville. Actual landings were effected astride the road at la Grande Dune, indicated by arrow.*

these features. Increased activity was evident in this area early in the year, possibly as a result of Field Marshal Erwin J. Rommel's inspection of the Atlantic Wall in December and January. Aerial reconnaissance revealed new casemated positions and showed that new open field battery emplacements were being prepared.

The fixed infantry defenses were more sparsely located in the Utah Beach area than at Omaha Beach (where V Corps landed), probably because the enemy relied on the natural obstacle provided by the inundated area directly behind the beach. At and near the roads leading to the beach the defense was a linear series of infantry strong points, armed chiefly with automatic weapons. About two miles inland on the coastal headlands behind Utah Beach were several coastal and field artillery batteries, the most formidable being

BEACH DEFENSES *took a variety of forms, including rows of mined stakes (lower right), turreted machine guns (right), and guns, usually 50-mm. or 75-mm., in open concrete emplacements (far right). Note hedgehogs and slanted stakes on the beach in last photo.*

those at Crisbecq and St. Martin-de-Varreville. Here heavy- and medium-caliber guns housed in a series of concrete forts were sited to cover both the sea approaches and the beach areas.

The Cotentin Peninsula lay within the defensive zone of the German *Seventh Army*, commanded by Col. Gen. Friedrich Dollmann. Allied intelligence estimates between March and early May of 1944 placed the enemy force occupying the Cotentin at two infantry divisions, the *709th* and *243d*. The *709th Division* was known to have a large percentage of non-Germans, particularly Georgians, and was disposed generally along the east coast of the peninsula, with two of its regiments (*729th* and *919th*) believed to be manning the beach defenses. The *243d Division* was located generally to the rear of the *709th*, with the mission of defending the western portion of the peninsula. The *716th* and *352d* Divisions, disposed east and south of the Cotentin, were not believed capable of affecting the VII Corps assault.

Intelligence reports early in May indicated that the enemy had been strengthening his coastal defense units to bring them up to the level of field divisions in strength and equipment. Formerly classified by Allied intelligence as "static," these divisions had been upgraded to "limited employment" or "low establishment." In addition to the organic field artillery of the infantry divisions, the enemy had various army and navy coast artillery and flak battalions, and the *709th Division* was thought to have been strengthened by elements of the *17th Machine Gun Battalion* at Carentan. It was not believed early in May that the enemy had panzer battalions or reserves of regimental strength in the Cotentin.



On the basis of these reports, the enemy was estimated to be capable of (1) rigid defense of the beaches, manning the crust of coastal fortifications and obstacles with the *709th Division* and various artillery and flak units; (2) reinforcing the *709th Division* in the assault area with elements of the *243d Division* commencing at H Hour; (3) piecemeal counterattacks by a maximum of four battalions and a battalion combat team on D Day; and (4) a coordinated counterattack with motorized armored reinforcements from outside the peninsula at any time after D plus 2.

About ten days before D Day it was learned that enemy dispositions in the Cotentin had probably been altered as a result of the recent arrival of the *91st Division* in the Carentan–St. Sauveur-le Vicomte–Valognes area. This division was estimated to consist of two or three regiments and one battalion of tanks. The *243d Division* was believed to have moved farther west, while the *91st Division* occupied positions to the rear of the *709th Division* (Map No. 1). The mission of the *91st* was



apparently to strengthen the defense of the eastern half of the peninsula from Carentan to Valognes. These three divisions were part of the *LXXXIV Corps*, which also controlled other divisions east of the Cotentin Peninsula.

The appearance of the *91st Division* was a surprise. It upset the VII Corps original plan of deployment and forced a change in the initial mission of the 82d Airborne Division.



The VII Corps Plan

The VII Corps plan of operations was issued on 27 March 1944. One of its major objectives, derived from the tactical aspects of the Cotentin terrain, was the cutting of the entire peninsula at its base as a preliminary to the drive on Cherbourg. The original plan of deployment provided that the 101st Airborne Division would land southeast of Ste. Mère-Eglise, destroy the bridges in the vicinity of Carentan, and seize the crossings over the Douve at Pont l'Abbé and Beuzeville-la Bastille in order to protect the southern flank of the VII Corps

east of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. The 82d Airborne Division was to land west of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte and block the movement of enemy reinforcements into the Cotentin in the western half of the peninsula.

This plan of deployment had to be revised when it became known toward the end of May that the Germans had moved the *91st Division* into the Cotentin. The additional strength which the enemy now possessed greatly increased his capabilities. Not only was he now able to meet the beach landings in greater strength, but his possession of additional troops at St. Sauveur-le Vicomte constituted a potentially serious threat to an airborne landing in this vicinity. It now became more important than ever for the seaborne elements to secure rapidly a beachhead sufficiently deep to hold against enemy counter-attacks in force. Of equal importance was the need for a prompt drive to Carentan to forestall the destruction of the locks in this area, to seal off the enemy's eastern approach to the beachhead, and to keep the Germans from driving a wedge into the initial gap between VII and V Corps.

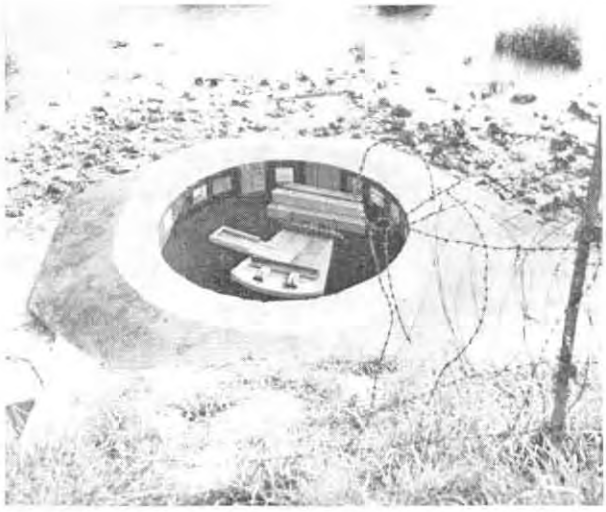
General Collins learned of the changed enemy situation in the Cotentin on 27 May, when he was called to General Bradley's headquarters in Bristol and was advised of the necessity of making some changes in the plans for the drop of the two airborne divisions.



ANTI-INVASION PREPARATIONS. *At top right is a pre-D-Day air view of the rows of stakes along the invasion beaches. Other defenses included remote-control demolition vehicles (center left) called Goliaths, which could be discharged down ramps in the dunes and exploded, and sunken machine-gun positions such as the one (center right) on the southern beach flat. Below is one of the many concrete pillboxes, its embrasures facing obliquely down the beach.*







It had been clearly understood that the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions were to be under First Army control during the mounting of the operation and until they actually touched ground in Normandy. Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway and Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, commanding generals of the 82d and 101st respectively, had, therefore, received their early instructions on the planning directly from the First Army staff. However, since both divisions were to pass to VII Corps control upon landing, General Bradley had agreed that General Collins' staff should collaborate closely in the detailed planning.

At the Bristol meeting of 27 May the First Army staff proposed that both the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions be dropped east of the Merderet—the 101st south and east of Ste. Mère-Eglise, and the 82d in the immediate vicinity of that town. After some study, General Collins suggested a less radical change: that the 82d be dropped between the Merderet and the Douve, generally north of Pont l'Abbé, and that the 101st's plan remain unchanged. General Collins thought that the 82d would thus be in a better position to seize not only the crossings of the Merderet at la Fière and Chef-du-Pont but also the crossings of the Douve farther west in the vicinity of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte and Ste. Colombe.

After additional study of the maps, however, it was concluded that because of the wooded and thickly hedged area between the Merderet and the Douve, and the paucity of clearings large enough to take gliders, it would not be possible to drop the entire 82d Division west of the Merderet. The final decision, therefore, provided for a divided drop astride the Merderet, with one parachute regiment dropping to the east and two parachute regiments to the west of the river (Map II).

When this change was made, troops of the infantry divisions were already moving into the marshalling areas preparatory to embark-

LOADING OUT *for the invasion presented scenes like these along the coast of southern England. Above, invasion ships and craft await sailing orders in the Dart River. Below, vehicles are loaded aboard an LST at one of the "hards" constructed along the southern English beaches.*

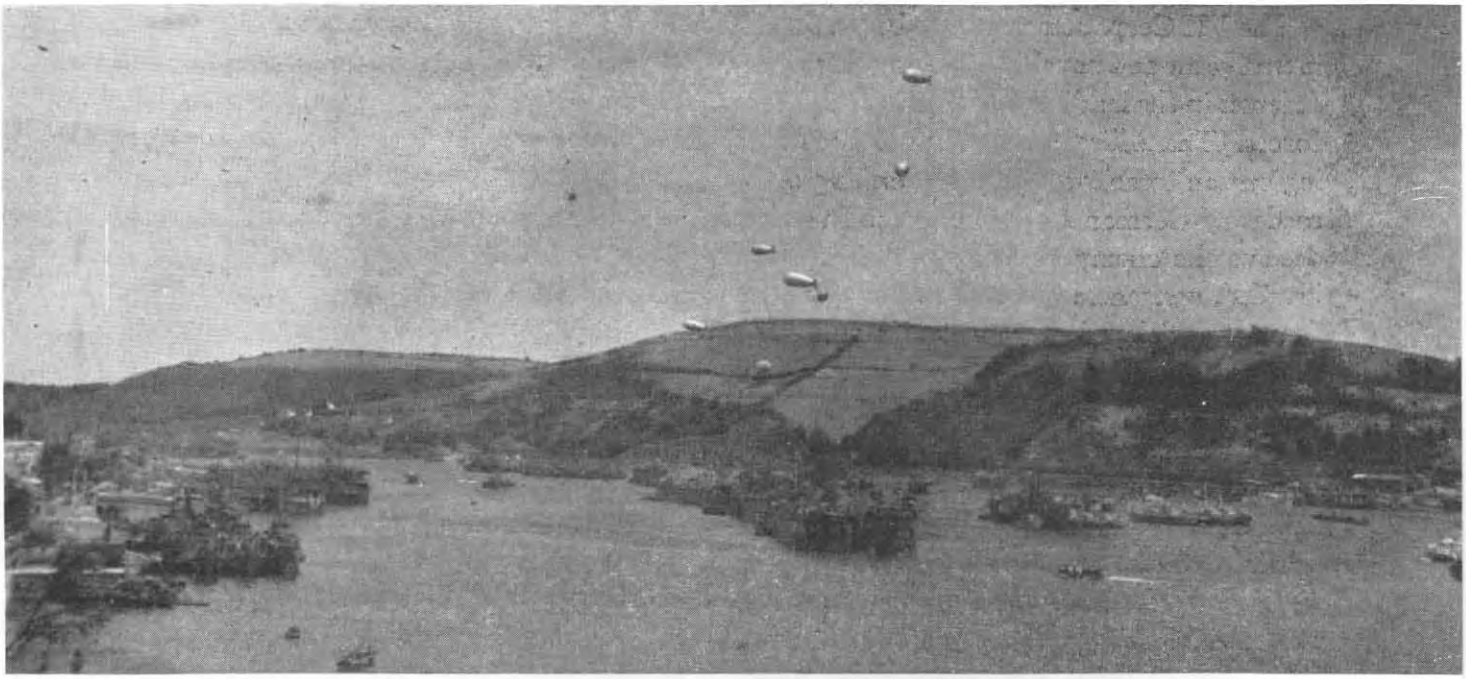
ing at English ports. The altered plan did not affect them. Moreover, the VII Corps' mission was not changed. Field Order No. 1, 28 May, read: "VII Corps assaults Utah Beach on D Day at H Hour and captures Cherbourg with minimum delay." But emphasis was now placed on securing the area to the north of the Douve and east of the Merderet, so that the beachhead would not be endangered (Map III). The plan had the disadvantage of leaving open for a few days the western corridor between St. Lô-d'Ourville and St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont, whose eventual interdiction was required. It was believed, however, that the changes made would facilitate the initial effort and thus insure the achievement of later objectives.

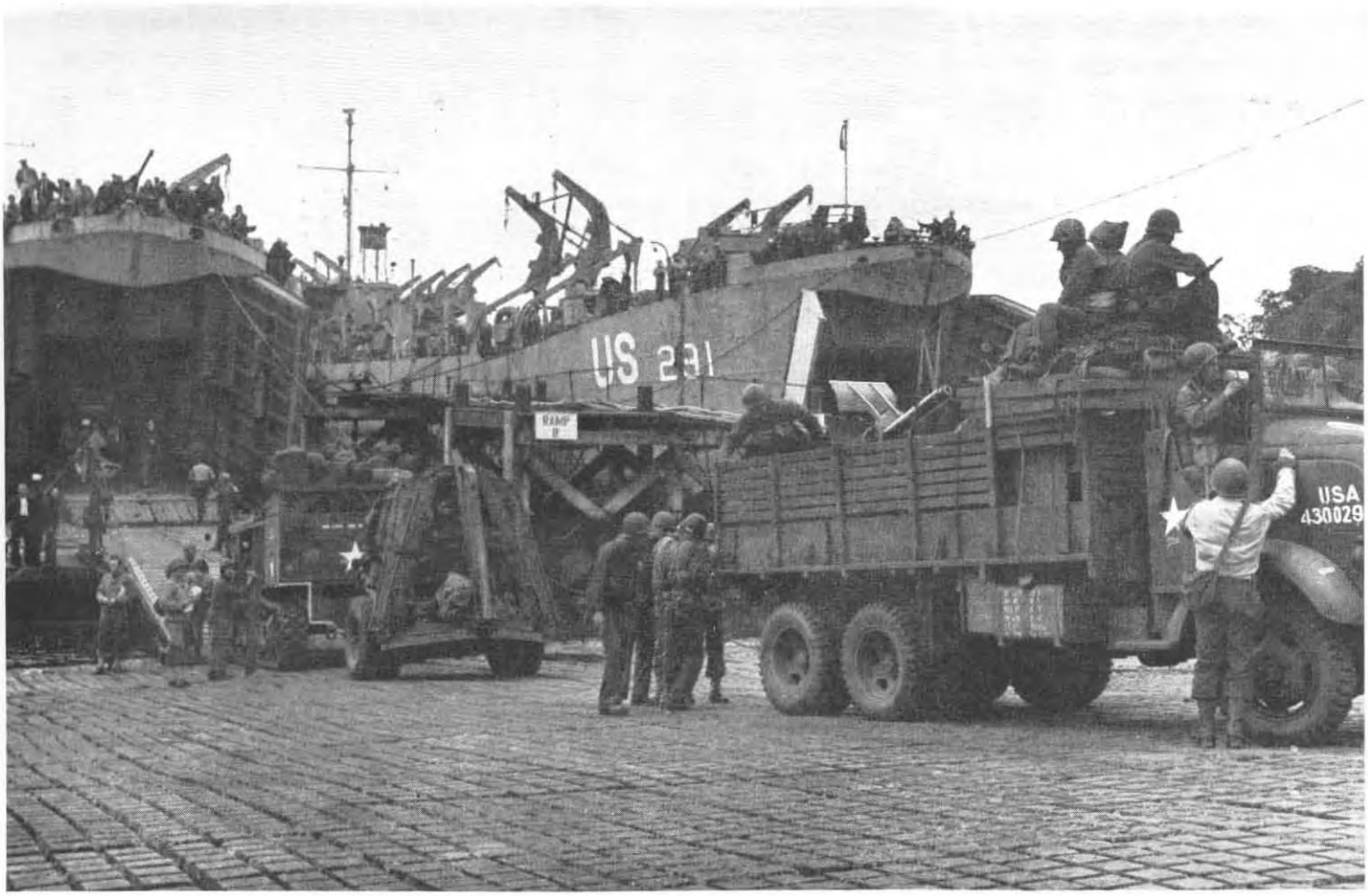
In the new plan it became the task of the 82d Airborne Division to secure the western edge of the bridgehead, particularly by capture of Ste. Mère-Eglise, a key communication center, and by establishing deep bridgeheads over the Merderet River, on the two main roads westward from Ste. Mère-Eglise, for a drive toward St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. The 101st Airborne Division was to clear the way for the seaborne assault by seizing the western exits of four roads from the beach across the inundated area. At the same time it was to establish defensive arcs along the northern and southern edges of the invasion area and establish bridgeheads across the Douve at two points for later exploitation in a southward drive to Carentan to weld the VII and V Corps beachheads.

The missions of the 4th, 90th, and 9th Infantry Divisions remained unchanged. The 4th Division, principal seaborne unit in the assault on Utah Beach, was heavily weighted with attachments for its special mission, among them the 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion, the 1106th Engineer Combat Group, the 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and one battery of the 980th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm.), plus antiaircraft artillery units and a detachment of the 13th Field Artillery Observation Battalion. The 4th Division was to assault Utah Beach at H Hour, establish a beachhead, and then drive on Cherbourg in conjunction with the 90th Division, which was to land on D plus 1 (Map IV). One of the 90th Division's Regimental Combat Teams (RCT), the 359th, landing on D Day, was to be attached to the 4th Division for operations on its northeast flank, reverting to the control of the 90th upon the latter's arrival on shore. The 9th Division was to begin landing on D plus 4 and assemble in Corps reserve in the area around Orglandes, prepared for operations to the northwest.

In addition to these units the revised field order of 28 May provided for the temporary attachment to the VII Corps of another division, the 79th, to begin landing on D plus 8. And, as an added precaution, the support of Corps artillery was to be hastened by phasing ahead by three days the entry of two 155-mm. howitzer battalions (the 188th and 951st). To insure expeditious movement of men and supplies across the beaches the 1st Engineer Special Brigade was charged with organizing and operating all shore installations necessary for debarkation, supply, evacuation, and local security.

At H minus 2 hours a detachment of the 4th Cavalry Group was to land on the Iles St. Marcouf to capture and destroy any installations there capable of hindering the landing operations.




US 231
RAMP
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The VII Corps attack was to be preceded by intensive air and naval bombardment of enemy defenses in the landing zones of the amphibious forces. The Allied air forces had been carrying out an intensive strategic bombing of railroads and German Air Force bases. In order to deceive the enemy concerning the area to be invaded, concentrated bombing of coastal defenses was delayed until D minus 4, and even then was deliberately scattered, with more attacks delivered in the Pas de Calais area than in the area selected for invasion. Not until D Day itself were the Allies finally to show their hand by a concentrated bombardment of the coastal defenses at the points where landings were planned. The objective was neutralization of the fortifications, demoralization of the troops manning them, and disruption of transport and signal communications.

About midnight, on 5 June, bombers of the RAF were scheduled to range up the entire invasion coast, centering their attention on known enemy coastal batteries, especially on the two big coastal batteries at Crisbecq and St. Martin-de-Varreville. Shortly before H Hour, medium bombers of the Ninth Air Force were to attack batteries at Utah Beach and to the east. The Ninth Air Force was also to provide protection for the cross-Channel movement, and one squadron of fighter-bombers was to be on air alert over Utah Beach during the assault. After H Hour the Tactical Air Forces were to be on call to support the ground troops in their advance inland.

Naval fire support was to be given by Task Force 125, organized into a bombardment and a support craft group. The bombardment group, consisting of 1 battleship, 5 cruisers, 8 destroyers, and 3 subchasers, was organized into 5 fire support units. At H minus 40 minutes these warships were to begin the bombardment of enemy shore batteries and defenses which threatened the ships and craft in the Utah Beach assault. The support craft group, comprising 33 craft variously equipped with rocket launchers and artillery, was to deliver close-in supporting fires from positions nearer the beach. Rockets were to be discharged when the first waves of assault craft were still 600 to 700 yards from the shore. Beginning at H Hour naval fires were to be lifted to inland targets on call from naval shore fire control parties.

Mounting the Operation

In magnitude the amphibious assault on the Atlantic Wall had never before been equalled. Months of special training preceded the actual landing. At the Assault Training Center at Wollacombe, England, infantry units practiced the assault of various types of strong points, and combat engineers received special training in the use of demolitions to clear beaches of obstacles. Together with airborne and other units they tested these techniques on Slapton Sands in full-scale dry run exercises such as DUCK and FOX, in which all phases of marshalling, embarking, and assaulting were practiced. The TIGER (27–28 April 1944) and FABIUS (4 May 1944) series of exercises were the last, and were the dress rehearsals for invasion. As a result, when paratroops and gliderborne units descended upon the Cotentin, followed by 30-man assault teams (each comprising an LCVP load), beach-clearing demolition teams, and amphibious tanks, it was an assault by specialists.

The mounting of the invasion began in the second week of May. During that week assault troops entered the sausage-shaped marshalling areas along the roads of southern England, where a security seal was imposed and where the men remained until they departed for the embarkation points. While in the marshalling areas they were briefed on the coming operation, received final issues of supplies and equipment, and waterproofed their vehicles. Troops had concentrated by boat serials, so that when they finally left on 1 and 2 June

they proceeded directly to the ports and hards (concrete loading points) in southern Devon and Cornwall, where they embarked.

Provision of the lift, protection at sea, fire support, and the breaching of underwater obstacles were the responsibility of Task Force U, commanded by Rear Admiral Don P. Moon, USN. Task Force U was part of the Western Naval Task Force under the command of Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk, who himself was responsible to Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay, commander of the Allied Naval Expeditionary Force. An important factor in the success of Task Force U was the high degree of cooperation between General Collins and Admiral Moon and their staffs. Jointly they worked out the details of the operation in their fenced-in quonset hut camp on Fore Street, Plymouth.

Task Force U comprised approximately 865 vessels and craft in 12 separate convoys. The lack of a large port necessitated the use of nine different loading and sortie points, all taxed to capacity. Most of the convoys contained three or four sections, which sailed from different ports and had to make precise rendezvous.

The difficulty of coordination was further complicated by a last-minute postponement of D Day. The date provisionally set a month earlier had been 5 June. On this and the two following days early morning light and tidal conditions fitted most closely the requirements of H Hour. It had been decided that the landings must be made near low tide, when most of the beach obstacles were exposed, and that the approach should be covered by darkness, but that the landings were to be made in daylight to give the assault troops visual bombing and observed naval fire support. Weather, however, interfered with the original plan. Predictions of strong winds and heavy seas for 5 June made General Eisenhower early on 4 June postpone D Day for twenty-four hours.

Task Force U convoys, having farther to sail than the other assault forces, had assembled on 3 June. The postponement of D Day found some of them already at sea. They back-tracked to use up the extra day, and some 250 gunfire support and landing craft sought temporary shelter in Weymouth Bay and Portland Harbor.

The regrouping of convoys began again early on the morning of 5 June. Despite the turning back and the obvious difficulty of reorganizing so scattered a fleet, the second start was accomplished with a minimum of confusion and Task Force U sailed again for the Transport Area, 22,500 yards off Utah Beach (Map No. 2). Sweepers of the 14th and 16th Minesweeper Flotillas had cleared a boat lane across the mine fields on Cardonnet Bank and had marked the Channel well with red and green lighted dan buoys.

At 0200 the marker vessel was passed at the entrance to the Transport Area, and at 0229 the *Bayfield,* headquarters ship for Task Force U, anchored in its assigned berth. Primary and secondary control vessels took their stations nearer the shore. LCT's and fire LST's with Rhino ferries were anchored a little farther out. The *Barnet* and *Bayfield* held troops for Uncle Red Beach; the *Dickman* and *Empire Gauntlet* held troops for Tare Green. H Hour was 0630.

THE AIRBORNE ASSAULT

While Task Force U was still approaching the Transport Area, the first blows had already struck the enemy from the air. The intensive air bombardment of the invasion area had started about midnight, 5 June. At that time RAF bombers made intensive attacks on the known enemy batteries along the entire invasion coast. Shortly before H Hour medium bombers of the Ninth Air Force dropped several hundred tons of bombs on enemy defenses at Utah Beach in support of the seaborne assault. Between these bombings, however, came the still more telling attacks by airborne infantry.

It was the largest use of airborne troops up to that time. Paratroop elements of the 82d and 101st Divisions, comprising 6 regiments, with the normal complement of parachute field artillery and engineers, numbering more than 13,000 men, were flown from bases in southern England to the Cotentin Peninsula in approximately 925 C–47's. An additional 4,000 men, consisting of glider infantry with supporting weapons and medical and signal units, were to arrive in 500 gliders later on D Day and on D plus 1 to reinforce the paratroops. Seaborne echelons were to join the divisions on D plus 1. To the parachute troops was assigned what was probably the most difficult task of the initial operation—a night jump behind enemy lines five hours before the coastal landings.

The 101st Airborne Division Lands

At 2215 on D minus 1, 432 C–47's began taking off from 7 departure airdromes in England, with 6,600 paratroops of the 101st Airborne Division. They were scheduled to begin dropping at H minus 5 hours. At dawn (H minus 2 hours) they were to be reinforced by approximately 150 glider troops from 51 gliders, and at dusk (H plus 15 hours) by an additional 165 in 32 gliders. Preceding the main echelons of paratroops by half an hour were 20 pathfinder aircraft which had the mission of marking six drop zones (for both divisions) and one landing zone. Marking of the zones was not entirely successful, but all of the pathfinder teams carried out at least part of their missions.

Paratroop echelons approached the Cotentin from the west and made their landfall in the vicinity of les Pieux (Map No. 2). Formations were tight until reaching the coast, but from the coast to the Merderet cloud banks loosened the formations, and east of the Merderet flak scattered them further. In general the division did not have a good drop, although better than that of the 82d Airborne Division (Map V). About 1,500 troops were either killed or captured and approximately 60 percent of the equipment dropped was lost when the bundles fell into swamps or into fields covered by enemy fire. Only a fraction of the division's organized strength could ini-

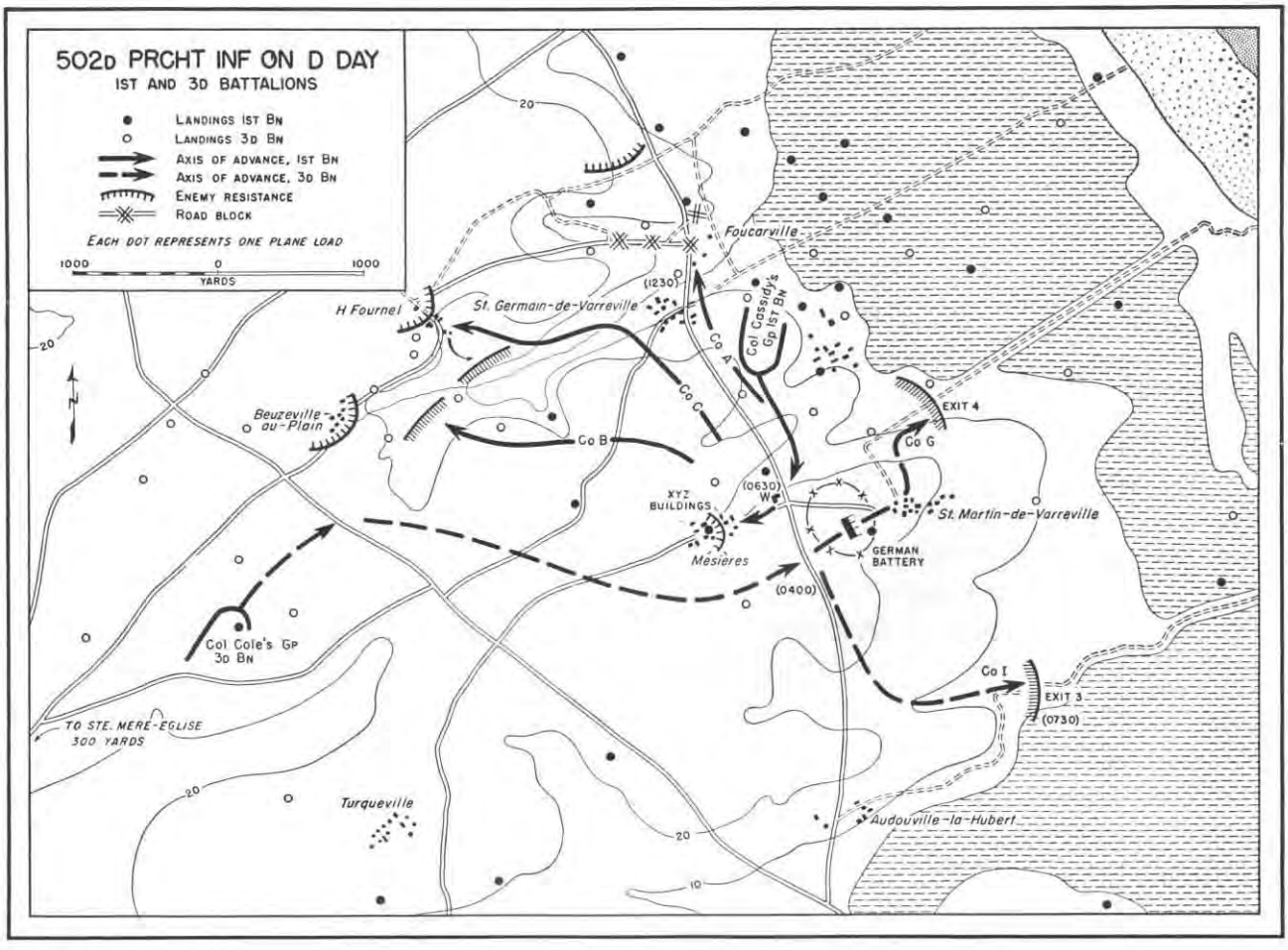
tially be employed on the planned missions, and many of the missions carried out were undertaken by mixed groups which did not correspond with original assignments.

The fifty-one Waco gliders, carrying command personnel and antitank weapons, came in early on D-Day morning. This type of landing had never been attempted before in darkness. Many gliders were wrecked as they landed in the small Normandy fields and there was damage to equipment and loss of personnel, one of the casualties being Brig. Gen. Don F. Pratt (Assistant Commander, 101st Airborne Division), who was killed in landing. In general, however, losses were not excessive and the mission was a success. Later in the day, at 2100, the serial of thirty-two Horsa gliders—carrying command, communications, and medical personnel and equipment—suffered heavier losses in personnel and gliders because of the unsuitability of the small landing fields. Equipment suffered relatively little damage. A seaborne echelon of the division, including the 327th Glider Infantry, joined the division on D plus 1.

The initial widespread dispersion of the 101st Division was not an unmixed evil. The Germans appear to have been confused by the scattered drops. For some time they were unable to estimate the magnitude of the invasion and, in consequence, reaction was slow and uncertain. The war diary of the German *Seventh Army* noted at 0130, 6 June, reports of Allied paratroop landings east and northwest of Caen, at St. Maricove, at Montebourg, on both sides of the Vire River, and on the east coast of the Cotentin Peninsula. Fighting was reported at le Ham. For several hours the

GENERAL EISENHOWER TALKS TO PARATROOPS *at a British airfield the evening before the invasion. Some of the men have already blackened their faces for the night landings. Parachute elements of the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions started taking off before midnight.*





MAP NO. 3

German command was uncertain whether the landings represented a major action. At 0400 it was estimated that the American plan seemed to be to "tie off the Cotentin Peninsula at its narrowest point."

Uncertainty at the enemy command level seemed to have been duplicated among the subordinate units. It was generally the experience of the 101st Airborne Division, at least, that although the enemy defended freely with fire he was initially reluctant to move out of his prepared defenses to attack. When attacks were launched they were seldom pushed vigorously. Thus in some measure the enemy's confusion tended to offset that of the invaders and, by dint of considerable improvisation, the 101st was able to accomplish most of its initial missions.

The plan of the 101st Airborne Division called for the seizure of the four inland exits—the western ends of causeways—from the inundated area west of Utah Beach between St. Martin-de-Varreville and Pouppeville (Map II). In the southern part of the division's sector two bridges across the Douve River, on the main highway northwest of Carentan and the railroad bridge to the west, were to be destroyed. In addition, the division was to seize and hold the la Barquette lock and establish two bridgeheads over the Douve at le Port northeast of Carentan. The sum of these missions thus provided for the clearing of the enemy's secondary beach defenses and the organization of the Corps' southern flank for defense and further exploitation. After being relieved in the beachhead area by the 4th Divis-

ion, the 101st was to seize Carentan and establish contact with V Corps, fusing the Utah and Omaha beachheads. Thereafter the 101st Airborne Division was ordered to protect the southern flank of VII Corps east of the Merderet River. The division would be reinforced by the attachment of a company of tanks of the 70th Tank Battalion, the 65th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, and a troop of the 4th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron when these were landed by sea.

Fighting for the Northern Beach Exits

The task of securing the two northern beach exits was assigned to the 502d Parachute Infantry, with the 377th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion. The 502d was to drop immediately to the west of Exits 3 and 4 in Drop Zone A. The 2d Battalion was to capture and destroy the coastal battery at St. Martin-de-Varreville as quickly as possible. The 3d Battalion was to support this operation, if necessary, and then secure Exits 3 and 4 so that the 4th Division could come up the causeways at H Hour. The 2d Battalion was to remain on the gun position as regimental reserve and establish contact with the 506th Parachute Infantry on its right. The 1st Battalion was to clean up a group of buildings, thought to be the German artillery garrison quarters, just west of St. Martin-de-Varreville. It was also to cover the northern flank of the regiment, establish contact with the 82d Airborne Division on the left, and cover the emplacing of the 377th Glider Field Artillery Battalion guns.

The four serials of the 502d Parachute Infantry came in ten minutes apart. The 2d Battalion led with regimental headquarters, followed by the 3d, the 1st, and the artillery battalion.

The 2d Battalion failed to land in Drop Zone A as planned. A large percentage of the men came down on the southern edge of Drop Zone C. Assembly, without landmarks and far from the designated assembly points, consumed most of the day, and the battalion as a unit took no part in the D-Day fighting.

Lt. Col. Robert G. Cole, commanding the 3d Battalion, landed several hundred yards east of Ste. Mère-Eglise (Map No. 3). Unable to orient himself, he moved toward Ste. Mère-Eglise, collecting a miscellaneous group of about thirty men from regimental headquarters, Company G of the 506th Parachute Infantry, and a few from the 82d Airborne Division. From Ste. Mère-Eglise the men backtracked north and then northeast, heading for the two northern exits of the beach. On the way the group snowballed to about seventy-five men and made contact with a small enemy convoy. Several of the enemy were killed and ten taken prisoner. This was the only incident of the march.

On nearing St. Martin-de-Varreville, a reconnaissance party was sent to the enemy



MAJ. GEN. MAXWELL D. TAYLOR, *Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division.*

coastal battery. It found that the position had been destroyed by bombing and was deserted.[1] No heavy guns were found, although there was ammunition in the pits and antiaircraft guns, including some multiple 20-mm. mounts. Colonel Cole then split his force to seize Exits 3 and 4 and dispatched a small group of men to seek contact with the 506th Parachute Infantry. At 0930, two hours after the defense was established at Exit 3, in the vicinity of Audouville-la-Hubert, the enemy began retreating across the causeway from the beach. Colonel Cole's men, without loss to themselves, killed 50 to 75 of the enemy, and at 1300 established contact with the 1st Battalion of the 8th Infantry (4th Division). By the end of the day 250 men had gathered under Colonel Cole. That night his battalion was ordered to assemble the next day in the vicinity of Blosville, south of Ste. Mère-Eglise, as regimental reserve.

The 1st Battalion, 502d Parachute Infantry (Lt. Col. Patrick J. Cassidy), had a much stiffer fight for its D-Day objectives. Colonel Cassidy landed near St. Germain-de-Varreville in the center of the battalion's drop zone and a mile from the first objective—the artillery garrison buildings designated as "WXYZ" in the plan. He gradually collected a small force, mostly from his own battalion, and after discovery of a road sign began moving toward the objective. Objective W, the house at the crossroads west of St. Martin-de-Varreville, was unoccupied. Colonel Cassidy set up his command post in the house and then checked the enemy gun position across the road. There he found a dozen men under Lt. Col. Steve A. Chappuis (commander of the 2d Battalion); Colonel Chappuis, though injured in the jump, had been able to reach his objective. He had decided to wait at the gun position for more of his men. Colonel Cassidy proceeded with his own mission. His plan was, first, to establish defenses at the St. Martin-de-Varreville intersection to prevent the enemy from moving east into the beach area, and then to clean out the XYZ buildings and set up a defensive line to the north.

A patrol sent to check Exit 4 found both it and the causeway clear. The 3d Battalion, in the meantime, reported Exit 3 covered, and Colonel Cassidy, after relaying this information to the 4th Division, turned his attention to consolidating the battalion position.

Several groups from Company A assembled north of St. Martin-de-Varreville during the morning. Forty-five men were collected by Lt. W. A. Swanson and ordered to move to Foucarville to establish the right anchor of the battalion line with a series of road blocks. Lieutenant Swanson set up four blocks shortly after noon and within half an hour he trapped and largely destroyed a 4-vehicle enemy troop convoy moving east from Beuzeville-au-Plain. Despite this success, Company A's positions were not secure as they were dominated by the enemy on the hill to the northwest. The Germans, however, made no determined effort to break through, although a fire fight continued most of the day as the enemy probed at the road blocks without discovering their essential weakness.

Meanwhile the fight at XYZ was carried on most of the day by a mixed group of men under Sergeant Summers, while Company C was held in reserve. It was not an easy task. Not until 1530 were the Germans driven out of the last building, after its roof was fired with bazooka rounds. More than one hundred were killed or taken prisoner as they tried to escape. Another fifty had been killed or captured earlier in the fight.

The establishment of the western end of the battalion line was facilitated by the arrival in the area of Lt. Col. John H. Michaelis, regi-

[1]The St. Martin-de-Varreville position had been a considerable worry to the planners. It had been bombed during the night of 28–29 May, when 356 tons of bombs were dropped by the RAF Bomber Command. Photo reconnaissance, later confirmed by captured German documents, showed heavy damage. Nevertheless, this battery was included among the RAF targets for the night attack of 5–6 June.



GLIDER ELEMENTS OF THE AIRBORNE DIVISIONS *arrived in separate echelons, some in the early morning hours of D Day, and larger formations late in the evening. The photo above shows C–47 tow planes and their gliders, flying low over the inundated lowlands near Ste. Mère-Eglise as they approach the landing zones.*

mental commander, with two hundred men. This left Colonel Cassidy free to move the 1st Battalion north and complete his D-Day mission. Company C was ordered to Beuzeville-au-Plain, while Company B reassembled in the artillery barracks area.

Actually Beuzeville-au-Plain was not reached that night. Company C moved in a body north to St. Germain-de-Varreville and then west along a stream bed toward its objective. A little more than halfway the company split into three "platoons," no more than combat patrols in strength. Each of these platoons became involved separately with small enemy forces at the hamlet of Fournel, which the leading group had mistaken for Beuzeville-au-Plain. At dark the paratroopers withdrew, and a company line was established south of Fournel, facing northwest.

During the night the line was subjected to continuing enemy pressure from the west. To cope with this threat, Colonel Cassidy put Company B, which had moved north after reassembling, into the line on the left flank. As there was still a dangerous gap between Company C and the battalion's right flank held by Company A, Colonel Cassidy filled it temporarily with a few spare riflemen and asked Regiment for help. Regiment, however, had already decided to pass the 2d Battalion through the 1st on the following day, and therefore ordered Colonel Cassidy to withdraw and consolidate.

Shortly before midnight the principal enemy threat was unexpectedly removed when the Germans on the hill opposing Company A hoisted a white flag. Bluffed into overestimating Company A's strength, chiefly by the in-

creasing volume of mortar and machine-gun fire laid down by Lieutenant Swanson's men, eighty-seven Germans marched into the American lines. Another fifty, attempting to escape north, were shot down by American prisoners who had been freed by the surrender.

Capture of the Southern Beach Exits

Regimental headquarters and the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 506th Parachute Infantry (Col. Robert L. Sink) were to land in Drop Zone C, between Hiesville and Ste. Marie-du-Mont; the 3d Battalion, together with a platoon of the 326th Engineer Battalion and two demolitions sections, was to land in Drop Zone D, between Vierville and Bse. Addeville (Map No. 4). The 506th Infantry had a dual mission—to seize the western edge of the inundated area back of Utah Beach between Audouville-la-Hubert and Pouppeville (including Exits 1 and 2), and to defend the line of the Douve within its sector, capturing the two bridges near the mouth of the Douve at le Port and establishing a bridgehead over the Douve at this point for subsequent use by the division. The bridges were to be prepared for demolition.

These missions were broken down as follows. The 2d Battalion, with one demolitions section, was to seize the two southern exits to the causeways. The battalion was to assemble at Hébert; Company F was to go to Pouppeville and secure Exit 1; Company E, to Houdienville and secure Exit 2; and Company D was to remain at Hébert with battalion headquarters as reserve. The 1st Battalion was to assemble at Hiesville and together with Regimental Headquarters Company constitute the regimental reserve. A reinforced platoon from Company B was to be sent to the south of Ste. Marie-du-Mont to create a diversion and draw the attention of enemy forces there. The 3d Battalion was to seize the two eastern bridges and cross the river to secure a bridgehead at le Port.

In the flight from England and the landings in the respective drop zones on the peninsula, the 506th Parachute Infantry's experience was similar to that of the 502d. The 126 planes cleared the English coast in good weather shortly after midnight, but when they approached the French coast, fog, and later flak, forced the dispersal of the formation, which resulted in a widely scattered drop (Map V). The 3d Battalion had a good pattern in Drop Zone D, but the 2d Battalion was completely out of its zone. Of eighty-one planes scheduled to drop troops in Drop Zone C, only ten found their mark. Yet the resulting difficulties in assembling did not prove serious.

Within two hours of landing Colonel Sink had collected forty men of his headquarters near the rendezvous point. Near by, the 1st Battalion (Lt. Col. William L. Turner) was assembling slowly, and the whole group soon moved to Culoville, where the regiment established its command post. No word had been received of the 3d Battalion to the south, or the 2d Battalion, which should have landed in Drop Zone C to accomplish one of the regiment's most critical missions—the seizure of the two southern exits. Colonel Sink wished the 1st Battalion to take over that mission, but, as Colonel Turner had only about fifty men, it seemed foolhardy to split the force and attempt to occupy both exits. Colonel Turner was therefore ordered to proceed only to Pouppeville and seize Exit 1.

About the same time, similar orders were given to the 3d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry (Lt. Col. Julian Ewell), by the division commander, General Taylor, who had little knowledge of the whereabouts of his units and was particularly worried about the southern exits. The 3d Battalion had been designated originally as division reserve to land in Drop Zone C and protect the glider landing zone northwest of Hiesville.



GLIDER LANDINGS *met with varying success. Some of the gliders landed in enemy-held territory; others, like the WACO below, crash-landed. The larger HORSA glider, above, came to a halt against a hedgerow bordering the small Normandy field.*



Although the battalion serial had been scattered, like the others, because of fog and flak, and had lost three planes with three-fourths of their personnel to enemy antiaircraft fire, a substantial number of the men came down within the prescribed area and assembled without undue delay. Just south of Ste. Marie-du-Mont, Colonel Ewell dropped with ninety of his own men and sixty from division headquarters. Another 150 men of his battalion assembled near Hiesville and set up the division command post there as planned. Colonel Ewell, with elements of his battalion (forty men from line companies and some headquar-

ters personnel), set out at 0600 for Pouppeville. General Taylor, Brig. Gen. Anthony J. McAuliffe (101st Airborne Division Artillery Commander), and eighteen other officers accompanied the column. The only enemy troops contacted on the march were six Germans at an outpost west of Ste. Marie-du-Mont.

Pouppeville was held by sixty to seventy men of the *1058th Regiment (91st Division)*. Colonel Ewell's men attacked the town. Enemy resistance was not determined, but Colonel Ewell was handicapped by the smallness of his force, which prevented him from maneuvering to envelop the enemy. Three hours were thus consumed in slow house-to-house fighting. At noon the German commander surrendered. Colonel Ewell's battalion had suffered eighteen casualties and inflicted twenty-five on the enemy. An additional thirty-eight Germans were taken prisoner.

Some of the enemy forces had withdrawn to the beach, but the approach of 8th Infantry, 4th Division, from that side made their position hopeless. Colonel Ewell heard the 4th Division coming, set up his machine guns, and waited for the nutcracker to close. The Germans surrendered to the 8th Infantry, and it was here, at Pouppeville, that Lt. Col. Carlton O. MacNeely (2d Battalion, 8th Infantry) and Colonel Ewell established the first contact between seaborne and airborne forces. In talking to 4th Division men at Pouppeville General Taylor learned for the first time that the 4th's progress was rapid and that the Utah exits were secure. He thereupon decided to direct the 101st's efforts to the second part of its mission—securing the Corps' southern flank.

Meanwhile elements of the 1st Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry, under Colonel Turner, became engaged in a series of small fights and were thus delayed in their advance on Pouppeville. When they arrived, Colonel Ewell's men had already occupied the town and the 4th Division was coming in across the causeway. Colonel Turner's force therefore returned to the command post at Culoville.

While Exit 1 was being secured, the 2d Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry (Lt. Col. Robert L. Strayer), was advancing on Exit 2, although this was not known at regimental headquarters. The battalion had achieved a rapid assembly of about two hundred of its men, despite the handicap of a drop entirely out of its designated zone. Some eighty men of battalion headquarters (including communications personnel and a machine gun platoon) and about one hundred men from the line companies, principally Company D, had gathered under the battalion S–2 and S–3 near Foucarville. They were joined by twenty men of the 508th Parachute Infantry (82d Airborne Division) and, at 0330, by Colonel Strayer with a group of fifteen men who had initially tied up with the 1st Battalion, 502d Parachute Infantry.

The consolidated force moved out about 0430, heading south. But it immediately met opposition from enemy troops which had moved between Foucarville and St. Germain-de-Varreville after the 1st Battalion, 502d Parachute Infantry, had passed to attack the XYZ buildings. Here Colonel Strayer's men were held up most of the morning by machine-gun positions and interdictory artillery fire across the road. Part of Company D finally was able to bypass the resistance points and, hurrying south, reached Exit 2 at 1330. Colonel Strayer, with the remainder of the battalion, joined these men about an hour later, and by 1800 the battalion had organized the position at Houdienville. By that time, however, elements of the 4th Division and tanks of the 70th Tank Battalion had already crossed the causeway and were proceeding inland.

Throughout most of the day, regimental headquarters, 506th Parachute Infantry, at Culoville felt virtually alone on the peninsula. It had no contact with the 2d and 3d Battal-

ions, little knowledge of other units of the division, and only sketchy information about the location and strength of the enemy. Its isolation was due in part to the scarcity of radio communication; a more important factor, however, was the small number of men which Colonel Sink had at his disposal and which he decided to keep together in order to protect the rear of the causeway forces and to provide a nucleus for further concentration of the regiment. During the morning he sent out a number of combat patrols to probe enemy dispositions and try to make contact with the 3d Battalion. The missions were not successful. Contact was made only with isolated enemy groups and did nothing to clear up the basic confusion.

At the same time that patrols were seeking out the enemy, actions were developing in the immediate vicinity of the command post. At Holdy, 1,000 yards northeast of Culoville, about seventy men of the 506th Parachute Infantry and the 82d Airborne Division had run into a previously unlocated enemy 105-mm. battery. They could make no headway against enemy defenses of the position, however, and asked for reinforcements. Colonel Sink gradually assembled an additional seventy or eighty men from the 1st Battalion at the command post and sent them up under Capt. Lloyd E. Patch of the 1st Battalion Headquarters Company and Capt. Knut H. Raudstein of Company C. When the reinforcements approached, the Germans withdrew to the earth revetments of the gun emplacements. Rockets were fired into the position, and after they had taken their toll Captains Patch and Raudstein moved the infantry in from two sides.

The battery had thus been overrun when a lieutenant of the 502d Parachute Infantry brought up from forty to fifty more reinforcements. Captain Patch turned over to them responsibility for outposting the guns and reassembled his own force to attack Ste. Marie-du-Mont from the west. The town was taken when elements of the 4th Division, which had crossed the causeway, entered from the east and squeezed out the enemy. While Captain Patch's men were thus engaged, the lieutenant, doubtful of his ability to hold the gun position with so few men, began destruction of the battery. Meanwhile, Colonel Sink had sent word to save the guns, as he had little other artillery available. The order came in time to rescue only one of the four guns.

Before the patrols and various forces which Colonel Sink had sent out returned that evening, the colonel's attention was drawn to the vulnerability of the command post itself. In midafternoon the sound of small arms came closer and closer. Twice he scraped together all the officers and men in the command post to hold back the Germans who pressed in from the surrounding hedgerows. When the forces of Colonel Strayer (2d Battalion) and Colonel Turner (1st Battalion) came in that evening, after being relieved by the 4th Division, Colonel Sink had a total of about 650 men, most of them from the 1st and 2d Battalions, but including also antitank personnel, men from the 82d Airborne Division, and scattered units of the 101st Airborne Division. There was still no contact with the 3d Battalion, and the whole situation to the south was vague and uncertain. Both General Taylor and General McAuliffe had visited the command post late in the afternoon en route from Pouppeville, and plans had been made to move south in the morning.

Securing the Southern Flank

Unknown to Colonel Sink, a small force from his 3d Battalion, of slightly more than platoon strength, had collected itself and proceeded to its objective. The 3d Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry, was to have landed in Drop Zone D, in the vicinity of Angoville-au-Plain, and to have seized the le Port bridges (Map No. 4). The enemy evidently

anticipated a drop in the area. Shortly before the drop, heavy antiaircraft fire was encountered. An oil-soaked building near the drop field was set on fire and the paratroops were immediately hit by machine-gun and mortar fire. Some of the men landed in or at the edge of the swampy plain east of Angoville-au-Plain.

The battalion S–3, Capt. Charles G. Shettle, came down near Angoville-au-Plain and walked toward the town, looking for some of his men. He found only two other officers and twelve enlisted men. But his thoughts were centered on the bridges, and, without further attempting to build up his force, he set out for the objective. There were thirty-three in the group when the northern bridge at le Port was reached at 0430.

Despite some fire from the opposite shore, a crossing was made and the east bank occupied. When an additional five officers and fifteen men joined the "battalion," Captain Shettle decided to cross the other bridge as well. Officers of Company H led patrols to the far bank, crossing under the bridge, and the command group followed. Although the bridgehead force killed some Germans and knocked out a few machine guns, after two hours the fight became unequal. The Americans ran low on ammunition and, having no contact with friendly forces, had no hope of reinforcing their position. They withdrew to the west bank to hold there for the remainder of the day.

Contact was made later with the group under Col. Howard R. Johnson (commanding the 501st Parachute Infantry) at the la Barquette dam, and Captain Shettle asked for reinforcements. But Colonel Johnson, who was in an equally precarious situation, could spare none. The best he could do was to promise help in case of emergency. The help that finally came, however, was fortuitous; that night forty men who had dropped farther



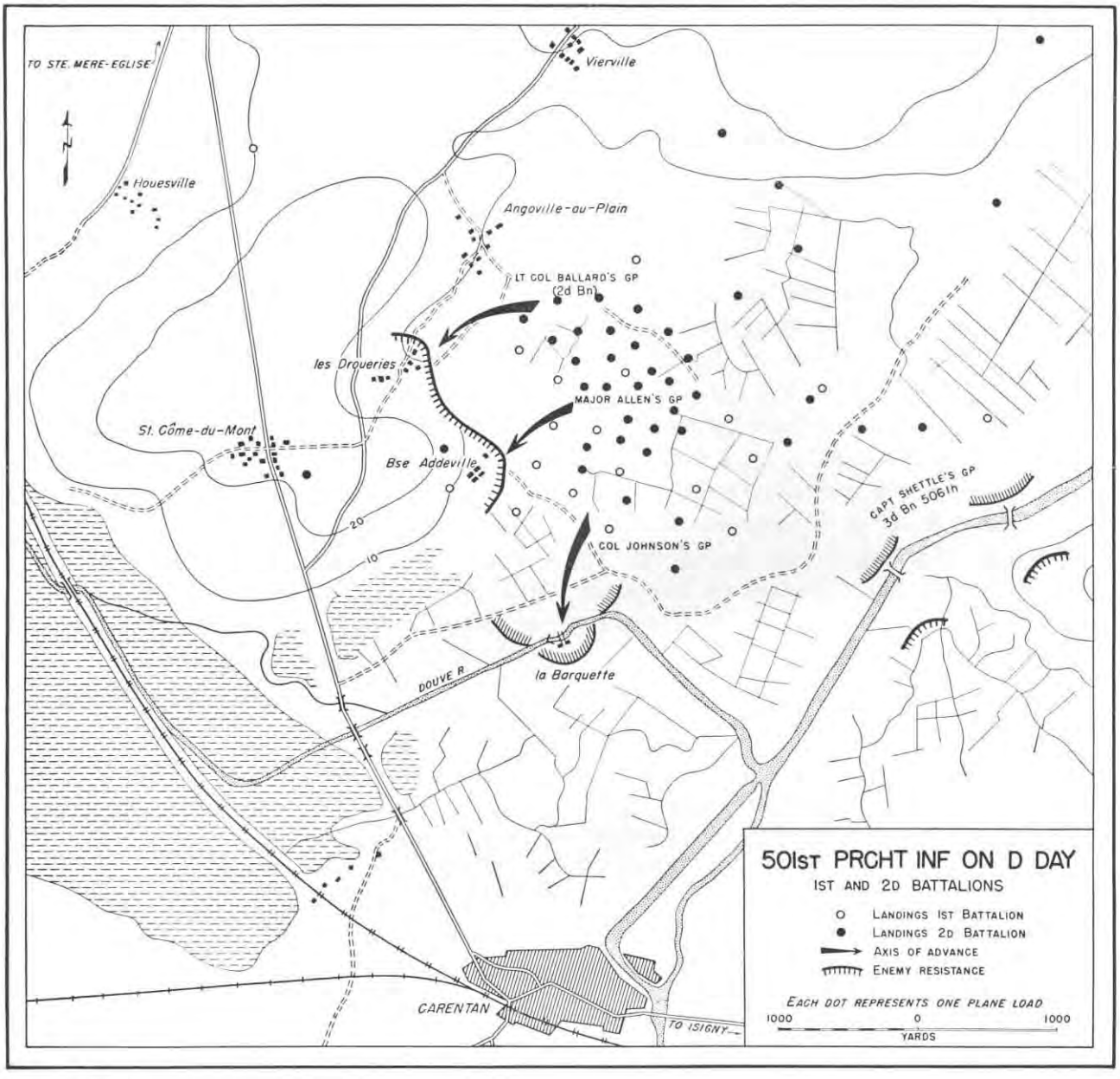
south, in the Carentan area, walked in and joined the group. Actually the Germans made almost no effort to take advantage of Shettle's weakness. In the middle of the night they tried a tentative push toward the bridge, which Shettle's engineers had already prepared for demolition, but gave up in the face of American small-arms fire.

Captain Shettle had thus set up the left anchor of a defensive line along the division's south flank. The completion of the division's defensive line in the south was the mission of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 501st Parachute Infantry (Colonel Johnson). To carry it out the 1st Battalion was ordered to seize the lock on the Douve River at la Barquette, and the 2d Battalion (Lt. Col. Robert A. Ballard) to blow the Douve River bridges on the main road from St. Côme-du-Mont to Carentan (Map No. 5). The regiment was also ordered to take St. Côme-du-Mont, if possible, and to destroy the railroad bridge to the west. Of these objectives, the la Barquette lock had assumed a special importance in the eyes of the planners.

The lock, located due north of Carentan, controls the water level of the Douve River to the west as far as the confluence of the Merderet. When the lock is opened the high tide floods the river channel and spreads gradually over the whole low marshy area between St. Côme-du-Mont and Carentan. Ultimately, through opening and closing the lock according to the tide level, the valleys of the Douve and Merderet can be turned into a shallow lake as far north as le Ham and as far west as St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. East of the lock the tide flow is kept in the river channel by flood banks from six to eight feet high. During the years when the RAF had this area under observation, inundations were observed periodically, extending in a large westward area between the ridges of high ground around St. Côme-du-Mont and the solid lower ground

POUPPEVILLE, *at the southern end of Utah Beach, where the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry, met Colonel Ewell's airborne force about noon of D Day, thus clearing Exit 1. The photo shows the western outskirts of the village, cleared by the paratroops.*



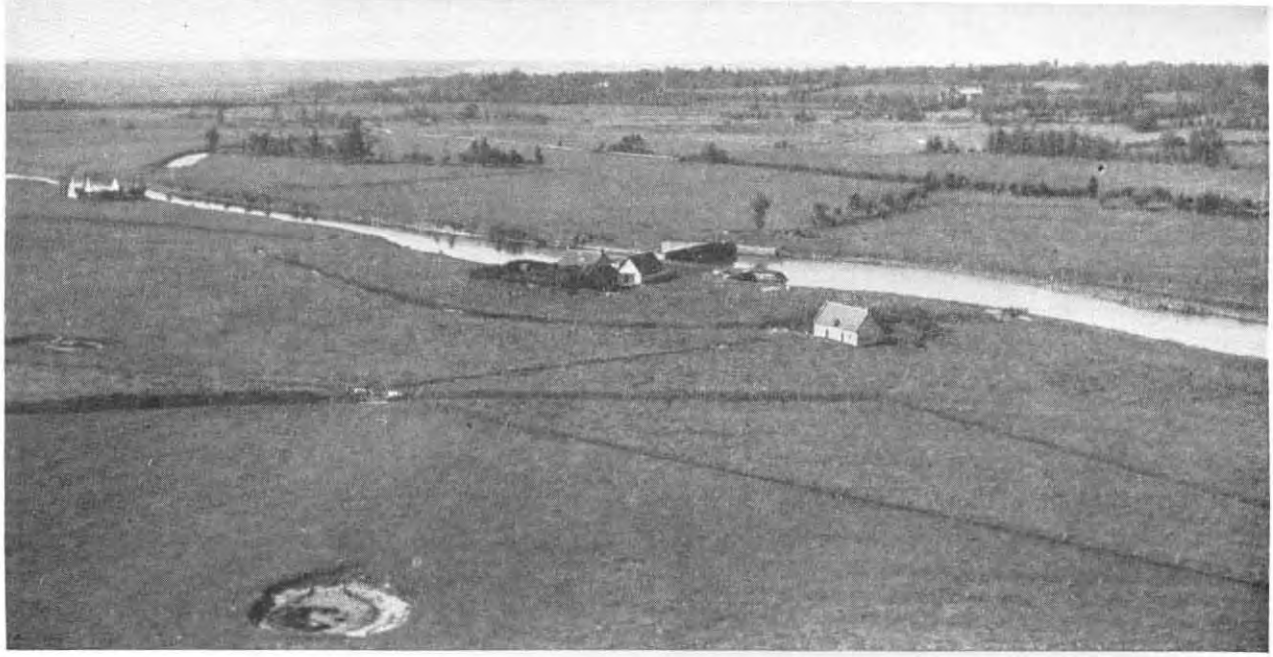


MAP NO. 5

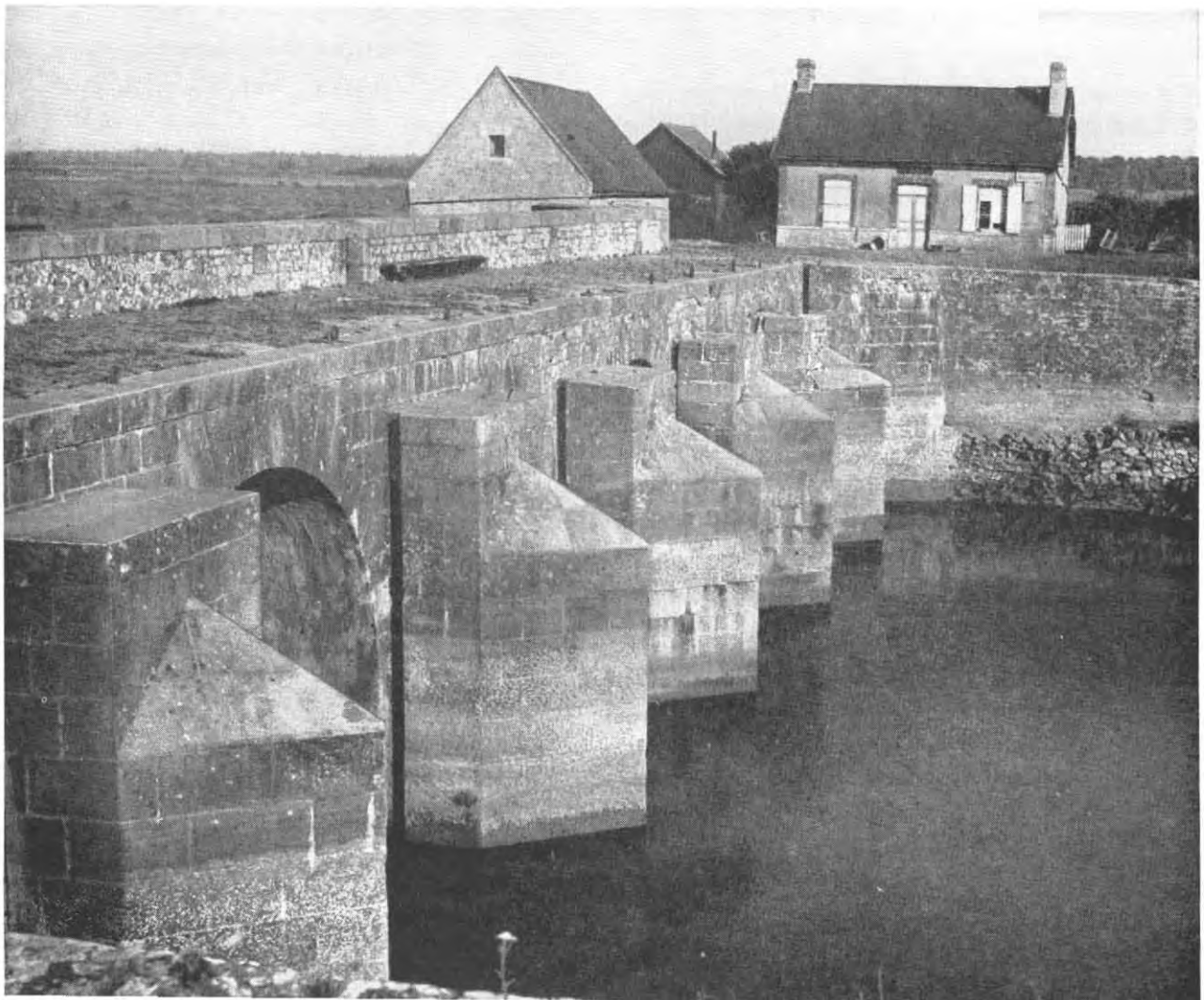
south and west of Carentan. Possession of the lock therefore meant control of a potentially valuable natural barrier to possible German counterattack against the south flank of the beachhead.[2] Furthermore, if seizure of the lock were coupled with destruction of the bridges north of Carentan on the only good route across the swamps, the task of safeguarding the left flank of VII Corps would be greatly facilitated.

Securing of this objective came close to failure at the outset, primarily because of a bad drop. The 501st Parachute Infantry, according to the original plan, was to drop between Vierville and Houesville, astride the two highways north of Carentan. A few days before D Day Drop Zone D was shifted southeastward to the area Angoville-au-Plain–Bse. Ad-

[2]Actually the tactical value of the lock was exaggerated. The flooding was usually slight and erratic. The area behind the lock flooded and drained so slowly that the inundation could not be used as a flexible defense measure.



THE LA BARQUETTE LOCK, *on the lower Douve, was the D-Day objective of the 1st battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry. The above view, looking northwest, shows the scene of action of Colonel Johnson's group, beyond the river. A close-up of the lock, looking south, is shown below.*



deville at the request of Colonel Johnson, who wished to land closer to his objectives, the la Barquette lock and bridges north of Carentan. A secondary consideration which also favored this change was the fact that antiairborne landing obstacles were appearing in the fields of the original drop zone. This brought the drop zone considerably nearer the lower Douve, and when the regiment actually made the drop, the first plane serial, carrying the 1st Battalion and regimental headquarters, was badly scattered, some of its sticks landing deep in enemy territory south of Carentan. Many others landed in the swampy bottom lands to the west. The 1st Battalion's command personnel was particularly hard hit. The commanding officer was killed, his executive officer was apparently captured, and all other company commanders and staff were also missing initially. In part, at least, the day was saved by an accident. A large percentage of planes of the 1st and 2d Battalions' serials had unloaded too soon. As the jump signal flashed in Colonel Johnson's plane, a bundle became wedged in the door. The delay caused by this prevented a premature unloading and brought Colonel Johnson and his men squarely down on Drop Zone D.

Moving south, Colonel Johnson collected some 150 men of miscellaneous units. At the trail junction just north of the lock, he verified his position and sent fifty men to take the objective, while the remainder of the force deployed defensively in place. The assault reached the lock in one dash, crossed it, and dug in on the soft ground of the far bank before the enemy could bring the area under shell fire. Even then the Germans made no attempt to press in on the bridgehead. Colonel Johnson thought that with a little additional strength he could proceed with the mission of blowing the bridges, which were only 2,000 yards up the river. But the patrols sent out in that direction drew fire with every movement. Satisfied that the lock situation was in hand, that his own position on this low-lying hollow was not favorable, and that he would need a stronger force for the task of destroying the Douve bridges, Colonel Johnson decided to move north and make contact with elements of the regiment at Bse. Addeville, 1,000 yards to the northwest. Patrols had reported that Maj. R. J. Allen, regimental S–3, had a sizeable force there.

Leaving the defense at the lock, Colonel Johnson took about fifty men to Bse. Addeville, hoping to gather sufficient strength to proceed against St. Côme-du-Mont. At 0900, the force arrived at Bse. Addeville. Near this town Major Allen had gathered a hundred men from several units, but these were already engaged with the enemy to the north and west. Without knowledge of other units in the division, Colonel Johnson was uncertain as to how best to employ his small forces. His decision was finally crystallized by a radio broadcast of the BBC from London. It was the noon news bulletin and brought word that the invasion "is going according to plan and the operations of the American airborne divisions are meeting with success." This news that the battle was going well elsewhere encouraged Colonel Johnson to proceed with the regimental mission. A small force was to be left at Bse. Addeville, with the bulk of his troops returning to la Barquette to move on the bridges.

At this point Colonel Johnson learned that 250 men of the 2d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry (Colonel Ballard), who had not been heard from previously, were heavily engaged at les Droueries, 1,000 yards to the northwest. Colonel Johnson was intent on the mission to the south and wanted Colonel Ballard's force to join him. But the enemy was between Colonel Ballard's force and that of Colonel Johnson's, and neither Major Allen's nor Colonel Ballard's units could move to join forces. Leaving fifty men at Bse. Addeville under Major Allen, Colonel Johnson took command

of the remainder of the force and moved out at about 1330.

At the la Barquette position the force was met by intense enemy artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire, coming partly from east of Carentan and partly from the direction of St. Côme-du-Mont. Among the men Major Allen had collected was Lieutenant Farrell, the naval shore fire control officer. He was in radio contact with the fleet and called the *Quincy*. Within a few minutes the first 8-inch salvo was delivered. Despite the difficulties, Lieutenant Farrell's adjustments brought a remarkably accurate concentration on enemy positions around St. Côme-du-Mont, and their mortar fire slackened immediately. Following this the naval fire was shifted to support the 2d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry, at les Droueries.

With enemy fire partially neutralized in the vicinity of la Barquette, Colonel Johnson resumed his efforts to take the Douve bridges. A new patrol, however, again reported progress to the west impossible because of heavy enemy fire. Colonel Johnson therefore ordered the extension of the defense at the lock east and west, pushing as close to the highway as possible. The bridgehead was built up to 100 yards in depth south of the lock. As protection against attack from the north, the position was expanded about 200 yards east and west and reinforced with automatic weapons. The 250 men with Colonel Johnson were augmented at 2000 by 30 brought down by Major Allen from Bse. Addeville. About 20 of the defenders were sent out during the night on patrols in an unavailing effort to find the headquarters of the division and of the 506th Parachute Infantry. Contact with Captain Shettle's men of the 506th at le Port was maintained. The other patrols were lost.

By the end of D Day Colonel Johnson's miscellaneous force had accomplished only a part of the regimental mission—the part originally assigned to the 1st Battalion. The 2d Battalion, becoming involved with the enemy in the vicinity of St. Côme-du-Mont shortly after the drop, was never able to move south to deal with the Carentan bridges on Colonel Johnson's right flank.

Colonel Ballard (2d Battalion) had assembled, between Angoville-au-Plain and les Droueries, small groups from each of his three rifle companies and his battalion staff (Map No. 5). He planned to move at once on St. Côme-du-Mont, which lay astride his main route to the Douve bridges. Prior G–2 information had indicated that the town was held by only one enemy platoon. It soon became apparent, however, that there were enemy forces of some strength at les Droueries between Colonel Ballard and his objective. Orders were consequently issued for the attack on les Droueries.

At 0530 two "companies," each with about thirty men, moved out abreast to seize two crossroads on the two trails from Angoville-au-Plain southwest. The third company followed in support. The enemy frustrated the frontal attack with small arms and mortars, but a new group of men, mainly from the 506th Parachute Infantry, arrived and succeeded in flanking the enemy on the right. Some progress had been made, although the Germans had not been beaten back, when Colonel Ballard received orders from Colonel Johnson to join him at la Barquette. The battalion, therefore, disengaged as soon as it could and returned to Angoville-au-Plain about noon, planning to move to la Barquette across the swamps south of Angoville-au-Plain. However, the area was covered by enemy fire and was soon found impassable, and the battalion moved instead along the west edge toward Bse. Addeville, which Major Allen had just reported he was about to vacate in order to join Colonel Johnson. The 2d Battalion had moved only about 400 yards when it was stopped by heavy fire from the same enemy force which had contested the morning at-



MAJ. GEN. MATTHEW B. RIDGWAY, *Commanding General, 82d Airborne Division.*

tack on les Droueries. There the battalion remained for the night, in close contact with the enemy. The 501st Parachute Infantry had secured the lock at la Barquette, but strong enemy resistance had prevented the capture of St. Côme-du-Mont as well as the destruction of the railroad and highway bridges north of Carentan.

The 82d Airborne Division Astride the Merderet

West of the 101st Airborne the 82d Airborne Division had gained possession of the east bank of the Merderet River in the vicinity of Ste. Mère-Eglise. Occupation of these positions, however, actually fell far short of the mission assigned to the division by plan. Broadly, its mission was to assist in sealing off the peninsula from the south by destroying bridges at Pont l'Abbé and Beuzeville-la Bastille and securing bridgeheads across the Merderet (Map II). Thereafter the 82d was to protect the southwest flank of the Corps by securing the line of the Douve River. It was therefore also charged with taking the offensive to the west in the direction of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte.

The assignments were as follows. The 505th Parachute Infantry was to land east of the Merderet River, capture Ste. Mère-Eglise, seize and secure the river crossings near la Fière and Chef-du-Pont, and secure a line in the north running through Neuville-au-Plain and tying in with the 101st Airborne Division in the vicinity of Bandienville or Beuzeville-au-Plain. The 507th and 508th Parachute Infantry Regiments were to land west of the river to consolidate the two bridgeheads on the west bank. More specifically, the 507th was to assist the 505th in securing the la Fière bridgehead and then establish a defensive line running southwest from Gourbesville to Renouf. The 508th was to destroy the crossings of the Douve at Beuzeville-la Bastille and Pont l'Abbé and extend the 507th's defensive line south from Renouf. Both regiments were to be prepared to assume the offensive westward and secure the line of the Douve River. All these forces were to land by parachute and were initially under the command of Brig. Gen. James A. Gavin, assistant division commander. General Ridgway, commanding the 82d Division, was to come in with certain glider elements just before dawn on D Day. The remaining glider artillery and infantry were to follow over a period of thirty-six hours to support the 508th Parachute Infantry in destruction of the Douve bridges. There was also a seaborne force made up of organic and attached artillery, tank destroyers, and other special units under Brig. Gen. Reese M. Howell.

The drop of the 82d Airborne Division was far from good (Map VI). The regiments assigned to the zones west of the Merderet had

the worst drop in the entire operation. The 507th Parachute Infantry was to land in Drop Zone T, north of Amfreville, but was scattered widely. The 508th Parachute Infantry was to land southwest of Amfreville and north of Picauville, and had a slightly better drop. But many of its sticks came down east of the Merderet, and for some days many of its men fought with the 101st Airborne Division.

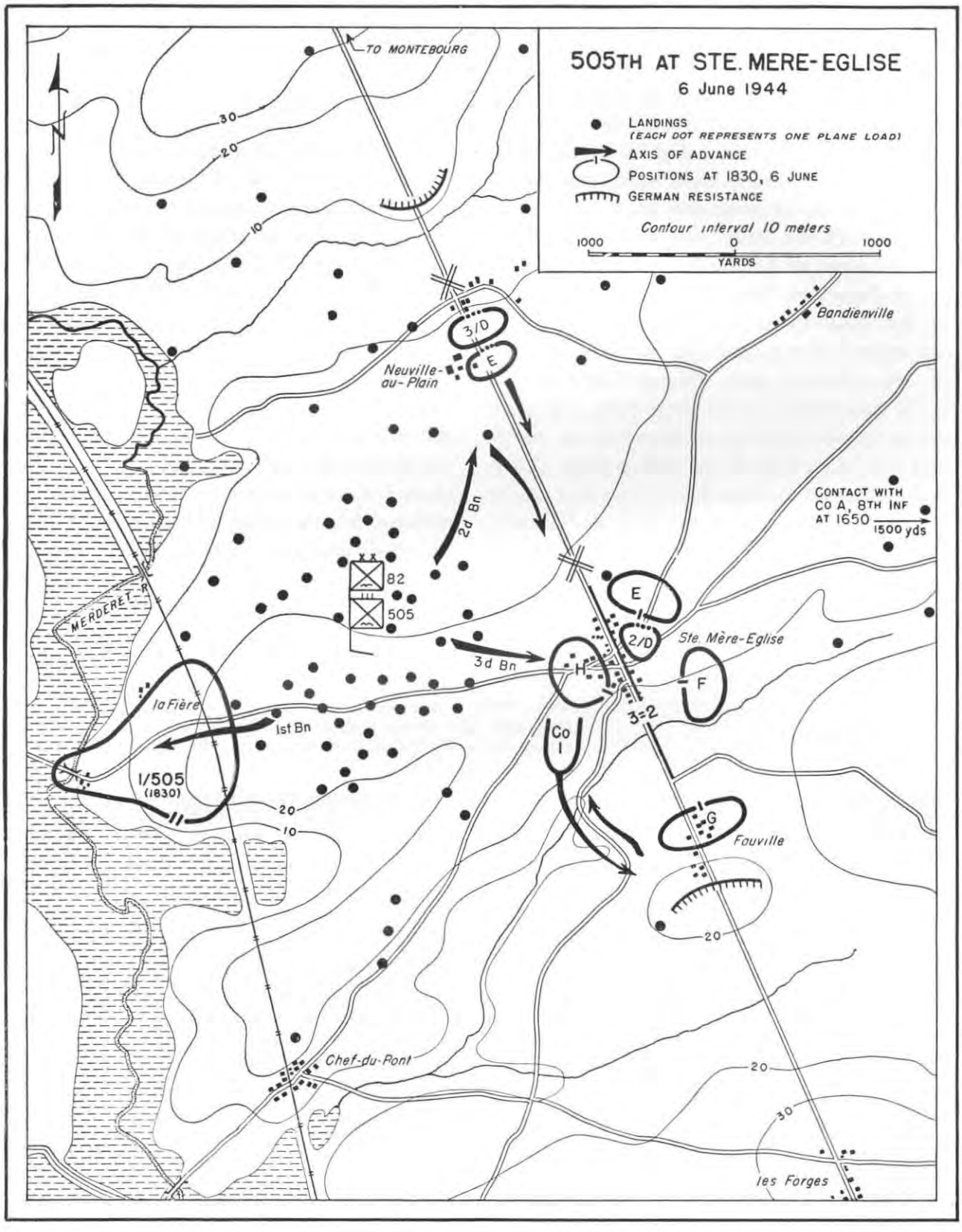
In contrast with the other two regiments, the 505th Parachute Infantry, landing northwest of Ste. Mère-Eglise between the railroad and the main highway, had one of the best drops of any airborne unit. About 1,000 of the 2,200 men landed in the drop zone, and most of the others, although scattered to the north and east, were able to assemble rapidly. They were fortunate to come down in an area nearly devoid of enemy. Rapid assembly of the regiment enabled it to proceed expeditiously with its mission—a mission that became during the day more important defensively than the plan contemplated.

The Capture of Ste. Mere-Eglise

Establishment of a defensive base at Ste. Mère-Eglise was one of the major undertakings of the division immediately after its drop. The other was the establishment of bridgeheads over the Merderet. But, as the latter operation began to founder, the capture and holding of Ste. Mère-Eglise assumed increasing importance. Tactically the most significant operation of the 82d Airborne Division on D Day was, therefore, the action in and around this town (Map No. 6). The town itself was the objective of the 3d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, which was to organize the immediate defense by setting up road blocks to the south and east. The 2d Battalion was to establish a line to the north, running from

THE BATTLE AROUND STE. MERE-EGLISE *involved many isolated actions by glider and parachute troops on D Day. This photo shows typical Normandy hedgerows and a sunken trail near the town, and bears evidence of a violent fight between the enemy and airborne elements of the 82d Airborne Division.*




505TH AT STE. MERE-EGLISE
6 June 1944
LANDINGS
(EACH DOT REPRESENTS ONE PLANE LOAD)
AXIS OF ADVANCE
POSITIONS AT 1830, 6 JUNE
GERMAN RESISTANCE
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0 1000
YARDS
TO MONTEBOURG
N
30
20
10
Bandienville
3/0
E
Neuville-au-Plain
2d Bn
CONTACT WITH CO A, 8TH INF AT 1650
1500 yds
82
505
MERDERET R
E
2/0
Ste. Mère-Eglise
3d Bn
H
F
3=2
la Fière
1st Bn
Co I
1/505 (1830)
20
10
G
Fauville
20
Chef-du-Pont
20
30
les Forges

MAP NO. 6

west to east through Neuville-au-Plain and Bandienville, tying in with the 502d Parachute Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, on the right. The 1st Battalion was to seize the Merderet crossings at la Fière and Chef-du-Pont, organize the defense of the glider landing zone, and furnish security for the regimental command post.

Like the other serials, the planes of the 505th Parachute Infantry ran into fog and flak, and for a time it appeared that the drops would be scattered. But the pathfinder markers were spotted correctly, and some of the planes which had moved out to prevent collision circled back before flashing the green light. As a result, all three battalions had good drops. The 1st Battalion (Maj. Frederick A. Kellem), after assembling the bulk of its force, started for the la Fière bridge. No troops could be sent to Chef-du-Pont immediately.

The 3d Battalion (Lt. Col. Edward C. Krause) moved after collecting about a quarter of its men. Colonel Krause organized these men into two companies and headed for Ste. Mère-Eglise. Learning from a Frenchman that the Germans had recently established themselves outside the town along the roads, Colonel Krause planned to surround the town and establish road blocks before daylight. He ordered his men to go directly into town without searching buildings, and they were told to use only knives, bayonets, and grenades while it was dark, so that enemy small-arms fire could be spotted by sight and sound.

By 0430 the 3d Battalion had occupied the town and raised the same American flag which the battalion had raised over Naples upon its entry into that city. Before daylight the main Cherbourg communication cable had been cut and all the road blocks were in. There was some resistance at three of the locations, but it was overcome with grenades. By 0930 the entire town had been cleaned out. It yielded only about thirty prisoners and ten enemy dead. The rest of the Germans, surprised, fled southward. Colonel Krause had at this time about 360 men under his control.

In the meantime, Lt. Col. Benjamin H. Vandervoort had gathered enough of his 2d Battalion to start on its mission of establishing a line through Neuville-au-Plain and Bandienville on the north. The battalion had been under way for an hour when, at 0614, Col. William E. Ekman, the regimental commander, ordered it to stop. He had not heard from the 3d Battalion, although Colonel Krause had sent runners with news of the situation at Ste. Mère-Eglise. At 0810, still without information about the 3d Battalion's location, Colonel Ekman ordered the 2d Battalion to return and capture Ste. Mère-Eglise. The order was countermanded on word of Ste. Mère-Eglise's fall and then, at about 0930, reissued when Regiment received a report of an enemy counterattack against the town from the south.

The Germans had attacked with considerable force—two companies of infantry supported by self-propelled guns and tanks. The attack had begun with mortar and machine-gun fire and had hit the flanks of the southern road blocks. The 3d Battalion was spread thinly. When the 2d Battalion came down at 1000 Colonel Krause ordered the scattered elements of Companies G and H on the north to join their companies on the south. The 2d Battalion took positions north and east of the town. Together the two battalion commanders decided on the defense, and by mutual agreement Colonel Krause took charge. Both officers had been injured. Colonel Krause had suffered a slight leg injury from shell fragments, and Colonel Vandervoort had a broken leg but continued to command his battalion from a cart.

Before proceeding to Ste. Mère-Eglise, Colonel Vandervoort had detached one rifle platoon (3d of Company D) on receiving word that Neuville-au-Plain was lightly held by the enemy. He sent the platoon there to organize

part of the northern defensive line which was the battalion's assigned mission. This impromptu decision proved wise, for the German thrust from the south at Ste. Mère-Eglise turned out to be only part of a larger squeeze which extended also to the north of the town. The effectiveness of the squeeze was nullified by the delaying action which the 3d Platoon (Lt. Turner B. Turnbull), Company D, fought at Neuville-au-Plain.

Lieutenant Turnbull had forty-two men with normal infantry weapons plus extra bazookas, BAR's, and two 57-mm. antitank guns. He deployed the platoon on high ground north of Neuville-au-Plain, and at 1030 the men engaged an enemy column which outnumbered them five to one. By weight of fire power, Lieutenant Turnbull's men were able to fight the enemy to a draw for eight hours. Gradually, however, enemy mortar fire, which the platoon was unable to neutralize, took its wearing toll, and the Germans began to use their superior numbers to turn the flanks of Lieutenant Turnbull's platoon. It became clear that the unequal fight could not continue. Colonel Vandervoort sent a platoon of Company E to cover Turnbull's withdrawal, and he pulled out late in the afternoon with sixteen of his forty-two men.

The platoon's tenacious fight at Neuville-au-Plain, however, had held back the northern prong of the enemy thrust long enough for the two battalions in Ste. Mère-Eglise to meet the stronger German threat from the south. Companies G and H, though hardly more than platoon strength, still held the southern edge of town. Two companies were in reserve inside the town. The enemy was building up strength on high ground 1,500 yards south of Ste. Mère-Eglise, where according to reports he had emplaced an artillery battery. He was moving infantry into the draw in front of his base.

After the first German attack had been repulsed, Colonel Krause sent Company I, with eighty men, to strike at the enemy's western flank. The counterattack was almost disastrous, as Company I, confused by the zigzag course through hedgerows, turned east too soon and emerged on the road just ahead of the enemy position. As a result of this miscalculation, however, the company hit an enemy convoy and destroyed it with Gammon grenades.[3] The surprise and effectiveness of the blow led the enemy forces immediately south of Ste. Mère-Eglise to overestimate American strength, and they began to withdraw. Company I, after following the flank of the withdrawal for some time, returned to the perimeter defense of Ste. Mère-Eglise.

As night approached, the general situation around Ste. Mère-Eglise began to appear more satisfactory. A few snipers had to be ferreted out of buildings, and roving groups of enemy delayed the free movement of messengers and supply personnel. But these did not constitute a serious threat. Except for a critical shortage of water, supply was adequate. Considerable quantities of food, ammunition, 57-mm. antitank guns, and engineer and signal supplies were gathered in from crashed gliders, whose occupants had been killed. After the morning attacks the enemy had exerted no pressure against the town during the rest of the day. It was not until after dark that he began to probe half-heartedly at the road-block outposts. These attempts, largely from the north, and presumably made by the same enemy which had overrun Neuville-au-Plain, were defeated without difficulty.

Along the Merderet

The events of Ste. Mère-Eglise assumed a greater significance in view of the critical situation which developed along the Merderet. There, more than anywhere else, the well-laid plans miscarried with a far-reaching impact

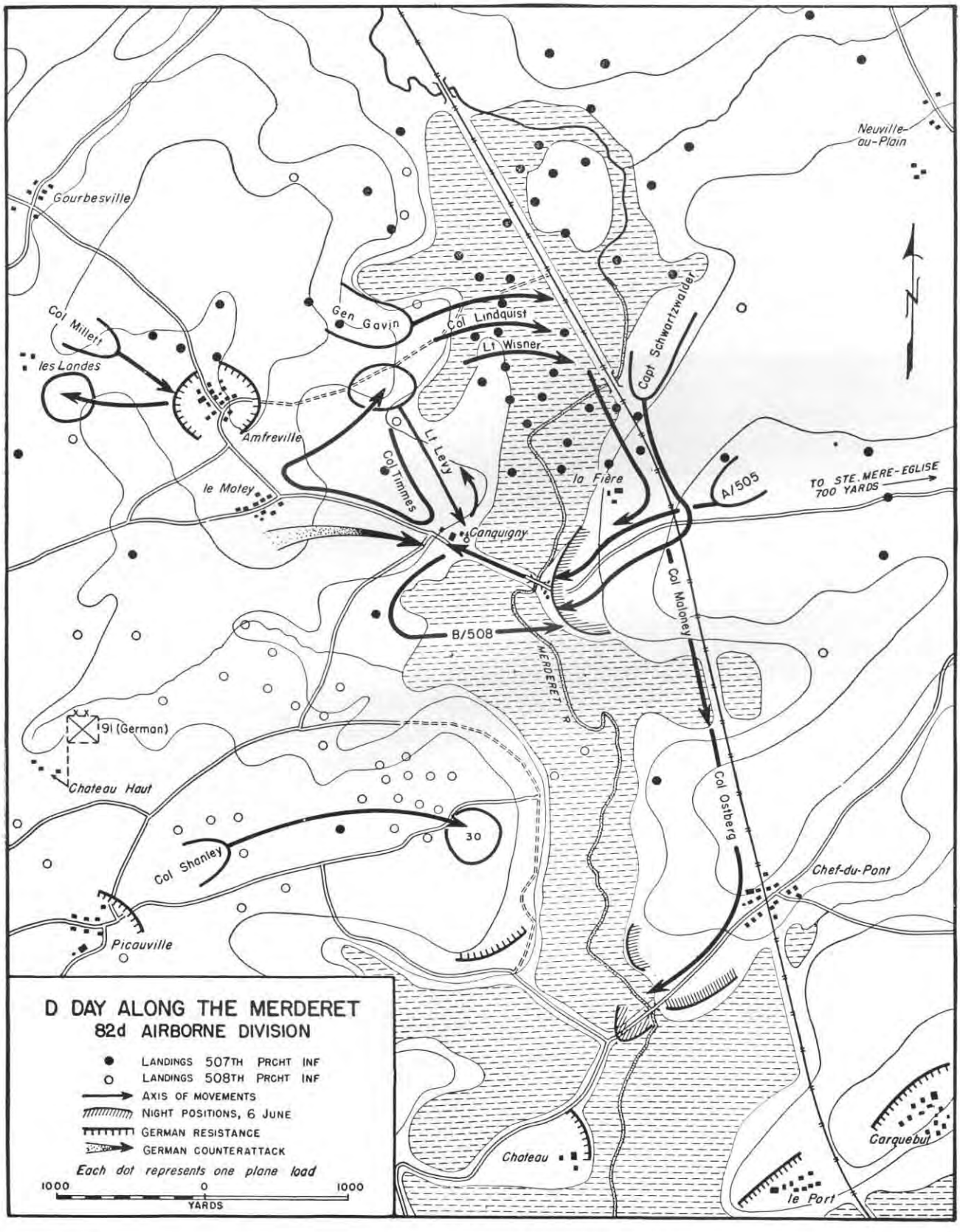
[3]Sacks of 2-pound plastic explosive, point detonated, used as antitank weapons.

on the operation as a whole. Securing the la Fière and Chef-du-Pont bridges from the east was the assigned mission of the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry. Company A was to seize the one at la Fière. This company, along with the rest of the battalion, had an excellent drop and effected a remarkably rapid assembly, moving to its objective immediately.

On the other side of the river the 507th Parachute Infantry and the 508th Parachute Infantry, with the mission of securing the west bank of the river, probably depended

STE. MERE-EGLISE *was the first town captured by American airborne troops, early on the morning of D Day. In the distance, looking south, is the area over which the 8th Infantry fought on D plus 1 to join the 505th Parachute Infantry, holding the town.*




Neuville-au-Plain
Gourbesville
Col Millett
les Landes
Gen Gavin
Col Lindquist
Lt Wisner
Capt Schwartzwalder
Amfreville
Col Timmes
Lt Levy
le Motey
la Fière
A/505
TO STE. MERE-EGLISE 700 YARDS
Canquigny
Col Maloney
B/508
MERDERET R
91 (German)
Chateau Haut
Col Ostberg
30
Col Shanley
Chef-du-Pont
Picauville
Chateau
Carquebut
le Port
D DAY ALONG THE MERDERET
82d AIRBORNE DIVISION
LANDINGS 507TH PRCHT INF
LANDINGS 508TH PRCHT INF
AXIS OF MOVEMENTS
NIGHT POSITIONS, 6 JUNE
GERMAN RESISTANCE
GERMAN COUNTERATTACK
Each dot represents one plane load
1000 0 1000
YARDS

MAP NO. 7

more than any other units on a good drop pattern for success. Both regiments, however, were scattered and faced some of the most difficult problems of assembly of any of the airborne units (Map VI).

The two regiments came in between 0230 and 0300, as scheduled. Pathfinders preceding them had in many cases found it impossible to mark the drop zones north of Amfreville and Picauville because of the presence of the enemy. Momentarily puzzled by the failure to see marker lights and by the realization that it was necessary to rely on alternative signals like the Eureka, pilots in some cases overshot the drop zones. Large numbers of paratroopers thus landed in the watery marshes along the Merderet. Aerial photos had indicated that the Merderet was a fairly narrow stream bordered with grassy swampland. But the photos were deceptive in that they did not reveal the wide flood areas created by the closing of the la Barquette lock. Grass had grown out of the water so thickly that from above this shallow lake looked like a prairie. Paratroops, heavily laden with equipment, found themselves in water several feet deep. The whole problem of assembly and recovery of equipment was therefore complicated. Both regiments were also widely dispersed. Part of the 508th Parachute Infantry dropped east of the Merderet and operated with the 101st Airborne Division. The 507th Parachute Infantry dropped generally east of its assigned zone, but personnel were found in widely separated places in the entire peninsula. Small groups held out against the enemy for several days, isolated from the rest of the division.

At first there was a noticeable gravitation to the la Fière bridge area, and ultimately elements of four regiments, including the 325th Glider Infantry, had a hand in the establishment of the bridgehead (Map No. 7). This convergence on la Fière was due in part to the tendency of the groups landing in the Merderet marshes to collect at or move toward the railroad. The railroad embankment rose prominently from the marshland and was a convenient orientation feature. The men knew it was the only railroad in the Merderet valley and naturally used it as a guide. Probably the first group to do so was the one led by Capt. F. V. Schwartzwalder. His group of men from the 507th Parachute Infantry had landed along the swamp east of the Merderet and assembled on the railroad embankment. They moved down to the la Fière bridge and met their first opposition there at daylight. In an orchard near the group of houses east of the bridge, they were fired on by mortar and small arms. Several attempts to rush the houses netted only casualties.

The engagement thus begun involved, in the course of the day, groups from all three parachute regiments. Company A, 505th Parachute Infantry, which had assembled almost to a man in the drop zone near Ste. Mère-Eglise, was already engaged on the right of Captain Schwartzwalder's unit. Next on the scene were men of the 507th and 508th under Col. Roy Lindquist, Commanding Officer, 508th Parachute Infantry. Colonel Lindquist, after landing in the swamps northeast of Amfreville, moved to the railroad embankment, assembling a hundred men as he went along. On reaching the railroad, he was joined by thirty men of the 507th under Lt. John H. Wisner, regimental S–2. Lieutenant Wisner wished to reach the regimental assembly area in the vicinity of Amfreville. Colonel Lindquist's objective was Pont l'Abbé. Both planned to follow the railroad as the clearest route south, and to cross the river at la Fière if the bridge was taken.

They arrived at dawn at the intersection of the railroad and the highway from Ste. Mère-Eglise west, to find Company A, 505th Parachute Infantry, moving toward the bridge. The company was deployed to the north of the road and Colonel Lindquist decided to move up abreast. Lieutenant Wisner's men,

leading off, were stopped by machine-gun fire 300 yards east of the bridge. At about the same point Company A, also pinned down by enemy fire, tried unsuccessfully to outflank the German positions from the right.

About that time Lieutenant Wisner, reconnoitering to the north, ran across another group making its way to la Fière. This new group numbered about 300 men, principally from the 507th Parachute Infantry, who had assembled, like so many others, north of la Fière and had followed the railroad south. Part had been collected by General Gavin, and part by Lt. Col. Arthur Maloney and Lt. Col. Edwin J. Ostberg. General Gavin's initial intention, after assembly, was to move this force south against the west end of the la Fière bridge and causeway. However, fruitless efforts to retrieve a jeep and an antitank gun from the marshes delayed the move until daylight. With the light, enemy fire seemed to build up along the west bank. The original plan was therefore abandoned and the force proceeded east and thence south along the railroad embankment.

When this force arrived at la Fière, the first American attempt to approach the bridge had been checked, but still it did not appear that the enemy was strong. Moreover, men of the 507th and 508th continued to drift into the position until by midmorning some 500 to 600 had gathered there. General Gavin therefore decided to commit part of the force elsewhere. Colonel Maloney was sent south with seventy-five men to reconnoiter another crossing. A little later General Gavin and Colonel Ostberg took another group of seventy-five men to try to cross the Merderet at the Chef-du-Pont bridge, which had been reported undefended.

Colonel Lindquist took command of the assorted units remaining at la Fière. The principal organized groups, comprising about 400 men of all regiments, were Company B, 508th Parachute Infantry; Company G, 507th Parachute Infantry; and Company A, 505th Parachute Infantry. Company G, under Captain Schwartzwalder, in position on the extreme left, south of the road, had probed out the weakest portion of the enemy line but had not followed up the advantage. When Colonel Lindquist ordered attack at noon by all forces, Company A, which had displaced to the north of the road, failed to get the order, but Lindquist's own force, attacking through the area where Company A had been held all morning, destroyed or captured the last of the enemy. As the fire fell away, Captain Schwartzwalder's men crossed the causeway and made contact near the west end with a patrol from the 2d Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry (Lt. Col. Charles J. Timmes).

The 2d Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry, had achieved an early assembly of fifty men under Colonel Timmes 1,000 yards east of Amfreville, near the battalion's planned drop zone. Soon after the initial assembly a patrol under Lt. Lewis Levy of Company D was sent to investigate the la Fière causeway and to clear it if possible. The patrol found a few men of the 507th already established in the village of Canquigny, though enemy infantry held the ground south and east. The forces joined but were unable to work their way to the causeway until the attack from the east bank carried across. The success of that attack cleared the west bank and brought eighty men into the bridgehead. Lieutenant Levy then established contact with the forces still on the east side and received assurance that the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, was coming across to take over the bridge.

The position seemed secure. Yet within the next hour the bridge was lost. The Germans countered quickly. Enemy artillery began to hit the vicinity of Canquigny, while small-arms fire built up to the south; tanks were heard approaching from the west. Before these signs of coming battle had become critical, Captain Schwartzwalder had decided that his primary mission was to go on toward Amfre-

ville to join the 2d Battalion and, under prodding of the first enemy artillery bursts, had pulled out fast with his eighty men and some additional personnel of the 508th. As no other troops from the east bank crossed over, this move left the bridgehead in the hands of four officers (including Lieutenant Levy) and eight enlisted men. With grenades and rifles and one machine gun, this handful of men fought off the enemy and even succeeded in disabling two enemy tanks with Gammon grenades, but they finally had to withdraw northward to join the 2d Battalion of the 507th.

In the meantime, Company B, 508th Parachute Infantry, had been sent, belatedly, across the causeway. When it arrived on the west bank it met the enemy attack head on. Unable to organize or hold its ground, it was forced south along the river, and survivors swam back under fire to the east bank.

The bridge so handily won was thus lost through failure to consolidate rapidly the west bank position. The reason for the failure was in part that the groups participating in the action had only a vague idea of what neighboring units were doing. The hedgerow country virtually penned each unit in its separate field of action.

Not only had the bridge been lost, but the enemy counterattack had isolated the force under Colonel Timmes (now including Captain Schwartzwalder's men) from the units at la Fière. Colonel Timmes' group had taken up a defensive position in an orchard near Amfreville and was caught and virtually immobilized by the enemy forces attacking toward the bridgehead. An attack south to la Fière was planned for that night but not attempted. The force numbered about 120 men; many were exhausted or casualties; and, in addition, friendly artillery fire began to fall in the causeway area. Colonel Timmes' force remained isolated in this position for two more days.

At la Fière, after the retreat of Company B, 508th Parachute Infantry, the position on the east bank was reorganized. Men of the 507th and 508th Regiments under Colonel Lindquist were relieved on the left and the remainder of the 1st Battalion, 505th, joined Company A in the line. Colonel Lindquist's men were placed in reserve west of the railroad. But the position was still far from satisfactory. The forward defenses of the 1st Battalion, 505th, were exposed to heavy mortar and artillery fire, and the enemy, after his success in clearing the west bank, began to show unusual aggressiveness. Two German tanks attempted to exploit their success by crossing the causeway. Company A's road block covered by bazooka men stopped the attack, destroying both tanks. But it seemed probable that the Germans would try again. General Gavin came up to la Fière from Chef-du-Pont late in the afternoon and found the situation serious. Ammunition was low; medical aid was scarce. General Gavin sent orders to Colonel Maloney at Chef-du-Pont to bring all his force, less about a platoon, to la Fière at once.

Before Colonel Maloney arrived, the enemy attacked the east bank again in considerable strength, and the position of the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, was, in the opinion of its commander, becoming rapidly untenable. At about 2000 Colonel Maloney brought 200 men to la Fière and moved up to the 505th Parachute Infantry line. By dark the American defense was again fairly well stabilized and the enemy had ceased his attack across the causeway.

Locally the situation was secure. But there was still no news at 82d Airborne Division headquarters, located west of Ste. Mère-Eglise, of the progress of the seaborne invasion. General Ridgway therefore took steps to provide for the possibility that the whole division might have to consolidate its defense in the vicinity of Ste. Mère-Eglise. Colonel Lindquist was ordered to move his force, now numbering some 250 men, to a position from which

he could prevent the enemy from cutting off la Fière units from Ste. Mère-Eglise. This movement, however, was not accomplished until the next day.

While the chief concern of the 82d Airborne Division during D Day was with the la Fière bridgehead, where the bulk of the assembled forces were committed and where the enemy put up his strongest resistance, another attempt to secure a crossing of the Merderet River had been made at the same time to the south of Chef-du-Pont and had fared slightly better. The initial attack at Chef-du-Pont had been undertaken by the seventy-five men under Colonel Ostberg. The enemy withdrew from the town and the eastern approaches to the bridge but dug in along the causeway and on the west bank. Though apparently not numerous, the Germans fought tenaciously. Colonel Ostberg's men were stopped at the bridge. The seventy-five reinforcements who arrived later under Colonel Maloney could do nothing to break the deadlock. At about 1700 the Chef-du-Pont force was stripped to a platoon in order to send reinforcements to the hard-pressed paratroopers at la Fière.

The remaining platoon of thirty-four men under Capt. Roy E. Creek almost at once were whittled down to twenty effectives by direct fire from an enemy field piece on the opposite bank. At the same time from seventy-five to one hundred Germans were observed forming on the east bank in some buildings to the left rear of Captain Creek's position. Captain Creek asked for reinforcements. Before they could arrive, immediate help was provided fortuitously by the landing within American lines of a glider carrying a 57-mm. antitank gun and ammunition. The gun was emplaced and fired to neutralize the enemy artillery piece. Nearly one hundred men came down from la Fière shortly thereafter and the enemy threat was removed. With the reinforcements a defensive position was organized to bring greater fire power to bear on the enemy. In a short time the east bank was cleared, and a platoon crossed the bridge and dug in on the other side without opposition. The bridge was secured, though the position remained enfiladed by enemy fire from the Carquebut area.

The capture of Ste. Mère-Eglise, and the fights for the Merderet River crossings at la Fière and Chef-du-Pont, together constituted the principal efforts of the 82d Airborne Division on D Day. But there were also a number of isolated groups of the division which organized themselves west of the Merderet and fought independently—in some cases for four or five days. These isolated groups contributed in some degree to the accomplishment of the division's missions, though they carried on what amounted to fights for survival rather than battles for planned objectives.

Col. George V. Millet, Jr., commanding the 507th Parachute Infantry, collected in the course of D Day some seventy-five men northwest of Amfreville. But, though he was not more than 1,000 yards from the 2d Battalion, 507th (Colonel Timmes), he made no contact with this battalion or other friendly elements until D plus 4.

Farther south, elements of the 508th Parachute Infantry were having similar experiences. One group, initially led by Lt. Gerald P. Guillot and later by Capt. Jonathan Adams, had one skirmish after another with the enemy, and survived to join the regiment on D plus 5.

The largest force from the 508th Parachute Infantry to assemble west of the Merderet was commanded by Col. Thomas J. B. Shanley (Commanding Officer, 2d Battalion). Colonel Shanley landed near Picauville. He assembled a small group, not large enough to proceed, as he wished, on the mission against the Douve bridge at Pont l'Abbé. Before noon he established radio contact with Lt. Norman McVicar, who had a force of about sixty men a mile to the northeast, and started out to join this force. He met a patrol from another force off

to his left under Maj. Shields Warren, Jr. Junction between these three groups, however, was delayed by enemy pressure on the south, which forced Colonel Shanley's men to engage. It was midafternoon before they could free themselves even so far as to choose better ground and organize a defensive position. Before nightfall, however, the enemy had been cleared sufficiently to allow the Shanley, Warren, and McVicar forces to join. But in the meantime Colonel Shanley had learned that the German force which had been trying all afternoon to close in on him had the strength of a battalion, and that more of the enemy was dug in around Pont l'Abbé. He therefore abandoned the idea of attacking toward the Douve bridge and decided to proceed to the regiment's assembly area, the high ground known as Hill 30, dominating the Chef-du-Pont causeway. At 2300 the entire force, organized into two companies, moved there and improvised an all-around defensive position.

The Airborne Divisions at the End of D Day

A hard fight had been fought on D Day by the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions—a fight that had not gone entirely according to plan and had cost heavy casualties. Not one battle but fifteen or twenty separate engagements had been fought.

Both divisions had had scattered drops, with varying losses in men and materiel. Initial dispersion was further aggravated by the Normandy terrain; the hedgerows made it difficult to assemble and still more difficult to coordinate the maneuver of units. Some units were completely unaware of others, fighting only a few hundred yards away. The groups were usually mixed, and men strangers to their leaders fought for objectives to which they had not been assigned. Still, the airborne operation was in general a success. Small groups of parachutists took advantage of a surprised and temporarily disorganized enemy to seize many of the vital objectives quickly.

When D Day ended, the 101st Airborne Division had accomplished the most important of its initial missions. General Taylor had estimated at noontime that, despite the errors of the drop, the tactical situation of his division was sound. The way had been cleared for the movement of the seaborne forces inland. The northern sector in the vicinity of Foucarville was securely held by the 502d Parachute Infantry. On the other hand, the forces holding the southern flank of the Corps front along the Douve north of Carentan were not as strong as intended. The le Port bridges had been taken, but the bridgehead had to be abandoned. The la Barquette lock was occupied, but precariously. Virtually isolated, with a total strength nearer three companies than three battalions, short of ammunition, and facing unexpectedly tenacious opposition, the prospects of the southern units did not appear bright. In the St. Côme-du-Mont area the enemy effectively held the 501st Parachute Infantry against the swamps in the vicinity of les Droueries and Bse. Addeville. There were no men to be spared to proceed against the railroad and highway bridges across the Douve, and the enemy was thus left strong and mobile to the southwest.

Yet here, as elsewhere on D Day, the weakness of the American forces was more than offset by the almost total lack of aggressiveness on the part of the enemy. Positions which tactically should have required battalions for defense could be and were held by small improvised forces which had to worry more about cover from artillery and mortar fire than about counterattack. Probably the weakest feature of the whole situation at the close of D Day was the lack of communication. This had plagued the activities of most of the battalions during the day. At night, though it was only the southern forces that remained

out of contact, the southern flank was precisely the most seriously threatened portion of the division sector (Map No. 9).

The situation of the 82d Division was more serious than that to the east. The plan by which the 82d was to have been placed in possession of both banks of the Merderet was voided by the faulty drop. Large numbers of the division were isolated west of the Merderet, unable to reach the division's planned objectives in that area. The la Fière bridgehead had been won only to be promptly lost. This was costly, for it created a tactical problem that engaged the major forces of the entire division for the next three or four days. Moreover, the expected reinforcements by sea and glider had not arrived by the end of D Day and many of the latter had been irretrievably lost in landing. General Ridgway, viewing the operation at the Merderet and lacking information about the other divisions, was naturally alarmed and took measures to consolidate his defensive base at Ste. Mère-Eglise.

There was probably little optimism in the minds of most of the commanders of the 101st and 82d Divisions as D Day came to a close. Of the 6,600 men of the 101st Division dropped on the morning of D Day, only 2,500 men were working together at the end of the day. Reinforcements were needed for all of the airborne units. Such reinforcements had to come across the beach. Fortunately the seaborne landing had been relatively unopposed. The arrival of the 4th Division had freed the 101st Airborne Division of responsibility in the north and east and released a large part of this division for employment elsewhere. The rapid progress of the 4th Division on D Day promised to improve greatly the situation of the two airborne divisions.

THE SEABORNE ASSAULT

Task Force U Moves In

While parachutists attempted to assemble in the labyrinth of the Normandy hedgerows and marshes, troops aboard transports prepared to transfer into landing craft for the assault on the beach. At 0430 (H minus 2 hours) detachments of the 4th and 24th Cavalry Squadrons under Lt. Col. E. C. Dunn landed on the Iles St. Marcouf to capture what was suspected to be a hostile observation post or casemate for mine-field control. Prior to the landing four men armed only with knives swam to what was supposedly an enemy-held shore to mark the beaches. No enemy was encountered, although both islands were found to be heavily mined and some casualties were suffered. All elements of the detachment (numbering 132 men) were ashore and the island occupied by 0530.

In the meantime the unloading of troops into assault landing craft proceeded uneventfully. After the transfer, LCVP's circled the transports awaiting the order to rendezvous. At H minus 40 minutes (0550) warships of the bombardment group of Task Force 125 began firing on enemy shore batteries. A few minutes later 276 Marauders of the Ninth Air Force dropped 4,404 250-pound bombs on 7 objectives on the beach, extending from les Dunes de Varreville to Beau Guillot. The effectiveness of this attack is difficult to assess. Les Dunes de Varreville seems to have received more bombs than any other target, possibly because the conspicuous tank ditch surrounding the area persuaded pilots to unload on it when briefed targets could not be located. About one-third of all bombs fell between high and low tide water marks. As assault craft started for the beach, the fire support group, consisting of thirty-three variously equipped craft, began the process of beach drenching. Seventeen of these craft mounted rocket launchers and discharged their rockets when the first waves of assault craft were still 600 to 700 yards from shore.

One of the earliest mishaps caused the immobilization of one of the control vessels. At approximately 0455 the Green Beach primary and secondary control vessels and the Red Beach primary control vessel left the Transport Area for the beach. The secondary control vessel for Red Beach fouled her screw on a dan buoy and was unable to proceed. An hour later, while still more than 7,000 yards from the beach and already 10 to 15 minutes late, the Red Beach primary control vessel was sunk, probably by a mine. Shortly thereafter an LCT behind the Green Beach primary control vessel also hit a mine and sank. The run into shore was already behind schedule, and these sinkings caused some of the landing craft to slow down. The Green Beach secondary control vessel therefore turned about to bring the landing craft in closer to the beach and announced that it would lead all amphibious tanks in. The tank-carrying LCT's were supposed to launch the tanks at 5,000 yards,



but to save time they were brought to within 3,000 yards of the beach and then discharged.

The first wave consisted of 20 LCVP's, each carrying a 30-man assault team from the 8th Infantry (Map VII). The 10 craft on the right were to land on Tare Green Beach, opposite the strong point at les Dunes de Varreville. The 10 craft on the left were intended for Uncle Red Beach, 1,000 yards farther south. The entire operation was timed against the touchdown of this first assault wave, which was scheduled to take place at 0630. Eight LCT's, each carrying 4 duplex drive (DD) amphibious tanks, were scheduled to land at the same time or as soon thereafter as possible.[1] The second wave comprised another 32 LCVP's with additional troops of the 2 assault battalions, some combat engineers, and also 8 naval demolition teams which were to clear the beach of underwater obstacles. The third wave, timed for H plus 15 minutes, contained 8 more LCT's with dozer tanks. It was followed within 2 minutes by the fourth wave, mainly detachments of the 237th and 299th Engineer Combat Battalions, to clear the beaches between high and low water marks.

The first wave arrived at the line of departure on time and all twenty craft were dispatched abreast. Support craft to the rear were firing machine guns, possibly with the hope of exploding mines. When the LCVP's were from 300 to 400 yards from the beach, the assault company commanders fired special smoke projectors to signal the lifting of naval support craft fire. Almost exactly at H Hour the assault craft lowered their ramps and six hundred men walked into waist-deep water to wade the last 100 or more yards to the beach. The actual touchdown on the beach was therefore a few minutes late, but the delay was negligible and had no effect on the phasing of the succeeding waves. Enemy artillery had fired a few air bursts at sea, but otherwise there was no opposition at H Hour. The morale of the assault troops was excellent. The men waved their rifles as they reached the dry beach, some of them shouting, "Goddam, we're on French

[1]The 32 DD tanks played little part in the assault. The tanks beached approximately 15 minutes after the first assault wave. One LCT had struck a mine when its ramp was lowered and sank, so that 4 of the 32 tanks did not reach the beach.

soil." They were obviously relieved and happy that this was not another "dry run."

The first troops to reach shore were from the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry. The 1st Battalion landed a few minutes later. Both came ashore considerably south of the designated beaches. The 2d Battalion should have hit Uncle Red Beach opposite Exit 3. The 1st Battalion was supposed to land directly opposite the strong point at les Dunes de Varreville. The landings, however, were made astride Exit 2 about 2,000 yards south.

It is difficult to pinpoint the cause for this error. Both Red Beach control vessels had been lost, and one of the Green Beach control vessels had gone back to bring in the LCT's carrying DD amphibious tanks. Guiding the initial assault waves to the proper beaches was therefore the sole responsibility of one control vessel. The possibility of error was increased by the strong tidal current as well as by the beach drenching administered by naval fire support craft, which threw up a tremendous cloud of smoke, dust, and fine sand, obscuring the beach for many minutes just prior to and after the jump-off from the line of departure.

Potentially this error was very serious, for it might have caused great confusion. In fact it did not. The original plans, in which each assault section had a specific mission, could not be carried out in detail, of course. Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., assistant commander of the 4th Division, had volunteered to coordinate the initial attack on the beach strong points until the arrival of the regimental commander, Colonel Van Fleet, and had landed

ASSAULT ELEMENTS OF FORCE U, *including DD tanks, were still on the beaches when these photos were taken shortly after H Hour. The amphibious tanks (left) await the blowing of breaches in the sea wall, while infantrymen cross the dune and advance inland.*





OPPOSITION ON THE BEACH ON D DAY *was light, but enemy artillery fire from inland batteries frequently forced men to take shelter along the sea wall several days after the landings. The lower photo was taken from a position along the sea wall itself.*



with Company E. When it was realized that the landings had been made at the wrong place, he personally made a reconnaissance of the area immediately to the rear of the beach to locate the causeways which were to be used for the advance inland. He then returned to the point of landing, contacted the commanders of the two battalions, Lt. Cols. Conrad C. Simmons and Carlton O. MacNeely, and coordinated the attack on the enemy positions confronting them. These impromptu plans worked with complete success and little confusion. The errors in landing actually proved fortunate. Not only was the beach farther south less thickly obstructed, but the enemy shore defenses were also less formidable than those opposite the intended landing beaches.

Clearing the Beaches

Such clearing of beach obstacles as was necessary was the mission of a special engineer force which was scheduled to land directly after the 8th Infantry. The engineer elements were organized as a Beach Obstacle Task Force, commanded by Maj. Herschel E. Linn of the 1106th Engineer Combat Group. They were to clear four 50-yard gaps in the obstacles on each beach from the high water mark seaward by hand-placed charges and tank dozers. Naval demolition teams were to destroy all obstacles under water and Army engineer teams were responsible for those above water. Army combat engineers were from the 237th Engineer Combat Battalion. The detachment of eight tank dozers was from the 612th Light Equipment Company and 70th Tank Battalion.

The plan contemplated the simultaneous landing at H plus 5 minutes of eight naval teams to clear eight 50-yard gaps in the first band of obstacles.[2] This wave was to be followed in 10 minutes by 8 LCT's carrying, in addition to other tanks, 8 tank dozers. Immediately behind the tanks were to come 8 engineer combat demolition teams to clear obstacles above water. A reserve of 3 naval teams and 4 engineer teams was included in the fourth and fifth waves.

Like many other D-Day operations, this plan was not executed as conceived. Two LCT's were sunk while approaching the beach. One LCM, with an engineer demolition team, was hit by shell fire just as it lowered its ramp on Green Beach, and six men were killed. Both Army and Navy demolition teams beached almost simultaneously, together with the four reserve engineer teams which landed on Green Beach. These discrepancies between plan and performance in no case seriously hindered the operation.

The parties left the LCVP's and LCM's in three feet of water and waded ashore, each man carrying sixty pounds of explosives. Aerial photos had indicated three bands of obstacles in depth. Since H Hour was timed for a rising tide favorable for landing craft, it was expected that one band would be either in or near the edge of the water. Actually all obstacles were found dry. The Navy teams, however, proceeded as instructed to fix explosives on the seaward band and the engineers moved to the next band. After the first gap at the junction of the beaches was blown, it was decided to proceed at once to the clearing of the entire beach. The landing craft heading for the initial gap were bunching so dangerously, and the obstacles were so much more sparsely distributed than expected, that the original plan of clearing only 50-yard gaps was abandoned.

Major Linn and the executive officer of the 237th Engineer Combat Battalion, Maj. R. P. Tabb, had both planned to direct operations from their M–29's (Weasels) on the beach. Major Linn's craft was sunk and Major Tabb's vehicle sank as it left the landing craft. Major

[2]The Navy teams contained about 50 percent Army personnel who had volunteered for this mission and had trained and lived with the naval demolition teams.

Tabb saved the crew and a radio and made for the beach, where he got in touch with General Roosevelt. There was little of the expected excitement and not much confusion. Control during the landing was never a serious problem because it was decentralized. The fortuitous simultaneous landings of Army and Navy demolition teams made possible the setting and blowing of charges for all three bands of obstacles at once, and consequently saved time.

As expected, obstacles consisted mainly of steel and concrete pikes, some steel tetrahedra, and hedgehogs. Tank dozers worked effectively against some of the piling and pushed the obstacles up onto the beach, but hand-placed charges accounted for most of them. Only a few mines were found on the beach, attached to the obstacles. Belgian Gates were found in small number, a few on the beach and a few blocking the roads leading from the beach. The four reserve teams which landed on Green Beach blew these gates and assisted in blasting additional gaps in the sea wall.

The entire beach was cleared in an hour, and by that time elements of the 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion, the 3d Battalion of the 8th Infantry, and the 3d Battalion of the 22d Infantry were moving across the beaches, while engineer units were arriving to organize the beach operation. The Beach Obstacle Task Force was occupied with odd jobs for several hours more, but before noon had completed its task and reorganized. Of the 400 men involved, 6 were killed and 39 wounded.

Clearing the beach was only the first of the tasks assigned to combat engineers. One platoon of engineers was attached to each assault company of the 8th Infantry to blow gaps in the sea wall, destroy barbed wire in front and

FIRST AID *was rendered on the beach in the early hours of the assault. Medical Corps men are shown administering aid to soldiers of the 8th Infantry wounded in the assault. Evacuation of casualties and prisoners of war to the United Kingdom also began early.*





BEACH EXITS *were blown in the sea wall by the 237th Engineer Combat Battalion soon after the landings. Above is a scene of Green Beach. Below, an aerial view shows additional gaps in the sea wall and also the Exit 2 causeway which crosses the inundated area and was the principal artery of traffic on D Day.*





MAJ. GEN. RAYMOND O. BARTON, *Commanding General, 4th Infantry Division.*

to the rear of the wall, and clear paths inland through the sand dunes. These tasks completed, they were then to perform normal assault missions against fortifications. For their initial missions they were equipped with bangalore torpedoes, mine detectors, explosives, and pioneer tools and markers. The demolition of the sea wall and clearance of paths through the sand dunes were accomplished very early. Company A, 237th Engineer Combat Battalion, blew two gaps in the wall on Red Beach, and Company C blew two on Green Beach. In addition Company A blew two Belgian Gates at the entrance to Exit 2 and picked up several prisoners from the pillboxes along the beach wall. The engineers then accompanied the infantry, removing mines and "dozing" roads across the dunes. As enemy artillery began to interdict the entrance to Exit 2, a trail was broken through the fields to the south and joined with the road which paralleled the coast and led back to Exit 2 south of la Madeleine. Many of the fields back of the beach marked *Minen* were free, but the pattern was such that all were suspect and had to be cleared.

The 4th Division Pushes Inland

While combat engineers prepared the beaches for the follow-up of additional men and materiel, the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 8th Infantry proceeded on their altered mission. When General Roosevelt and the battalion commanders became aware of the error in the landings, it was decided to reduce the enemy strong points immediately confronting them and proceed inland to their original objective (Map No. 8). Directly in front of the 1st Battalion was the fortification in and around Madeleine, and facing the 2d Battalion, approximately 1,300 yards to the southeast, was another fortification, just south of the Exit 2 road. These were field fortifications placed to cover the causeway roads; they were not formidable. They were all taken by forces of company size or less against light opposition. Other troops cleaned out houses along the road running parallel with the beach. The enemy coastal garrisons, apparently demoralized by the preparatory bombardment, showed little fight; some did not fire at all.

Two or three hours were consumed in eliminating opposition in the beach area and in reorganizing for the advance inland. The two battalions then diverged, the 1st moving north and then inland through Exit 3, and the 2d moving down the coast to Exit 1. By this time additional waves of infantrymen had landed. At approximately 0745 (H plus 75 minutes) the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry (initially attached to the 8th Infantry), touched down on Green Beach and moved north along the coast to reduce beach strong points. The 3d Battalion of the 8th Infantry landed in the same

waves on Red Beach and moved inland across Exit 2. Four battalions of infantry had thus landed by 0800. Two more came in at about 1000—the 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry, on the northern beach and the 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, on the southern. According to plan, these two battalions were to march inland through Exit 4. Since the eastern end of this exit was still covered by enemy fire and the causeways to the south were already congested, some of the 22d Infantry's units were compelled to wade two miles through the inundations. Elements of the 12th Infantry, which landed shortly after noon, also waded through the flooded area. The water was generally only waist-deep, but the area was full of ditches and holes, and men frequently dropped into water over their heads. Since the 22d Infantry's objective lay to the northwest in the direction of St. Germain-de-Varreville, it had to cross the Exit 3 road and wade through the swamps. In doing so it found itself crossing rear elements of the 8th Infantry moving west on the road.

This was only part of the traffic congestion resulting from the errors in landing. The original traffic plan envisaged the use of Exit 2 and Exit 3 for vehicles. Exit 3 could not be used because of the nearness of enemy positions to the north. Consequently all vehicles tried to use Exit 2. The 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry, supported by tanks of the 70th Tank Battalion and engineers of the 237th Engineer Combat Battalion, had begun to move down the causeway to Exit 2. Halfway down the causeway it found that the culvert over a small stream had been blown, and the road was covered by an antitank gun off to the right. The first tank was stopped by a mine. Another was knocked off the road by an anti-

INFANTRY TROOPS ARRIVE AT GREEN BEACH, *wade ashore, and prepare to move inland. Antilanding obstacles have already been cleared, but at this stage, shortly after the initial landings, there is still little evidence of organization of the beach for the subsequent build-up.*



tank gun. It was not until a third tank silenced the enemy gun that the column proceeded to ford the stream. The blown culvert never really obstructed traffic; Major Tabb of the Beach Obstacle Task Force immediately brought up a platoon of engineers and built a small treadway bridge.

Meanwhile a great many vehicles accumulated in the areas behind the beach. Enemy shelling of the beach intensified during the morning but fortunately did not hit the parking fields. Beginning about noon Exit 2 became jammed with trucks. Engineer work parties had unloaded bridging equipment on the causeway, an antiaircraft half-track had taken up a position on the road, and a signal truck was slowly laying wire. Exit 2 was narrow and practically without shoulders. At noon, General Barton, concerned over an enemy tank threat, ordered that the road be cleared for antitank guns, even if other vehicles had to be pushed into the swamp. Late in the day there was still considerable congestion east of the bridge because trucks were maneuvering to reclaim partly mired vehicles.

After the capture of the coastal positions the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, moved north and then west on the causeway to Exit 3. Despite enemy artillery fire, it crossed the inundated area and reached the vicinity of Turqueville by evening.

The 3d Battalion moved west beyond Exit 2, meeting little opposition until just north of Ste. Marie-du-Mont. There, at Germain, it

A DD TANK OF THE 70TH TANK BATTALION, *its shroud collapsed, and knocked out by enemy antitank fire from the western shore of the inundated area, is pushed off the narrow causeway leading to Exit 2 so that other traffic can pass.*



encountered enemy dugouts, underground shelters, three or four 88-mm. guns, and smaller weapons. After a short fire fight, the battalion closed in. Fifty Germans were cut down as they broke and ran; a hundred were taken prisoner. At night the battalion bivouacked north of les Forges, confronting the high ground south of Ste. Mère-Eglise. Company K took up a position far to the left and sent one platoon to Chef-du-Pont to establish contact with the 82d Airborne Division.

The 2d Battalion moved straight south toward Pouppeville. Colonel MacNeely (commanding the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry), scheduled to land at H plus 30 minutes, had decided to go in earlier. When he landed, Company F was already moving in to reduce the fortification confronting it. Company E had found a path through the mine field behind the dunes and followed it under artillery fire without losing a man. Colonel MacNeely shortly had his battalion in hand and, while Company F was still engaged, he moved Company E around behind Company F and led it down the road along the eastern edge of the inundations. Company G moved south also, hugging the sea wall. The battalion encountered continuous small-arms fire all the way down the coast. Company G received artillery fire as it approached the strong point at Beau Guillot, and ran into a mine field, but decided to move through. The battalion was assembled at the road junction northeast of Pouppeville and then advanced on the village, where first contact was made with the 3d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry.

The battalion thus bypassed some enemy positions at the southern tip of the inundated area, including the lock north of Grand Vey which in part controlled the inundations. The lock, which was originally the mission of Company G, 8th Infantry, was secured later by Company A, 49th Engineer Combat Battalion. In the course of reducing the surrounding enemy defenses, the engineers took 125 prisoners. The 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry, relieved the 3d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry, at Pouppeville. From there it pushed on west and at night it bivouacked just south of the main road intersection at les Forges.

The 8th Infantry had reached its D-Day objectives. It had relieved elements of the 101st Airborne Division in the Pouppeville area and was in a position to protect the southwest flank of the 4th Division. Only north of les Forges did it encounter difficulties. A finger of strong enemy resistance extended through Fauville to Turqueville. Entrenched along a ridge, the enemy cut the les Forges–Ste. Mère-Eglise highway, and prevented contact between the 8th Infantry and the main body of the 82d Airborne Division at Ste. Mère-Eglise. Attacked earlier in the day by the 505th Parachute Infantry troops from Ste. Mère-Eglise, the Germans had apparently given some ground to the north but had consolidated again at Fauville.

Late in the afternoon the advance elements[3] of the seaborne "Howell Force," which was attached to the 82d Airborne Division and commanded by Col. E. D. Raff, followed the 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry, across Exit 2. They were to join the 82d Airborne Division at Ste. Mère-Eglise. When the 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry, came up against the enemy positions on the high ground to the north, it requested artillery but did not intend to advance farther that evening. Colonel Raff, on the other hand, considered it necessary to attempt forcing his way through in order to accomplish his mission. He was also concerned over clearing the area to permit the landing of gliderborne artillery units of the division scheduled to come in at 2100.

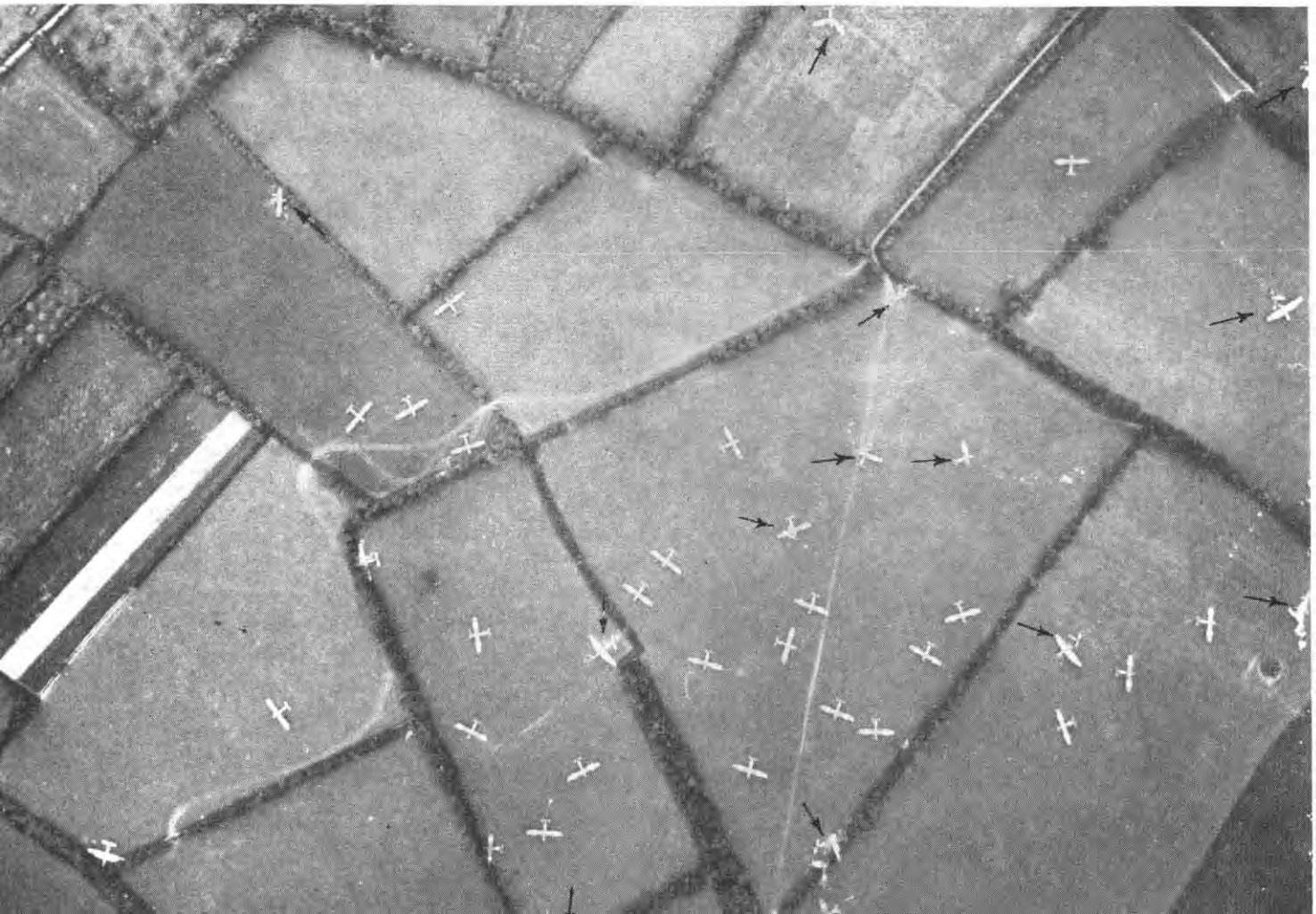
Twice tanks and infantry struck at the German defenses and were turned back. One tank was disabled in the first attempt; two

[3]Consisting of one platoon of the 4th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, a company of the 746th Tank Battalion, and ninety riflemen of the 325th Glider Infantry.

were destroyed in the second. The enemy had not been budged at 2100 when, on schedule, sixty C–47's appeared over the area with gliders in tow. Despite heavy enemy fire most of the gliders were cast loose over the German positions. Some came down in enemy lines; some drifted farther south; most crash landed with high casualties. Colonel Raff was able to gather only miscellaneous personnel to help set up a defensive line against enemy counter-attack. And there in the vicinity of les Forges his force spent the night.

The other two regiments of the 4th Division did not reach their D-Day objectives. After wading through the inundated area, the 12th Infantry came up on the left of the 502d Parachute Infantry south of Beuzeville-au-Plain, and remained there for the night. The 1st and 2d Battalions, 22d Infantry, which also had to wade inland through the swamps and spend about seven hours in the marsh, reached dry land in the vicinity of St. Martin-de-Varreville and moved on to St. Germain-de-Varreville, where they bivouacked for the night. The 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, as already noted, was assigned the task of reducing enemy beach strong points. The battalion moved north past les Dunes de Varreville and the Exit 4 road and reached the southern edge of Hamel de Cruttes by nightfall.

GLIDER LANDINGS *had to be made in the small Normandy fields, and this resulted in many crashes and casualties. The gliders below, carrying men of the 325th Glider Infantry, landed in the vicinity of les Forges (see Map No. 8). Crashes are indicated by arrows.*





WADING THROUGH THE INUNDATIONS, *elements of the 22d Infantry spent several hours in these watery stretches before reaching solid ground in the vicinity of St. Martin-de-Varreville. The northern causeways were either impassable or under enemy fire.*

The Landing in Retrospect

The relative ease with which the assault on Utah Beach was accomplished was surprising even to the attackers, and gave the lie to the touted impregnability of the Atlantic Wall. The 4th Division's losses for D Day were astonishingly low. The 8th and 22d Infantry Regiments, which landed before noon, suffered a total of 118 casualties on D Day, 12 of them fatalities. The division as a whole suffered only 197 casualties during the day, and these included 60 men missing through the loss (at sea) of part of Battery B, 29th Field Artillery Battalion. Not less noteworthy than the small losses was the speed of the landings. With the exception of one field artillery battalion (the 20th) the entire 4th Division had landed in the first fifteen hours. In addition there came ashore one battalion of the 359th Infantry, the 65th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, the 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion, the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less two companies), the 70th and 746th Tank Battalions, components of the 1st Engineer Special Brigade which had begun organizing the beach for the build-up, seaborne elements of the airborne divisions, and many smaller units. A total of over 20,000 troops and 1,700 vehicles reached Utah Beach by the end of 6 June.

Corps headquarters had, up to the night of D Day, participated but very little in the initial beachhead operation. Consequently, all activity centered around the divisions and, more particularly, their subordinate units.

VII Corps Headquarters was actually divided on D Day. An advance detachment of the headquarters, under Maj. Gen. Eugene M. Landrum, had crossed Exit 2 late in the afternoon, paused in an orchard in the vicinity of la Houssaye at the west end of the causeway, and proceeded to Audouville-la-Hubert at 1900 to establish a command post only a few hundred yards from that of the 4th Division. But by nightfall higher headquarters still had little contact with most of the units on the Utah beachhead, and direction of the battle remained almost completely decentralized.

The Corps commander, General Collins, was at the close of D Day still aboard the *Bayfield* with the major portion of his staff. For a number of reasons the Corps commander had decided to maintain his headquarters aboard ship. The *Bayfield* had been especially fitted with radio communication in order that contact could be kept with V Corps on the left and with General Bradley, whose command ship was nearer the Omaha than the Utah Beach operation. The *Bayfield* was also prepared to receive radio communications directly from the two airborne divisions and from the 4th Division. Furthermore, General Collins wanted to be near Admiral Moon's headquarters to insure that landing operations would continue uninterrupted in spite of adverse weather. This decision was fortunate, for Admiral Moon became greatly concerned over the loss of some vessels in the Task Force. Late in the day he considered a recommendation of his staff to suspend landing operations during the night, but General Collins convinced him of the necessity of continuing landing operations as uninterruptedly as possible. This was agreed to.

Among the commanders who were on the ground and whose units were in contact with the enemy there were uncertainty and anxiety on the night of D Day. Most disturbing was the lack of information about other units. This uncertainty had already affected the decisions of many commanders on D Day, and was most keenly felt by the airborne units, particularly the 82d Airborne Division, which had little or no knowledge of the course of the battle on other parts of the beachhead.

The anxiety experienced by some ground commanders on the night of D Day was not as keenly felt at higher headquarters, where a somewhat broader picture of the operation was obtainable. Some assuring reports had reached the *Bayfield* on the course of the operation. General Collins had heard as early as 0700 or 0800 that the 101st had taken St. Martin-de-Varreville, and by noon he had learned that definite contact had been established between the 4th Division and the 101st and that the beach exits were in their possession. These reports were particularly reassuring, for the greatest causes for concern had been the six 150-mm. guns reported at St. Martin-de-Varreville and the fear that the western ends of the causeways would be mined and held in strength. It was a great relief to learn that the inundated area had been crossed and that the exits were in American hands.

In general, on the *Bayfield* there was reason to believe that things were going well ashore, except for the lack of information about the 82d Airborne Division. General Collins' headquarters called the division repeatedly on D Day, but could not raise a single response. Early in the evening a report was received at 4th Division headquarters at Audouville-la-Hubert to the effect that elements of the division were being attacked from the northeast and south; but this message was not clearly identified as to its origin. Two-way communication with the 82d Airborne Division was not established on D Day. The first report did not come in until late during the night. However, with favorable reports from both the 4th and 101st Divisions, General Collins saw no need for any changes in the Corps plans. He was confident that the veteran 82d possessed the leadership and fighting ability to

take care of itself until contact was made with other units ashore (Map No. 9).

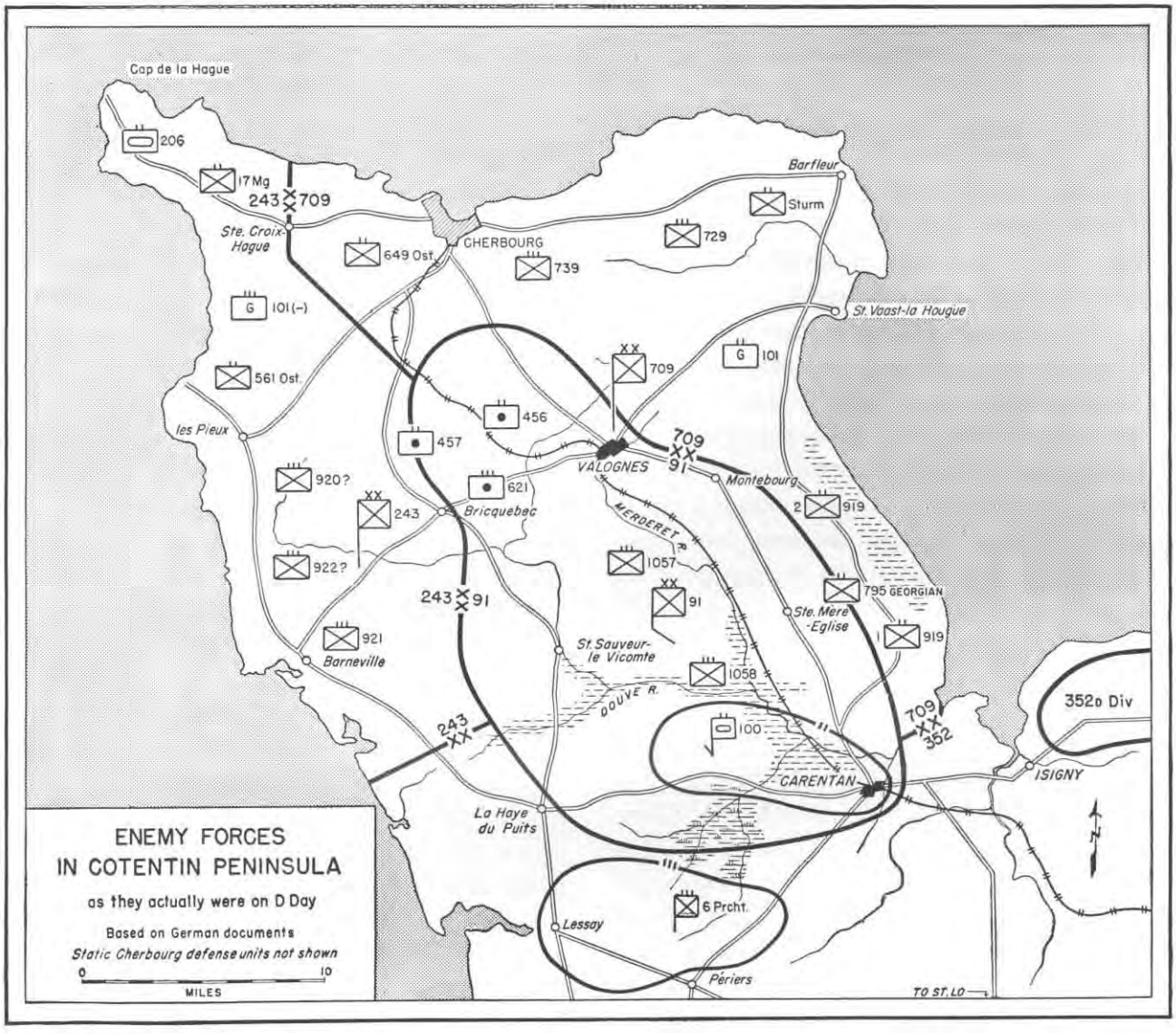
German Reaction to the Landings

Apparently the Allied assault on Normandy had achieved tactical surprise in spite of the enemy's awareness of an impending invasion. This success could be attributed in part to the fact that the enemy defense plan for the Atlantic Wall included basic miscalculations and in addition could never be fully put into effect because of German helplessness in the air and the steady attrition of German forces on two other major fronts. The German effort to build permanent coastal defenses had been handicapped throughout the winter both by the inability of the crowded and bombed railroads to carry sufficient building materials and by the higher priority for men and materials which was assigned to the V-Bomb sites. Those defenses which were completed were concentrated most heavily in the area between the Somme and Seine Rivers which the Commander in Chief West consistently estimated as the most likely spot for an Allied invasion attempt. This region presented the most direct way to the Ruhr and from its excellent port, Le Havre, a fine road net led to the interior. Moreover, some effort had also to be expended to meet Hitler's insistence on maximum defense of the Channel Islands. It was not until May 1944, when the imminence of a landing became obvious to all, that Hitler reportedly foresaw, by "intuition," the likelihood of an assault on the Cotentin Peninsula. At that time it was too late to improve the fixed defenses. But additional antiaircraft and antitank weapons were emplaced in the peninsula, one more division (the *91st*) was moved there, and units were supplied with "extra weapons mainly of a type useful in combatting airborne troops."

Though the landings in Normandy might have been foreseen, it was not considered likely that they would constitute the main Allied effort. For weeks after the Normandy invasion Hitler and his generals continued to expect a second major effort in the Somme area and kept the *Fifteenth Army* there to meet it.

The army high command also found it difficult to agree on the best method of dealing with the invasion once it struck. One faction of the high command wanted to retain the bulk of the armored reserves well inland for eventual employment in mass counterattack. Field Marshal Rommel, on the other hand, was adamant in his contention that all reserves should be moved in as close to the coast as possible. He thought that it would be impossible to throw back an invasion once it had gained a foothold and that Allied air power would make impracticable extended troop movements. His view, backed by prior experience in North Africa, prevailed and in May three of the four armored divisions in strategic reserve, the *21st Panzer Division*, *12th SS-Panzer Division*, and *2d Panzer Division*, were moved into Normandy proper—one to the south of Caen and two to the Alencon–Evreux region. Henceforth the Germans were committed to the coastal areas as their main line of resistance with all the dangers inherent in such an extended linear defense.

If there were some doubts on the wisdom of the plan, there were none on what was at stake. The Germans recognized from the beginning that failure to repel the invasion at the outset would rapidly unbalance both their tactical and strategic positions. Given a foothold, the Americans and British could ultimately win the race for the build-up of men and supplies, and so make it impossible to dislodge the enemy forces. But if the landings could be pushed back into the sea at once, it was likely that invasion would not be attempted again in the near future and perhaps not at all. Germany would then have a large part of the sixty western divisions for use as reserves against the Russians.



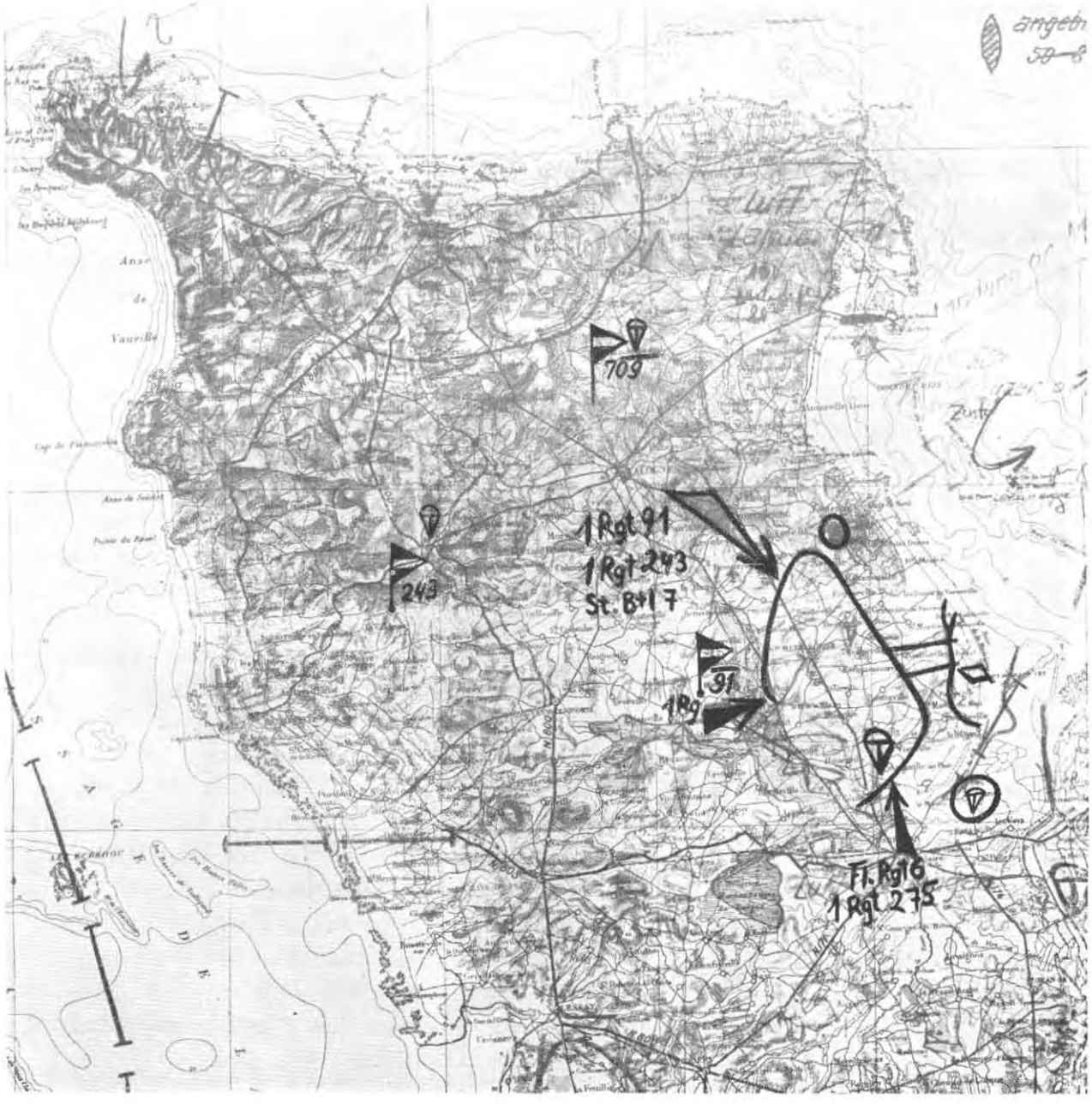
MAP NO. 10

Considering the importance attached to fast and total reaction to any attempt to crack the Atlantic Wall, it is notable that so little German air power was used against the beachheads. Apparently Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering, Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, considered at one time the possibility of committing the whole of his fighter force against the expected invasion, but was forced to abandon the idea. Allied bombings had hit hard at Luftwaffe ground installations in France, and by moving large numbers of fighters to France, months ahead of time, the Luftwaffe would have been inviting destructive fights with Allied planes which it could not afford. Moreover, Goering was reluctant for obvious political as well as military reasons to strip Germany of fighter protection.

Even though Allied control of the air and sea, together with bad weather, had curtailed German reconnaissance, enemy intelligence had secured a fairly accurate picture of Allied strength and estimated that the invasion would come as soon after 1 April as weather permitted. Yet the Germans had no knowledge of Allied plans for artificial ports and they under

estimated the speed with which the build-up could take place across the beaches. Col. Gen. Alfred Jodl figured that the landing of about six American divisions across open beaches would require from five to six days and thought that within that time the German tactical reserves could be committed in a main counterattack. Actually the early build-up was much more rapid—within four days six and one-half divisions were ashore—and the movement of German troops took three or four times longer than expected. Despite the German command's estimate in May that an Allied invasion attempt was imminent, the

SITUATION IN THE COTENTIN *as seen by the German High Command (West), and the first reaction to the landings. This is a reproduction of a captured German map dated 6–7 June 1944.*



actual landfall on 6 June took the enemy by surprise. Field Marshal Rommel was not present at the front, and the troops in the sector attacked had been taken out of their defense positions to construct additional fortifications.

Word of the Allied landings reached Hitler's headquarters about four hours after the first airborne troops came down in the peninsula, but it was not until several hours later that the landings were reported as part of a full-scale invasion and not until late in the day that even the *Seventh Army* realized that seaborne landings had taken place at Utah. The German high command released two of the four armored divisions in *Seventh Army* reserve for employment in Normandy; the expectation was that these reserves would arrive in the battle area by the end of D Day. The *Sturm Battalion AOK 7* (*Assault Battalion, Seventh Army*) was ordered from Cherbourg into the beachhead sector. But generally the *Seventh Army* command was sure that the coastal forces could cope with the invaders. No other major troop shifts were ordered at the time. The German command still feared further landings elsewhere on the French coast, especially in the area between the Somme and Seine Rivers.

The disposition of the enemy forces in the Cotentin largely confirmed Allied estimates of the enemy Order of Battle prior to D Day (Maps Nos. 1 and 10). Manning the coastal defenses at Utah Beach was the *919th Regiment* of the *709th Division.* Other units of this division *(729th* and *739th Regiments)* were identified as they reached the battle area from positions farther up the coast. It developed that there was no Georgian regiment in the *709th* Division as believed in G–2 estimates prior to D Day, but the *729th Regiment* had an *Ost Battalion* (the *649th*), and the *739th Regiment* a Georgian battalion (the *795th*), the latter of which was encountered in the Ste. Mère-Eglise area. Both the *795th Battalion* and the *1st Battalion, 919th Regiment* (which was at Utah Beach), lost communications with higher headquarters early on D Day. Elements of the latter escaped over the Carentan Canal and joined other German units southeast of the Douve River.

Pre-D-Day intelligence had placed only the *716th Division* southeast of Carentan, but elements of the *352d Division* had also moved into this area. The *6th Parachute Regiment,* located near Carentan, had not been listed separately in VII Corps' enemy Order of Battle, but had been mentioned in intelligence reports of higher headquarters as part of the *91st Division.* The *1057th* and *1058th Regiments,* also part of this division, were identified along the Merderet as expected.

Covering the west coast of the Cotentin was the *243d Division,* with about half its personnel manning beach fortifications and the remainder occupying higher ground a few kilometers inland, with the mission of breaking up any attempted airborne attack. This division was in the process of reorganization which would have upgraded it from its limited employment category and given it greater mobility. Its retraining and reequipment, however, had not been completed. Units of the division were ordered to regroup eastward early on D Day and were identified in the invasion area a few days later.

Unpreparedness of the enemy in ground and air defense, his indecision which tied up reserves, and his miscalculation of both his own and Allied capabilities played perhaps as important a part in allowing Allied forces to establish a foothold on the Continent on D Day as the efforts of the assaulting troops themselves. In the week that followed, the same enemy weaknesses, exploited in particular by overwhelming Allied air power which provided time for powerful build-up over the beaches, was to insure that Allied invasion forces had come to stay.

SECURING THE BEACHHEAD (D PLUS 1)

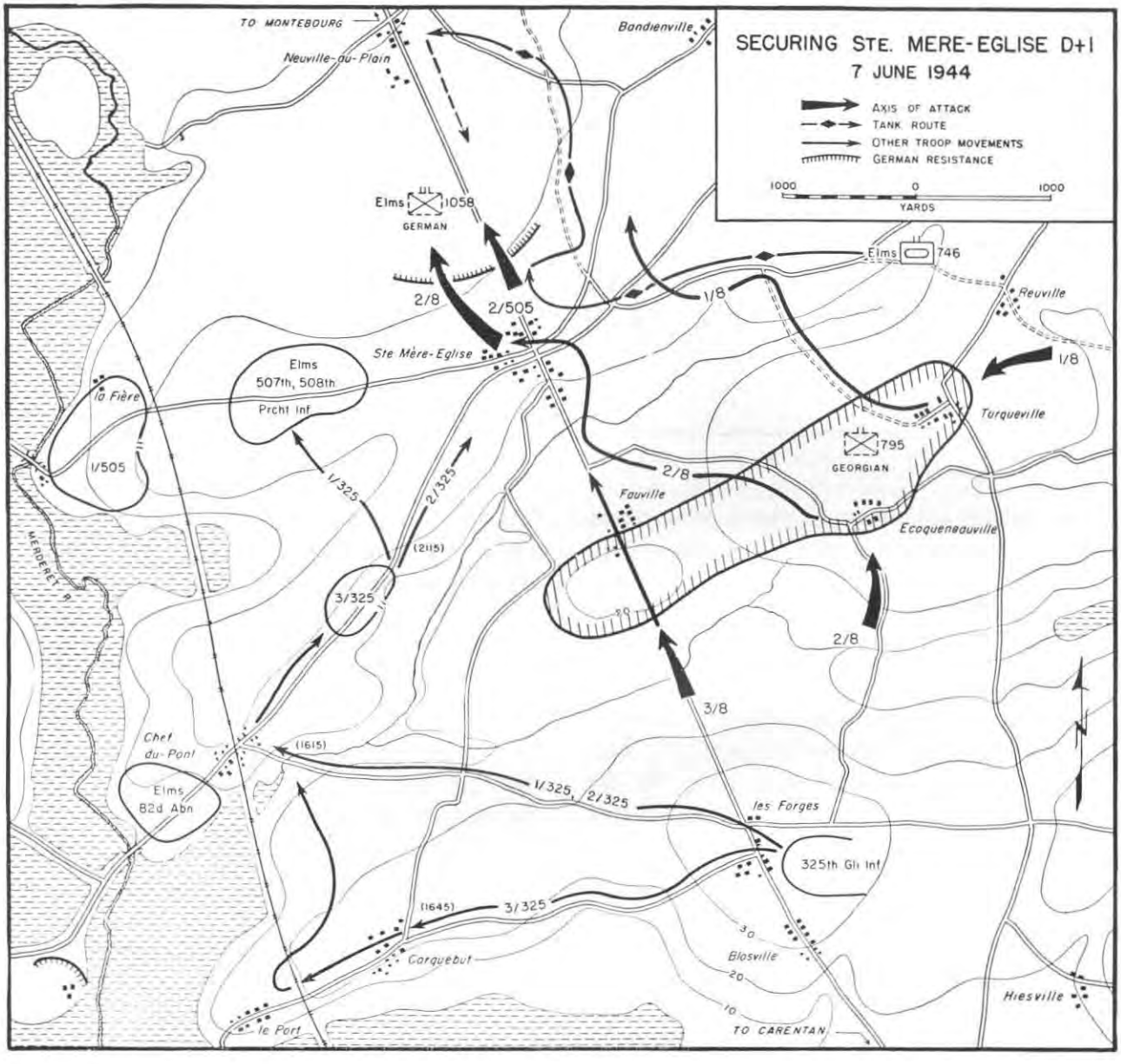
Most of the actions on D plus 1 were aimed at the destruction of scattered enemy groups which still held positions within the perimeter of the beachhead. There was no front line at the end of D Day (Map No. 9). The airborne operations had pocketed sizeable enemy forces which had to be eliminated before communications and supply lines could be secured. This was the task accomplished on 7 June. By the end of that day the VII Corps beachhead had taken more definite shape.

The 82d Division at Ste. Mère-Eglise

The dawn of D plus 1 confronted the 82d Airborne Division with the unsolved problems of the day before. The la Fière bridge and Ste. Mère-Eglise remained the critical areas in the western sector. Until 0900 the division continued to be out of touch with higher headquarters. D Day had left all of the division units hard-pressed, and General Ridgway's primary concern was in the arrival of expected tank and infantry reinforcements. At the close of the day he had reported his position, his losses in men and materiel, and his need for artillery, antitank guns, ammunition, and medical supplies. He had stated that he was prepared to continue his mission when reinforcements came. But the communication was one-way and General Ridgway did not even know whether his messages got through.

More fruitful was a D-Day contact by patrol with the 4th Division. Late in the evening Lt. Col. W. F. Winton, assistant G–3, took a patrol northeast in the direction of Beuzeville-au-Plain. He contacted elements of the 12th Infantry and went on south to the division command post at Audouville-la-Hubert. At midnight he talked to General Barton, from whom he obtained for the first time information on the 4th Division. At 0800 the next morning he returned to his own command post with assurance of relief by the 8th Infantry and Colonel Raff's force, the advance elements of the seaborne Howell Force which had tried to break through to the 82d Division the night before.

Between the 82d Airborne Division's main body at Ste. Mère-Eglise and the 8th Infantry at les Forges the enemy still had a large force, holding the ridge between Fauville and Turqueville and blocking the highway south of Ste. Mère-Eglise (Map No. 11). Another enemy force was threatening the 82d Division from the north. The elimination of these enemy forces became the main preoccupation of both the 8th Infantry and the 505th Parachute Infantry on D plus 1.



MAP NO. 11

The 8th Infantry attacked the Turqueville salient on the morning of 7 June, with the objective of establishing contact with the 82d Airborne Division at Ste. Mère-Eglise. The 1st Battalion's attack on Turqueville itself was the first to get under way late in the morning, and succeeded in eliminating the eastern tip of the enemy salient. Turqueville was held by a battalion of Georgians *(795th)*, which initially put up a stiff fight but was finally talked into surrender. During the morning the 4th Division G–1, Lt. Col. Gorlan A. Bryant, Sgt. John Svonchek, and a driver had left the division command post intending to visit the 22d Infantry. They had made a wrong turn at Audouville and had driven west, into the enemy position near Ecoqueneauville, where they were taken prisoner. They were moved to a house south of Turqueville and held there along with twenty-three American parachutists. When it was learned that the enemy unit was Georgian, Sergeant Svonchek, who spoke

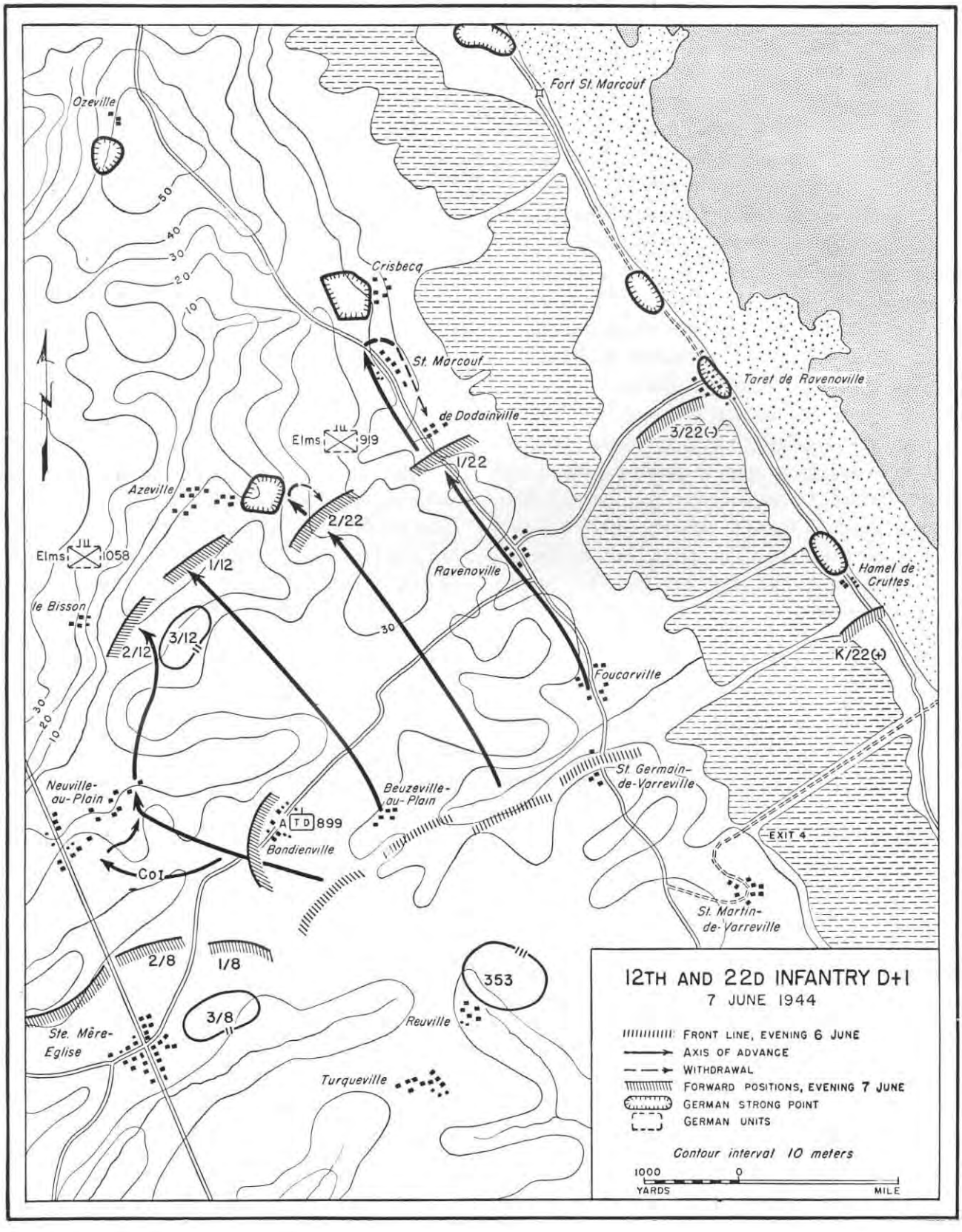
Russian, persuaded some of them to surrender, and about seventy-five gave up. Then the German captain gave the cease fire order and surrendered at about the same time that the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, was closing in on Turqueville. Upon entering the town the battalion rounded up 174 prisoners.

Meanwhile, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 8th Infantry had attacked northward from their positions in the les Forges area to link up with the 82d Airborne Division at Ste. Mère-Eglise. The 3d Battalion advanced astride the highway while the 2d Battalion attacked toward Ecoqueneauville. As the two battalions reached a creek bed in front of the enemy lines, they received heavy machine-gun and artillery fire from enemy positions along the ridge Fauville–Ecoqueneauville. The 3d Battalion was held up and had one of the severest fights of these first few days, but as the 2d Battalion took Ecoqueneauville both battalions continued their advance toward Ste. Mère-Eglise. South of the town, enemy interdiction of the road caused the 2d Battalion to circle to the east and make an approach to the town from the northeast. But almost immediately after it had established contact with the 505th Parachute Infantry within the town, it was engaged by the enemy north of Ste. Mère-Eglise. The main German position was to the west of the highway. Colonel MacNeely (2d Battalion, 8th Infantry) and Colonel Vandervoort (2d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry) planned a coordinated attack. The 2d Battalion of the 505th moved up astride the road and attacked, supported by tanks, while the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry, crossed the road behind the 505th Parachute Infantry and attacked on its left. By the end of the day the two battalions had killed or captured 300 Germans and cleared the enemy from his positions to the west of the highway.

Earlier in the afternoon an enemy armored thrust from the north had been beaten back on the very edge of Ste. Mère-Eglise by an American tank force. This force had been dispatched by order of the Corps commander himself, who learned of the 82d Division's request for assistance upon his arrival at the Corps command post late in the morning after he had come ashore. At the 4th Division's command post, across the road, General Collins met one of General Ridgway's staff officers, who outlined General Ridgway's situation and repeated the 82d Division commander's desire for tanks to meet a threatened armored attack. General Barton still had tanks of the 746th Tank Battalion in reserve at Reuville, and General Collins ordered these to be sent to General Ridgway under the officer's guidance.

On reaching Ste. Mère-Eglise the tank column turned north. After moving a few hundred yards it received heavy artillery and mortar fire from an enemy armored column, consisting of five tanks and a few other vehicles, about 300 or 400 yards away. Lt. Houston Payne, in the leading American tank, shot at the first enemy tank, setting it afire, and then knocked out an antitank gun on the side of the road. As both American and enemy tanks were in column only the lead tanks had targets. Lieutenant Payne destroyed one more enemy tank before his ammunition was exhausted and then moved back to permit the second tank to come forward.

Seeking a way of attacking the flank of the enemy column, Lt. Col. C. G. Hupfer, the 746th Tank Battalion commander, had in the meantime reconnoitered to the east and north and found, to the right of the highway, a trail which led straight north about a mile and joined a secondary road which entered Neuville-au-Plain. Some of the American tanks drove north on this trail and entered Neuville-au-Plain. At a cost of 2 of their own they destroyed 2 enemy tanks, took 60 prisoners, freed 19 American parachutists, and forced the German armored column to retreat northward. They stayed in Neuville-au-Plain until


Fort St. Marcouf
Ozeville
Crisbecq
St. Marcouf
Taret de Ravenoville
de Dodainville
Elms 919
3/22(-)
1/22
Azeville
2/22
Elms 1058
1/12
Ravenoville
Hamel de Cruttes
le Bisson
3/12
2/12
K/22(+)
Foucarville
Neuville-au-Plain
Beuzeville-au-Plain
St. Germain-de-Varreville
A T D 899
Bandienville
EXIT 4
Col
St. Martin-de-Varreville
2/8
1/8
353
3/8
Reuville
Ste. Mère-Eglise
Turqueville
12TH AND 22D INFANTRY D+1
7 JUNE 1944
FRONT LINE, EVENING 6 JUNE
AXIS OF ADVANCE
WITHDRAWAL
FORWARD POSITIONS, EVENING 7 JUNE
GERMAN STRONG POINT
GERMAN UNITS
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0
YARDS
MILE

MAP NO. 12

2100 when they withdrew for lack of infantry support.

It is not clear whether the German armor which had supported the infantry attack along the highway had come from Neuville-au-Plain, but the two actions do not appear to have been coordinated. Whatever the enemy's intentions, Lieutenant Payne's engagement with the German armor and Colonel MacNeely's and Colonel Vandervoort's later attack west of the highway removed the enemy threat to the town and allowed the 82d Division units in Ste. Mère-Eglise to give more attention to developments along the Merderet.

Even before the German threat north of Ste. Mère-Eglise had been eliminated, the anxiety at the command post of the 82d Airborne Division had been relieved, and General Ridgway reported to Corps that the "situation is under control." Contact had been established with elements of the 8th Infantry south of Ste. Mère-Eglise and the 325th Glider Infantry had arrived and was ready for commitment against the enemy to the west. Shortly thereafter General Collins made his first personal contact with General Ridgway in the latter's command post west of Ste. Mère-Eglise.

The 325th Glider Infantry had arrived in two serials, one at 0700 and one at 0900. Although the landings were somewhat scattered, most of them were made in the les Forges area. One serial received ground fire from enemy positions to the north and there was a total of 160 landing casualties. But the regiment was given some protection by the attacks of the 8th Infantry and it made a rapid assembly near the les Forges crossroads.

The 325th Glider Infantry had the mission of proceeding to Chef-du-Pont as division reserve. But when Col. Harry L. Lewis (commanding officer) contacted division headquarters by radio at about 1000, he was instructed to use at least part of his force to eliminate the enemy force in the Carquebut area, where the Germans were threatening the security of the Chef-du-Pont bridge and causeway. The 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, had been unable to divert forces to counter this threat. At the same time Colonel Raff received orders to bring his seaborne force up to Chef-du-Pont and then to the 82d Airborne Division command post. While Colonel Raff carried out his orders, arriving at the division command post at noon, Colonel Lewis took his 3d Battalion to the Carquebut area and sent the other two to Chef-du-Pont. He found Carquebut evacuated by the enemy and proceeded to rejoin the other two battalions. The 1st Battalion was then sent, under General Gavin's order, to la Fière, and the 2d Battalion to Ste. Mère-Eglise, where it was to be attached to the 505th Parachute Infantry for operation in the north on the 8th Infantry's left.

Meanwhile, the action at la Fière bridge had been a continued stalemate. Enemy counterattacks were repulsed and the American position was slightly strengthened by reorganization. But no progress had been made in establishing a bridgehead on the west bank. In the evening the 1st Battalion of the 505th, which during the day had fought off the enemy with heavy losses at la Fière, was released to Regiment for the next day's operation. The 82d Airborne Division forces west of the Merderet remained isolated. In general, the situation of the 82d at the end of D plus 1 had been solidified, particularly around Ste. Mère-Eglise, although its D-Day mission was still unaccomplished.

The 12th and 22d Infantry Regiments Pursue Their D-Day Objectives

The 4th Division extended the northern arc of the beachhead some two miles on D plus 1 in its advance toward its D-Day objectives, and pushed the enemy back against his main headland fortresses at Azeville and Crisbecq.

On the beach the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, continued the methodical destruction of beach defenses (Map No. 12).

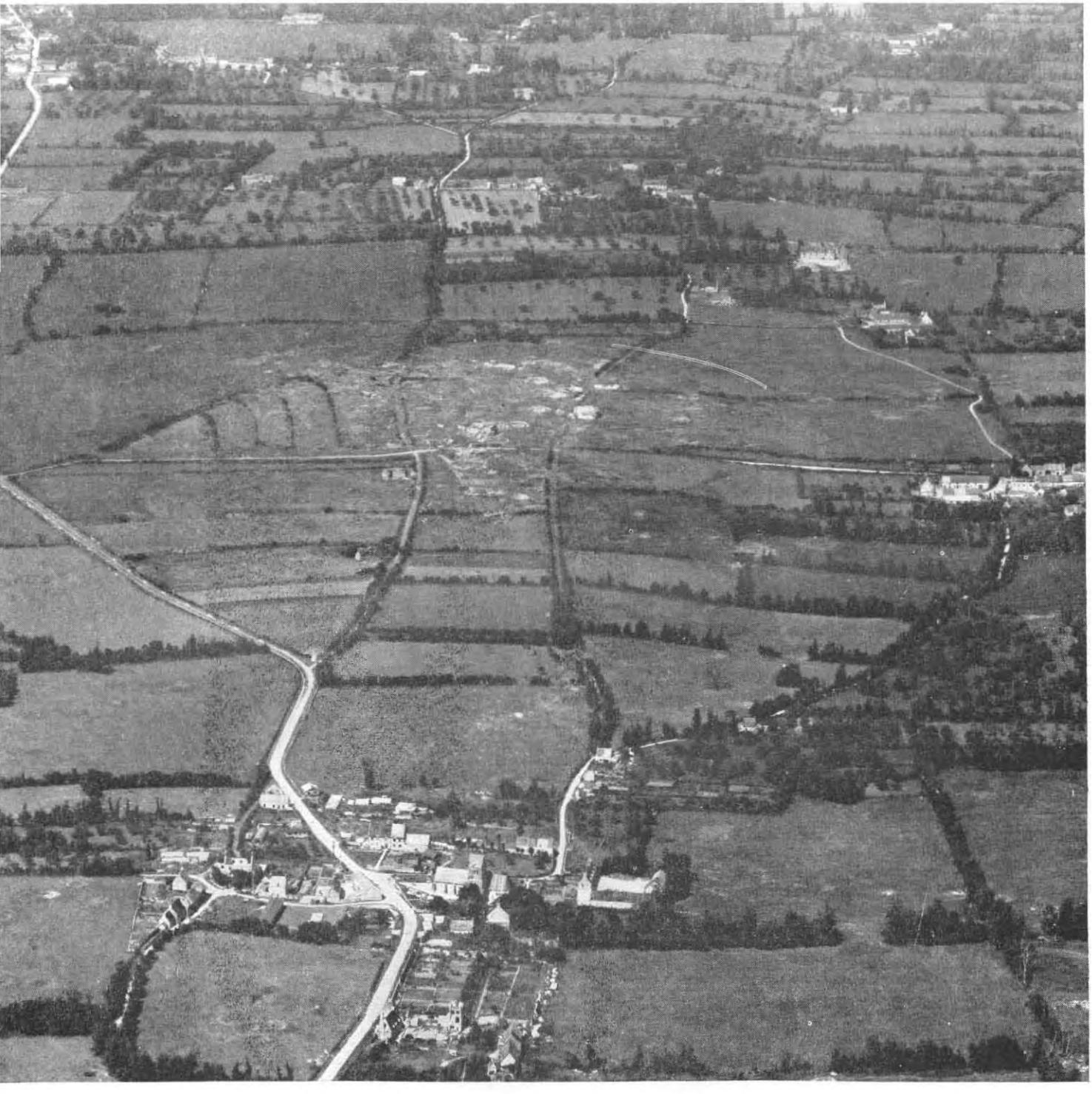
The 12th Infantry had come up on the left of the 502d Parachute Infantry late on D Day, just south of Beuzeville-au-Plain. On 7 June it attacked northwestward toward the high ground crossed by the Ste. Mère-Eglise – Montebourg highway north of Neuville-au-Plain. The 1st Battalion took a strong point southwest of Beuzeville-au-Plain; the 2d Battalion fought a sharp engagement on the eastern outskirts of Neuville-au-Plain, but did not take possession of the town, thus necessitating its capture by other units later in the day. In the middle of the morning the two battalions pressed their attack northward. Early in the afternoon they were stopped on the forward slopes of the hills between Azeville and le Bisson, where they reorganized for the night. The gap between the 12th Infantry's left flank and the 8th Infantry was covered by guns of Company A, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Probably the most difficult of the 4th Division's missions were those assigned the 22d Infantry on the division's right flank. The regiment had the task of reducing both the strong points along the beaches and the heavily fortified headland batteries two to three miles inland and west of the inundations. On D plus 1 the first attacks against the enemy's inland positions were made by the 1st and 2d Battalions.

The two battalions had spent most of D Day moving across the inundated area, but had come through almost without losses. From their positions at St. Germain-de-Varreville, where they had relieved the 502d Parachute Infantry, they started out at 0700 on 7 June, with the 1st Battalion on the right advancing astride the highway which runs parallel to the coastline, and the 2d Battalion using the trails to the west. They moved rapidly until they approached the higher ground between Azeville and de Dodainville, where they received fire from the forts of Crisbecq and Azeville. The 1st Battalion pushed on to enter St. Marcouf.

The two battalions now faced the enemy's two most powerful coastal forts. With their heavy guns (the Crisbecq guns were 210-mm.) these forts threatened the beaches as well as shipping and stood as the last serious barrier before the regiment's D-Day objectives. Each position consisted of four massive concrete blockhouses in a line; they were supplied with underground ammunition storage dumps, interconnected by communication trenches, and protected against ground attack by automatic weapons and wire. An arc of concrete sniper pillboxes outposted the southern approaches to Azeville. Crisbecq mounted the larger guns and occupied a more commanding position on the headland overlooking the beaches.

Immediate attacks were launched against both forts. The 2d Battalion tried for several hours to move forward against the Azeville position, but a counterattack drove it back to its line of departure with considerable losses. The 1st Battalion attack on Crisbecq was even more fiercely contested. As the battalion passed through St. Marcouf, it received heavy artillery fire from the Azeville battery to the southwest. Company C was organized into assault sections, in the same manner as the units had been organized for the assault on the beach on D Day. It was ordered to move up a narrow trail, along with the two other rifle companies of the battalion, to blow the blockhouses. This was the only approach the battalion could make, for to the east the ground dropped off to the town of Crisbecq and the swampland, and to the west the ground was high and open. As the three companies moved forward they suffered heavy casualties from shell fire. They inched ahead, up the thickly hedged trails, but as they reached the trail block and the wire obstacles on the perimeter of the position the Germans counterattacked their left flank.



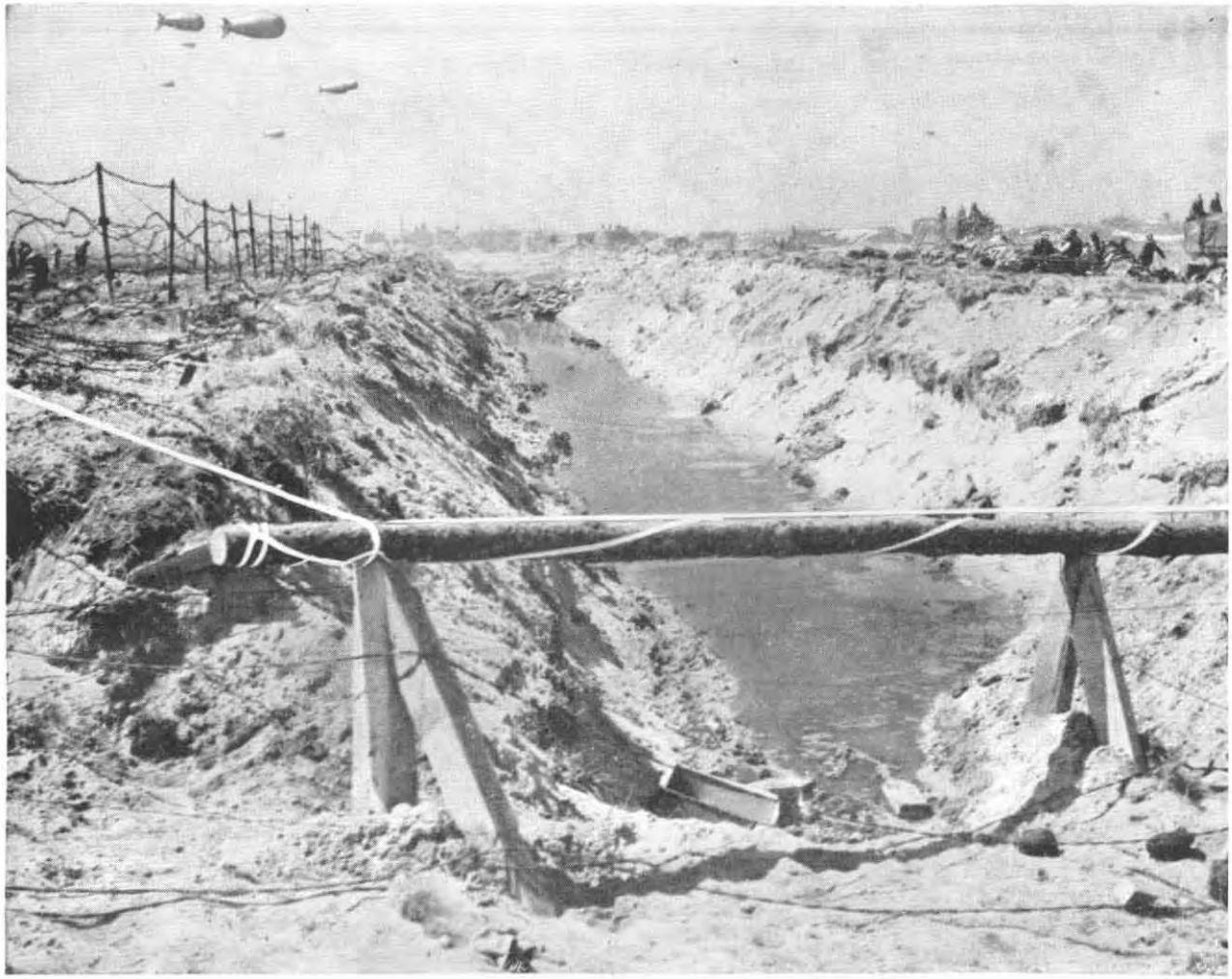
THE APPROACHES TO THE CRISBECQ FORTIFICATIONS. *Attacks by the 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry, on 7 and 8 June were launched from the town of St. Marcouf, seen in the foreground, up the two tree-lined trails leading directly to the forts, the ruins of which are visible in this photo. Enemy counterattacks came down on the left.*

To contain the counterattack the 3d Platoon of Company B was moved behind Company A to the left. In the fields northwest of St. Marcouf it met a strong enemy force supported by at least one tank. Capt. Tom Shields of Company A, who took command of the battalion when its commanding officer was wounded, decided that the position was too dangerous to hold and at 1600 he ordered a withdrawal. The battalion became increasingly disorganized as it retreated, still under heavy fire. Nineteen men of Company A were cut off on the left and probably captured. Another platoon on the right lost its way and wandered as far as the beach, which was still in enemy hands. Late that night these men found their way to the battalion, bringing with them 113 prisoners. The battalion withdrew to a line 300 yards south of de Dodainville. After dark the Germans counterattacked again but were routed by accurate naval fire.

On the extreme right flank of the 22d Infantry, separated from the rest of the regiment by the inundations, the 3d Battalion meanwhile proceeded against the string of beach fortifications which extended all the way up the coast. Those which posed an immediate danger to the Utah landings lay between les Dunes de Varreville and Quinéville, on the

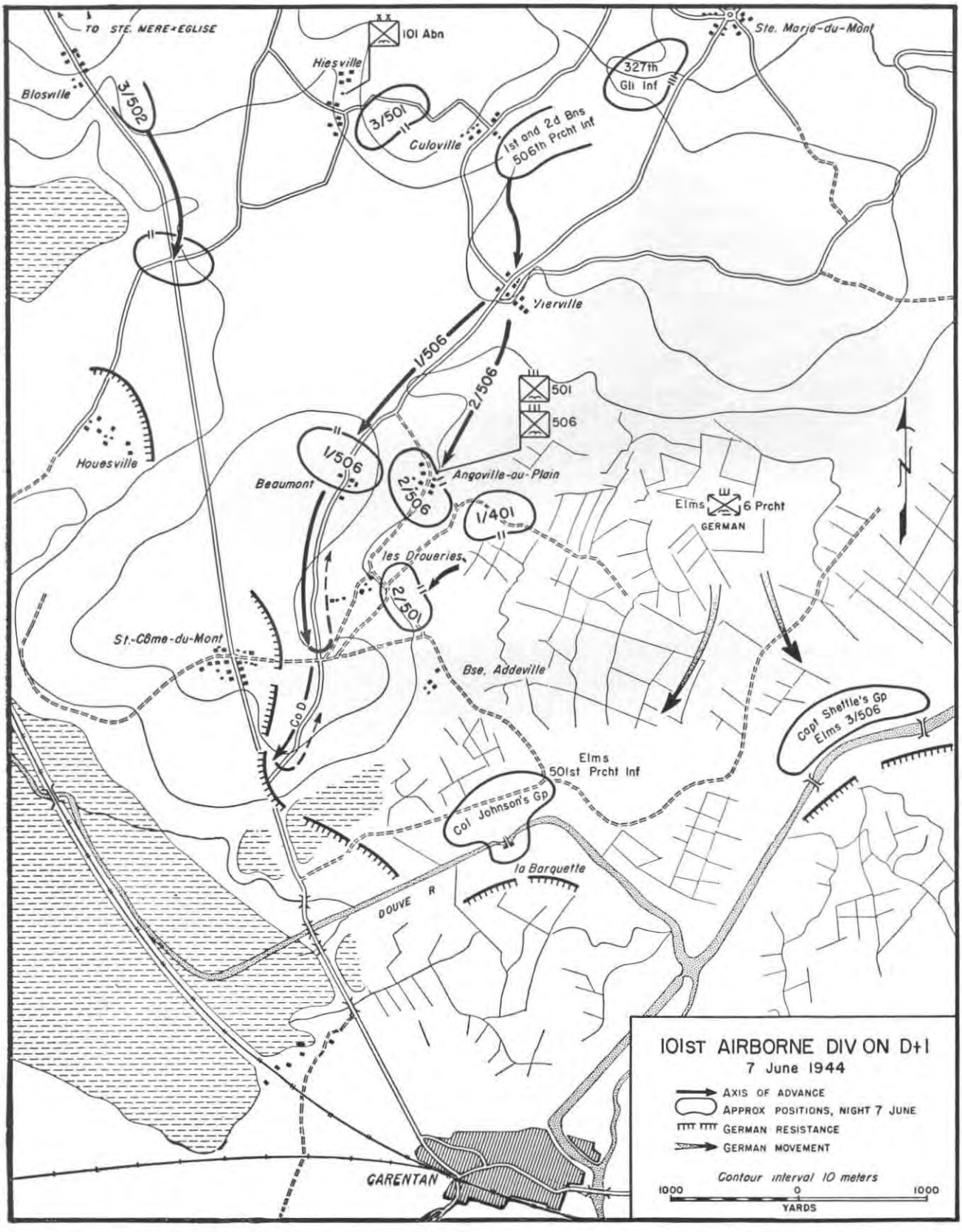
THE CRISBECQ FORTIFICATIONS, *on the coastal headlands overlooking the sea northeast of Ste. Mère-Eglise, were among the most heavily defended positions in the entire peninsula. Just beyond the most prominent casemate is one of the blockhouses destroyed by demolitions, and to the left is the reinforcing iron and steel framework of another under construction.*





FORTIFICATIONS ALONG THE BEACH, *on the narrow strip of land northward toward Quinéville, were the objectives of the 22d Infantry. Above, a tank trap and wire obstacles of the type found surrounding beach fortifications north of the landing beaches. Below, a concrete pillbox, typical of those found along the entire invasion coast.*




TO STE. MERE-EGLISE
101 Abn
Hiesville
Blosville
3/502
3/501
Culoville
1st and 2d Bns 506th Prcht Inf
327th Gli Inf
Ste. Marie-du-Mont
Vierville
1/506
2/506
501
506
Houesville
Beaumont
1/506
Angoville-au-Plain
2/506
1/401
Elms 6 Prcht
GERMAN
les Droueries
2/501
St.-Côme-du-Mont
Bse. Addeville
Co D
Capt Sheffie's Gp Elms 3/506
Elms 501st Prcht Inf
Col Johnson's Gp
la Barquette
DOUVE R
GARENTAN
N
101ST AIRBORNE DIV ON D+1
7 June 1944
AXIS OF ADVANCE
APPROX POSITIONS, NIGHT 7 JUNE
GERMAN RESISTANCE
GERMAN MOVEMENT
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0 1000
YARDS

MAP NO. 13

narrow strip of land between the sea and the inundations, and could be approached only by movement along the sea wall. The strong points were reinforced concrete blockhouses, armed with artillery pieces and turreted machine guns. Most of them had the additional protection of wire, ditches, mines, and outlying infantry pillboxes and had communication with supporting inland batteries by underground telephone cable.

The 3d Battalion (Lt. Col. Arthur S. Teague) had been constituted as a task force with the mission of reducing these beach fortifications.[1] The method of attack followed the pattern taught at the Assault Training Center in England. Naval gunfire adjusted by the Naval Shore Fire Control Party laid down a preparation. Then tanks and 57-mm. antitank guns approached within 75 to 100 yards of the fort to fire point-blank, while infantrymen moved, often through waist-deep water, to the rear of the strong point under the cover of mortar fire. The enemy, however, would allow the men to come near the fort before opening up with small-arms fire, and in addition subjected the assaulting troops to artillery fire from inland batteries. The reduction of the forts thus turned out to be slow and costly.

On D Day the 3d Battalion had advanced 2,000 yards beyond Exit 3 and destroyed one fort. On D plus 1 it advanced another 2,000 yards and captured two more. As it faced the fort at Hamel de Cruttes on the evening of 7 June, it received orders to move inland as regimental reserve, since a counterattack was feared against the shattered 1st and 2d Battalions of the 22d Infantry. Colonel Teague left Company K, supported by the chemical mortar company, a machine gun platoon, an antitank platoon, and one-half of the NSFCP, to contain the strong point, and moved the remainder of the battalion inland to the vicinity of Ravenoville. That same evening, in the one gain of the day for the 22d Infantry, the battalion recrossed the inundation to capture the beach fort at Taret de Ravenoville. The fort had been shelled by the Navy, and a number of Germans had slipped out to surrender. One of them reported that many of the Germans still inside the fort wished to surrender but until this time had been prevented from doing so by their officers. On the strength of this information Colonel Teague obtained permission to move the bulk of his battalion from Ravenoville northeast across the inundated area and close in on the rear of the fort. A prisoner who was sent ahead returned with the entire garrison of eighty-two Germans. Colonel Teague and his men billeted themselves in the fort for the night. Between Taret de Ravenoville and Company K to the south three enemy strong points still held out. One of these surrendered the following day.

The Southern Flank on D Plus 1

On the southern arc of the beachhead the leading elements of the 101st Airborne Division converged on St. Côme-du-Mont on D plus 1 in preparation for an attack on the bridges which span the Douve and its tributaries northwest of Carentan (Map No. 13). The enemy held stubbornly to the ground commanding the approaches to the Douve, and it was feared that, unless he was dislodged, he would bring up reinforcements over the bridges. It was here that the main effort of the 101st Division was made on D plus 1. Farther east, Captain Shettle's men of the 506th Parachute Infantry and Colonel Johnson's miscellaneous forces continued to hold their positions at the la Barquette lock and the le Port bridges.

After dark on D Day Captain Shettle's engineers had prepared the two le Port bridges for demolition, but on the morning of D plus 1 the Germans made no attempt to cross the

[1] Attached to it were a naval shore fire control party (NSFCP), a platoon of tanks from Company A, 746th Tank Battalion, Company D of the 87th Chemical (4.2) Mortar Battalion, and a platoon of Company C, 4th Engineer Combat Battalion.

river. At noon a flight of P–47's came overhead and Captain Shettle, with improvised panels, requested the bombing of the enemy on the opposite beach. At 1430 a dozen bombs were dropped over the bridges. Later in the afternoon about three hundred Germans were seen approaching Captain Shettle's position from the north. One of the patrols he sent out against them demonstrated so successfully that, overimpressed with American strength, some of the Germans began to surrender. Between 30 and 50 enemy troops were killed in the next few hours and groups of 30 and 40 came in to surrender. By the end of the day Captain Shettle had 255 prisoners. That night an enemy force made an attempt to reach the bridges from the east but was driven back by small-arms fire. The American position was still secure at the end of D plus 1.

The enemy force which Captain Shettle's patrols dealt with that afternoon turned out to be elements of the *6th Parachute Regiment.* The bulk of this force attacked Colonel Johnson's group of some 250 men at the la Barquette lock that same afternoon. Colonel Johnson had improved his position the night of D Day but he was short of ammunition and still isolated. Patrols which he had sent out during the day to look for the 506th Parachute Infantry did not return. In the hope of getting a resupply of ammunition, Colonel Johnson laid out an orange panel. Shortly after dawn a plane passed over, and a drop was made at 0630, but the bundles landed in marshes covered by enemy fire and could not be retrieved.

At about 1500 Colonel Johnson saw the German troops approaching his position from the northeast. At first he was not sure whether they were friendly or hostile. They came straight through the fields and marshes and seemed headed directly for the river. Colonel Johnson's position faced south and he had to redispose his men and machine guns to meet this threat from the north. The Germans moved carelessly, bunched together without advance security. When they approached within 350 yards, all of Colonel Johnson's men, at a signal, opened fire. The Germans took cover, returned fire, and sent up a rocket signal, which shortly brought mortar and artillery fire on Johnson's men. It was difficult to spot the Germans in the clumps of tall grass, and after the fire fight had gone on for a while Colonel Johnson became worried about the expenditure of ammunition. At that time several cries of "Kamerad" from across the fields indicated that he might possibly get the whole enemy force to surrender. He gave the cease fire order and went forward with two volunteers.

As the three men walked forward carrying an orange flag, the firing on both sides stopped. But shortly it broke out again, wounding the colonel and one of his men. They crawled back 125 yards to their own lines and the fight continued. In about half an hour the German fire slackened and Colonel Johnson decided to try again. This time he and the two enlisted men were met halfway by two wounded German privates, who said that they wanted to surrender but that their officers were shooting men who talked about it. Colonel Johnson sent one man back to the German lines with the message that the Germans were to surrender in thirty minutes or be annihilated by "our superior forces." The firing was resumed at that time, but exactly thirty minutes later the first small group of Germans formed a column and came into the American lines. It was the beginning of a procession of 350 Germans which continued until after dark. At the end came the battalion commander, a lieutenant colonel, who wanted to "talk over" his surrender. About 150 Germans had been killed or wounded; the rest escaped to Carentan. Colonel Johnson's force had lost ten killed and thirty wounded.

The appearance of enemy paratroops in this area was not entirely expected. While the *91st Division* was known to have two or three

regiments in the Cotentin, the *6th Parachute Regiment* had not been identified. It has since been learned that the bulk of the regiment occupied a reserve position just north of Périers at the time of the invasion. But captured prisoners revealed that one battalion had been in the Vierville area for some weeks, engaged in antiairborne defense preparations and exercises. On D plus 1 this battalion found itself hemmed in on three sides by American paratroop forces and was moving south with no apparent plan, direction, or resolution when it encountered Colonel Johnson's and Captain Shettle's forces just north of the Douve. The Germans had a strength of well over eight hundred men. By the end of the day the bulk of the force had been captured and its defensive mission thus nullified.

Meanwhile, Colonel Johnson had not abandoned the plan to reach the Douve bridges along the Carentan causeway and had been trying to get Colonel Ballard's force at Bse. Addeville to join him. But Colonel Ballard was still engaged and could not shake free at that time nor on the following day. Consequently Colonel Johnson's men remained in position at la Barquette during all of 8 June.

Communications had been so poor on D Day that only Colonel Johnson knew definitely that the bridges had not been blown. General Taylor and General McAuliffe, lacking that information, conferred with Colonel Sink of the 506th Parachute Infantry at the latter's command post at Culoville late in the afternoon of D Day and decided to send the 506th on a reconnaissance in force southward. It was to pass through Vierville and Beaumont and then continue southward to the west of Colonel Ballard's 2d Battalion of the 501st Parachute Infantry, which had been engaged at les Droueries throughout D Day.

The 1st Battalion of the 506th Parachute Infantry led the regimental column on the morning of D plus 1 down the road from Culoville to Vierville. From the beginning the column was harassed by snipers firing from the front and the flanks. Finally, at Vierville it stopped long enough to clear the houses. From that town Colonel Sink and General Taylor saw several hundred men moving about in the open field some 2,000 yards to the southeast. It was the battalion of German parachutists which later attacked the rear of Captain Shettle's and Colonel Johnson's positions on the Douve. Bunched as they were, the Germans would have made an excellent target, but Colonel Sink hesitated because he was not sure they were enemy. A patrol was sent out to investigate, but before it reported back the column was out of sight.

At Vierville, Colonel Sink's column split. The 1st Battalion proceeded down the highway toward Beaumont, while the 2d Battalion swung off to the left with the intention of advancing on Angoville-au-Plain. Both battalions were pinned down by machine-gun and small-arms fire soon after they came out of Vierville. They moved on again when a platoon of medium tanks (Company A, 746th Tank Battalion) came up to support them. The 1st Battalion was harassed on its right flank by Germans who moved behind trees and hedges along the ridge which paralleled the road, but it finally fought its way into Beaumont. There it reorganized, but further advance was blocked by two enemy counterattacks, repulsed only after hard fighting.

Thereupon Company D and a platoon of light tanks, which had been detached from the 2d Battalion, and ordered to join the 1st, crossed to the latter's right flank. With this new power the battalion pushed ahead to the crossroads 500 yards east of St. Côme-du-Mont. Company D went on to the junction of the two highways south of St. Côme-du-Mont, where it ran into a convoy of eight American trucks loaded with quartermaster supplies, which had inadvertently come through German-held St. Côme-du-Mont. In the meantime the 1st Battalion moved back to

higher ground east of St. Côme-du-Mont, where it was later joined by Company D and the truck convoy. The intention was to bivouac there, but with both flanks of the main column retarded, the small force was in effect alone in enemy territory; it had made no contact with Colonel Ballard's force to the east, although it had heard firing in that direction. It therefore withdrew on Colonel Sink's order to Beaumont.

Early in the afternoon Colonel Ballard had conferred with Colonel Sink at the latter's command post on coordination of the southern advance of the 506th Parachute Infantry with attacks by the 2d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry, in the les Droueries area. As a result, Colonel Ballard was ordered to continue the attack south, which he had launched that morning, so that the 2d Battalion of the 501st might come abreast of the 506th Parachute Infantry in the vicinity of St. Côme-du-Mont. At the time Colonel Ballard's force was stopped on the sunken road east of les Droueries, but he was given six medium tanks to pace his renewed attack. It was at this time that the German paratroops began crossing the marsh to the east of Colonel Ballard's command post. The enemy force might have become a serious threat, but most of it passed out of range across the marsh; only about twenty Germans came near Ballard's flank. Of these, twelve were shot and the rest surrendered.

The tanks enabled Colonel Ballard to advance by taking care of the enemy machine guns which had been the chief obstacle. Two tanks moved out in column on the road, while two others on the left advanced abreast across the fields. The tanks attacked boldly, turrets open, spraying the hedgerows with machine-gun fire, and using 75-mm. guns against buildings and other suspected strong points. The infantry followed, taking the road junction to the southeast and capturing eight enemy machine guns on the left flank. Colonel Ballard was ordered by Colonel Sink to hold there for the night and the battalion reorganized and dug in. The two commanders then made plans for resumption of the attack on 8 June.

By the evening of 7 June a considerable force of the 101st Airborne Division had gathered in the area for the next day's attack. To the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 506th Infantry and the 2d Battalion of the 501st Infantry, already engaged, there now were added a battalion of the 401st Glider Infantry (which had arrived by sea), the 3d Battalion of the 501st Infantry, nearly two battalions of artillery, and some additional light tanks.

It had become apparent that in order to proceed against the Douve bridges at Carentan it was first necessary to take St. Côme-du-Mont. A direct attack on the bridges from the east was impracticable with the forces available to Colonel Johnson in the la Barquette area. Johnson and Shettle were therefore ordered to hold in place while the main attack drove down from the north.

The Beachhead at the End of D Plus 1

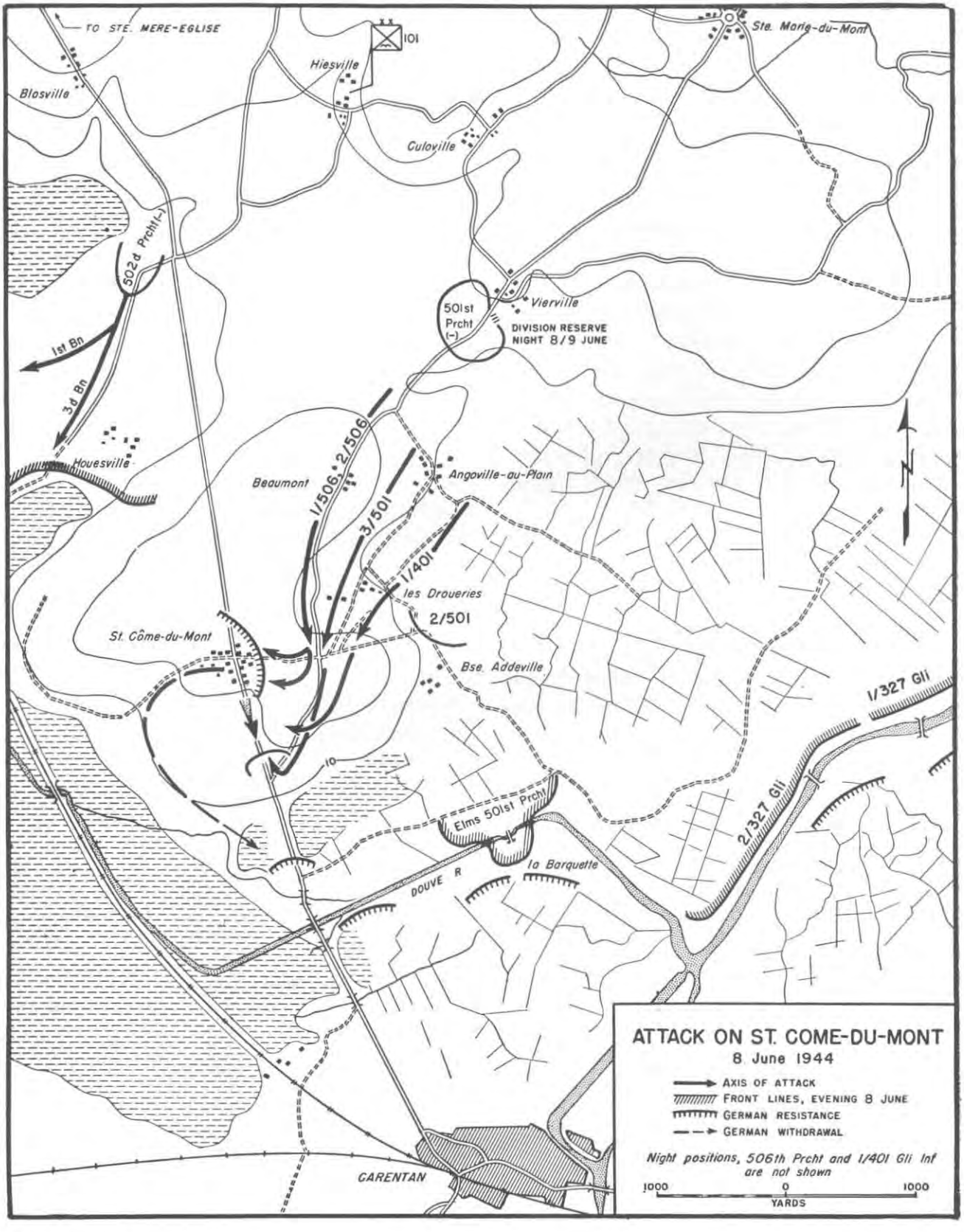
By the night of D plus 1 VII Corps units had rounded out a beachhead 12,000 yards deep, and it was clear that the initial assault on the East Cotentin had succeeded (Map No. 14). At the same time, however, it was obvious that the operation had not gone entirely according to plan. At the end of the second day elements of the 82d Airborne Division (the forces of Timmes, Millett, and Shanley) still remained isolated west of the Merderet. East of the river the Germans still held strong positions in both the north and south. The Corps had not attained its D-Day objectives as rapidly as hoped.

To be sure, the enemy was too weak at the moment to make more than piecemeal counterattacks, and his confusion was epitomized by the parachute battalion which had wandered through American positions and surrendered

to the small forces of Colonel Johnson and Captain Shettle. But the danger of a major counterattack had not passed. In the initial assault plans the enemy had been judged capable of a major counterattack on D plus 2. So far as the Americans knew at the close of D plus 1, the way was still open for such an attack to develop on 8 June. The southwest corner of the bridgehead remained unsealed. It was conceivable that German reinforcements might push up from Carentan and overwhelm the weak American forces clinging to the rim of the Douve marshes. As a matter of fact, on 7 June Field Marshal Rommel had taken the first step toward committing reinforcements when, convinced at last that there was no danger of Allied landings in Brittany, he ordered the *77th Division,* which had assembled there, to move to St. Lô.

Furthermore, the situation at the beaches, where the American build-up was proceeding far from smoothly, was not reassuring. Enemy guns, some in the coastal forts and some probably mobile, continued to harass the unloading, which had already fallen behind schedule. Admiral Moon found that the congestion of shipping was causing a constant loss of time, and considered delaying the convoys. The transshipment of materiel by small craft was so slow that Brig. Gen. Williston B. Palmer, Corps artillery commander, urged the Admiral to beach LST's at full tide to permit the landing of vehicles directly. On D plus 1, 10,735 men, 1,469 vehicles, and 807 tons of supplies were landed at Utah Beach, making a total of 32,000 men, 3,200 vehicles, and 2,500 tons of supplies for the first two days. But the schedules had called for the landing of 39,722 men, 4,732 vehicles, and 7,000 tons of supplies.

The continued failure of the 82d Airborne Division to establish a bridgehead over the Merderet and the 4th Division's slow progress toward its D-Day objective on the northern flank forced the first modification in the VII Corps plan. It was originally planned that part of the 4th Division would cross the Merderet and that the entire division would then attack northward astride the river, capture Valognes, and continue northwest to Cherbourg. The 90th Division, part of which started landing on D Day, was to pass through elements of the 4th east of Montebourg and drive toward Cherbourg on the right. The implementation of these plans was predicated on the rapid attainment of the D-Day objectives. But both the 82d and the 4th had made only slow progress during the first two days. Rather than disengage the 4th Division, which had become involved along the entire northern flank, General Collins on 7 June ordered the 4th to continue its northward attack east of the Merderet and to seize the coastal forts and the line Quinéville–Montebourg Station. Elements of the 82d Airborne Division (the 505th Parachute Infantry reinforced with the 2d Battalion of the 325th Glider Infantry) were to take over the left flank of this northward drive and seize the line Montebourg Station–le Ham. The remainder of the 82d was to continue on its D-Day mission of establishing a bridgehead over the Merderet. The 90th Division was given another mission a few days later. In the southern sector the 101st Airborne Division was to continue its mission of securing the southern flank of the beachhead by seizing the causeway approaches to Carentan. These tasks were to require the major efforts of VII Corps for nearly a week.


TO STE. MERE-EGLISE
101
Hiesville
Blosville
Culoville
Ste. Marie-du-Mont
502d Prcht (-)
1st Bn
3d Bn
Houesville
501st Prcht (-)
Vierville
DIVISION RESERVE NIGHT 8/9 JUNE
Beaumont
1/506, 2/506
3/501
1/401
Angoville-au-Plain
les Droueries
2/501
St. Côme-du-Mont
Bse. Addeville
1/327 Gli
2/327 Gli
10
Elms 501st Prcht
la Barquette
DOUVE R
CARENTAN
ATTACK ON ST. COME-DU-MONT
8 June 1944
AXIS OF ATTACK
FRONT LINES, EVENING 8 JUNE
GERMAN RESISTANCE
GERMAN WITHDRAWAL
Night positions, 506th Prcht and 1/401 Gli Inf are not shown
1000 0 1000
YARDS

MAP NO. 15

THE BATTLE OF CARENTAN (8–15 JUNE)

For several days special attention had to be given the southern flank of the VII Corps sector. The early joining of the Utah and Omaha beachheads had acquired an added urgency as a result of the difficulties in the V Corps area. Neither corps had made as rapid progress as hoped. Considerable anxiety existed, especially in the V Corps sector, where only a precarious foothold had been won on Omaha Beach on D Day and determined enemy resistance prevented an early consolidation of the beachhead. There was serious danger that the enemy would attempt to drive a wedge into the gap between V and VII Corps, particularly if he were allowed time to bring up reserves. General Eisenhower, viewing the situation on a visit to the Omaha area on 7 June, ordered a concentrated effort to close this gap. General Bradley accordingly gave first priority to this mission of linking the two beachheads and issued the necessary directives to the two corps. V Corps was ordered to thrust westward through Isigny; VII Corps was to seize Carentan.

The latter mission fell naturally to the 101st Airborne Division, already engaged along the southern flank of the Utah sector. In temporarily diverting the main effort of the VII Corps, General Bradley even suggested to General Collins that the 101st Airborne Division be reinforced should it be unable to break through to join up with units from V Corps, and indicated his immediate concern over the fusion of the two beachheads by specifically assigning first priority to this mission.

St. Côme-du-Mont

The 101st Airborne Division was already engaged in efforts to dislodge the enemy from St. Côme-du-Mont when these new orders were received by the VII Corps commander. The new attack on St. Côme-du-Mont was scheduled for 0445 on 8 June. It was to be led by Colonel Sink of the 506th Parachute Infantry and was to be made by four battalions (Map No. 15). On the right the 1st and 2d Battalions, 506th Parachute Infantry, were to drive directly from Beaumont to St. Côme-du-Mont. In the center the 3d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry, was to advance from north of les Droueries to the main highway south of St. Côme-du-Mont. On the left the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, was to move through Colonel Ballard's force east of les Droueries, and as the entire attack approached St. Côme-du-Mont it was to slant off to the south and go down the highway to blow the causeway bridge.

Preceded by effective preparatory fires on fifteen registered targets, the attack got off to a good start. The 3d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry, cleared les Droueries and advanced rapidly southward. As it approached the in-

tersection east of St. Come-du-Mont, it was threatened with being pinched off by the convergence of the 506th Parachute Infantry units on the right and the glider battalion on the left. A reorganization was effected and the 1st and 2d Battalions, 506th Parachute Infantry, were ordered to move to the west and set up defensive positions on the east of St. Côme-du-Mont. The glider battalion lagged behind on the left, while the 3d Battalion of the 501st went on and reached the Carentan highway, just north of the Beaumont road intersection, about midmorning.

Colonel Ewell, commanding the 3d Battalion, thought he saw signs of the enemy's withdrawal westward from St. Côme-du-Mont, and he decided to go south along the Carentan highway to seize the causeway and the bridges. But as his men moved onto the highway they were met by small-arms, machine-gun, and antitank fire from the buildings near the first bridge, and 88-mm. guns in Carentan began to shell them. Since no communications with the American artillery were available, Ewell's battalion pulled back to the east of the highway. As it withdrew, the battalion was suddenly faced by a German counterattack from the north. The counterattack was repulsed, but an additional effort was needed to clear the enemy from a small hill which dominated the highway on the west. With this hill as an anchor, the battalion built up an east-west line facing north. From this line Colonel Ewell's men beat back five successive German thrusts, each of which approached within one hedgerow of the American positions.

In the middle of the afternoon, the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, was ordered by Colonel Sink to go in between Colonel Ewell and the 506th Parachute Infantry. But by the time it had moved up, the enemy had begun to withdraw. The two American battalions started in pursuit, but did not regain contact, although the enemy could be seen moving south between the railroad embankment to the west and the highway. About forty loaded wagons were captured on the highway.

A patrol found that the enemy's withdrawal had left St. Côme-du-Mont completely clear. The 101st Division could now prepare to move south to attack the four causeway bridges, the second of which had been blown earlier in the afternoon by the enemy.

The Causeway Attack

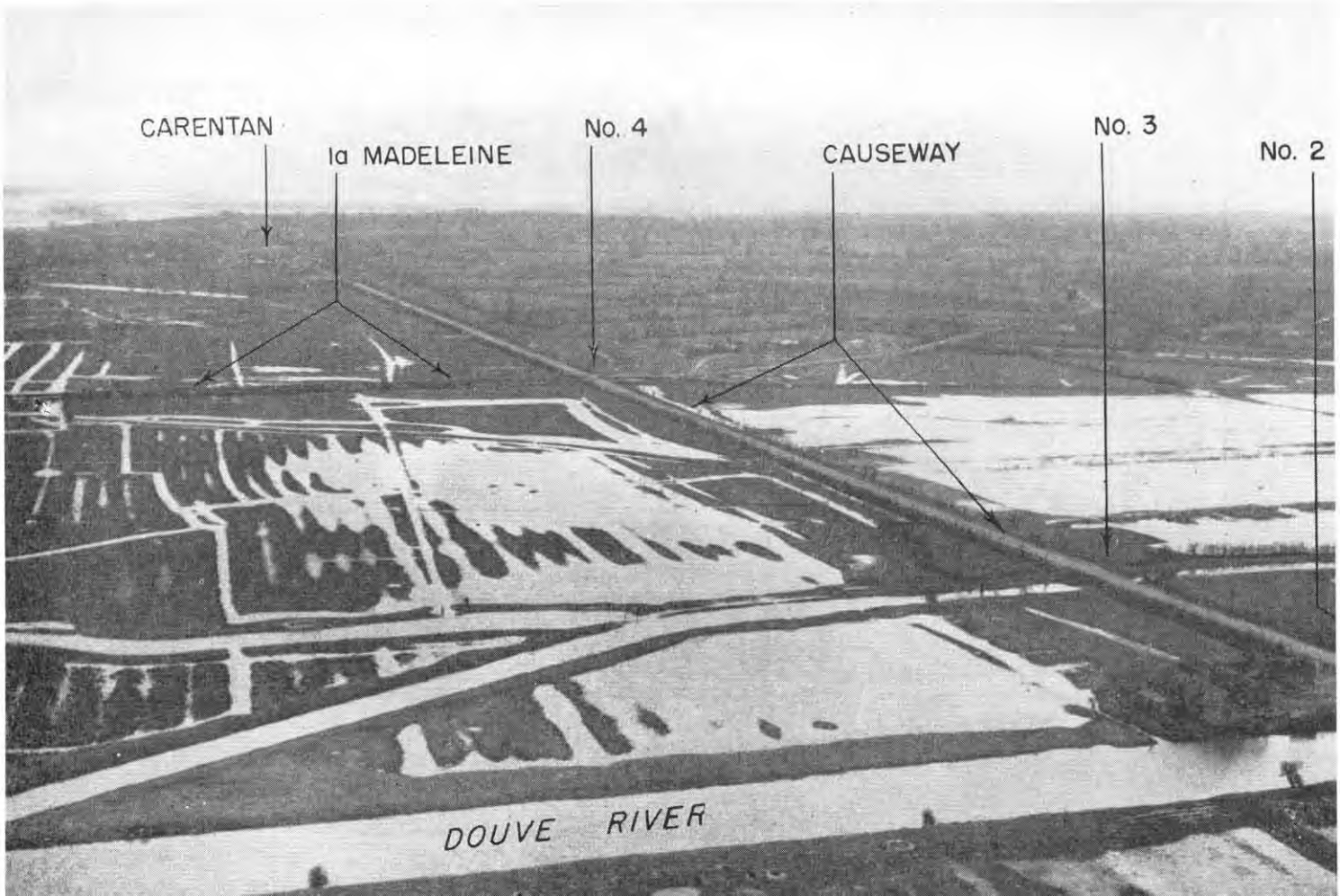
By evening of 8 June, the 101st Airborne Division had occupied a defensive arc on the southern flank of the VII Corps from Chef-du-Pont to the mouth of the Douve. The 502d Parachute Infantry, after accomplishing its missions in the Foucarville area, had taken positions on the right flank of the division, from Chef-du-Pont to the vicinity of Houesville. The 327th Glider Infantry, which had arrived by sea, relieved Colonel Johnson's and Captain Shettle's men in the vicinity of the lock and the le Port bridges. The 506th Parachute Infantry held the center, astride the Carentan highway, while the 501st Parachute Infantry was assembled near Vierville as division reserve.

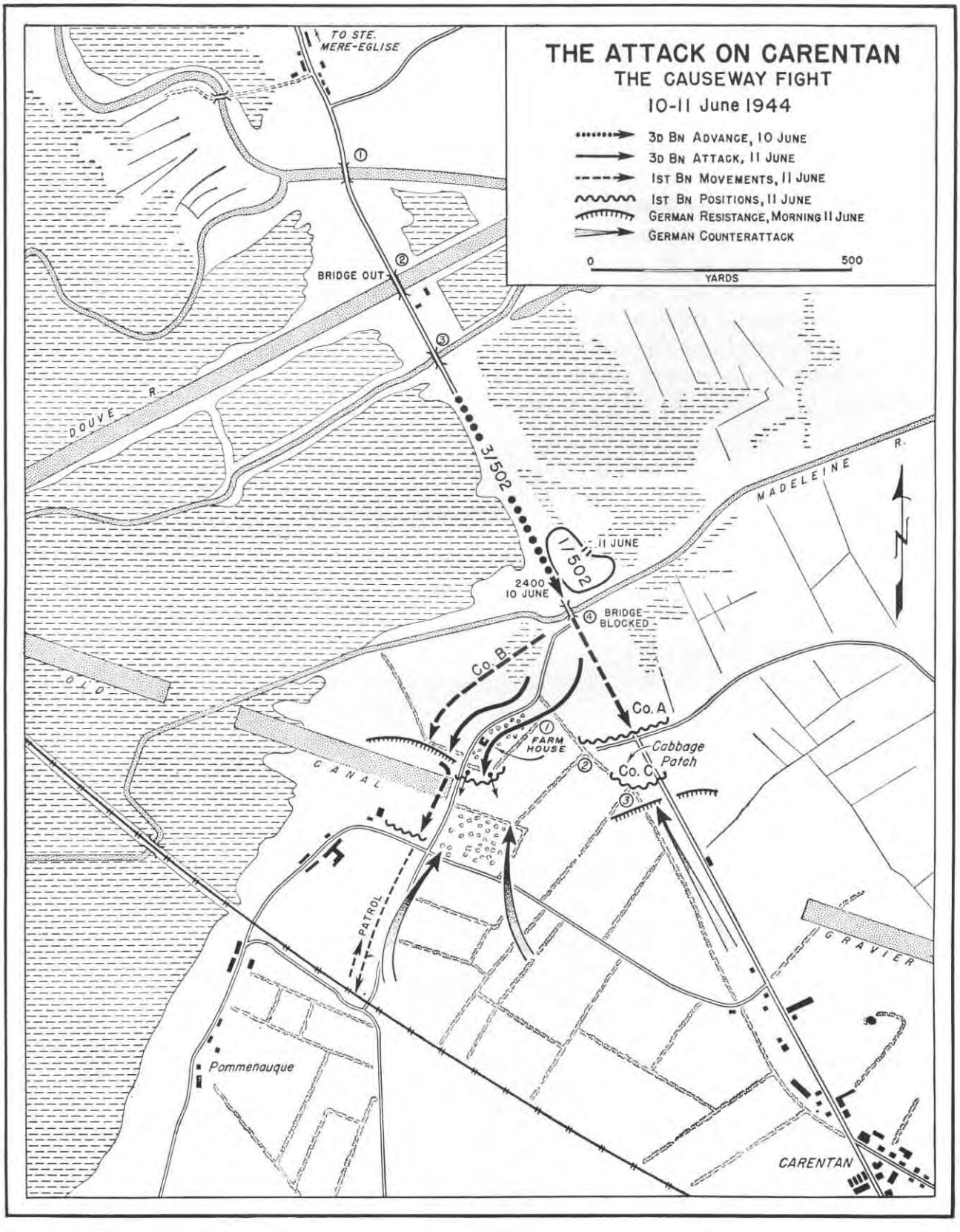
The plan of the 101st Division provided for two crossings of the Douve. The left wing, starting at 0100 on 10 June, was to cross in the vicinity of Brevands; part of this force was to join V Corps near the Vire River bridge southwest of Isigny, while the main force was to drive southwest to seize Carentan. The right wing was to cross the causeway northwest of Carentan, bypass Carentan, and seize Hill 30, southwest of the city. Capture of Hill 30 would put the Americans astride the principal German escape route from Carentan, as movement to the south and east was hindered by the Vire–Taute Canal and extensive swampland. As the battle for Carentan developed, the left and right wings of the division were coordinated to form a ring about the town, and within this ring a pincers closed in on the town itself.

With St. Côme-du-Mont clear, the division's right wing was ready to begin its attack across the causeway. There were indications that Carentan was not heavily defended. On 8 June Colonel Sink of the 506th Parachute Infantry had outposted the first two bridges across the causeway after the enemy's withdrawal from St. Côme-du-Mont, and on the following day he made a reconnaissance to the outskirts of Carentan; in the vicinity of the fourth bridge he drew fire (Map No. 16). Airplane reconnaissance reported that Carentan had been evacuated and also that a big gap had been blown in the railway embankment, thus making the causeway the only practicable approach to Carentan. Straight and narrow, the causeway rises some six to nine feet above the marshes and spans the Douve and Madeleine Rivers and the two Douve canals. Any attack would thus be canalized and expose the infantry to fire from the front and both flanks. On either side the marshes extend out of rifle range. With the western bank of the causeway falling away sharply to the water's edge, only the more gradually sloping eastern bank offered an opportunity to dig in.

The attack was to be carried out by the 502d Parachute Infantry. The 3d Battalion (Colonel Cole) started out shortly after midnight, 9–10 June. But the inability of the

THE CARENTAN CAUSEWAY, *looking south toward Carentan, was the scene of the 502d Parachute Infantry's action of 10–11 June. The network of canals and drainage ditches along the lower Douve is clearly visible, and, with the surrounding fields flooded, the attack was channelized down the narrow causeway road.*

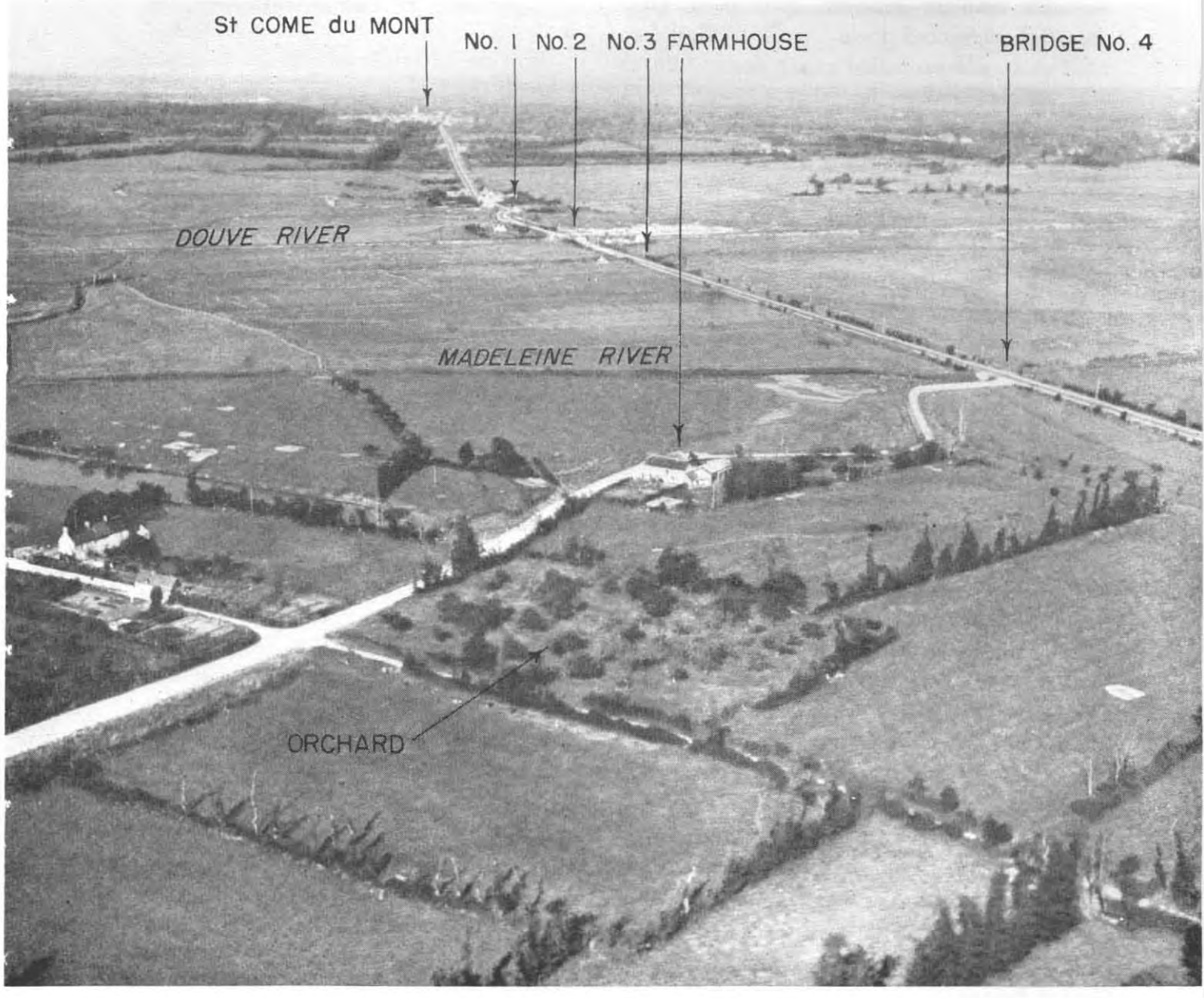



THE ATTACK ON CARENTAN
THE CAUSEWAY FIGHT
10-11 June 1944
3D BN ADVANCE, 10 JUNE
3D BN ATTACK, 11 JUNE
1ST BN MOVEMENTS, 11 JUNE
1ST BN POSITIONS, 11 JUNE
GERMAN RESISTANCE, MORNING 11 JUNE
GERMAN COUNTERATTACK
0
500
YARDS
TO STE. MERE-EGLISE
BRIDGE OUT
DOUVE R.
3/502
1/502
11 JUNE
2400 10 JUNE
MADELEINE R.
BRIDGE BLOCKED
Co. B
Co. A
Co. C
FARM HOUSE
Cabbage Patch
CANAL
PATROL
GRAVIER
Pommenauque
CARENTAN

MAP NO. 16

engineers, working under fire, to repair Bridge No. 2 caused the attack to be postponed. Shortly after midnight a patrol, led by Lt. Ralph B. Gehauf, set out to reconnoiter the road. The patrol crossed the canal at Bridge No. 2 in a boat and proceeded to Bridge No. 4. At this point the men were forced to edge single file through a narrow opening left by a heavy Belgian Gate which had been drawn almost completely across the bridge, and

SCENE OF THE CAUSEWAY FIGHT. *This air view of the St. Côme-du-Mont–Carentan highway and the farmhouse area affords an excellent idea of the terrain in which the 502d Parachute Infantry broke German resistance north of Carentan. The fields on either side of the highway had been drained at the time this photo was taken.*



which they could budge only about eighteen inches. When they had gone about fifty yards beyond the bridge a mortar shell dropped near them, flares went up, and then machine guns and more mortars fired on them. The fire came from the front and right front, the first indication that the Germans were in positions on the highway and on the higher ground directly south and west of the highway. At about 0530 the patrol withdrew.

The battalion was then told that the attack would be launched in the afternoon, with considerable artillery support, principally from the 65th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm. self-propelled guns) and the 907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion (75-mm. pack howitzers). Most of the artillery fire was laid on the suspected and known enemy positions southwest of Bridge No. 4. At noon the engineers had still not spanned the 12-foot gap at Bridge No. 2, but Colonel Cole and three other men improvised a footbridge with engineer planking, enabling the battalion to start crossing in single file in the middle of the afternoon. From Carentan an 88-mm. gun continued to interdict the causeway, but it did not stop the movement and caused no casualties. The men moved low or crawled along the embankment. At the end of three hours, when the point of the battalion had crossed three of the bridges and most of the men were beyond Bridge No. 2, the enemy opened fire from the hedgerows and a large farmhouse to the right front. The men in the point hit the ditches. As they attempted to move forward, an enemy machine gun behind a hedgerow only a hundred yards away searched the ditches, and, after three men were hit, the group withdrew.

The battalion, extended in a long thin column on the road and, unable to maneuver to either flank, was under enemy small-arms fire along its whole length. To advance, it had to send one man at a time to rush the Belgian Gate at Bridge No. 4 and slip through the narrow opening under direct enemy fire. The whole precarious maneuver would have been impossible without artillery support, which worked over German positions from 1600 to 2330 and undoubtedly reduced the effectiveness of enemy fire. Part of Company G, which was leading the battalion, deployed to the left of Bridge No. 4, while the rest of the company tried to cross the bridge through the narrow opening. Six men edged through; the seventh was hit and the company stopped to build up a fire position. Three mortars were also brought up and they worked over the German-held ground.

Still the battalion could not advance. Company I, exposed on the right bank near Bridge No. 3 where men had no grass for concealment and could not dig in, was hard hit, first by enemy rifle fire and later (at 2330) by two planes that bombed and strafed its positions. The strafing in particular took a heavy toll and, when it was over, 21 men and 2 officers of the company's original 80 moved back behind Bridge No. 2. About midnight, during a lull in the firing, Company H started moving men through the gate at Bridge No. 4.

At 0400 on 11 June, Regiment ordered the 3d Battalion to continue the attack, and in the darkness Company G and Headquarters Company followed Company H across Bridge No. 4. The battalion deployed along both sides of the highway. The center of the enemy's positions appeared to be a large farmhouse, flanked by hedgerows, on the higher ground which rises out of the marshes on the right-hand side of the road.

When the leading scouts on the right approached the farmhouse, they were fired on by rifles, machine guns, and mortars. In an attempt to neutralize the position, an artillery concentration was placed on the area but had no perceptible effect. Colonel Cole then ordered a bayonet charge on the farmhouse and called across the road to Maj. John P. Stopka, the battalion executive officer, to have the or-

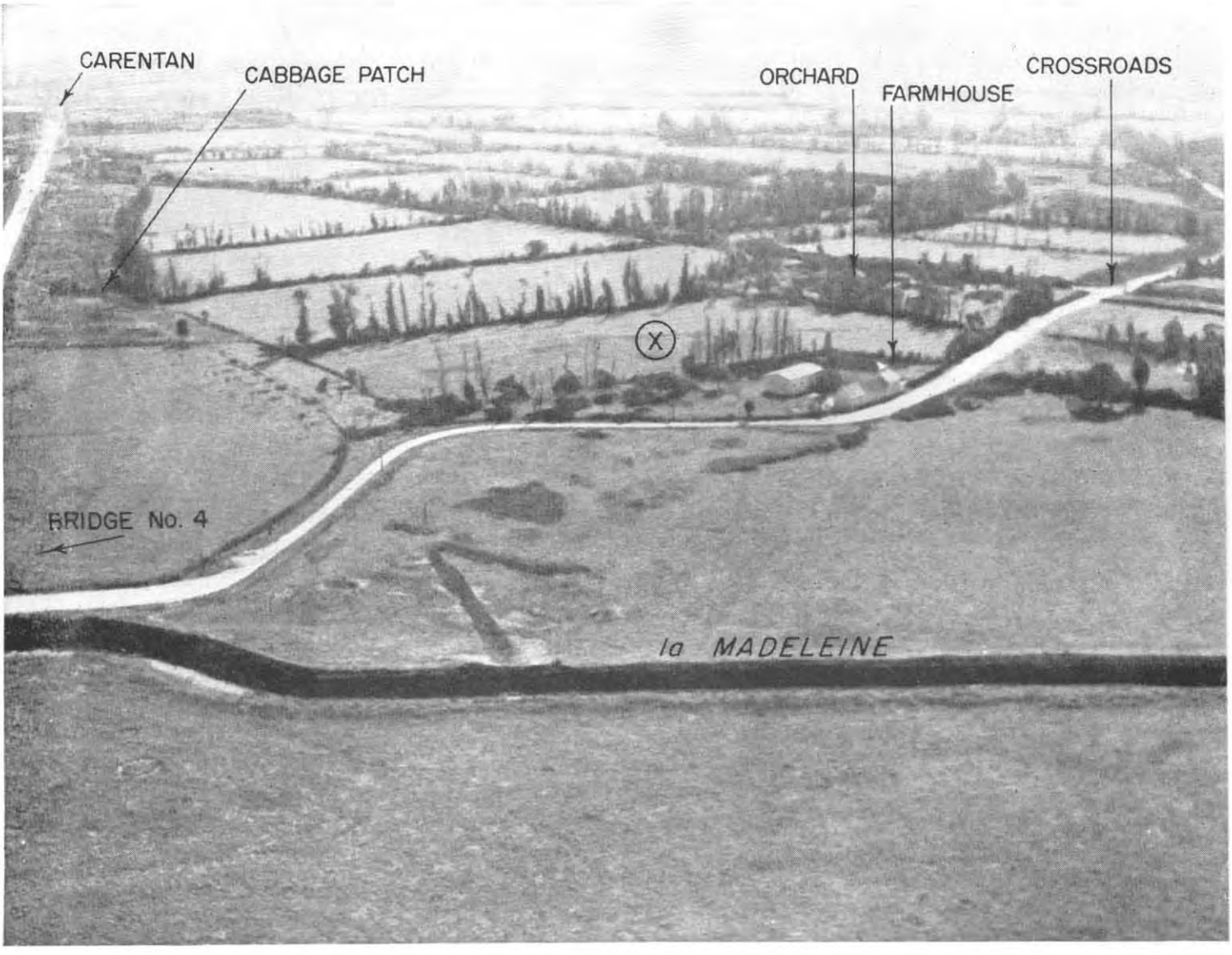
der passed along. Artillery put down smoke in a wide arc around the objective. At 0615, as the artillery fire was lifted, Colonel Cole blew his whistle and led the charge. Of the 250 men who should have followed him only 20 got up to go; another 50 followed Major Stopka. In the confusion and excitement, with the men widely distributed and hugging the ground, the order had not been passed around. Some of the men never received it; others had only a vague idea by hearing a word or two. In addition, parts of Company G, in the meadow east of the road to Carentan, became involved with enemy troops, armed with machine pistols. The commanding officer of the company was hit by an artillery short during the action. Most of the men of Company G did not hear the whistle at all, but when they saw the attack they ran after the others, trying to catch up.

Despite the initial disorder, the men charged across a ditch into the fire-swept field east of the farmhouse. The men, closely bunched, followed Colonel Cole and Major Stopka, and Colonel Cole stopped several times to get them to fan out. Two men of Company H reached the farmhouse first and found it abandoned, but to the west on higher ground the enemy still occupied rifle pits and machine-gun emplacements along a hedgerow running at right angles to the road. Under the momentum of the charge the men also secured this objective and eliminated the Germans with grenades and bayonets. The enemy's main defense was thus broken, but he still held ground to the south from which he continued to fire on the American positions. Colonel Cole wished to take advantage of the enemy's disorganization and keep the attack moving, but the 3d Battalion was in no condition to push on. All of the men in the battalion managed to cross the causeway and assemble near the farmhouse, but units were badly mixed and had suffered heavy casualties. Word was therefore sent to the rear to ask the 1st Battalion, 502d Parachute Infantry, to come up and pass through the 3d and continue the attack south to the high ground at la Billonerie (Hill 30).

The 1st Battalion (Colonel Cassidy) was north of Bridge No. 4 when it received Colonel Cole's message. It crossed the bridge under heavy fire and deployed across the fields toward the house. Instead of relieving the 3d Battalion, however, it reinforced it to help secure the ground gained. The 1st Battalion had been hard hit, especially by mortar fire, and was as disorganized as the 3d. Colonel Cole commanded the positions on the right from his command post in the farmhouse and Colonel Cassidy stayed on the left; there was little consultation or communication between them.

On the right flank the defensive position was improved when a group of men, after routing a few remaining Germans from the ridge, pursued them down the side road which ran between the farmhouse and the ridge. These men set up a machine gun at the crossroads and, together with others who joined them later, engaged the Germans who had returned to take up positions in the houses south of the crossroads. For the rest of the day they remained there, virtually isolated, some 150 yards out ahead of the other American positions. Another small group set up two machine guns in the corner formed by two hedgerows behind the farmhouse; these guns could fire into the hedgerows to the east, into the orchard, and down the road to the crossroads.

The defense, however, was not coordinated, and in the farmhouse Colonel Cole remained apprehensive. He did not know the situation on his flanks, his communications were out, and he thought that the supporting artillery was not effective. With their backs against the river, the troops had no rear area and hence no local reserve. The artillery observers could not see where their shells were landing because of the hedgerows and had to adjust fire, in the manner of jungle warfare, by sound. Very few of the men saw the enemy,



THE LAST PHASE OF THE CAUSEWAY FIGHT *resulted in the breaking of enemy resistance late on 11 June, when the Germans fell back from their positions, along the highway and cabbage patch on the left and the hedgerows and orchard beyond the farmhouse.*

who moved low behind the hedgerows; they judged his closeness by the sound of his fire.

In the middle of the morning enemy artillery and mortar fire increased in intensity, and the Germans began a counterattack. One of the strongest thrusts came through the orchard and threatened to rout the Americans south and east of the farmhouse. But machine guns south of the house broke up the attack and the position was restored. It held throughout the morning.

Shortly before noon an unexplained lull occurred in the fighting. The 502d Parachute Infantry took advantage of this to re-form its left flank positions. Company C moved forward from Bridge No. 4 to a cabbage patch

between the second and third hedgerows where they could fire down along the forward hedgerow as well as along the highway. Company A took positions just behind Company C and extended its line across the road.

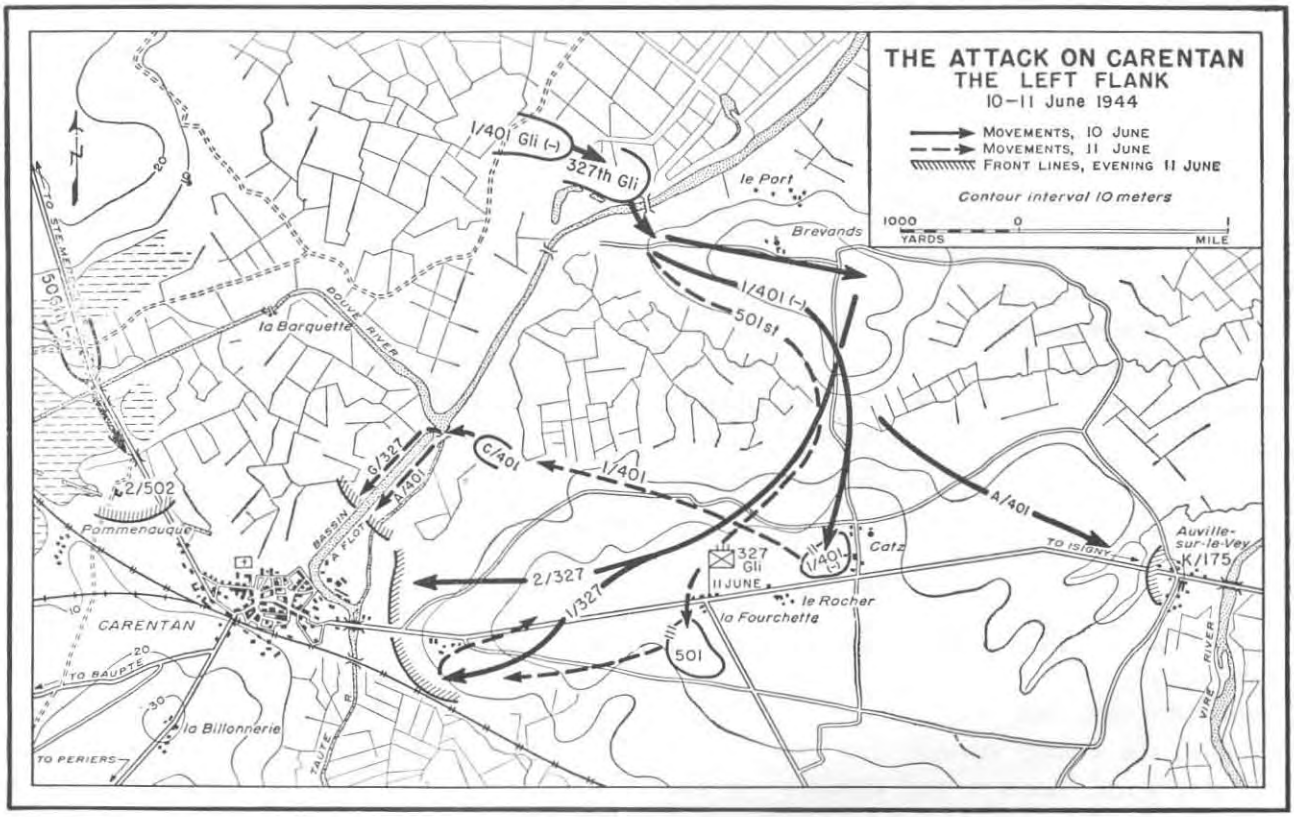
At noon Regiment notified the battalions that the enemy had requested a truce and ordered cease firing. It was a garbled message. The fact was that General McAuliffe, who was directing the operation for the 101st, was requesting this truce of the enemy. McAuliffe wanted time to clear the lines of his own casualties. Maj. Douglas T. Davidson, regimental surgeon, escorted by two Germans, went through the enemy lines to ask the military commander of Carentan for a breathing space to evacuate the wounded. When Major Davidson returned to Bridge No. 4, having been denied an interview with the German commander, the enemy opened fire—with rifles, machine guns, mortars, and artillery—in the most intense concentration of the day. Colonel Cole called Regiment and asked permission to return fire. He was ordered to wait, for Major Davidson had not yet returned to the regimental command post with definite word of the end of the truce. But the men in the line made their own decision and opened fire with all they had. They were convinced, not only by having observed the movements of the enemy during the truce, but also by the effectiveness of his renewed fire, that he had used the interlude to strengthen his small-arms positions and to prepare an artillery attack.

The renewed German attack strained the American positions almost to the breaking point. The group at the crossroads on the right flank had not received the cease fire order and had continued to fire on the Germans whom they had observed moving about to their left. When the truce ended and the enemy struck at the crossroads, some of the groups were forced to give ground. One of the machine guns behind the farmhouse, by interdicting the crossroads, helped the others to hold. The positions on the left, in the cabbage patch and along the hedgerows, managed to hold throughout the afternoon against repeated German attempts to come down the ditches beside the highway and along the hedgerows. At times they came so near that the men could hear the Germans working their bolts. The enemy gave the two battalions no respite and no opportunity to reorganize or evacuate the wounded. His artillery was weak, but his mortars never stopped firing.

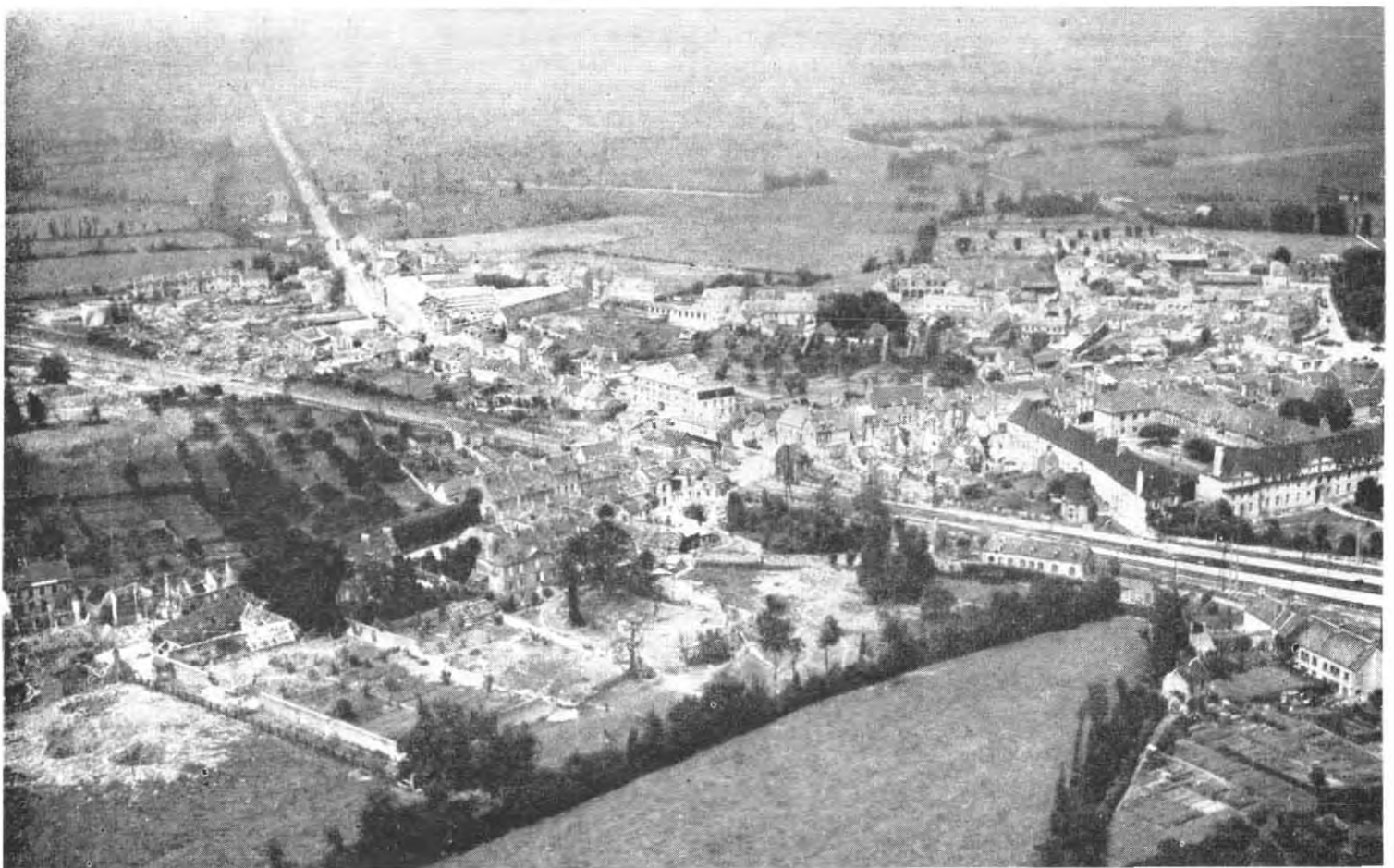
Colonel Cole, looking out from a second-story window in the farmhouse, expected his line to crack. At 1830 he informed Regiment that he planned to withdraw and asked to have covering fire and smoke ready when the time came. He believed that only closer and heavier artillery support would enable him to hold out. But the radio of his artillery liaison officer, Capt. Julian Rosemond, had been jammed. When Captain Rosemond finally managed to get through to the artillery command post, the situation improved rapidly. During most of the day only two battalions had been firing in direct support. Now every gun in the command was brought to bear. To be effective it was necessary to adjust the fires very closely, with the result that two Americans were killed. The shells arched high over the American positions and fell in the field directly beyond the farmhouse. It lasted only five minutes, but when the fire lifted the sound of German firing was receding southward. Patrols sent out ascertained that the enemy had fled. At about 2000 the 2d Battalion came up to take over the now improved positions, and the 1st and 3d Battalions withdrew. The enemy defense barring the way to Carentan from the north was broken, but the 502d Parachute Infantry was too exhausted to continue the attack. It requested relief, and the 506th Parachute Infantry was sent in to finish the job.[1]

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[1]Colonel Cole was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his part in the Carentan attack. Before he could receive the medal he was killed in action in Holland, 19 September 1944.


THE ATTACK ON CARENTAN
THE LEFT FLANK
10–11 June 1944
MOVEMENTS, 10 JUNE
MOVEMENTS, 11 JUNE
FRONT LINES, EVENING 11 JUNE
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0
YARDS
MILE
1/401 Gli (–)
327th Gli
le Port
Brevands
1/401 (–)
501st
la Barquette
BOUVE RIVER
C/401
1/401
A/401
G/327
A/401
2/502
Pommenduque
BASSIN A FLOT
2/327
1/327
327 Gli 11 JUNE
1/401 (–)
Catz
le Rocher
la Fourchette
501
CARENTAN
TO BAUPTE
la Biltonnerie
TO PERIERS
TO ISIGNY
Auville-sur-le-Vey
K/175
VIRE RIVER

MAP NO. 17



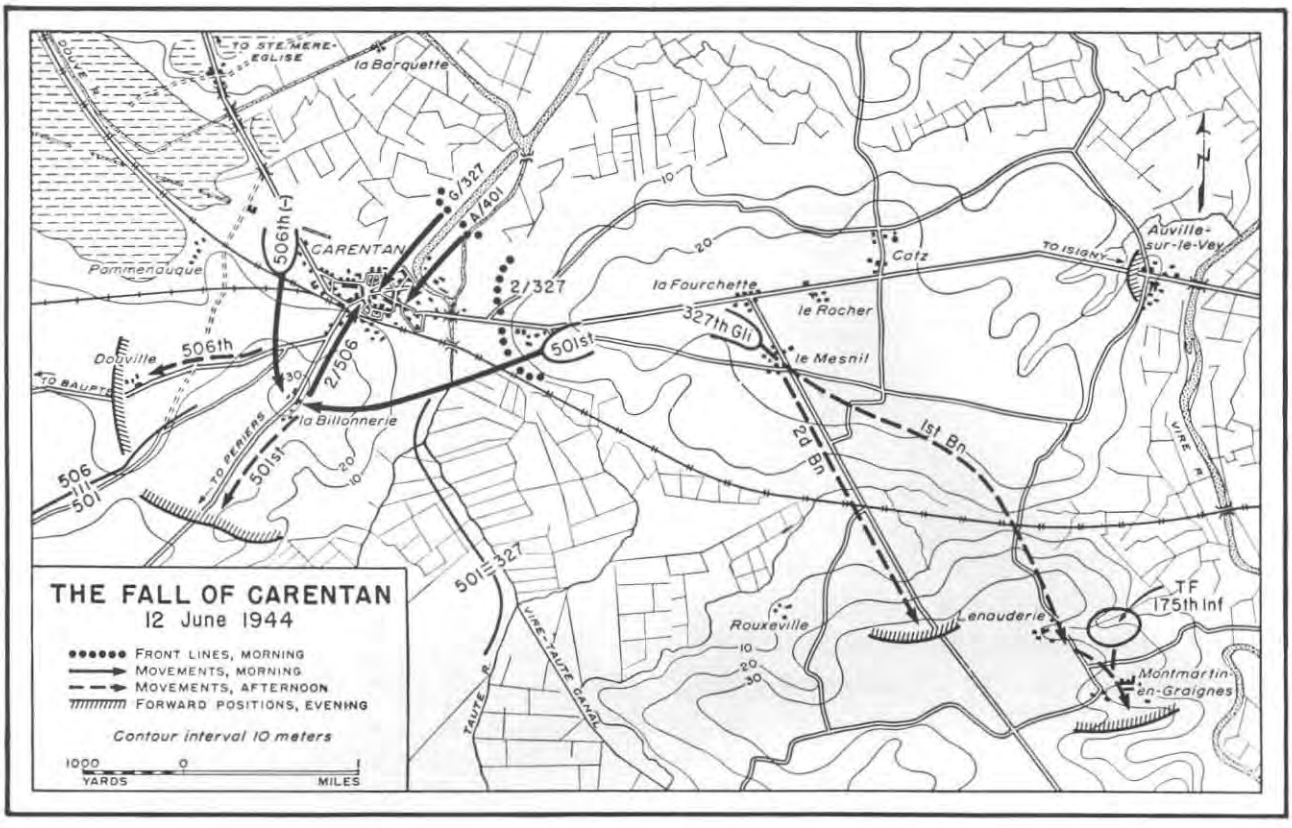


CARENTAN *fell on 12 June, when the 2d Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry, drove into the city from the southwest to join with the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, which entered from the northeast. Left, Carentan, looking north along the highway. Above, airborne infantry occupy the city.*

The Left-Wing Attack on Carentan

During the two days of the fight across the causeway the 101st Airborne Division's left wing had also been pressing southward. The first mission of the 327th Glider Infantry was to cross the lower Douve and secure the high ground around Brevands (Map No. 17). At 0145 on 10 June, Company C silently crossed the river and established a small bridgehead. The artillery and mortar barrage which prepared for the crossing of the rest of the regiment was so successful that all three battalions were across by 0600, and Brevands was occupied shortly thereafter. At noon Company A of the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry,[2] was ordered to reconnoiter southeastward from Brevands toward Auville-sur-le-Vey on the west bank of the Vire River. About a mile and a half from its destination the company encountered a strong German force, and in a running battle it broke the enemy line and knocked out twelve machine guns. It then proceeded to Auville-sur-le-Vey, where it made contact with the 29th Reconnaissance

[2]The 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, operated as a third battalion of the 327th Glider Infantry. In the airborne division reorganization effected in March 1944, the 401st Glider Infantry was split, one of its battalions being attached to the 327th Glider Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division and the other to the 325th Glider Infantry of the 82d Airborne Division. The former retained its own designation.



MAP NO. 18

Troop and Company K of the 175th Infantry (29th Division).[3] The assistant G–3 of the 101st Airborne Division, who had accompanied Company A, went to the 29th Division headquarters to report the situation of the 101st, while Company A mopped up the enemy force which it had just broken up and which had constituted the last obstacle separating VII and V Corps. This done, it rejoined the 327th Glider Infantry for the advance on Carentan.

The approach to Carentan from the east is cut by the Vire–Taute Canal. The 327th Glider Infantry was ordered to block the eastern exits from the city by securing the railroad bridge and the Isigny highway bridge over the canal. Throughout the afternoon the regiment advanced rapidly, but it was stopped at 1800 some 500 yards from the canal by enemy fire from the houses and hedgerows on the east bank. The regiment reorganized to gain these 500 yards. The 2d Battalion moved north of the highway on the right, the 1st Battalion south of the highway; the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, was in reserve. The attack drove the enemy across the canal, and by midnight the two battalions had reached the last hedgerow and dug into positions behind it. They could now fire into the city and control the highway bridge, the only bridge still intact.

Both the railway bridge to the south and a footbridge to the north near the junction of the canal and the Douve had been blown. The footbridge, however, could be repaired to permit troops to cross. On the west bank, the wood bordering the Bassin à Flot provided a

[3] A slightly different version of the joining of the two corps is given in *Omaha Beachhead*, published in 1946, pp. 145–46. The account given here is based on more complete information than was available when *Omaha* was written.

covered approach to Carentan. Col. Joseph H. Harper, who had assumed command of the 327th Glider Infantry that afternoon, decided to use this approach when he was ordered to continue the advance on Carentan. At dawn on 11 June a patrol repaired the footbridge, and at about 1000 two companies of the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, and Company G, 327th Glider Infantry, crossed under German mortar fire. Company G was to attack along the right side of the Bassin à Flot, Company A along the left, while Company C was to be in reserve. The 1st and 2d Battalions were to hold their positions to the south along the canal and support the attack by firing into the city.

The companies advanced several hundred yards through the woods toward Carentan, but when they were about half a mile from the city they were pinned down by machine-gun and small-arms fire from the houses on the northeastern outskirts. American artillery was unsuccessful in checking the German fire, and the companies remained in the woods all day, unable to advance.

At about 2000 on 11 June, Colonel Harper was called back to the regimental command post. Here Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges (Deputy Commander, First Army), General Taylor, General McAuliffe, and Colonel Johnson (501st Parachute Infantry) had gathered to plan the next day's attack on Carentan. General McAuliffe was given the command of the task force which was to make a coordinated attack; it consisted of the 501st and 506th Parachute Infantry Regiments and the 327th Glider Infantry. The 501st was to move from its defensive position north of the Douve, cross the river near Brevands, where a treadway bridge had been built, and swing southwest to join Colonel Sink's men of the 506th near Hill 30, thus completing the division's ring around the city. The 1st and 2d Battalions, 327th Glider Infantry, were to continue to hold the canal, while the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, and Company G, 327th Glider Infantry, were to press their attack into Carentan from the northeast.

During the night of 11–12 June Carentan was set ablaze by artillery, naval guns, 4.2-inch mortars, and several tank destroyer guns which fired on point targets from the 327th Glider Infantry's positions along the canal.

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 506th Parachute Infantry, moved out at 0200 on 12 June. Near the farmhouse which had been Colonel Cole's command post they left the highway and moved cross country directly south to Hill 30 (Map No. 18). Neither battalion met serious resistance; the 1st drove in a German outpost line and occupied Hill 30, the 2d bivouacked on its right. Colonel Sink (506th Parachute Infantry) moved his command post group over the same route which the battalions had followed, but after leaving the highway he missed the way and swung to the south of Hill 30, where he dug in forward of the two battalions. At 0500, while still unaware of his own position, Colonel Sink ordered the 2d Battalion to attack toward Carentan. At dawn, when enemy fire made it apparent that the command post position was isolated and surrounded, the 1st Battalion was ordered to attack south from Hill 30 through the hamlet of la Billonerie toward the command post. As the 1st Battalion started out it was counterattacked near la Billonerie. It took heavy fighting through the hedgerows and houses to break through and extricate Colonel Sink's group.

The 2d Battalion, meanwhile, had moved out astride the main road leading into Carentan from the southwest. It received harassing machine-gun fire and interdictory artillery fire from the south most of the way into town. As the battalion entered, it met the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, which had already come in from the northeast. This unit had pushed a patrol to the edge of the town before dawn, but it still faced the enemy rear

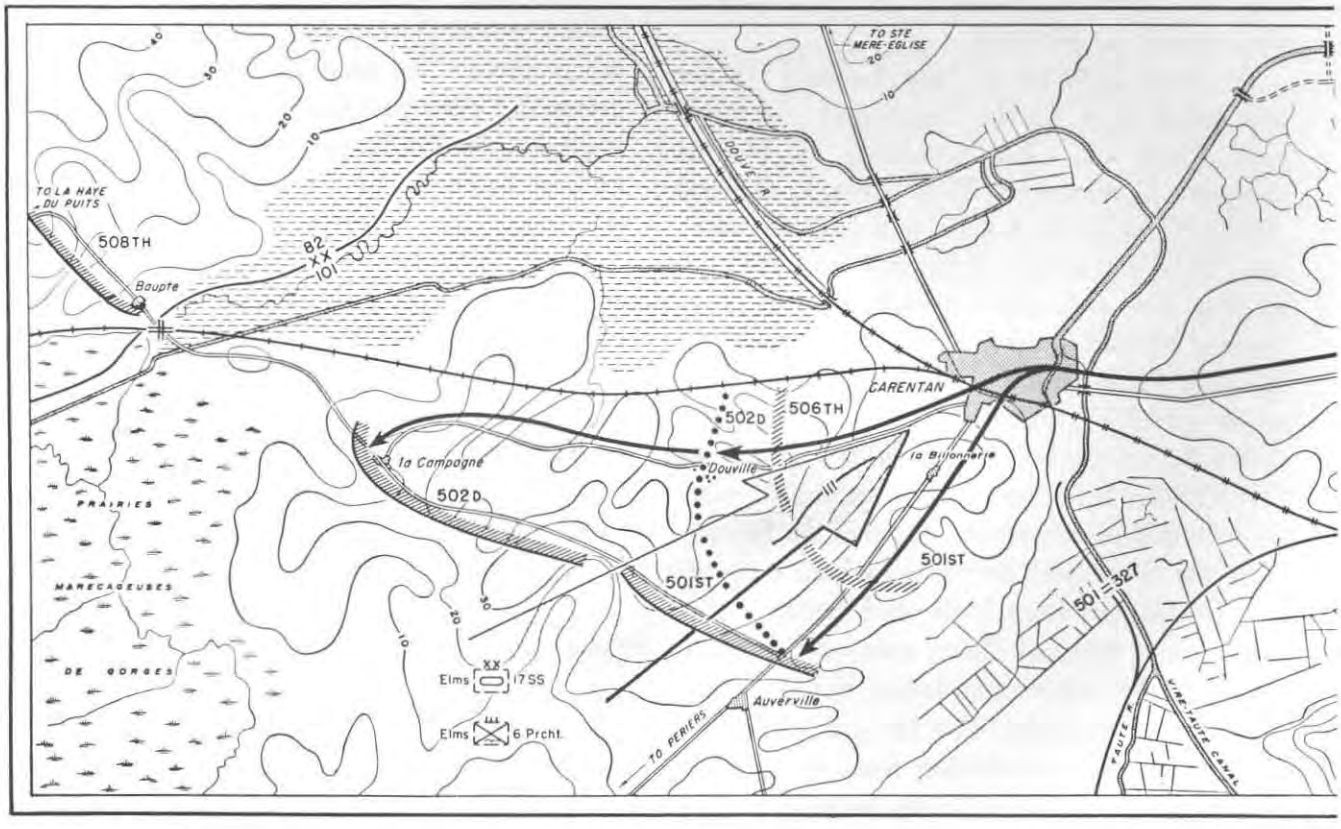
guard and was temporarily stopped. At 0600 it attacked out of the wood at Bassin à Flot and drove rapidly into the center of Carentan. The meeting with the 2d Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry, occurred about 0730 after a short fight with enemy stragglers around the railroad station.

While the inner pincers thus squeezed shut in the town, the wide envelopment on the left intended to cut the enemy's southern escape routes was also closing. At dawn the 501st Parachute Infantry crossed the canal south of the 327th Glider Infantry, fought its way to Hill 30, and made contact with the 1st Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry, about half an hour after the entry into Carentan. The double maneuver succeeded in capturing Carentan, but the trap closed too late to catch the bulk of the German defenders, who evidently had escaped south during the night.

Securing Carentan

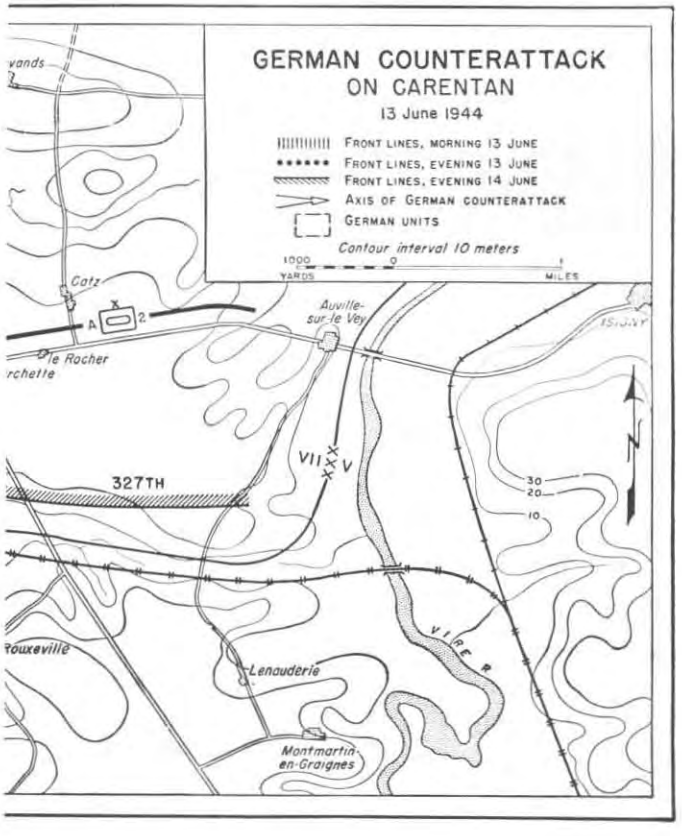
With the capture of Carentan, VII Corps had acquired the vital link for its communication with V Corps. It now remained to solidify the junction of the beachheads and secure the approaches to the city by seizing additional ground to the southwest and east. This was included as part of the mission of the 101st Airborne Division, as outlined the day before, and the division set about this task immediately. The 501st and 506th Parachute Infantry Regiments were to push out southwestward to the Prairies Marécageuses de Gorges, while the 1st and 2d Battalions, 327th Glider Infantry, were to secure the ground to the east and, on General Taylor's orders, to go beyond the railroad and seize the high ground south of Montmartin-en-Graignes, in order to insure the security of the intercorps boundary.

MAP NO. 19





GERMAN ARMOR, *including these Mark IV's knocked out along the Baupte road, supported the counterattack on Carentan. Elements of the 2d Armored Division assisted the 101st Airborne Division in repulsing the attack.*



The 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, remained in Carentan.

Reinforced by five tank destroyers, the two battalions of the 327th Glider Infantry set out along the Isigny highway early in the afternoon of 12 June (Map No. 18). At le Mesnil they turned south, the 2d Battalion advancing on the right, the 1st Battalion on the left. Shortly after crossing the railroad they ran into strong resistance, and at about 2100–2200 they were held up, the 2d Battalion in the vicinity of Rouxeville, the 1st in the vicinity of Lenauderie. The 2d Battalion was unable to break through the German positions but the 1st penetrated the enemy defenses and contacted a force of about eighty men from the 29th Division, including Brig. Gen. Norman D. Cota, assistant division commander, which had been surrounded by the enemy. This force joined the 1st Battalion to continue the attack,

which took Montmartin-en-Graignes and the high ground to the south.

Colonel Harper in his command post to the rear of his two battalions had lost contact with both and had only a vague idea of their situations. When he succeeded in reestablishing radio communication, he ordered the 1st Battalion to withdraw to the forest south of Lenauderie, abreast of the 2d Battalion on the right. He did not know that Montmartin-en-Graignes and the high ground had been taken. He called Division to ask for armor, but was informed that all the available armor was needed to check a counterattack against Carentan from the southwest.[4]

On the morning of 13 June, the situation had been cleared sufficiently to enable Colonel Harper, on General Taylor's order, to withdraw his two battalions, under artillery cover, northward to the railroad. General Cota's group was ordered to rejoin the 29th Division. Colonel Harper, reinforced by the five tank destroyers, set up defenses which extended 3,000 yards along the north side of the tracks above Montmartin-en-Graignes. He remained here until 15 June. The German attack he had expected from Montmartin-en-Graignes did not develop

Meanwhile, the battle for the merging of the two beachheads was being decided near Carentan. On the afternoon of 12 June the 506th and the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiments had started to carry out their mission of securing the southwestern approaches to the town. The 506th on the right moved out westward along the Carentan–Baupte road, and the 501st on the left set out southwestward from Hill 30 along the Carentan–Périers highway. A small enemy force attacked the 2d Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry, at noon, but the battalion repulsed this counterattack and pursued the enemy into Douville, where it was stopped at a strongly organized position manned by parachutists and panzer troops. The ensuing fight lasted the rest of the day. During the night the 3d Battalion came in on the 2d's right. The 501st Parachute Infantry met similar opposition on the Carentan–Périers highway and at the close of the day held a line only a short distance southwest of Hill 30.

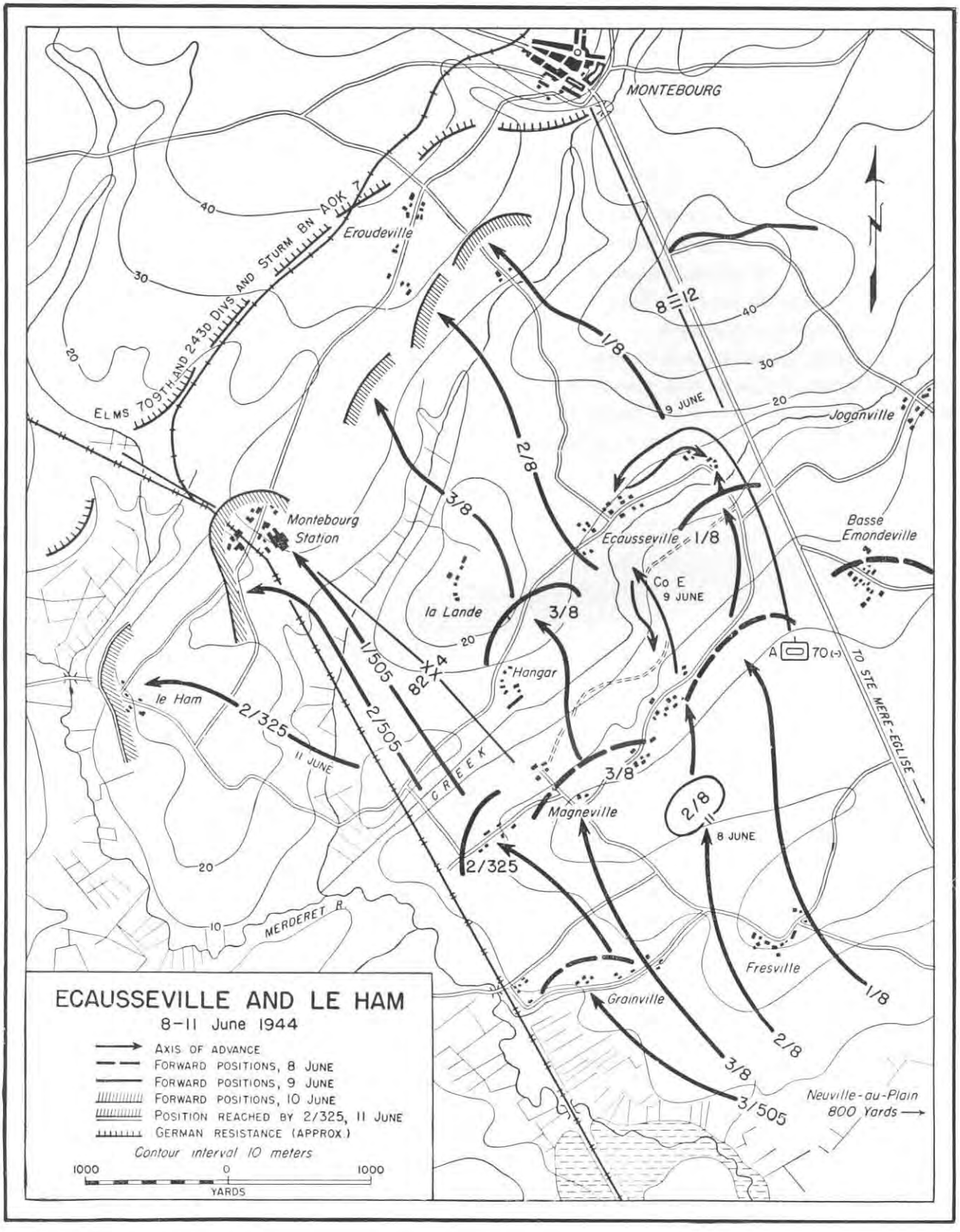
An attack by the 506th Parachute Infantry was scheduled for the morning of 13 June, to deepen the defensive base around Carentan. Before the attack could get well under way a strong enemy counterattack, supported by armor, struck along both the Carentan–Baupte and Carentan–Périers roads (Map No. 19). Included in the German forces were elements of the *37th* and *38th Panzer Grenadier Regiments* and the *17th Tank Battalion,* all from the *17th SS-Panzer Grenadier* (*Goetz von Berlichingen*) *Division,* and also remnants of the *6th Parachute Regiment.* The attack was obviously directed at the recapture of Carentan, and it drove to within 500 yards of the edge of the city. The 2d Battalion, 502d Parachute Infantry, moved down to the 506th Parachute Infantry's right flank and helped to regain some of the lost ground. But the attack threatened the junction of the V and VII Corps beachheads so seriously that First Army decided to send armor to repel it. Not until this armor arrived was the German threat eliminated and the link between the two corps firmly secured.

At 1030 elements of Combat Command A, 2d Armored Division, arrived in Carentan. One task force attacked west along the Carentan–Baupte road at 1400 and, followed by

[4]On the night of 12–13 June General Cota reported that he had observed, from the high ground south of Montmartin-en-Graignes, some 150 German troops reentering the town. The message had been garbled to read "150 German tanks" and had induced General Bradley to send Colonel Harper armored support. When a major from General Bradley's headquarters walked into Colonel Harper's command post with the news that a company of medium tanks, a company of light tanks, and a battalion of armored infantry were on their way, Colonel Harper in surprise called Division to say that he would have enough strength with the armor to push on to St. Lô, if that was desired. But General Taylor called Corps and learned that because the Germans were threatening Carentan from the southwest he was to move the armor to Carentan. This armor was part of the force which arrived in Carentan in time to break the German attack. Colonel Harper called for an artillery and naval barrage on Montmartin-en-Graignes.

the 502d Parachute Infantry, passed through the 506th Parachute Infantry and drove westward. Another task force attacked along the Carentan–Périers highway. Both task forces received close support from the 14th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. The coordinated efforts of the tanks, infantry, and artillery threw the enemy back several thousand yards, inflicting an estimated loss of 500 men. That night the 506th Parachute Infantry was relieved by the 502d on the right flank and passed to division reserve in Carentan.

On 14 June Carentan was secured and the junction with V Corps was completed. On the 101st Division's right flank, the 502d Parachute Infantry made contact with elements of the 82d Airborne Division at Baupte and, with the 501st Parachute Infantry on its left, it secured the road which runs southeast from Baupte to join the Carentan–Périers highway. The 327th Glider Infantry held the railroad from Carentan to the Vire River and had established contact with elements of the 29th Division on its left. Against this line enemy pressure dwindled. The 101st Airborne Division had thus completed its mission by extending the southern arc of the beachhead and welding together its isolated segments. On 15 June the 101st Division was transferred from VII Corps to VIII Corps, which gradually assumed responsibility for the protection of the VII Corps' southwest flank.


MONTEBOURG
Eroudeville
AOK 7
STURM BN
243D DIVS
709TH
ELMS
Montebourg Station
la Lande
le Ham
Hangar
Ecausseville
Co E
9 JUNE
Joganville
Basse Emondeville
Magneville
Grainville
Fresville
Neuville-au-Plain
800 Yards
TO STE MERE-EGLISE
MERDERET R
CREEK
11 JUNE
8 JUNE
9 JUNE
1/8
2/8
3/8
1/505
2/505
3/505
2/325
82
XX
8
12
40
30
20
10
N
ECAUSSEVILLE AND LE HAM
8–11 June 1944
AXIS OF ADVANCE
FORWARD POSITIONS, 8 JUNE
FORWARD POSITIONS, 9 JUNE
FORWARD POSITIONS, 10 JUNE
POSITION REACHED BY 2/325, 11 JUNE
GERMAN RESISTANCE (APPROX.)
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0 1000
YARDS

MAP NO. 20

BREAKING THE GERMAN LINE IN THE NORTH

The terrain in the northern zone of the beachhead did not offer the enemy as strong a natural barrier as the swamps and rivers in the south, but it still favored him over VII Corps. The ground generally rises to the north, giving the defender commanding heights, and it is liberally crisscrossed with hedgerows (Map I). Fortifications in the fields and along the beaches, as well as the large forts at Azeville, Crisbecq, and Ozeville, supported the German defense in depth. A backstop line for the forward defensive positions was anchored to the coast at Quinéville; it stretched inland along a high ridge to Montebourg and then bent southwestward along a salient of solid ground which points down between the Merderet and two of its tributaries. The backstop line roughly paralleled the Quinéville–Montebourg–le Ham highway and tied in with the Merderet River at le Ham. It was part of VII Corps' D-Day objective, but five infantry regiments took a full week, from 8 to 14 June, to reach and secure it. (Map III).

The Penetration at Ecausseville

The western half of the objective was assigned to the 8th Infantry, which was to take the area between Montebourg and the Montebourg Station, and to the 505th Parachute Infantry (with the 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, attached), which was to take the high ground between the station and le Ham (Map No. 20). Defending the le Ham–Quinéville line during the first days of the operation were elements of the *709th* and *243d Divisions,* as well as such reinforcements as the *Sturm Battalion AOK 7.*

The 8th Infantry jumped off from Ste. Mère-Eglise on the morning of 8 June and attacked along the eastern side of the Ste. Mère-Eglise–Montebourg highway. It was opposed from the beginning by artillery fire, but its first contact with enemy infantry came at Neuville-au-Plain. There American forces had already fought the enemy three times but had not taken possession of the town. The Germans yielded the town again after a sharp skirmish in midafternoon. Beyond Neuville-au-Plain the going was easier, as the 8th Infantry turned to the left and continued its attack on the western side of the highway. As it approached Fresville and Grainville, enemy artillery and sniper fire increased and slowed down the regiment.

On the left of the 8th Infantry the 505th Parachute Infantry began its advance northward at 0800, with its 2d Battalion on the right and the 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, on the left. The 3d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, followed on the left rear, screening the attack from the strong enemy forces across



the Merderet. As the regiment came abreast of Neuville-au-Plain, it swung to the northwest, as the 8th Infantry had done, and the 3d Battalion came up through the two leading battalions to take over the advance.

The 8th Infantry halted before Fresville and Grainville to await tank support. When the tanks arrived at about 2000, the enemy withdrew from Grainville without further resistance. The 3d Battalion of the 505th secured the village, while the 3d Battalion of the 8th continued north to Magneville. Here Company I fought its way through the houses on the northern side of the town into an orchard, where it came under heavy artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire from the rising ground to its front and from a fortified hangar still farther ahead, across a creek. Having discovered



THE HANGAR AND ECAUSSEVILLE AREAS *shown in this air view lay along the 8th Infantry's axis of advance. Enemy resistance stiffened noticeably on this favorable ground, which was the scene of heavy fighting on 8–10 June. Ecausseville is at upper right; la Lande is just beyond the hangar.*

this concentration of German strength, Company I was pulled back in line and dug in around Magneville with the rest of the battalion. The 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, had also reached this sector and established its position eastward to the highway along a road roughly paralleling the creek. Throughout the night both battalions were under unusually heavy fire, particularly from 88-mm. guns.

The German main line of resistance ran along the north bank of the creek, a tributary of the Merderet, with main strong points at the hangar beyond Magneville and the village of Ecausseville to the north. On the commanding north bank of the creek, the enemy had dug in a large number of machine guns and several 88-mm. guns, and he was supported by other artillery, mortars, and Nebelwerfers, registered on all routes of approach. These positions were part of a line extending eastward to Emondeville, Azeville, and Crisbecq. Here the Germans were making their first real effort to hold, and by 9 June they had begun to reinforce their positions with elements of the *243d Division*, and with the *Sturm Battalion AOK 7*, which had been rushed down from Cherbourg on bicycles.

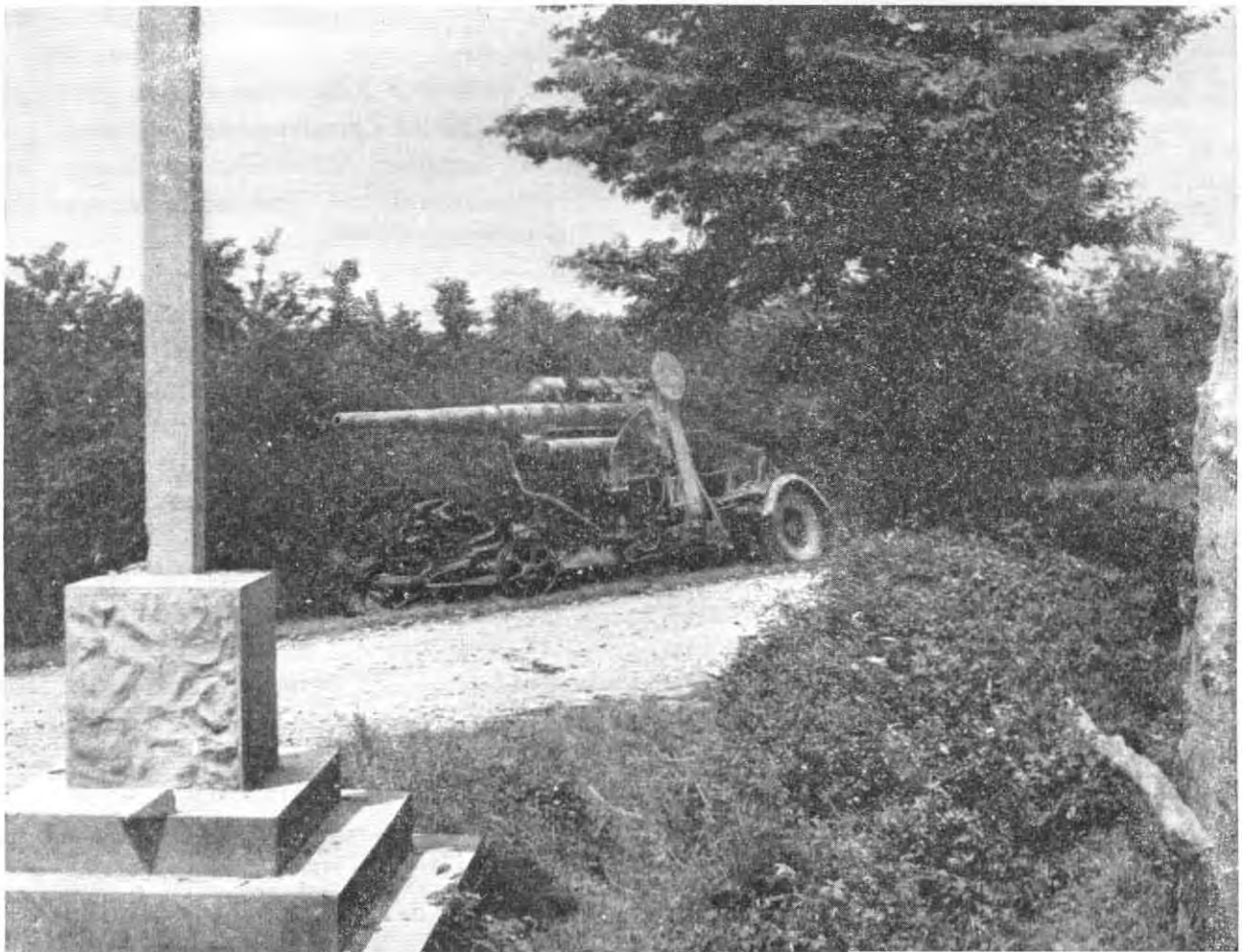
At 0630 on 9 June a coordinated attack by the 1st and 3d Battalions, 8th Infantry, and the 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, was launched against the German line between the highway and the Merderet. A half-hour concentration by at least three battalions of artillery preceded the jump-off. The 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, was stopped at its line of departure; the other two battalions crossed only the first few fields. All three battalions then felt the full weight of the enemy's fire from across the creek. The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 505th Parachute Infantry prepared to follow in column behind the 2d Battalion of the 325th Glider Infantry on the left, to be employed as needed. Colonel Ekman, commanding the 505th, planned an advance up to the creek and then a slash almost directly west to le Ham by the glider battalion. The 2d Battalion of the 505th, following the lead-

ing glider infantry, was to continue on its right and attack northwest to Montebourg Station. The 1st Battalion was to become the reserve, while the 3d Battalion remained on the defensive near Grainville, covering the bridge over the Merderet and protecting the rear of the regiment.

After crossing the first few fields the 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, became so cramped between the river and the 8th Infantry's zone that it had no room for maneuver and was pinned down within 200 yards of the creek by artillery and mortar fire from the front and from the left flank. To the rear, at Grainville, the 3d Battalion of the 505th was taking losses from artillery and machine-gun fire from across the river. Throughout the afternoon the regiment was unable to advance.

Late in the afternoon Colonel Ekman decided to send the 2d Battalion of the 505th forward across the creek to the right of the 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry. The attack was to have the support of the 456th and 319th Field Artillery Battalions and of Battery C of the 80th Antiaircraft Battalion, and it was to be coordinated with an attack by the 8th Infantry. Colonel Ekman had asked for a 15-minute artillery concentration and white phosphorus to screen the infantry advance, but when the time for the attack came his communications failed him; the 319th Field Artillery Battalion (the general support battalion) was pulled away for another mission, and he was refused the white phosphorus because he had no authentication. Under the circumstances he cancelled the attack. When

GERMAN DUAL PURPOSE 88-MM. GUN. *Artillery fire which slowed the northward advance of the 4th Division was almost invariably believed to come from the dreaded "88," often difficult to locate because of frequent changes in position.*





THE ORCHARD AREA WEST OF THE HANGAR *was the scene of determined enemy resistance to the advance of the 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry, on 9 June. Part of the battalion halted at the creek, the location of which is indicated by the dotted line.*

he notified the 8th Infantry of his decision, he learned that the 3d Battalion of that regiment, on his right, was getting ready to go into a defensive position for the night. Therefore the 505th Parachute Infantry also dug in.

The attack of the 8th Infantry on 9 June had met with more success following its initial difficulties, but at the cost of hard fighting and heavy losses. The Germans answered the preparatory fire promptly, and both the 1st and 3d Battalions, which were leading the attack, came under heavy shelling. The 1st Battalion on the right was stopped on its line of departure and stayed there all morning. The 3d Battalion attacked toward the hangar. Companies L and I reached the creek together. Company L was to flank the hangar on the left, but it was stopped at the creek, which in its zone was too wide to jump. Company I crossed the creek at a narrow place to the right of Company L and charged straight across the large, flat, open field beyond, through the grazing fire from enemy positions near the hangar and along the edge of the orchard to the north. The men crossed at a dead run without firing and, although they suffered heavy losses, two platoons and the command post group with the mortars managed to make their way into the orchards north of the hangar. There they were stopped by fire from houses in la Lande to the north, and from the fields to the northeast.

Company I was out 1,000 yards ahead of the rest of the regiment, and part of the platoon on the right was separated from the main group. After two hours the company withdrew to a fire line north of the hangar buildings. Meanwhile Company L managed to cross the creek and in close-in fighting captured the hangar area. Company I then moved to its former position in the orchard, and Company L came into line on the left. There they dug in for the night. The position was threatened by the Germans in la Lande to the north and

in Ecausseville on the right flank, and Company K was brought up to strengthen this flank.

When earlier in the day patrols had reported Ecausseville free of the enemy, Colonel Van Fleet decided to commit the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry, in the center in an attempt to aid the 1st and 3d Battalions, both of which were temporarily stalled. At about 1400 two platoons of Company E led the attack, advancing up the trail which skirts the bend in the creek. No opposition was met until the scouts were almost at the creek. Then the enemy opened up with artillery, mortars, and machine guns. The leading platoons piled into the trail behind the shelter of the hedgerows. But the German artillery was accurately registered, and time fire or tree bursts lined the trail with American dead. Some of the men moved to the left and northward to knock out a German machine gun which had enfiladed the trail, but discovered the enemy strongly entrenched in an orchard. Others advanced beyond the eastern bend of the trail to find cover, but the fire followed them there. A direct hit destroyed a mortar; an attached platoon of heavy machine guns from Company H lost two of its guns. To avoid the enemy fire fourteen men of the 1st Platoon moved so far to the east that they lost contact with their company and joined the 1st Battalion, with which they fought for the next two days. The confusion was increased when a false order, reported to have come "from the rear," started a retreat along the trail. It drew most of the company back about 400 yards and, after it was checked, less than 75 men remained dug in behind a hedgerow. The company had lost all its mortars, half of its machine guns, and between fifty and sixty men. About midafternoon Company E was ordered to withdraw to a line abreast of the 1st Battalion, and at 1730 it was further withdrawn to the 2d Battalion assembly area to reorganize.

Late in the day the 1st Battalion took up the attack again on the regiment's right flank and this time succeeded in breaking through. It attacked at 1900 and, preceded by two platoons of medium tanks from Company A, 70th Tank Battalion, moved up the road which runs northward from Magneville. As the tanks crossed the creeks, they machine-gunned the houses on the right, swung into the fields north of Ecausseville, and fired into the village for ten or fifteen minutes. Answered by 88-mm. guns in the village, they turned back to rejoin the infantry. On reaching the cluster of houses at the turn in the road they found them still occupied by the enemy. The tanks attacked from the rear, broke the enemy's resistance, and enabled Company A, 8th Infantry, to move in. About a hundred prisoners were taken. It was now 2100 and the battalion dug in for the night.

Ecausseville, the strongest point on the enemy's first thoroughly prepared line, had held out all day. But outflanked by the 1st Battalion's drive on the right and by the 3d Battalion's attack through the hangar sector on the left, it was abandoned by the enemy during the night.

The Montebourg–le Ham Highway

On the following day, 10 June, both the 8th Infantry and 505th Parachute Infantry resumed their attack (Map No. 20). The 8th advanced toward the high ground at Eroudeville, which it reached that night, while the 505th moved on Montebourg Station and le Ham. The latter objective was not seized until the following day.

All three battalions of the 8th Infantry jumped off early on 10 June. The 2d Battalion, moving in the center, advanced straight toward Ecausseville, which it found abandoned. Advancing northwestward it cleared the southern portion of Eroudeville, crossed the Montebourg–le Ham highway early in the evening, and fought until dark against Germans entrenched along the railway; at

dark the battalion withdrew to positions east of the highway.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion on the right, supported by tanks, had jumped off at 0730, following an artillery preparation. The tanks, some of them carrying infantry, advanced along the trail which passed Ecausseville on the east. When fired on, some 500 yards south of Eroudeville, the tanks dropped the infantry, moved up the trail several hundred yards, and knocked out three antitank guns. The infantry followed and in a sharp fight drove the enemy (elements of *Sturm Battalion AOK 7*) back toward the le Ham–Montebourg highway. As the battalion came within 300 yards of the highway, it was halted by an enemy force in Eroudeville and to the north of the village. At 1500 the enemy counterattacked. Although Company C was pulled in from the right flank to reinforce the battalion, the counterattack forced a retreat of several hundred yards. The enemy's effort was finally broken after five tank thrusts into Eroudeville, and an attack by Company C enabled the 2d Battalion to take the village. No further attempt was made that night to cross the highway; the battalion dug in about 400–600 yards east of it, with Company C protecting the Montebourg flank.

On the regiment's left flank the 3d Battalion, temporarily delayed by heavy artillery fire, had started a little later than the other two battalions. It swung slightly eastward to outflank the enemy-held houses at la Lande, which had stopped it the previous night. In its advance it received artillery fire from the vicinity of the station and engaged some enemy infantry. But when the 2d Battalion began advancing through Ecausseville and the 1st Battalion of the 505th Parachute Infantry moved up the railway on the left, the enemy troops began to fall back. Behind a small tributary of the Merderet, the enemy made a half-hearted stand, but at 1000 the battalion attacked across the stream and in the face of heavy artillery fire drove the German infantry back to the le Ham–Montebourg highway. In the evening the battalion made another attack, which carried it beyond the highway, halfway to the railroad. Meeting heavy fire from the entrenchments along the railroad and finding itself in advance of the other two battalions on the right, the 3d Battalion pulled back east of the highway. The entire regiment was now on its objective, organizing defensive positions which it was to hold until 19 June.

In the meantime the 505th Parachute Infantry had directed its efforts to dislodging the enemy from the extreme west end of his Quinéville–le Ham line. This line was anchored in and around le Ham, situated on the solid ground which extends southwest from the Montebourg Station between two small tributaries of the Merderet. The 505th's attack on 10 June was not coordinated with that of the 8th Infantry, and in their respective advances the two regiments diverged, leaving a gap between them. For this attack Colonel Ekman planned to use the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 505th, sending them through the 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, which had been pinned down the day before and was still receiving flanking fire from across the Merderet and frontal fire from the German positions north of the creek. The 1st Battalion was to seize Montebourg Station and prepare a defensive arc to the north; the 2d Battalion was to follow the 1st beyond la Lande, swing west and cross the first Merderet tributary and railway, and then attack southwest toward le Ham. The 2d Battalion of the 325th Glider Infantry was to provide supporting fire; the 3d Battalion of the 505th was to remain at Grainville.

The air force supported the attack by bombing le Ham and the station and, as the 1st Battalion of the 505th jumped off at 1330, another air mission forced the retirement of a self-propelled gun which was firing on the battalion from a railway overpass. The artil-

lery support was also effective, rolling ahead of the battalion's advance. Despite all of the preparations a number of Germans still held their ground north and west of the creek and had to be driven back hedgerow by hedgerow; direct, close-range 88-mm. fire also took heavy casualties. But the 1st Battalion pushed slowly ahead and fought its way into Montebourg Station at about 1900, forcing the enemy to retire northward and southwestward toward le Ham. The 2d Battalion, following the 1st, moved farther north than had been planned in order to avoid fire from the left flank. Just below the station it turned southwest. Resistance stiffened as the enemy was squeezed into the south end of the solid ground around le Ham, and as darkness fell the attack was stopped about halfway between the station and the town. Colonel Ekman ordered the two battalions to organize a defensive position northeast of le Ham extending north around the station. The 1,000-yard gap between the 505th's right flank and the 8th Infantry was covered by patrols from the 1st Battalion of the 505th Parachute Infantry.

The heavy enemy artillery fire which had fallen around the station eased up on the morning of 11 June. By this time the 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, was ready to go again. Instead of sending the 2d Battalion of the 505th directly against le Ham from the north, Colonel Ekman decided to employ it in a holding attack north of the town to divert the fire of the enemy while the 2d Battalion of the 325th attacked into le Ham from the east. At 1015 the 456th Field Artillery Battalion fired a 15-minute concentration on the heavily fortified ground east of the town, and at 1030 the 2d Battalion of the 325th started its attack from the railroad embankment. Smoke screened the advance over the open fields and through the 500 to 600 yards of swamp along the stream. Casualties were high, but as the leading elements reached the first solid ground enemy fire temporarily slackened. The battalion pressed on through the orchards and hedgerows, but was shortly stopped by heavy small-arms fire. Depleted in strength and low in ammunition the 2d Battalion set up a defensive position and delivered spasmodic fire on the enemy. In about forty-five minutes the enemy fire died, and the Germans began to withdraw toward le Ham. A machine gun was set up to fire into the retreating troops and, for lack of radio communications with the artillery, wire was laid and a forward artillery observer stationed himself in a building from which he could see le Ham.

The attack order was given at 1800 and after a 10-minute artillery preparation the battalion pushed off, deployed on a broad front. Meeting its only resistance from a badly shaken covering force, the battalion passed abandoned field pieces and swept into le Ham. When it reached the center of town at 1955 no Germans were in sight, and no riflemen were found in the house-to-house search. A patrol set out to clear the area directly south; the bridge across the Merderet to the west of the town was secured, and contact was established with the 2d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, to the north. Late in the afternoon part of the 3d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, had moved up from Grainville to mop up any enemy bypassed by the glider battalion and to patrol the river line to the south.

By noon, 12 June, the line running from the Merderet through le Ham and the station to the outskirts of Montebourg was secured. The 505th Parachute Infantry and the 8th Infantry were still in contact with the enemy all along their front and the outposts were receiving fire, but the only cause for concern was the gap between the two regiments. This area was cleared on 12 June by a patrol. It was intended that the 4th Division would relieve the airborne units of responsibility in the le Ham sector as soon as the coastal area was cleared to Quinéville. But the 4th Division had not taken Quinéville by 12 June. A bat-

talion of the 359th Infantry (90th Division) therefore took over the le Ham sector on the morning of 13 June, relieving the 505th Parachute Infantry for a new mission to the south.

The Advance Toward Montebourg

The enemy's first organized line of resistance had been broken at Ecausseville and the enemy forced to retreat to the backstop line along the railway north of the le Ham–Montebourg highway. East of the Ste. Mère-Eglise–Montebourg highway the Ecausseville line extended across the high ground at Emondeville to the heavy fortifications at Azeville and Crisbecq (Map VIII). In this sector the enemy offered equally stubborn resistance and it became the task of the 12th and 22d Infantry Regiments to dislodge him and drive him beyond the Montebourg–Quinéville ridge.

On the night of 7 June, the 12th Infantry was ordered to seize the high ground northeast of Montebourg. At that time the regiment was in contact with enemy outposts along the line le Bisson–Azeville, nearly four miles to the south. At 0530 the next morning a naval concentration was placed on Emondeville and an hour later the 1st and 3d Battalions attacked. About 700 yards south of Emondeville the regiment encountered the German forward line. The 3d Battalion on the left broke through the enemy's forward line but was stopped in the orchards south of Emondeville. Company L freed itself and fought into the center of the town and then moved on to a hedgerow 600 yards beyond, but Company K was pinned down for five and a half hours by artillery and rocket fire. Company L was thus left out in a precarious salient. Colonel Reeder decided to commit his reserve, the 2d Battalion, on the left flank to relieve the isolated elements. After a violent fight the 2d Battalion drove into Basse Emondeville and established a line about 300 yards north of the village. Company L was moved back to tie in with this line.

On the right, the 1st Battalion found progress even more difficult. Shortly after the start of the attack it was pinned down by artillery west of Azeville. At 1400 it was counterattacked by part of *Sturm Battalion AOK 7*. Only the opportune presence of Company B of the 359th Infantry, the division reserve regiment, which was hastily attached to the 12th Infantry, enabled the 1st Battalion to stop the attack.

Meanwhile Company I was completing a withdrawal from the left flank, which had been exposed to attack from across the highway by the 8th Infantry's swing northwestward toward Fresville and Grainville. The enemy was steadily building up pressure along the highway and in midafternoon threatened the regimental command post south of Emondeville, but Company I and headquarters men rallied to repel the attack.

The 12th Infantry suffered nearly three hundred casualties on 8 June, but that night the enemy withdrew to Joganville, and the 12th stabilized its lines through Emondeville and Basse Emondeville.

On 9 June the regiment took the enemy strong point at the Chateau de Dodinville near Joganville. The chateau, a large walled-in stone building, was stubbornly defended. Six Sherman tanks from Company B, 746th Tank Battalion, outflanked the chateau on the west, while the 1st and 2d Battalions, at the cost of heavy casualties, fought into it from the south. Both battalions then continued northward and reached positions 2,000 yards northwest of Joganville. The 3d Battalion made a spectacular advance and reached positions 1,500 yards northeast of Montebourg, on the edge of the regimental objective and far in advance of units on either flank.

On 10 June the 2d Battalion skirted the eastern edge of Montebourg, which was strong-

ly defended by antitank and machine guns. After an unsuccessful attempt to pentrate the city's thick stone walls, the battalion crossed behind the 1st and 3d Battalions to take up a position on the extreme right of the regiment. Division ordered the regiment to contain Montebourg but to stay out of it. The farthest advance northward was made by the 1st Battalion, which crossed the Montebourg–Quinéville highway, overextending its position. Late in the evening the enemy counterattacked from Montebourg and from the north. Although repulsed, mainly by massed artillery fire, the Germans had shown considerable force, and the 1st Battalion was pulled back for safety. The three battalions then held positions abreast and south of the highway. The next morning (11 June) the regiment reached its objective north of the highway, but it had lost contact with the units on both flanks. The enemy still held strongly fortified positions at Montebourg on the left and to the right rear. At 2300 Division ordered the regiment to withdraw behind the Montebourg–St. Floxel road and prepare defensive positions, although no part of the division had yet reached its objective.

Crisbecq and Azeville

Progress had been especially difficult in the 22d Infantry sector. There, along the beach and at the headland fortifications, the enemy offered stubborn resistance. After the costly failure of the attacks on Crisbecq and Azeville on 7 June, the regimental commander, Col. Hervey A. Tribolet, waited for the 3d Battalion (minus Company K) to assemble west of the inundated area near Ravenoville as a reserve force, before he renewed the push northward. During the night, however, the 3d Battalion moved across the inundation to accept the surrender of Taret de Ravenoville. Company K, reinforced by 4.2-inch mortars, antitank guns, heavy machine guns, and part of a NSFCP, continued to attack the beach fortifications farther to the south.

At 1000 on 8 June the 1st and 2d Battalions again attacked Azeville and Crisbecq (Map VIII). On the right the 1st Battalion drove the enemy out of St. Marcouf, which he had reoccupied during the night, and advanced on Crisbecq. As on 7 June, Companies A and B led the attack, with Company C organized for assault and prepared to pass through the center. At 1330 a 20-minute preparation of naval and field artillery and mortar fire began to pound Crisbecq; it gave way to a rolling barrage which the infantry followed at 200 yards. Company D provided overhead fire with heavy machine guns. The advance and the fires were effectively coordinated, permitting the battalion to reach the edge of the fortifications with few losses. Companies A and B took positions on the flanks while Company C advanced through the center and blew several emplacements with pole charges.

The battle then developed in the same way as it had on the previous day. The assault sections exhausted their explosives without destroying the main enemy fortifications and became engaged in close-in fighting with the Germans in the trenches. The whole battalion was shelled by Nebelwerfers and by the guns at Crisbecq and farther inland, and its left flank was again counterattacked. As the pressure mounted on the left, the battalion fell back under cover of smoke, as it had on the previous day, to the orchard north of Bas Village de Dodainville. On first check the battalion showed less than half strength, but during the night a large number of men, separated in the course of the fighting, found their way back to the line which the battalion had organized. At Azeville, the 2d Battalion had also repeated its experience of 7 June when it had been driven back by a counterattack.

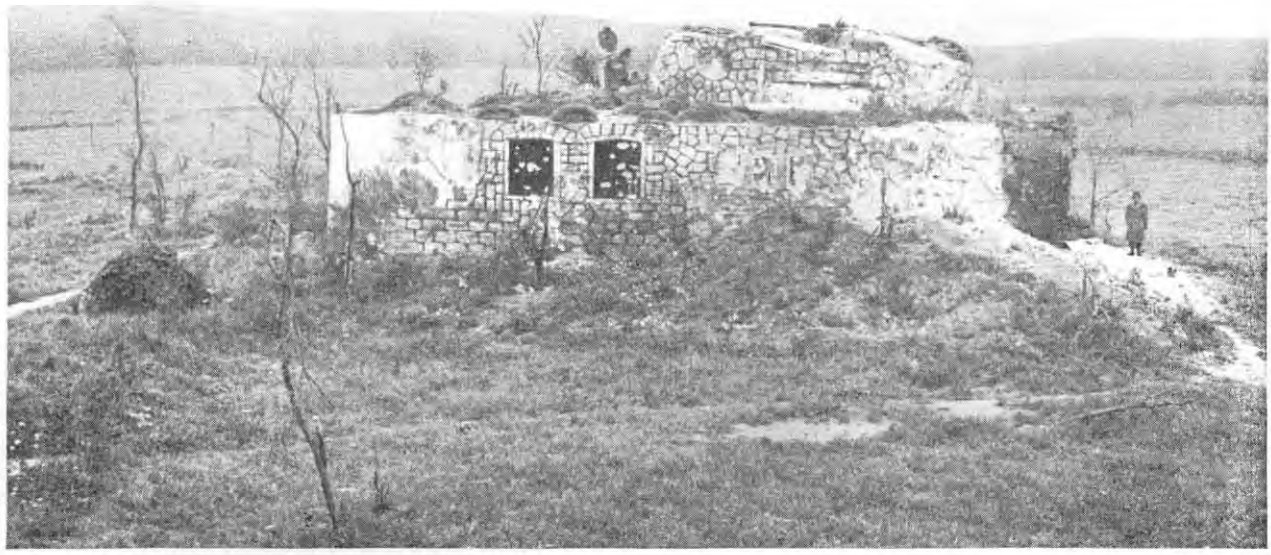
On 9 June the Azeville mission was assigned to the 3d Battalion (less Company K), which had again moved inland from Taret de Rave-



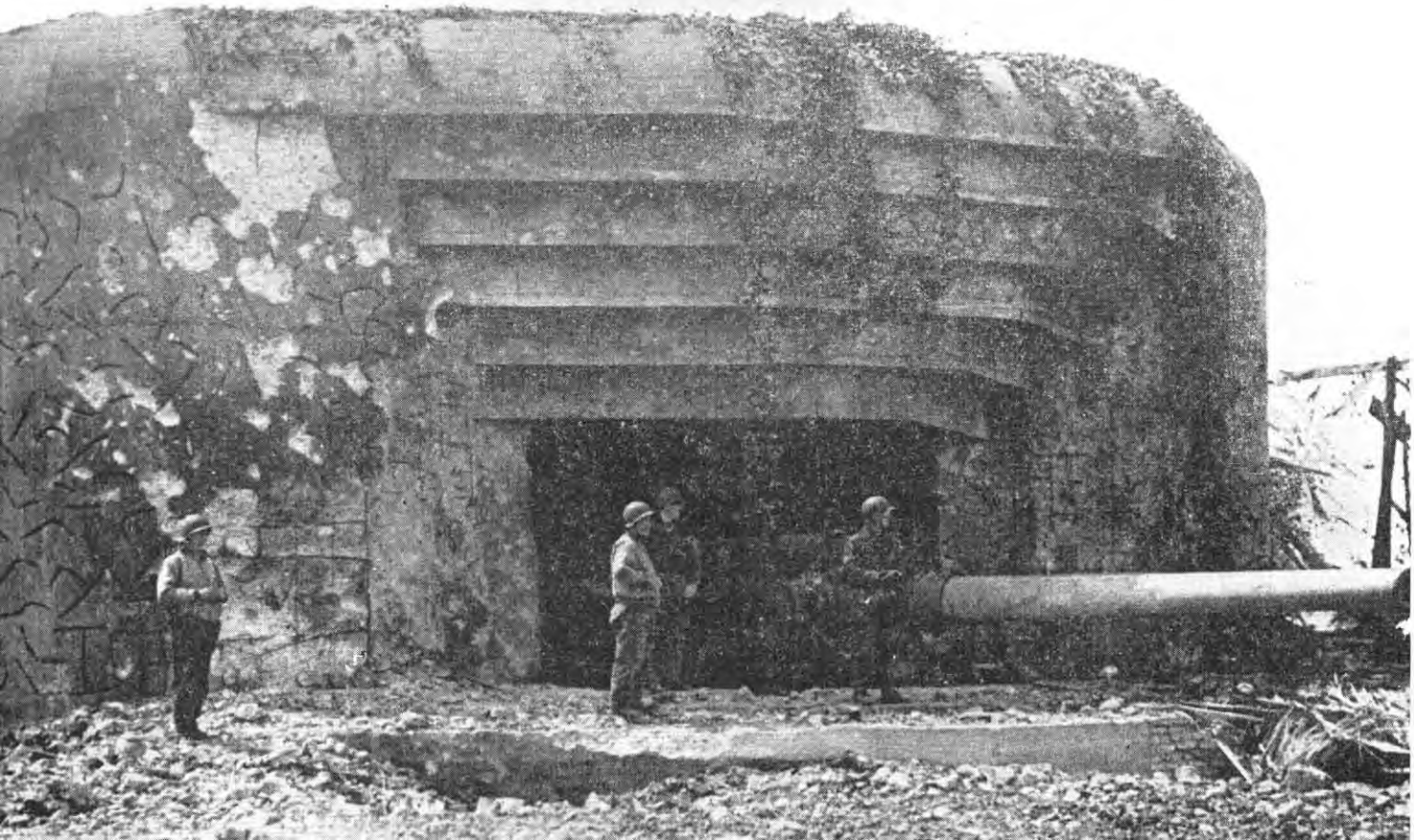
CLEARING ST. MARCOUF *for the second time, men of the 22d Infantry are shown moving cautiously through the village on 8 June, when the drive on Crisbecq was resumed. St. Marcouf had been captured by the 1st Battalion the day before but had been reoccupied by the enemy after the failure of the first attack.*

noville. The plan to take Crisbecq was temporarily abandoned, although naval and artillery fire continued to neutralize its batteries. The fort at Azeville, roughly circular, encompassed the east edge of the village. It consisted of four large concrete blockhouses camouflaged as buildings, which were armed with 150-mm. guns and turreted machine guns, and interconnected by covered trenches. The southern approach was protected by small outlying pillboxes and mine fields, and the entire area was surrounded by varying widths of barbed wire entanglements. The roads in the vicinity were blocked.

The 3d Battalion assembled about 1,000 yards southeast of Azeville, and at 1100 it crossed to the draw southwest of the village. Company L moved farther west in a wide arc in order to enter the village from the west and capture any reserves the enemy might have to the rear of the fort. Company I organized into five assault sections, moved north inside the arc of Company L, and advanced up the draw and through the fields to approach the



HEADLAND BATTERIES AT AZEVILLE AND CRISBECQ *consisted of huge reinforced concrete casemates and their guns and various smaller weapons and wire. The Azeville positions housed 105-mm. guns and, like the one above, were camouflaged to look like stone houses. The Crisbecq fort shown below housed a 210-mm. gun.*



fort from its right rear. The 44th Field Artillery Battalion fired 1,500 rounds in preparation for the attack. The company started out with the support of tanks, but mines held up all except one of them. At noon Company I came in sight of the first outlying pillbox. The men did not attempt to lift the mines, but after cutting the wire they picked their way through the fields and orchards. They buttoned up pillboxes with rifle fire and then blew them. Enemy return fire was not heavy. The Germans had neglected to clear good fields of fire and to cover the approach from the southwest.

Company I concentrated on the nearest blockhouse. First bazookas and the lone tank opened fire from behind a hedgerow, but accomplished little more than to chip the concrete. An assault team was then sent in to blow the rear entrance, which was recessed in the blockhouse and out of reach of direct fire. The team worked its way to its objective, emptied its flame thrower, and set off a pack charge. But this had no effect, nor did a second attempt, nor a third with a still heavier satchel charge. In a last effort Capt. Joseph T. Samuels, commanding Company I, sent Pvt. Ralph G. Riley to the blockhouse with the last flame thrower to "give it a few more squirts." With the flame thrower on his back, Private Riley ran seventy-five yards under fire and dropped into a shell hole for cover. The flame thrower would not work, and he tried to think of the proper "immediate action." He opened the valve, held a lighted match to the nozzle, and trained the stream of fire on the base of the door. At just this time enemy artillery fire from Crisbecq began to come in and Captain Samuels thought the attack had failed. Suddenly Private Riley heard a popping sound, different from the sound of the rifle fire around him. It was soon followed by explosions within the blockhouse. The enemy's ammunition had been fired by those "few more squirts" of the flame thrower. Soon a white flag was raised and, after the firing had ceased, the rear door of the blockhouse swung open to let out an American parachute officer followed by two Germans. The German commander surrendered all 4 forts with their garrison of 169 men.

Ozeville

Shortly after Azeville was captured in mid-afternoon, 9 June, General Barton issued an order creating a task force which that same day was to bypass Crisbecq and the other German strong points along the coastal headlands and swing northeast to "capture Quinéville and the high ground west thereof." Quinéville was the eastern anchor of the German defenses. The task force, which was to have first priority on division fires, consisted of the 22d Infantry, the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and the 746th Tank Battalion (less detachments); it was commanded by Brig. Gen. Henry A. Barber. Led by tanks, the 22d Infantry was to advance in a column of battalions (3d, 2d, 1st) on Ozeville, its first objective. Crisbecq was to be contained by a force of tank destroyers and infantry and was to be neutralized by division artillery at the time of the attack.[1]

The task force moved out at 1630, but it was stopped by fire from strong enemy positions at the crossroads west of Chateau de Fontenay and forced to dig in for the night. For three days (10–12 June) the task force struggled with little success to overcome the enemy resistance, its right flank exposed to the bypassed enemy strong points at Crisbecq, Dangueville, Chateau de Fontenay, and Fontenay-sur-Mer and its left flank to the German positions in the gap of about a mile and a half that separated the 22d and 12th Infantry Regiments. The task force lacked sufficient

[1]The containing force, commanded by Maj. Huston M. Betty, consisted of Company C, 22d Infantry; Company C, 4th Engineer Combat Battalion; Company C, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

strength to protect both of its flanks and at the same time push ahead. Unfavorable weather denied it air support.

On 10 June the 3d Battalion, supported by tanks, launched two frontal attacks on Ozeville which carried it up the rising ground to within a few hundred yards of the enemy entrenchments. But the battalion, consisting of only two companies, was too weak to gain the objective. Company K was still on the beach and Company L had lost 159 men since D Day. On the same day the 2d Battalion attacked on the right in an effort to reduce the strong point at Chateau de Fontenay, but it was pinned down by grazing machine-gun fire. Ordered to withdraw to allow bombing of the enemy positions, the battalion became disorganized by the enemy fire, and seventy men east of the chateau were left stranded.[2] The air mission did not materialize.

On 11 June, General Barber planned to send the 1st and 3d Battalions into Ozeville from the west, after an air mission had softened the enemy positions. But he was forced to divert the 1st Battalion to the right to contain the enemy positions at Fontenay-sur-Mer and Dangueville. The 3d Battalion therefore attacked Ozeville alone, but again failed.

While the 2d and 3d Battalions suffered heavy losses in unsuccessful attacks on the chateau and the Ozeville strong point, the 1st Battalion contained the enemy at Fontenay-sur-Mer and another force contained the Crisbecq fortification. Twice on 10 June this latter force pulled back for scheduled air missions which were cancelled because of unfavorable weather. The only real progress during these days was made on the beach by Company K, which on 11 June captured two more strong points. For two days it had hammered at these positions. At last it learned from prisoners that the only effect of heavy American fire on the forts had been to force the garrison to shuttle through a tunnel from one part to the other. Company K therefore fired fifty rounds of 57-mm. on the first fort and then switched suddenly to put eighty rounds into the adjacent stronghold. Resistance ended in both forts, and ninety-three prisoners were taken.

On 12 June, General Collins ordered the 39th Infantry, 9th Division, which had landed on the previous day, to take over the reduction of the enemy strong points on the beaches and the coastal headlands. General Collins had two reasons for this move. He was determined to reduce the beach and headland fortifications from Taret de Ravenoville to Quinéville, for they continued to shell Red Beach and threatened to slow down the unloading of supplies; and he wished to free the right flank of the 22d Infantry, in order that it might move on to Quinéville. With this in view, the 1st Battalion of the 22d Infantry was released from its task of containing Fontenay-sur-Mer and Dangueville and ordered to rejoin the regiment for the drive northward.

Early on 12 June the 39th Infantry fanned out from its assembly area on its coastal missions (Map IX). The 2d Battalion pushed patrols to Crisbecq and, finding it abandoned, occupied it at 0820. Dangueville was occupied in midafternoon. Two companies were then sent eastward toward the beach. The 1st Battalion moved to St. Marcouf at noon and then sent three companies down the roads from St. Marcouf and Ravenoville to the beach. There the battalion reorganized and assaulted and captured the first pillbox north of Taret de Ravenoville, establishing contact with the 2d Battalion patrol below Fort St. Marcouf. The 3d Battalion meanwhile attacked through the 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry, drove the enemy back from Fontenay-sur-Mer, where he resisted stubbornly, and established outposts along the roads to the north and east.

[2]Only one of these men returned—an aid man who was later found among the prisoners at Cherbourg.

The 22d Infantry was now free to make a concerted attack on Ozeville. It was to jump off at noon of 12 June. The air force was to bomb Ozeville at 1100, and the artillery (44th and 20th Field Artillery Battalions) was to fire on known enemy positions south of Ozeville from 1115 to 1130, then lift to Ozeville until 1200, after which fire was to be available on call. In addition to the organic weapons of the 22d Infantry, the attack was to be supported by two platoons of 81-mm. mortars and the Cannon Company of the 12th Infantry. The 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, on the left flank was to place mortar and antitank fire on the strong point from 1115 until 1200; and the 1st Battalion on the right flank was to support the attack with its tanks and cannon. Colonel Teague's 3d Battalion in the center, which was to lead the attack, was to be supported by one company of chemical mortars (87th Chemical Mortar Battalion), a platoon of tanks (Company C, 70th Tank Battalion), and an extra platoon of antitank guns.

At 1005 General Barber notified Colonel Teague that the air mission was cancelled, but that heavy artillery fire would be substituted. The preparatory fires were delivered and the attack jumped off on time. With the 2d Battalion covering the gap on the left flank and the 1st Battalion becoming heavily engaged in the vicinity of Fontenay-sur-Mer, the main assault was made by the 3d Battalion alone toward the southwest corner of the strong point.

The troops advanced behind overwhelming fire power. Even naval support was available, particularly on Quinéville where German guns had opened up. Covered by Companies I and L on either side, two assault sections of Company K closed in on the Ozeville defenses. After a short but violent fight a white flag appeared on one of the positions. But as Lieutenant Dewhurst, a platoon leader, climbed up on a pillbox to stop the firing, he was cut down by German fire. The men of Company K suddenly fought with greater fury; they rushed into the emplacements with bayonets and grenades and wiped out a large part of the garrison.

Ozeville was captured and the last major barrier to an attack on Quinéville was removed. On the same day, 12 June, the 39th Infantry cleared resistance from the 22d Infantry's right flank, while on its left flank the 12th Infantry retook the ground east of Montebourg which had been relinquished the day before.

The 12th Infantry's attack was launched at 1600, when the capture of Ozeville became assured. After an artillery preparation the 2d Battalion moved against its objective, the strong point built around two stone quarries near les Fieffes-Dancel (Map IX). While tanks gave close fire support, Company E assaulted the position with rifles and hand grenades. An enemy counterattack from the northwest, threatening to check the assault, was thrown back, mainly by Company B which had been sent up from the 1st Battalion in reserve to reinforce the 2d Battalion. The 2d Battalion then completed the capture of the stone quarry position. The 3d Battalion on the left had, in the meantime, captured the height 1,000 yards to the west, and Company A had established an outpost northeast of Montebourg. The 12th Infantry was again extended in an exposed position.

So far no attempt had been made to seize the city of Montebourg. When the two regiments approached the city on 10 June, General Barton ordered them to stay out of it; his division was spread out over a wide front with few reserves and, expecting a counterattack, he wished to avoid street fighting. On 11 June the 4th Engineer Combat Battalion established road blocks on the highway south of Montebourg and covered the gap between the 8th and 12th Infantry Regiments. But on 12 June patrols reported that the town was only lightly held. At the same time the 4th Division's burden had been lightened by the

attachment of the 39th Infantry, and by the arrival of the rest of the 9th Division as Corps reserve. General Barton therefore notified Colonel Van Fleet that Montebourg was included in the 8th Infantry's zone and should be seized and occupied that day if it could be done cheaply.

Colonel Van Fleet organized a battalion-size task force to attack Montebourg and placed it under the command of Lt. Col. Fred Steiner, his executive officer. The task force, composed of two rifle companies, a platoon each of engineers, heavy machine guns, antitank guns, 4.2-inch mortars and tank destroyers, a cannon company, and the 29th Field Artillery Battalion in direct support, moved out at 2100 and reached the edge of the town at dark. Although the German force inside the town was not believed to be large, approaches were well covered by automatic fire. One company, on the left, was forced to withdraw and reorganize, and Colonel Steiner decided to wait until morning to renew the attack. At 0700 on 13 June the task force moved out again, one company on either side of the highway. Upon reaching the stream on the very edge of the town, the tank destroyers decided not to venture farther because of the 88-mm. fire. General Barton then resolved against risking the loss of men in street fighting and ordered the force to take a position from which it could contain Montebourg. Small patrols were sent into the town to observe enemy activity.

The Capture of Quinéville

Enemy possession of Montebourg technically exposed the left flank of the 22d Infantry's attack toward Quinéville. But the danger was not too great and General Barton hoped to gain Quinéville and the ridge to the west on 13 June. However, neither the 39th Infantry nor the 22d Infantry was able to make sufficient progress. The 1st Battalion of the 39th attacked northward along the beach toward Fort St. Marcouf, aided by 2d Battalion mortars and four tank destroyers, but it made only small gains (Map IX). The 3d Battalion attacked east from Fontenay-sur-Mer to the edge of the swamp and then north, with the intention of clearing the balance of the regimental zone south of the Quinéville–Montebourg highway and along the north edge of the inundation. But it was held up by both friendly and enemy artillery fire falling on its forward elements.

The 22d Infantry reached the ridge but was unable to secure it or attack eastward to Quinéville. The 2d Battalion made a wide swing through the 12th Infantry's area to the Montebourg–Quinéville highway east of les Fieffes-Dancel. The 3d Battalion moved north to the forward slope of the ridge and then was ordered to sideslip to the east in preparation for an attack in column down the ridge on Quinéville. Colonel Teague extended one company to the right, passed the second across its rear farther to the right, and then passed the third behind the other two. This maneuver, made across ground dominated by the enemy positions on the ridge and harassed by heavy Nebelwerfer and artillery fire, resulted in a number of casualties.

In ordering the attack of 14 June, Regiment directed all three battalions of the 22d Infantry to secure the ridge and the two hills to the east as necessary preliminaries to the attack on Quinéville. The 2d Battalion, with one company of 4.2-inch mortars attached (Company C, 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion), was to seize the crest of the ridge, on the left flank. The 1st Battalion, with the 70th Tank Battalion in direct support, was to seize the eastern nose of the ridge, which was fortified, and Hill 54A to the east. The 3d Battalion, aided by a company of chemical mortars (Company A, 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion), was to capture Hill 54B, the easternmost hill, and was then to turn right and at-

tack Quinéville. Preparatory fires were to be delivered for fifteen minutes on the fortified nose of the ridge, the two heights to the east, and a coastal battery farther east. South of the highway the 3d Battalion of the 39th Infantry was also to attack and come into position for a later coordinated attack on Quinéville with the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry. The battalion was to be pinched out just south of the town.

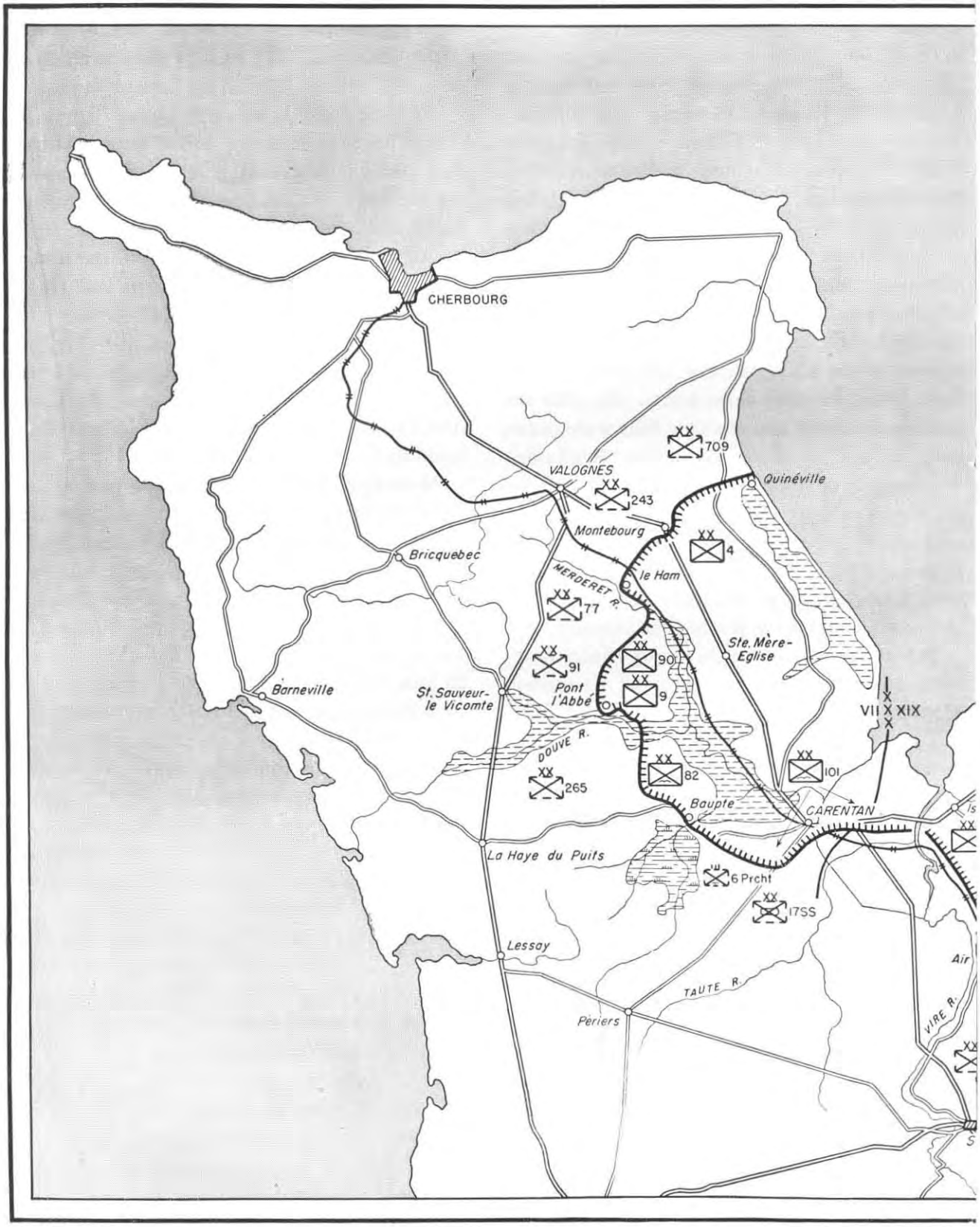
At 0915 on 14 June the 4th Division artillery began to fire concentrations on the four ridge targets. At 0930 a round of green smoke signalled the lifting of fires and the three battalions of the 22d Infantry jumped off. The fight lasted for over three hours. By 1300 the nose of the ridge and the two hills were occupied. Meanwhile the 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry, had also taken up the attack on the southern slopes of the ridge south of the highway, completing a 90-degree turn to the east just south of Hill 54B and advancing on Quinéville with Company K in the lead. The attack on the town could now proceed as planned.

Before this plan was put into effect, however, the 39th Infantry received permission from Division to send its 3d Battalion independently against Quinéville without the assistance of the 22d Infantry. At 1400 thirty-six A–20's carried out a bombardment of enemy positions at Quinéville and it was desirable that this bombardment be followed as soon as possible by an infantry attack. At 1600 the 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry, moved out with Company K in the lead. Initially the company encountered little opposition and took sixty-eight prisoners. On the slopes just southwest of Quinéville leading elements of the company successfully attacked a casemated 88-mm. gun and took the crew prisoner. At this time tanks of the 70th Tank Battalion, operating with the 39th Infantry, opened fire at long range on what appeared to be enemy vehicles on the right flank, and drew antitank fire. This movement on the right proved to be that of tank destroyers attached to the regiment's 1st Battalion, which was fighting its way up the beach in the vicinity of St. Marcouf. The firing ceased after identification was established by flare and radio.

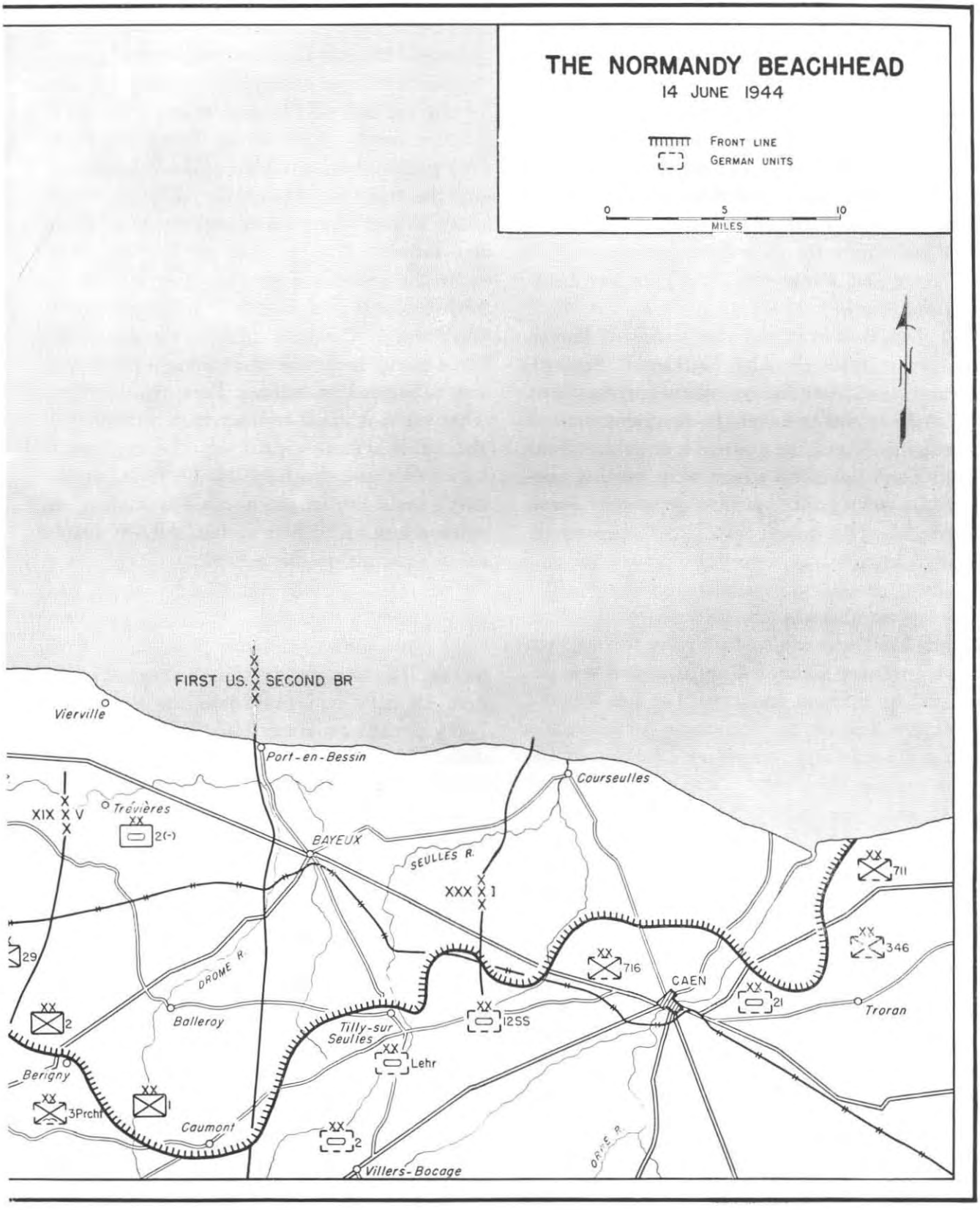
As Company K entered Quinéville it received heavy mortar fire, but it went on to the first street intersection. There the 3d Platoon, which had been leading the attack, turned right and advanced toward the beach. In its path lay a tank ditch, extending to the mouth of the Sinope River on the north and to the swamps on the south. As the platoon proceeded down the street a small antitank gun opened fire from a pillbox on the beach, forcing lead elements of the platoon back and driving the rest to cover in ditches and buildings.

Meanwhile the 1st Platoon had pushed into the northeast part of town with the intention of cutting through to the beach. The Weapons Platoon emplaced its 60-mm. mortars south of town and rushed up light machine guns and one section of heavy machine guns from Company M through heavy enemy fire to join the 1st Platoon. The platoon and attached guns entered the northeast section and the machine guns were set up on the edge of town, looking out onto the beach and the river mouth where the enemy had fixed positions. But the men found themselves dangerously exposed and were forced to take cover after receiving numerous casualties when they attempted to advance in the open toward the beach fortifications. The 2d Platoon succeeded in clearing the western part of town with little opposition, for the enemy's strength was concentrated on the east for the protection of the beach fortifications.

Aside from this minor success in the western part of town the attack at this point did not offer much hope of succeeding. Company K had suffered heavy casualties, including the 1st and 3d Platoon officers. The remainder of the battalion had been of little assistance. Company M's heavy mortars had been em-


CHERBOURG
VALOGNES
709
243
Quinéville
Montebourg
4
Bricquebec
le Ham
MERDERET R.
77
Ste. Mère-Eglise
90
91
9
Barneville
St. Sauveur-le Vicomte
Pont l'Abbé
VII X XIX
DOUVE R.
82
101
265
Baupte
CARENTAN
La Haye du Puits
6 Prcht
17SS
Lessay
TAUTE R.
Périers
VIRE R.

MAP NO. 21


THE NORMANDY BEACHHEAD
14 JUNE 1944
FRONT LINE
GERMAN UNITS
0
5
10
MILES
N
FIRST US. SECOND BR
Vierville
Port-en-Bessin
Courseulles
BAYEUX
SEULLES R.
Trévières
2(-)
XIX
V
XXX
1
29
DROME R.
Balleroy
2
Tilly-sur Seulles
12SS
Lehr
716
CAEN
711
346
21
Troran
Berigny
3Prchl
1
Caumont
2
Villers-Bocage
ORNE R.

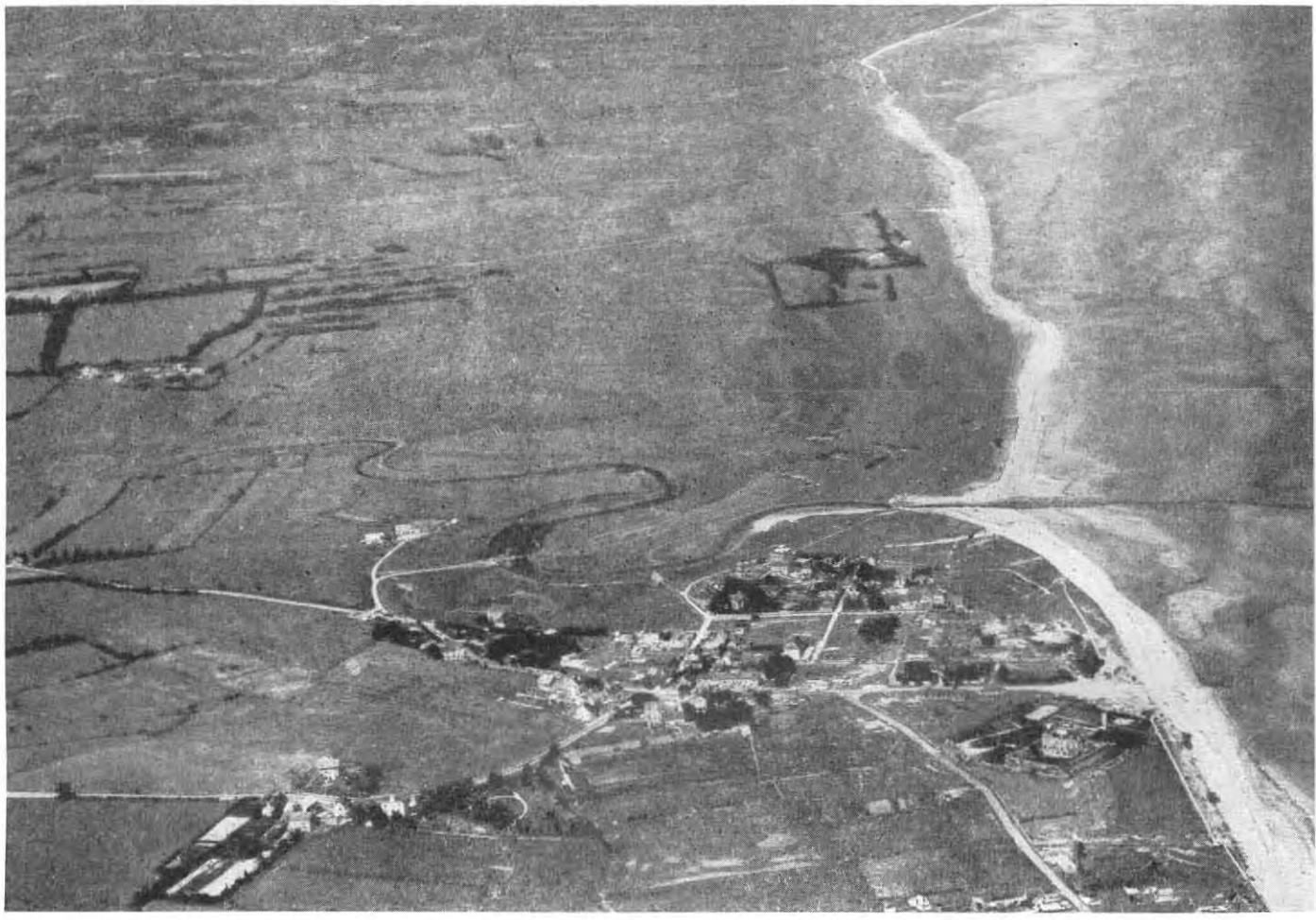
placed earlier to cover only the original mission of the battalion and were now out of accurate range of Quinéville; they were at this point moving forward over difficult terrain and mined trails, and communications with them were out. Companies I and L had halted under the last remaining cover about 400 yards southwest of town, alerted to take up the attack on either flank of Company K, but there was little room for their deployment except in the open and across wire entanglements flanking the town.

Before resuming the attack the 3d Battalion commander, Lt. Col. William P. Stumpf, requested artillery fire on enemy fortifications. Its purpose was to cover the reorganization of Company K and the approach of tanks of the 70th Tank Battalion which were waiting outside the town, and to soften the enemy fortifications. Following this fire Company K was to assault the enemy positions under the cover of smoke, supported by the tanks. Radio communication was difficult, but the requested fire was adjusted by relay through the 39th Infantry Cannon Company and was delivered by division artillery. The fire was not effective against the concrete fortifications, but did result in a temporary cessation of enemy mortar fire. Smoke was not available at this time. One tank reached the intersection, turned east, and immediately drew fire from the antitank gun on the beach and was damaged. The tank returned the fire, but faced with the antitank ditch and heavy mortar fire, it withdrew. Two other tanks then moved up to the intersection to support the infantry, but also retired due to the heavy mortar fire.

Colonel Stumpf, observing the very limited support which the tanks were able to give and losing hope of getting the requested smoke, decided to resume the attack with the forces at hand. Company L was ordered to lead the assault on Company K's left. Company L had just moved out on the approach and was drawing mortar fire when a heavy concentration of smoke fell squarely on the enemy positions. Taking advantage of the long-awaited smoke, delivered by 4th Division artillery, Company K attacked immediately. As leading elements of the 1st and 3d Platoons reached the fortifications under the cover of the smoke, all enemy positions were suddenly surrendered, ending the fight for Quinéville at 2130. Company K had lost twenty-eight wounded and five killed.

In the meantime the 1st Battalion of the 39th Infantry had continued its attack northward along the beach. During the day it suffered heavy casualties in crossing a mine field, but succeeded in taking Fort St. Marcouf. That night it made contact with patrols from the 3d Battalion. Thus, by the capture of Quinéville and the ridge on 14 June, the enemy's main line in the north was broken, depriving him of his best natural defense against the advancing northern flank.

The capture of Quinéville and the clearing of the coast to the south also helped to speed the landing of supplies and personnel for VII Corps. In the early days of the landings German artillery had prevented the use of the Navy ponton causeway built on D plus 1, and difficulties in beaching landing craft and in the functioning of the ferry control organization had resulted in a lag in unloading of about thirty-six hours. Now the causeway became usable. Moreover, on D plus 3 the practice of drying out LST's by beaching on a falling tide was begun and on D plus 5 additional DUKW's were made available. On D plus 6 a joint Army-Navy meeting devised means of expediting the unloading; the original plan of establishing a beach at Quinéville was abandoned and a third beach, Sugar Red, was established above Tare Green. This new beach, together with the increased capacity of the assault beaches, made the Quinéville beach unnecessary. By 14 June an average of over 4,000 tons of stores was being unloaded daily, compared with an average of 1,500 tons dur-



QUINEVILLE, *looking northwest along the coast. The capture of this town by the 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry, driving in from the southwest, climaxed the struggle for the D-Day objectives in the north.*

ing the first three days. By the evening of 14 June a total of nearly 86,000 personnel, 12,000 vehicles, and 26,000 tons of stores had crossed Utah Beach.

With the increase of the VII Corps' striking power, the security of its position also increased. By 14 June, the D-Day objectives had been gained. The threat to the Corps' southern flank had been removed with the capture of Carentan, and firm contact had been established with V Corps (see Map No. 21, which shows the extent of the Allied beachhead in Normandy on 14 June). In the west, VII Corps troops were operating well to the west of the Merderet.[3] The seizure of the Quinéville Ridge broke the anchor of the enemy line in the north and increased his apprehension of a breakthrough toward Cherbourg.

The Enemy Situation

With the capture of the Quinéville Ridge and the linking of the two beachheads the crucial first week of the campaign had passed. The enemy had failed to launch the expected counterattack.

[3]See the following chapter.

MOVEMENT OF SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT, AND PERSONNEL *increased in volume as the beach was organized by the 1st Engineer Special Brigade. Pictured above is the entire beach, looking south, with its protective "Gooseberry" (breakwater) of sunken ships. Below, beached LST's unload directly into trucks.*



SHIP-TO-SHORE MOVEMENT OF SUPPLIES *was accomplished largely by DUKW's of the amphibious truck companies operating under the 1st Engineer Special Brigade. At the left is a ponton causeway used for offshore unloading of small craft.*

Allied air superiority, the enemy's supply shortages, especially in fuels, and his early uncertainty about Allied plans had delayed reinforcements. Spitfires, P–47's, and P–38's forced units to detrain even before they reached the German *Seventh Army* zone. On 10 June the *77th Division* was still in the Avranches area and, because of lack of fuel, the *17th SS-Panzer Grenadier Division*, intended for the Carentan area, could not come up in time to prevent the linking of the V and VII Corps beachheads. The advance elements of the *77th Division* began arriving in the Valognes area only on 10 and 11 June and did not face American forces in large numbers until 12 and 13 June when the reduction of the Montebourg–Quinéville line was nearing completion. The *17th SS-Panzer Grenadier Division* finally reached its assembly area on 12 June, but some of its assault guns had been destroyed by Allied fighter-bombers, and the weakness of its communications, supply, and command organization forced it to postpone its counterattack in the Carentan sector. When it did attack, on 13 June, the 101st Airborne Division and elements of the 2d Armored Division were strong enough to drive it back.

The enemy had initially considered the Calvados beachheads as the main Allied effort in Normandy. On D plus 2, when he picked up from the waters of the English Channel a copy of the VII Corps field order for Operation NEPTUNE, he realized that a second "main effort" was being made in the direction of Valognes–Cherbourg, and he took measures to prevent the cutting off of the peninsula so that his units in the north could be reinforced. He decided to strengthen the Cotentin forces with the *77th Division*, which had been originally intended to join the *II Parachute Corps* in preventing a junction of the two U. S. corps in the Carentan area. Furthermore, in view of the possibility of airborne landings at Valognes and amphibious landings on the northwest coast of the Cotentin, the German command also alerted the *17th SS-Panzer Grenadier Division* near Carentan for a possible shift westward to plug the St. Lô-d'Ourville gap.

German *Seventh Army* believed that, while it did not have adequate forces for a counterattack, it could hold its own in the Cotentin and defend Cherbourg. But on 9 and 10 June, when the 4th Division penetrated the defensive front south of Montebourg and forced the *709th Division* to give way at Ecausseville, the enemy became alarmed. Lt. Gen. Heinz Hellmich, commanding the *243d Division* and elements of the *709th* and *91st Divisions,* was ordered to hold the Montebourg–Quinéville line at all costs. General Erich Marcks of the *LXXXIV Corps* urgently requested air power to combat the effective naval fire which assisted the 4th Division advance in the Emondeville and coastal sectors. He believed that the decisive phase of the battle for Cherbourg was fast approaching and that a breakthrough might be attempted within a day or two. With the fall of Quinéville and the Quinéville Ridge on 14 June an Allied offensive toward Cherbourg appeared imminent. However, the northern front remained relatively quiet for nearly a week, while VII Corps concentrated on taking advantage of its Merderet bridgehead to cut the Cotentin Peninsula.

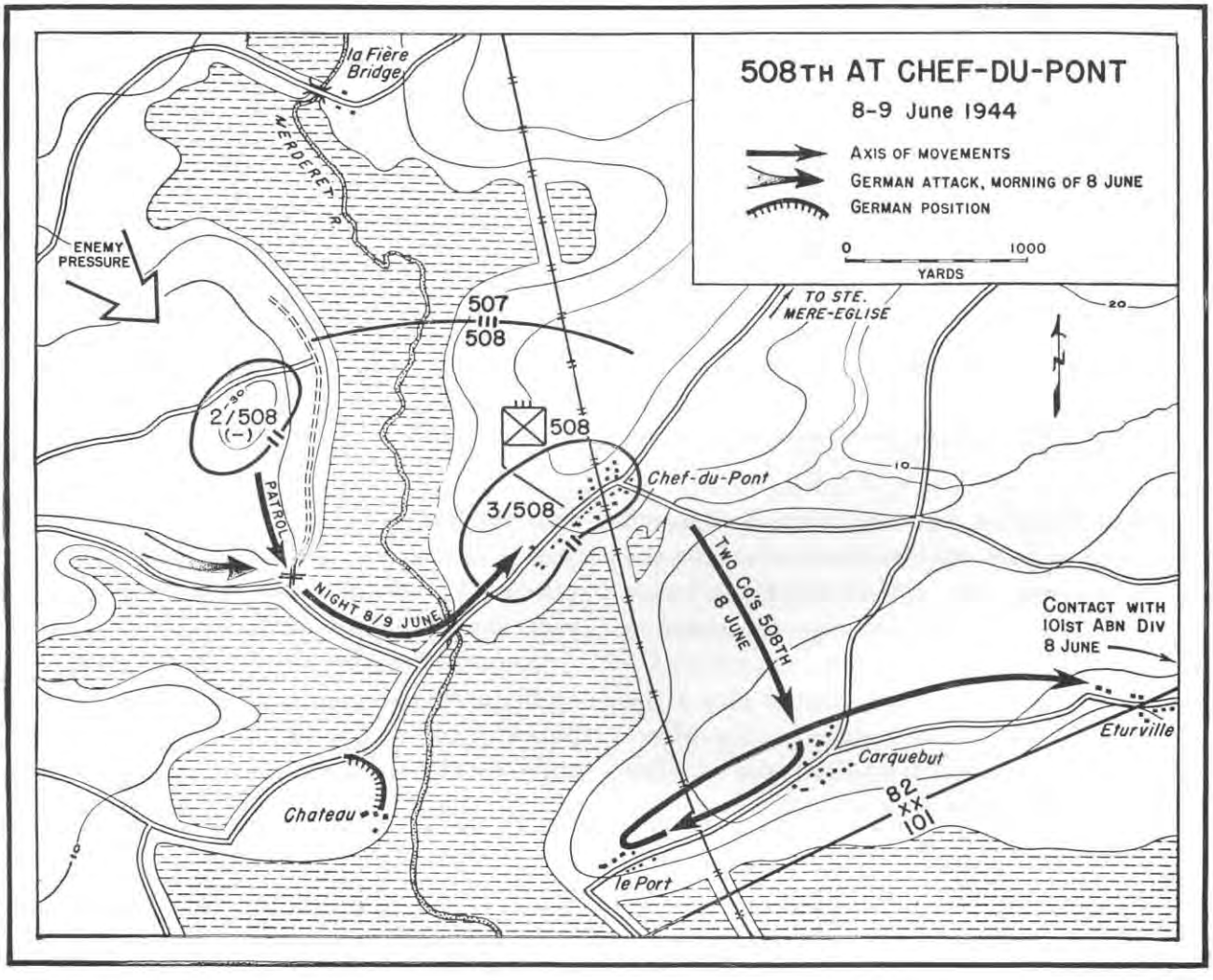
SECURING THE DOUVE LINE

While the 101st Airborne Division captured Carentan and the 4th Division reached the objectives along the Quinéville–Montebourg ridge, the 82d Airborne Division continued to expand the beachhead westward toward its D-Day objectives. On D Day and D plus 1 the 82d had consolidated its positions at Ste. Mère-Eglise and at the Chef-du-Pont and la Fière bridges. On 8 and 9 June it fought across the Merderet and established a bridgehead prior to its relief by the 90th Division the following day.

Crossing the Merderet

The la Fière position on the east bank, which had been threatened at various times on D plus 1, again appeared well in hand on the morning of 8 June. Held by the forces of Colonel Maloney and Colonel Lindquist, and backed by the newly arrived 1st Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, it was well supplied with ammunition and supported by tanks and artillery. Nevertheless, no attempt was made that day to cross at la Fière. Instead Colonel Lindquist's force was shifted to Chef-du-Pont on orders to organize the bridgehead there and establish contact with Colonel Shanley's men isolated on Hill 30 (Map No. 22). It was also to secure the left flank of the division east of the Merderet. The latter mission was given to two companies which, without loss to themselves, cleared the Carquebut–Eturville area, taking 135 prisoners and establishing contact with the 101st Airborne Division to the south.

Colonel Lindquist did not succeed, however, in his principal mission of joining Colonel Shanley's force. From Hill 30 Colonel Shanley could overlook the Merderet and the causeway running west from the Chef-du-Pont bridge, but his only contact with the forces east of the river was by patrol. For purposes of supply and medical aid he was cut off by enemy dominance of the western end of the causeway. On D plus 1, when Colonel Shanley's force had been augmented by stray parachutists with machine guns, a road block had been organized south of Hill 30. The block, manned by about fifty men, covered the northern and western approaches to the causeway, both of which had been mined with German mines found in the area. But on the morning of 8 June, while the road-block positions were being reorganized, the enemy attacked from the west. Unprepared at the time to defend the position, and threatened with heavy losses from enemy mortar fire, the Americans were withdrawn. Colonel Shanley decided that the immediate tactical value of the position did not warrant large sacrifices and that he was strong enough to retake the ground when necessary.



MAP NO. 22

That evening Colonel Lindquist radioed that he planned to send a convoy across the causeway and asked Colonel Shanley to clear the causeway road. Colonel Shanley complied by sending out a 23-man patrol, led by Lt. Woodrow W. Millsaps, to knock out the German-held road block and to clear the causeway to the east bank of the river. By bold action the patrol succeeded in killing or driving off all the Germans at the western end of the causeway and then crossed the river to report to Colonel Lindquist. Unfortunately, Colonel Lindquist had already taken steps which nullified the patrol's effort. Having observed that the causeway was receiving fire from south of the Douve, he had informed Colonel Shanley that it would be too hazardous to send the convoy across. When the patrol's arrival on the east bank demonstrated the feasibility of the crossing, it was too late, for Colonel Shanley had already withdrawn the covering force and did not wish to risk another engagement west of the bridge. The most urgent need of the men on Hill 30, plasma, was obtained later by a patrol which crossed the swamp. On 9 June Colonel Shanley's forces continued to receive pressure. Not until 10 June were they relieved by a battalion of the 90th Division.

On 9 June the main divisional effort was shifted back to la Fière where another attempt

was made to cross the Merderet and reach the isolated forces of Colonel Timmes, east of Amfreville, and of Colonel Millett, northwest of that town (Map No. 23). For this effort it was planned to send the 1st Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry (Maj. Teddy H. Sanford), north along the railway to cross the river above la Fière and then attack south to take the west end of the causeway, establishing a bridgehead and joining the forces of Colonel Timmes and Colonel Millett. Colonel Millett at the same time was ordered to join Colonel Timmes east of Amfreville.

This plan was developed late on 8 June after a 2-man patrol from Colonel Timmes' force made contact with Division. Moving east, the patrol had discovered a road across the swamp which, though just covered with water, could be seen and followed. The two men had picked their way across without incident and were then rowed down the river by a Frenchman to a point where they met men of the 325th Glider Infantry. They stayed at Division to guide the early morning attack back over the hidden swamp road.

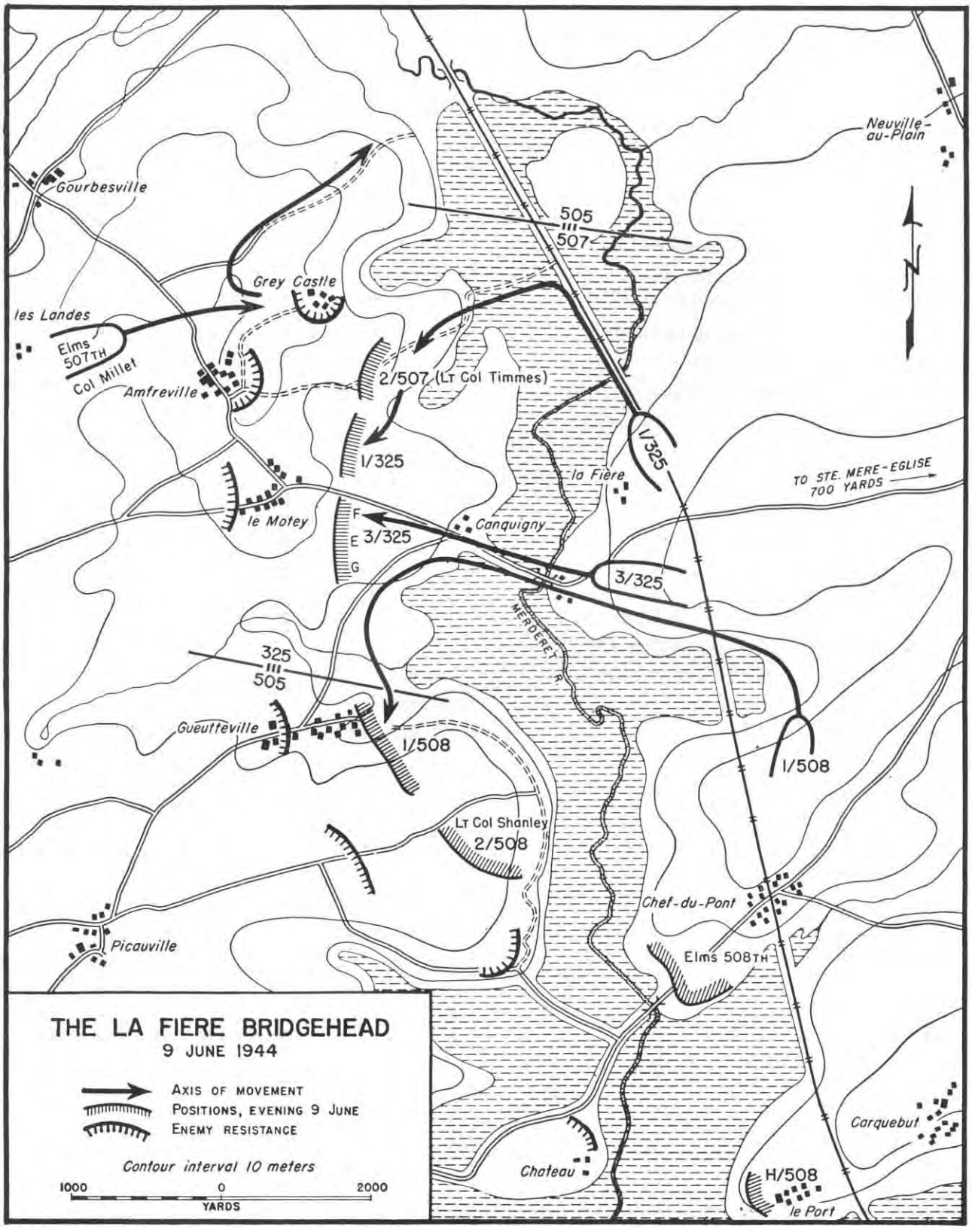
After dark on 8 June the 1st Battalion of the 325th Glider Infantry and Colonel Millett's force began simultaneously the planned convergence on Colonel Timmes' Amfreville position. Colonel Millett's men, however, were unable to make the junction. The column, fired on in the dark, fell apart. Colonel Willett and several others were separated from the main body and captured. Enemy fire from the group of buildings, which came to be called the "Grey Castle," forced the rest of the column to withdraw northeast toward the river.[1]

The 1st Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, attacking west, had better initial success. The battalion moved north along the railroad from la Fière. It crossed the river on the railway bridge and, guided by one of the men from Timmes' patrol, proceeded westward across the marshes. As the battalion reached dry land and approached Timmes' positions, it also drew fire from the "Grey Castle" a few hundred yards to its right. One company swung off to clear the buildings, while the rest of the battalion went on to join Timmes' force. This accomplished, the battalion swung southeast to seize the west end of the causeway, but it ran into strong German defenses and was thrown back with heavy losses to Timmes' lines.

When Colonel Lewis, commanding the 325th Glider Infantry, reported the failure of the 1st Battalion's attack, General Gavin decided to force the crossing at la Fière from the east. The 3d Battalion of the 325th Glider Infantry was to spearhead the attack, supported with fire by Captain Rae's reinforced company of the 507th Parachute Infantry from positions along the river south of the bridge. Should the glider infantry be unable to force the crossing, Rae's force was to move immediately in support of the attack. The artillery was to begin firing at 1030, and the attacking battalion, which was at Chef-du-Pont, was to move to la Fière under covering smoke and be ready to start out across the causeway at 1045.

During the artillery preparation the tanks moved up to within 100 to 150 yards of the bridge and fired over a hedge at targets of opportunity, while Captain Rae's force opened fire from the bank south of the bridge. The smoke laid down to screen the infantry approach, however, was not concentrated enough and, as the leading elements neared the bridge, they were stopped by machine-gun fire from across the river. Only by swinging to the left and following the stone wall, behind which Rae's men were firing, could the troops approach the bridge. At 1045 a round of smoke signalled the lifting of the artillery fire and the attack jumped off.

[1]Colonel Millett's group took no further part in the Merderet bridgehead action. On 9 June, numbering 155 officers and men out of 400 originally assembled, the group moved to Neuville-au-Plain, bivouacked there the night of 9–10 June, and joined the 508th Parachute Infantry on 10 June.


THE LA FIERE BRIDGEHEAD
9 JUNE 1944
AXIS OF MOVEMENT
POSITIONS, EVENING 9 JUNE
ENEMY RESISTANCE
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0 2000
YARDS
Gourbesville
Neuville-au-Plain
505
507
Grey Castle
les Landes
Elms 507TH
Col Millet
Amfreville
2/507 (Lt Col Timmes)
1/325
la Fière
TO STE. MERE-EGLISE 700 YARDS
le Motey
F
E 3/325
G
Canquigny
3/325
MERDERET R.
325
505
Gueutteville
1/508
Lt Col Shanley
2/508
Chef-du-Pont
Elms 508TH
Picauville
Carquebut
Chateau
H/508
le Port

MAP NO. 23

The men had been told that they were to cover the exposed 500-yard-long causeway in one sprint. But the long run in the face of enemy small-arms and mortar fire proved to be too much for most of the men. Only a handful of Company G led by Capt. John B. Sauls made the initial dash, gained the west end of the causeway, and started deploying along the trail to the south.[2] Some of the others, who hesitated, were hit on the exposed causeway. The first casualties induced more hesitation and the causeway became more and more congested with the dead, the wounded, and the reluctant. To make matters worse, an American tank, trying to cross after the leading infantry, hit an uncleared American mine field. Its crippled bulk, added to a destroyed enemy tank, constricted the causeway bottleneck still further and slowed the build-up on the west bank. Yet the crossing proceeded, though at increasingly heavy cost. When another platoon of Company G reached the west bank, the company built a right flank anchor along the road, while some of the men worked south along the edge of the swamp, clearing the enemy from buildings and fields.

Company E followed Company G across under orders to deploy to the right of the main road and clear out the ground northward along the river and around the Canquigny church. Despite the fact that its numbers were seriously depleted in the crossing, Company E carried out its mission with comparative ease. The Germans, caught around Canquigny by the supporting fire of the 507th Parachute Infantry from the far bank, were eager enough to surrender. Company E then swept the buildings on the north of the road and reached its objective line.

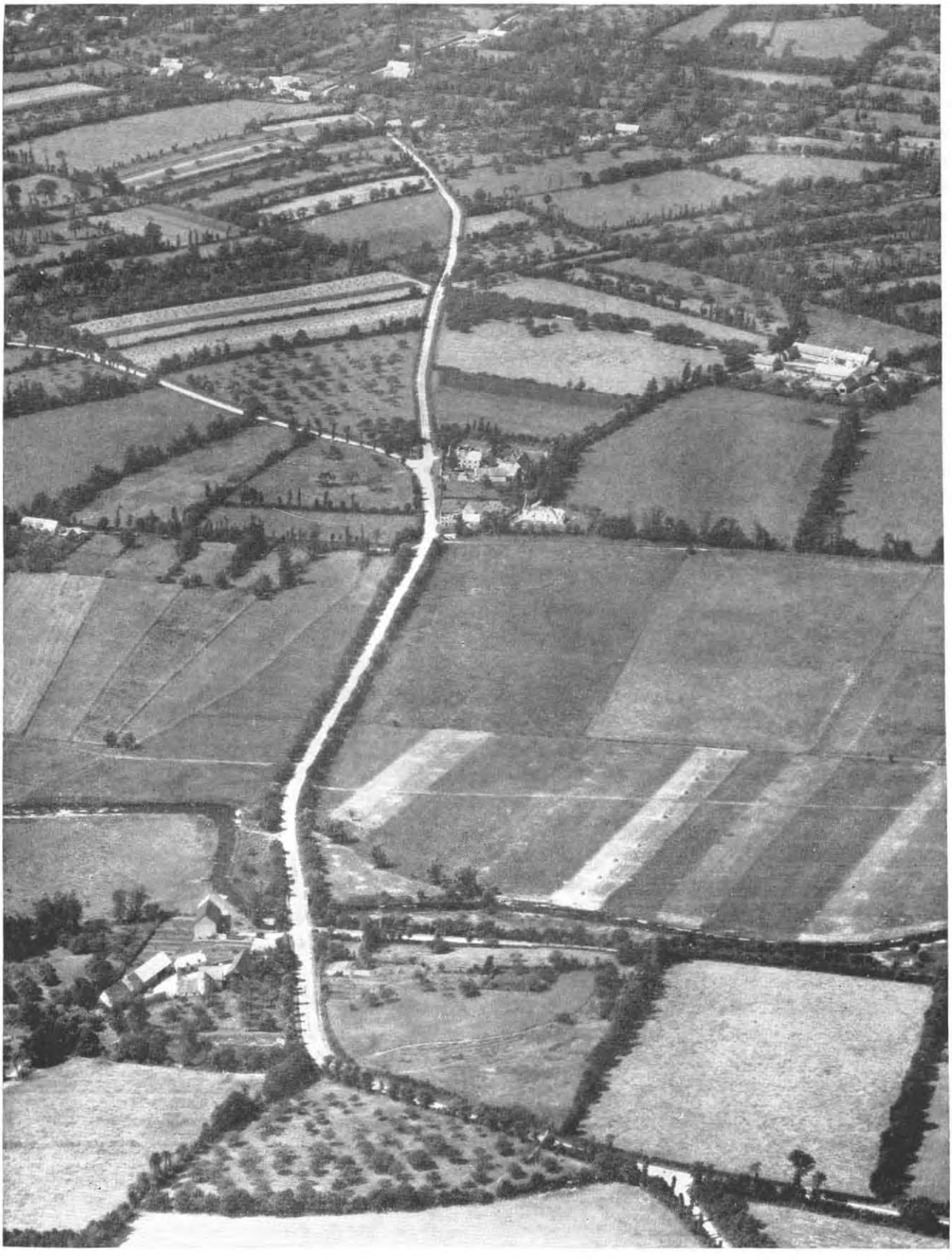
Company F had the mission of following Companies G and E to mop up. However, when it crossed the causeway, the bridgehead had not been deepened to the extent where mop-up operations were required. On the initiative of its commander the company therefore struck out west along the main road to push out the center of the bridgehead.

By now General Gavin had become concerned over the congestion of the causeway and the slow movement of troops across it. In the absence of reports from the west bank, he concluded that the 325th Glider Infantry was faltering in its attack, and ordered the immediate commitment of Captain Rae's company of the 507th Parachute Infantry. Captain Rae was told to sweep the stragglers from the other companies across with him. His men moved out at about the same time as Company F and the two groups became intermingled in the crossing. Once across, Captain Rae also headed west to drive through the center of the bridgehead toward the high ground around le Motey.

Part of Captain Rae's company actually went on into le Motey, but another part, on the advice of Captain Harney (Company F), broke off to the left and sought contact with Company G. Captain Harney also directed a platoon of Company E to strike north and contact the 1st Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry. Company F remained along the main road. However, before any of the missions could get started, the troops in le Motey were hit by American artillery fire which, without their knowledge, had been ordered to interdict the le Motey area as the most likely assembly point for a German counterattack against the bridgehead. Both forces pulled back and tried to communicate by tank radio and runner with the artillery to call off the fire, which was barring their way to the high ground.

When these efforts proved unavailing, Captain Rae was ordered to withdraw his company to reserve in Canquigny. From there he sent a patrol northwest to contact the 1st Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, and Colonel Timmes' battalion. The patrol reported that

[2]The 3d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, had originally been the 2d Battalion of the 401st Glider Infantry and included Companies E, F, G, and H.



the enemy had eased its pressure in the north and that Colonel Timmes was free to move as he wished. The north flank of the bridgehead ceased to be a tactical concern.

Meanwhile, however, Captain Rae's withdrawal from le Motey had left a wide gap between Company F and Company G to the south. At the same time the platoon of Company E on the right pulled back to rejoin its company just west of the marsh. Company F was thus left exposed on both flanks while enemy small-arms fire from le Motey built up against it. Still more threatening were groups of enemy infantry discovered by a patrol among the hedgerows on the left. To counter this danger, Company E was ordered to come up and protect Company F's left flank. This move, however, was delayed by the scattering of Company E personnel, and before it could be carried out Company F, finding its position untenable, had moved back a few hedgerows. As Company E finally pushed up, it found itself as exposed as Company F had been earlier. Discovering its isolation, and subjected to enemy flanking fire, it pulled out in a confused maneuver which sent one platoon hurtling back to the causeway under the impression that it was being counterattacked. The panic was checked in time, however, and Company E was put back in line. Late in the afternoon defensive positions were established with Company F on the right, Company E in the center, and Company G, which meanwhile had been extending northward, on the left. The line thus formed held against a German last-effort counterattack in the evening.

The la Fière bridgehead was now reasonably secure, but the higher command, lacking information, was still worried. Regiment ordered Captain Rae back into the line, and he placed his unit in position to the right of Company F, where a tie-in was eventually effected with the 1st Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, in the north. Meanwhile the bridgehead was also extended southward to tie in with Colonel Shanley's group around Hill 30. Late in the afternoon a group from the 508th Parachute Infantry crossed the causeway, mopped up the area southward from Gueutteville, and took up positions on the right of the mixed group which had held isolated positions on Hill 30 since D Day. The whole defense of the bridgehead was thus tied up for the night, from Colonel Timmes' group on the north to Colonel Shanley's group in the south, bringing all units west of the Merderet within the perimeter of the bridgeheads. Outposts were set up without opposition in le Motey just before dark. By nightfall the bridgehead appeared ready for exploitation by the 90th Division next day.

The 90th Takes Over the Attack

The original VII Corps plan provided that the 90th Division be committed on the 4th Division's right for the advance up the peninsula. In accordance with this plan the 359th Infantry, which landed on D Day and D plus 1, was initially attached to the 4th Division for use on its right along the coast. However, modifications in the original plan had been made as a result of the 82d Division's early difficulties along the Merderet and the 4th Division's involvement across the entire northern sector, making it impracticable to disengage any part of the division. When on 9 June General Bradley directed that the peninsula be cut before proceeding against Cherbourg, General Collins decided to commit the 90th Division through the Merderet bridgehead in

THE LA FIERE BRIDGE AND CAUSEWAY, *site of a 4-day struggle by the 82d Airborne Division to win a bridgehead across the Merderet. At the end of the causeway is the hamlet of Canquigny, beyond it le Motey, and in the upper right, Amfreville.*



BRIG. GEN. JAY W. MACKELVIE, *Commanding General, 90th Division.*

an attempt to break through west of the river. Verbal orders to this effect were issued to Brig. Gen. Jay W. MacKelvie, commanding the 90th Division, on 9 June.

The 90th Division's new mission was to cross the Merderet at both la Fière and Chef-du-Pont and attack west (Map No. 24). Its initial objective was to secure the line of the Douve between the bend in the river at Terre de Beauval and St. Sauveur-le Vicomte and then prepare to advance northward on Cherbourg in conjunction with the 4th Division. The 82d Airborne Division was to hold the line of the Merderet until the 90th Division had secured a foothold of approximately 2,000 yards west of the river, and to take over the security of the southern flank of the Corps along the north bank of the Douve.

Initially General MacKelvie had only two regiments available for the assignments west of the Merderet, inasmuch as the 359th Infantry was still attached to the 4th Division. Plans were made for the 357th and 358th Infantry Regiments to cross the river early on 10 June. The 357th was to attack in the direction of Amfreville, Orglandes, and Ste. Colombe, while the 358th was to cross the Chef-du-Pont causeway and, guiding on the highway, attack toward Picauville, Pont l'Abbé, and St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. The German defensive positions ran from Pont l'Abbé to Gourbesville and Orglandes in the north.

The 357th Infantry started across the la Fière causeway at approximately 0400 on 10 June. The bridge was under artillery fire which inflicted a few casualties and delayed the crossing briefly. But the units collected themselves in short order, went over the causeway, and passed through the 325th Glider Infantry at 0545. The 325th had been authorized to withdraw at daylight, but the whole situation relative to the 357th Infantry's attack was so obscure that Lt. Col. H. G. Sitler, executive officer of the glider regiment, secured General Ridgway's permission to remain in position awaiting the outcome of the attack. This proved to be a fortunate step, because the Germans were exerting pressure on the la Fière positions at the very time that the 90th Division began passing through. It soon became obvious that the bridgehead was not as firm as was believed. The 357th Infantry's attack was stopped on the high ground just beyond le Motey where the Germans (elements of the *1057th Grenadier Regiment, 91st Division)* were strongly entrenched. The 357th Infantry was meeting enemy fire for the first time. The 2d Battalion recoiled, many of its men falling back to the ground still held by the 1st Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry. Some of these men were put on the right flank of that battalion and remained there the rest of the day. In the afternoon the 1st Battalion, 357th Infantry, relieved the 2d Battalion and at 2130 launched another attack toward Amfreville. It, too, proved unsuccess-

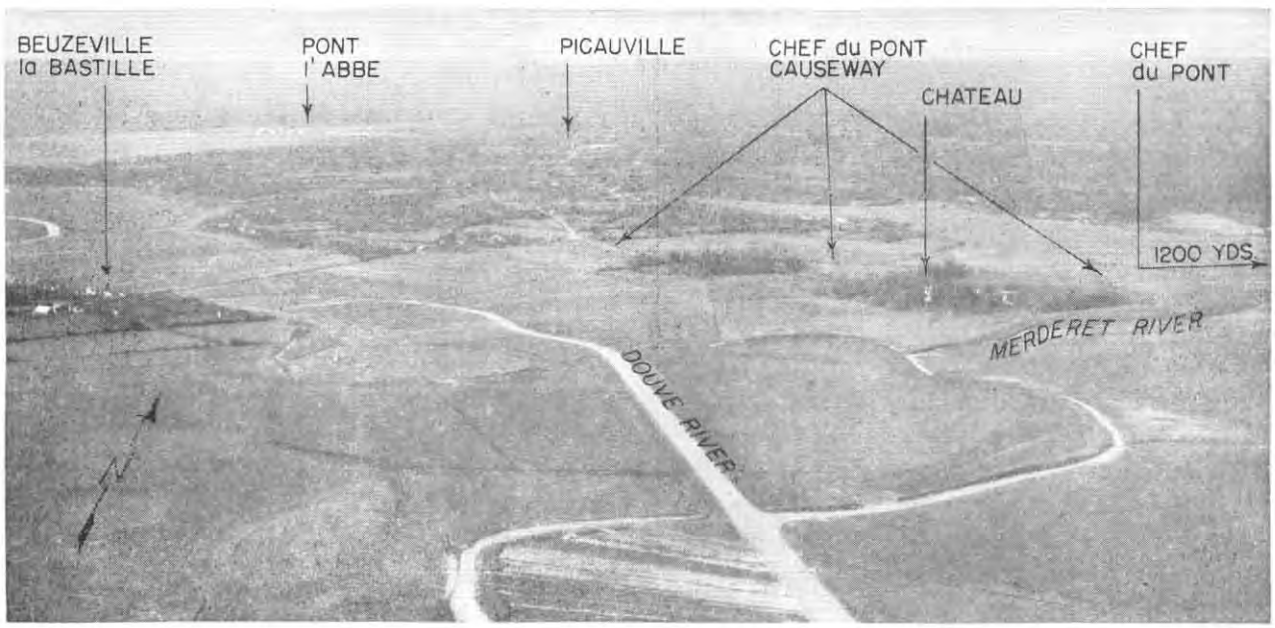
ful. On that day the regiment suffered 99 casualties, including 15 killed and 84 wounded.

The 358th Infantry met with somewhat better success at the southern bridgehead, although it also fell short of reaching its intermediate objective, Pont l'Abbé. The bridgehead at Chef-du-Pont was even less clearly defined than the one at la Fière. Colonel Shanley's force was in possession of Hill 30, north of the causeway, but the situation to the west was vague. The movement across the causeway was led by the 1st Battalion, 358th Infantry, and was completed by 0530. The 3d Battalion followed. The enemy opposed the crossing only with scattered rifle fire from the chateau in the woods south of the causeway; the fire did not hold up the leading battalion. As the 3d Battalion came across the causeway, Company I was detached to clean out the chateau. The 1st Battalion went on to occupy Picauville and then pushed west toward Pont l'Abbé. About 500 yards west of Picauville the battalion received its first heavy concentration of fire. The companies deployed abreast and, under regimental order, dug in.

Col. James V. Thompson, regimental commander, had become apprehensive about the situation to the rear. Company I had not completed the clearing of the chateau. Furthermore, the infantry-engineer detachment sent to blow the bridge over the Douve at Beuzeville-la Bastille had failed to accomplish its mission because of fire from across the river. Colonel Thompson therefore instructed the 1st Battalion to assume the defensive.

In midafternoon the Germans counterattacked, but the 1st Battalion held. Company L was brought up on the right and at 1700 the four companies jumped off toward Pont l'Abbé after an artillery preparation by the 344th Field Artillery Battalion. The attack stalled, however, and at 1930 the 1st and 3d Battalions began to dig in. The 1st Battalion alone suffered a total loss of 129 men, of whom 17

THE SOUTHERN CROSSING OF THE MERDERET *was effected on 10 June by the 358th Infantry via the causeway southwest of Chef-du-Pont, shown in this photo. Principal opposition to the crossing came from the chateau at the confluence of the Merderet with the Douve. (Photo taken October 1945.)*



were killed, 93 wounded, and 19 missing. Most of the losses were from mortar and 88-mm. fire.

Both the 358th and 357th Infantry Regiments attacked again on 11 June. The 3d Battalion, 357th Infantry, advanced 800 yards and cleared Amfreville in the morning. Later in the day, the 1st Battalion attempted a wide flanking movement to rout the enemy from his entrenchments around les Landes, but the approach of darkness found the regiment still short of its intermediate objective.

The main effort on 11 June was made by the 358th Infantry against Pont l'Abbé, where the Germans offered stubborn resistance. This was to be expected because Pont l'Abbé occupied a commanding position astride one of the few causeway-highways permitting access to the Cotentin from the south.

All three battalions were committed in the attack, supported by all four battalions of division artillery. The infantry jumped off at 1330, behind a rolling barrage which advanced about one hundred yards every five minutes. The three battalions advanced steadily behind this fire but were soon slowed down by machine-gun fire from the east edge of the town and from the north. By early evening the town was partially encircled, but the enemy still delayed its capture with well-directed machine-gun and artillery fire.

By 12 June the 359th Infantry had rejoined the 90th Division and two of its battalions were now committed in the center. This necessitated a change in boundaries for the other two regiments, but not in the direction of attack or regimental objectives. A gap had existed between the 357th and 358th Infantry Regiments from the beginning, and the 359th simply took over a narrow front of 1,000 yards in the center. It was instructed to drive straight toward Reigneville and the middle ground overlooking the Douve between Ste. Colombe and St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. Each regiment now had the support of approximately three platoons of tanks (from the 746th Tank Battalion) and the division had received a battalion—minus one battery—of 155-mm. guns (the 980th Field Artillery Battalion).

Despite this additional strength the 90th Division continued to measure its gains in hundreds of yards on 12 and 13 June. The 357th Infantry near Amfreville made two attacks on 12 June, the first recoiling after the loss of two tanks to 88-mm. fire, the second making slight gains on one flank but failing to gain any momentum. The 1st and 2d Battalions again attacked the following morning but advanced only a few hundred yards all day. Late in the day the 3d Battalion moved up on the right and crossed the Amfreville – Gourbesville road with the intention of hitting Gourbesville from the northeast. But the maneuver was not completed until dark and the attack was not fully developed. The regiment had average daily casualties of about 150 during these first days of hedgerow fighting.

The 359th Infantry's experience in the center was similar. Not until the evening of 13 June did the regiment reach its initial objective—the black-top road between Gourbesville and Pont l'Abbé.

In the south the 358th Infantry was ordered on 12 June to contain Pont l'Abbé with one battalion and to bypass it on the right with the other two, attacking westward. As the 2d and 3d Battalions tried to advance past the town they were stopped at the line of departure by machine-gun, mortar, and rocket fire. Colonel Thompson and Lt. Col. Nave, commanding the 1st Battalion, were both wounded early in the morning. Lt. Col. Christian H. Clarke, Jr., commanding the 2d Battalion, took over the regiment. By this time the original order to contain and bypass Pont l'Abbé was changed, probably as the result of General Ridgway's objection. The latter feared that the enemy's possession of the town would imperil the 508th Parachute Infantry's river-



MAJ. GEN. EUGENE M. LANDRUM, *who assumed command of the 90th Division on 13 June.*

crossing operation at Beuzeville-la Bastille, and plans were made for the immediate capture of Pont l'Abbé. The 1st Battalion, counterattacked shortly before noon, was badly under strength, but the regiment reorganized and prepared for an assault on the town following an air bombardment. The air mission, carried out by one group of P–47's at approximately 1700, was very effective, but the infantry attack was delayed. Artillery was therefore laid on the town prior to the jump-off at 1925. The double bombardment made Pont l'Abbé a shambles. When the regiment entered the town, Colonel Clarke remarked that all he saw alive was two rabbits, and one of them wasn't very spry.

That night the three battalions went into a defensive position around Pont l'Abbé. Colonel Clarke decided to attack westward again early on the morning of 13 June, but some of his positions were bombed at 0700, and the attack was delayed several hours. When finally launched at noon, it netted no advance. The 359th and 357th Infantry Regiments, in the center and on the right flank of the 90th Division, also failed to make satisfactory progress. By the evening of 13 June the 90th Division had barely reached its intermediate objective.

In its first four days of combat the 90th Division had made an inauspicious beginning. Unfortunately it had had to take over a bridgehead the condition of which was still obscure, and had immediately run into a well-entrenched enemy in terrain most favorable to the defender. On the other hand, the division was not making the progress expected of it by the corps commander. The immediate action taken was to relieve the division commander and two regimental commanders. The division was now placed under the command of Maj. Gen. Eugene M. Landrum.[3]

In common with other units, the 90th Division had been seeking a solution to the problem of hedgerow fighting. The rolling terrain between the Douve and Merderet was Normandy hedgerow country at its worst. Except for the flat marshy bottomlands along the rivers and a few small wooded areas, the entire countryside was cut into small pastures, fields, and orchards, each with its inevitable hedgerow border. The hedgerows consisted of solid earth banks several feet high and mounted by another four or five feet of hedge—a mass of bush, vine, and bramble. Frequently there was a double hedgerow, with a drainage ditch between, thus forming a natural trench. The enemy made good use of the hedgerows, building up his resistance line directly behind them. Each hedgerow formed a natural breastwork, high and thick enough to provide cover, concealment, and good fire positions. Adequate

[3]General MacKelvie was relieved without prejudice. He had been in command of the division since January 1944.

THE GENTLY ROLLING TERRAIN OF THE SOUTH COTENTIN, *with the inevitable hedgerow enclosing every field, is illustrated in the above air photo. The close-up below illustrates a Normandy road flanked by hedgerows, which were so advantageously utilized by the defenders.*



protection against mortar and artillery fire could be obtained with an L-shaped foxhole dug into the embankment and laterally along the axis of the row. Automatic weapons were usually emplaced at the corners, where they could cover the open field in front and enfilade the hedgerow lines of approach.

Each hedgerow became a separate objective, each enclosed field a battleground, and the line of advance was often determined more by the configuration of the hedgerows than by the contour of the terrain. Observation was limited to a few hundred yards or less. Antitank guns had poor fields of fire. Control was difficult to maintain, and the maneuver of units hard to coordinate. Tanks could move across country only if preceded by dozers punching holes in the banks; and because of the tightness of these defenses, attacking infantry often had to advance to the very hedgerow behind which the enemy had established his defense in order to get at him. The battle was thus often joined at ranges of a few yards, and grenades had to be used to rout the enemy.

These natural advantages held by the enemy prevailed in other sectors as well as the 90th Division's. A partial solution to the combat problem was the persistent application of basic infantry principles and lessons—the axioms concerning fire and movement, control, bunching—and maximum initiative by individuals and small groups. This lesson was stressed in an operational memorandum issued on 19 June by 90th Division headquarters. It stated that the division's small gains and heavy losses were due in part to failure to apply training lessons properly and suggested stressing to the men the fundamentals of constant movement, of returning fire by some while others maneuver, and of following artillery closely. General Landrum also underscored these basic infantry tactics when he spoke to the battalion commanders of the 358th Infantry on 15 June. Some of his remarks were noted in the Regimental Journal:

> Coming under hostile fire causes inertia to our troops . . . [do not] believe they're afraid, but bewildered, and this can be broken by common sense, applying simple tactics of fire and movement which are applicable in any type of fighting . . . it is doubtful whether any man is pinned down unless out in the open . . . mustn't let ourselves be stopped by fire . . . must get something moving right away . . . part of the line may have to take it, but have to get fire on the hostile weapons, the machine guns . . . it is seldom that any unit of any size is pinned down, so it should be possible always to maneuver some of your forces if there's any concealment at all, and there's plenty of it here . . . PWs say they can tell the direction from which we are coming and how we're going, which indicates we've got to control our fire . . . and they say also that we bunch up . . . we should be able to control our men better in this terrain . . . the danger of the 88 is that it multiplies in quantity as one man tells another about them, and finally our men think there are four times as many as there really are . . . it is an effective weapon, but it can be beaten . . . we have plenty of artillery to be used on call . . . .

The 9th Division Is Committed

When General Bradley on 9 June established the high priority for the seizure of Carentan and the firm junction of the V and VII Corps beachheads, he also directed that the 4th and 90th Divisions were to maintain pressure in the direction of Cherbourg, and that the 9th Division and the 82d Airborne Division were to complete the blocking of the peninsula in the vicinity of St. Lô-d'Ourville and la Haye du Puits. The original Corps field order had provided that the 9th Division was to begin landing on D plus 4 and assemble as soon as practicable in the Colomby–Orglandes area, prepared for operations to the northwest. It was not anticipated that the division would have to fight its way to this area; but the slow progress of the 90th foreshadowed a serious delay in securing the Douve line and in blocking the enemy's western reinforcement corridor. On 12 June, therefore, General Collins decided to commit the 82d Airborne Division

THE TERRAIN WEST OF THE MERDERET *in the vicinity of the la Fière crossing shown in this air view affords still another example of the type of ground over which the 90th Division and others fought in the south Cotentin.*



and the 9th Division in the westward attack. The 82d was to concentrate on the north bank of the Douve west of the Merderet and to advance westward; the 9th was to cross the Merderet for operations in conjunction with the airborne division.

Units of the 82d Airborne Division were in various stages of reorganization on 12 June. With the Merderet bridgehead mission completed, the 507th and 508th Parachute Infantry Regiments and the bulk of the 325th Glider Infantry had been relieved as the 90th Division passed through the bridgehead on 10 June. The two parachute regiments assembled and reorganized during the next two days with an effective strength of about 50 or 60 percent. The 505th Parachute Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, remained in the le Ham area until the morning of 13 June, when they were relieved by a battalion of the 359th Infantry.

On 11 June the 508th Parachute Infantry was alerted for a mission south of the Douve. Organized as a combat team, with the 319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion and antiaircraft, engineer, medical, signal, and reconnaissance attachments, the 508th Parachute Infantry was ordered to cross the Douve on 12 June in the vicinity of Beuzeville-la Bastille under cover of darkness. The objective was to pinch off the area between the Douve and the Prairies Marécageuses de Gorges along the line Beuzeville–Baupte. At Baupte a junction was to be effected with the 101st Airborne Division, thus linking up the two Douve bridgeheads. This operation, beginning at midnight on 12 June, was successfully carried out and Baupte was reached by 0800 the next morning. Meanwhile, the 325th Glider Infantry and 507th Parachute Infantry were alerted for the projected advance westward.

The 9th Division (Maj. Gen. Manton S. Eddy commanding) had begun to debark on Utah Beach on 10 June, as planned. The 39th Infantry was attached to the 4th Division to assist in clearing the coastal area to Quinéville. The remainder of the division was unloading rapidly enough to be ready for commitment on 14 June. Late on 12 June the division received a warning order from VII Corps, alerting it for a possible movement westward across the Merderet.



MAJ. GEN. MANTON S. EDDY, *Commanding General, 9th Division.*

General Collins issued more detailed orders verbally the next day. They provided for a coordinated attack by the 9th and 82d Divisions on 14 June. Both divisions were to pass through the 90th Division, the 82d attacking along the Pont l'Abbé–St. Sauveur-le Vicomte highway toward St. Sauveur-le Vicomte, and the 9th attacking on its right toward Ste. Colombe (Map X). The two divisions thus took over the 90th Division's objective—the line of the Douve. In addition the 9th had the further mission of crossing the Douve and blocking off the peninsula west of

the Prairies Marécageuses. The 90th Division was given a new objective. After the other divisions had passed through, it was to pivot northward on Beauvais and establish itself on the east-west line from Montebourg Station to the bend in the Douve at Terre de Beauval, thus covering the north flank of the 9th Division as the latter drove westward. Meanwhile, in view of the previous slow progress of the 90th Division, General Collins asked General Bradley for a replacement and was given the 79th Division, which, however, was not to be employed until later.

The new assignments for 14 June resulted in some involved maneuvering during the following days. At no time did the 90th Division disengage entirely. It continued to attack, wheeling gradually toward its new objective; only in the south was any unit of the division passed through and relieved by units of the other divisions.

Two regiments of the 82d Airborne Division were employed for the attack astride the highway west of Pont l'Abbé. The 325th Glider Infantry moved along the left of the road, the 507th Parachute Infantry along the right. On the morning of 14 June the initial attack was to be led by the 358th Infantry. It was agreed that this regiment should seize the road junction 1,000 yards to the west and that the 82d Airborne Division was to carry the attack from there.

Two battalions of the 358th Infantry moved out astride the road at 0850. Reaching the limited objective involved pushing the Germans off a small nose which extended across the highway near the road junction. This was done by early afternoon, despite close-range mortar fire and 88-mm. fire from across the river. At noon elements of the 507th Parachute Infantry began passing through the 358th Infantry on the right, and by evening the regiment was relieved. The 507th Parachute Infantry and 325th Glider Infantry continued the advance, moving in columns of battalions. An evening counterattack forced back the 507th's right a few hundred yards. At the end of the day the two leading battalions were along the road south of Bonneville.

Meanwhile, the 359th Infantry in the center had begun to turn gradually north, thus opening a gap in the 90th Division front near Gottot. Into this gap the first elements of the 9th Division were committed. The gap was at first only wide enough to permit the employment of one battalion. The 60th Infantry of the 9th Division therefore launched its initial attack in a column of battalions, the 3d Battalion leading. As the northward turning maneuver of the 90th Division continued on the right and the 82d Airborne Division on the left drove almost straight west, the 9th Division zone in the center widened.

The initial objective of the 60th Infantry was Renouf. From there it was to advance northwest to the high ground west of Orglandes. Troops were under rifle, mortar, and artillery fire from the line of departure and movement was slow. But by midafternoon the two lead companies had pushed up the road to Renouf, Company K occupying the town at 1800. The 2d Battalion was then brought up on the right and, advancing abreast, the 2d and 3d Battalions reached the Valognes – Pont l'Abbé highway by dark. Shortly before midnight General Eddy ordered the 60th Infantry to attack at 0500 the next day, 15 June, and push on vigorously, since enemy reinforcements from the *265th Division* were reported to be moving up. First Army had sent word of the arrival of this division in the area of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte, and this report was confirmed on 15 June when the 82d identified two regiments of the *265th Division*, the *894th* and *895th Regiments*.

While the 60th Infantry made good progress northwestward, the 359th Infantry of the 90th Division, turning north-northwest toward Orglandes, was opposed stubbornly, field by field. The two lead battalions became

separated when the 2d Battalion failed to keep abreast of the 3d, and enemy riflemen infiltrated into this gap, nearly encircling the 3d Battalion for part of the day.

The 357th Infantry, on the right flank of the 359th, also encountered difficulties. On 14 June it prepared to attack Gourbesville again, its objective being the Gourbesville–Beauvais line. An air mission arranged for 1400 was cancelled for lack of proper marking smoke, and an artillery preparation was substituted at 1800. Because of poor coordination, a number of shells fell on American troops and the attack became disorganized. The concentration was fired again at 1930 and the 3d Battalion entered the village at 2230. It was unable, however, to clean out enemy resistance that night, and Gourbesville remained in enemy hands.

The push to win the Douve line continued with varying success on 15 June. The 3d Battalion of the 357th Infantry, after a full day's fighting, finally captured Gourbesville. Late in the day the 3d Battalion, 358th Infantry, attacked around the right of the 3d Battalion, 357th Infantry, toward le Calais under orders to seize the crossroads south of Urville. At the same time the 359th Infantry attacked northward, intending to pass Orglandes to the east and cut the Orglandes–Urville road. The two attacks were to pinch out the 3d Battalion, 357th Infantry, clearing the 359th Infantry's flank. But the 359th Infantry gained only about 1,000 yards, far short of its objective.

Substantially larger gains were made on 15 June by the 82d and 9th Divisions in their drive westward. The 82d, attacking astride the highway to St. Sauveur-le Vicomte, encountered only moderate resistance throughout the day. The enemy used some tanks to oppose the advance. The 325th Glider Infantry made the largest gains and reached Rauville, only 1,000 yards from St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. During the day the 507th was relieved by the 505th Parachute Infantry, the change slowing up the advance along the right of the road. Nevertheless, the 505th reached a line south of Reigneville by nightfall.

The attack of the 9th Division (initially only the 60th Infantry) was coordinated with that of the 82d Airborne Division. It began at 0500 on 15 June and ran into the last determined resistance offered by the enemy east of the Douve. Shortly after the attack started, the 90th Division reported sixteen tanks moving south from Orglandes. These tanks apparently did not constitute part of any coordinated infantry-tank counterattack, for no determined thrust developed. Bazookas and 57-mm. antitank guns knocked out three Mark III's and forced the rest to withdraw. The 60th Infantry lost two antitank guns. By 0900 the regiment had advanced approximately 500 yards beyond the Orglandes–Bonneville road, where the 1st Battalion on the right was strongly counterattacked by four tanks and an estimated battalion of infantry. It was thrown back 500 yards to the road. The commanders of both Companies A and B were lost in this action and the battalion suffered other casualties. The 2d Battalion, immediately to the rear, countered the enemy thrust, however, and regained half the lost ground.

During the morning, the division commander had shifted the 60th Infantry's axis of attack slightly, assigning to it the mission of taking Reigneville and, as the 359th Infantry turned north and the 60th Infantry attacked west, it became feasible to commit another regiment. The 47th Infantry was brought in on the 60th Infantry's right and given the latter's former objective—the high ground west of Orglandes.

The 47th Infantry moved out shortly after noon, the 1st Battalion leading. The companies were initially so widely spread that the 3d Battalion could not jump off until about 1630. It advanced rapidly, however, and reached the forward slopes of the objective by

dark. The situation on the northern flank caused some concern, as the 1st Battalion was held up for some time by fire from Orglandes on its right rear. Late in the afternoon the 1st Battalion forged ahead again, easing the situation on the 3d Battalion's right. It exposed itself, however, and was then echeloned to the right to protect that flank.

This maneuver became characteristic of the entire 3-division front on 15 June. Not only was the attack fanning out west to northwest, but the enemy was apparently pivoting his withdrawal to give up his north-south line in favor of one generally east-west, athwart the peninsula. The enemy's left, opposing the 90th Division, consequently became the anchor of his resistance and the 9th Division and the 82d Airborne Division, attacking westward, cut obliquely at his withdrawal routes. In each case, therefore, the American right flank units found themselves bucking the strongest enemy opposition while the left flank units advanced with comparative ease.

The exact strength of the enemy was unknown. Elements of the *77th Division* and *265th Division* were identified by the 9th Division and 82d Airborne Division respectively. In general, however, the Germans seemed to be delaying with small groups and taking advantage of good defensive ground which compensated in part for their numerical inferiority.

To keep the enemy from reinforcing and organizing a better coordinated defense, it was essential to push to the Douve River line quickly. On the afternoon of 15 June, General Collins ordered the 325th Glider Infantry to advance to the Rauville ridge line without regard to the actions of the regiment on its right. The 505th Parachute Infantry was to try to advance to the same line, but its right was to be refused in order to maintain contact with the 60th Infantry. Similarly the 47th Infantry's right was to tie in with the 359th Infantry.

Attack Along the Douve River Line

On the afternoon of 15 June General Collins announced: "The major effort of the Corps is now to cut the peninsula." By this time the advance westward had progressed sufficiently so that the entire effort could be focused toward that end. For 16 June General Collins ordered an attack all along the line from the Douve to Gourbesville. The 82d Airborne Division was to continue toward St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. The 358th Infantry was to attack northwest from Gourbesville, and the 9th Division, advancing between the 90th and the 82d Divisions, was to seize the rough arc formed by the line Reigneville–Hautteville-Bocage–Orglandes–Gourbesville. The 39th Infantry was now to be committed on the right of the 359th Infantry, which was placed under the 9th Division commander in order to establish proper coordination and control. The division was therefore to attack with four regiments in line from right to left—the 39th, 359th, 47th, and 60th (Map X).

In the 90th Division zone only one regiment was involved in the advance toward Urville on 16 June, the 357th Infantry having been temporarily withdrawn to a reserve position. The 358th Infantry prepared to jump off at 0800, but there were several delays, due primarily to the 1st Battalion's loss of direction. The attack did not get off until 1715, at which time Lieutenant Colonel Bealke's 3d Battalion led the advance into le Calais.

Developments in the vicinity of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte suddenly changed the whole tempo of the battle. The 82d Airborne and 9th Division units jumped off at various times between 0500 and 0800 on the morning of 16 June, but it was the attack of the 325th Glider Infantry, assisted by tanks of Company A, 746th Tank Battalion, which touched off the complete rout of the remaining enemy units

east of the Douve and paced the 2-division drive to the Douve line.

At noon three regiments—the 325th Glider Infantry, 505th Parachute Infantry, and the 508th Parachute Infantry which had joined the other two—were poised on the east bank of the river overlooking the town of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. From this position the enemy could be observed withdrawing from the town. General Ridgway, realizing the possibilities of the situation, asked Corps' permission to cross the river into town and establish a bridgehead. Meanwhile he had the artillery deliver interdictory fire on the roads leading north, west, and south from the town, and the 1st Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, was alerted to cross the river and cut the road to the southwest. An hour after the Corps commander had approved General Ridgway's request, elements of the division were crossing the river, meeting little resistance. By dark a firm bridgehead was established and secured with a perimeter defense 2,000 to 2,500 yards out from the town. Engineers bridged the Douve and tanks entered the town that evening.

The events at St. Sauveur-le Vicomte were a turning point in the whole drive westward. The success of the 82d Airborne Division gave such impetus to the 9th Division's attack that it gathered a momentum which carried it swiftly across the peninsula.

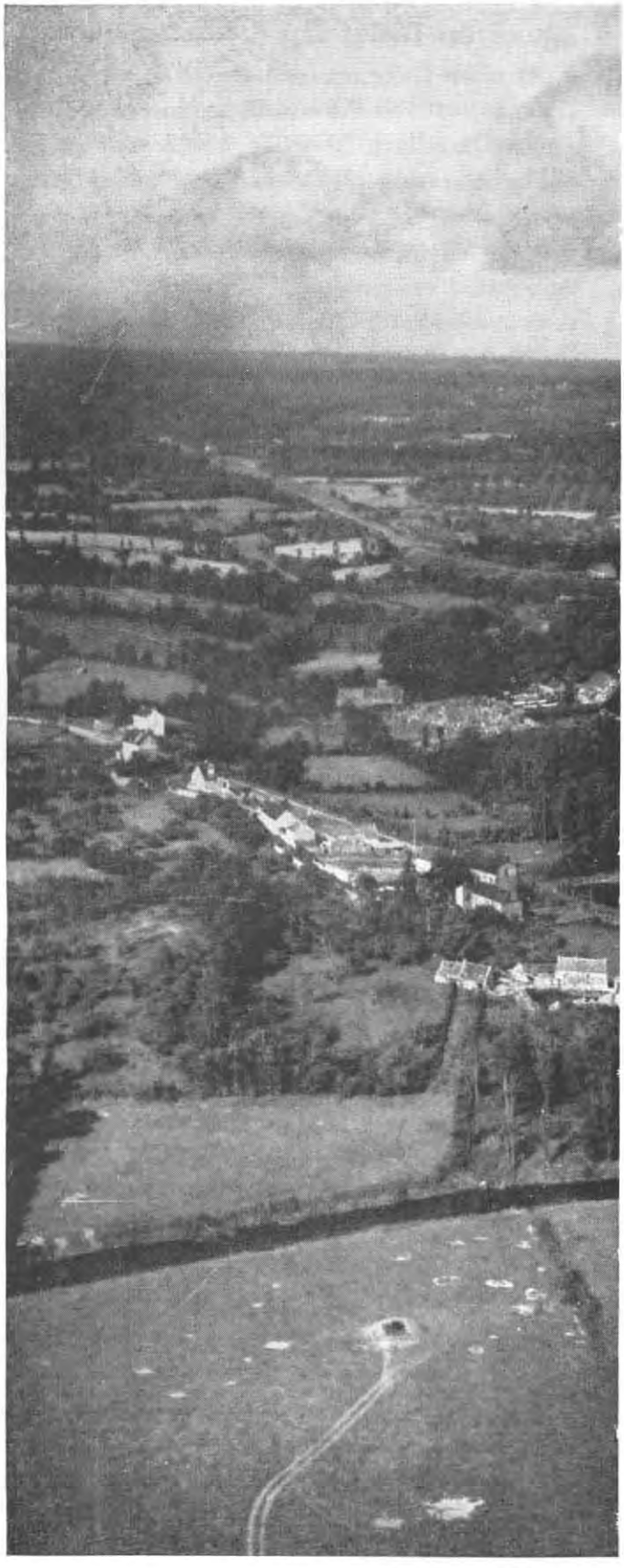
When the 9th Division had jumped off early in the day its initial objectives were Reigneville (60th Infantry), Hautteville-Bocage (47th Infantry), Orglandes (359th Infantry), and the ground west of Gourbesville (39th Infantry). The attack had just begun when the order was given to push hard to the Douve. Even before the 82d Airborne Division achieved the breakthrough at St. Sauveur-le Vicomte, there had been signs that the enemy was withdrawing west of the Douve. Heavy enemy traffic through St. Sauveur-le Vicomte had been observed during the night.

At 1130 General Collins called 9th Division headquarters and ordered General Eddy to have the 60th and 47th Infantry Regiments push hard to Ste. Colombe with the 39th Infantry swinging around to protect the flank. General Eddy immediately ordered the 60th Infantry to push all three battalions to the river. Early in the afternoon he urged the 47th Infantry (Col. George W. Smythe) to get on the high ground east of Ste. Colombe, over which the Valognes–St. Sauveur-le Vicomte highway ran. In the Hautteville-Bocage and Biniville area the 47th Infantry met stubborn resistance, as expected, for this high ground was the last on which the enemy could make a stand east of the Douve. Shortly after General Eddy issued his orders at 1330, news of the 82d Airborne Division's crossing of the Douve was received and General Collins designated Colleville and Ste. Colombe as the 47th Infantry objectives. During the day the 47th Infantry pushed well beyond Biniville and established itself on the main highway. Coupled with the pace-setting drive of the 325th Glider Infantry, the rupture of the German defenses south of Orglandes by the 9th Division won the battle to sever the peninsula.

Meanwhile the 39th Infantry cleared the ground west of Gourbesville and the 359th Infantry pushed up to the black-top road leading into Orglandes from the east. At that point it was halted. To make it possible for the 39th Infantry to get behind the 47th and help protect the north flank of the division, it was decided that the 39th would make a left turn and attack across the front of the 359th Infantry into Orglandes. But a counterattack developed east of the town and the attack was delayed until evening. The 1st Battalion, which led the assault, was unable to clear the village that night. The 359th Infantry's movement north was also held up.

The 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry, meanwhile had begun to lead the important push to Ste. Colombe, with the intention of estab-

ST. SAUVEUR-LE VICOMTE, *shown looking west, where the 82d Airborne Division seized a bridgehead by noon of 16 June. By evening, engineers had spanned the Douve, allowing tanks to cross, and the bridgehead was extended 2,000–3,000 yards beyond the city.*



lishing a bridgehead over the Douve. While the 1st Battalion took over the clearing of Reigneville, the 2d Battalion, under Lt. Col. Michael B. Kauffman, swung cross country, south of Reigneville, and headed for the main crossroads in a column of companies. Company E led, followed by Company F, each with a platoon of heavy machine guns, which had to be hand-carried. Machine-gun fire from houses down the road was encountered at the crossroads, but a Company E platoon crossed the road, worked its way up to the houses, killed several Germans, and took sixteen or seventeen prisoners. A wide arc was made to the north to avoid tanks which had been observed on the road, and Ste. Colombe was entered without opposition.

The Douve River is not impressive at Ste. Colombe. It splits into three small streams spanned by three bridges—one hardly more than a culvert—connecting Ste. Colombe on the east bank with Néhou on the west. The river bed is narrower than the Merderet at la Fière and the ground between the three streams relatively firm. Neither town has a particularly commanding position because the banks rise gradually and hedgerows in the area make observation poor.

A pre-invasion map reconnaissance had been made in anticipation of crossings of the Douve at this point. However, intelligence had indicated that there were mine fields on the west bank, south of Néhou, and the 9th Division had considered fording the river farther north. But in the fast-moving situation of the 16th it had been decided to make a dash to Ste. Colombe and cross as quickly as possible.



Company E led the movement from Ste. Colombe, some men riding tanks of Company B, 746th Tank Battalion. Without supporting fire, the 2d Battalion pushed into the river bed and seized the first and second bridges intact. As the third bridge was out, the tanks turned back. When all three rifle companies were on the causeway, enemy shells began to land and some small-arms fire was received from Néhou. Despite the lack of tank support, Company E established itself on the west bank and held there in the face of artillery fire and direct fire from enemy self-propelled guns somewhere in the vicinity of Néhou. The company's ammunition ran low and its situation became precarious. Parts of Company F and Company G started to cross, but, finding themselves under enemy fire, some dug in between the bridges and others were pulled back to Ste. Colombe.

Colonel Kauffman asked for relief, but he was told by General Collins to hold on, that the 3d Battalion would move to his aid. The ammunition shortage was eased when the battalion commander returned from Regiment with a loaded 2½-ton truck. Company G then managed to join Company E on the west bank. But the attack on Néhou was postponed until the next day. The battalion was badly shaken; there was still no tank support; and darkness was approaching. That night the 3d Battalion joined the exhausted 2d Battalion to strengthen the position on the left bank. Next morning the 3d led the attack westward.

THE VALLEY OF THE DOUVE *between Ste. Colombe and Néhou was the scene of the bridgehead attack of the 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry, on the night of 16 June. Shown here, looking southwest, is the main bridge and beyond it the road leading to Néhou.*



SEALING OFF THE PENINSULA

With the seizure of the bridges at St. Sauveur-le Vicomte and Ste. Colombe, the 82d Airborne Division and the 9th Division had completed the mission of clearing the east bank of the Douve as far north as Ste. Colombe. Good progress was made on 16 June. In midafternoon General Collins alerted the 4th Division for an attack toward Valognes the next day and the 79th Division was ordered to prepare one regimental combat team for movement on four hours' notice, even though the 90th Division had not reached its objective line from Terre de Beauval to the Merderet.

In this sector the Germans continued to offer greater resistance than from the west. The enemy was withdrawing on all fronts, but withdrawal to the north was accompanied by considerable fire. The northern flank of the 9th Division was exposed to attack as the division moved westward toward Ste. Colombe. Both Corps and division commanders took precautions to guard the northern flank. General Collins ordered that, in the vicinity of Biniville, all antitank guns were to cover the roads and trails to the north, since any enemy attack was likely to come from that direction, and the 47th Infantry was ordered to establish defenses in this area.

Meanwhile plans were made to exploit the bridgehead over the Douve and to cut the peninsula. The 60th Infantry was to cross the Douve at Ste. Colombe and, as soon as possible, push west and seize the high ground in the vicinity of St. Pierre-d'Arthéglise (Map XI). The 47th Infantry was to swing south, passing through the 82d Airborne Division bridgehead at St. Sauveur-le Vicomte, and push southwest to cut off the escape corridor between the Prairies Marécageuse and St. Lô-d'Ourville. The defense against attack from the north was to be taken over progressively by the 39th Infantry and then the 90th Division. Since the 39th Infantry was still engaged at Orglandes and it was not known how soon it could relieve the 47th, General Eddy ordered part of the 47th left east of Ste. Colombe to block the roads with infantry and antitank guns. The 39th Infantry was ordered to hasten the clearing of Orglandes by shelling the town with 4.2-inch mortars if artillery could not reduce the opposition there.

That night (16 June) enemy machine-gun fire forced the 1st Battalion, 39th Infantry, to withdraw from Orglandes. In the morning the town was shelled, and at 0730 Companies A and B entered and cleaned out the remaining resistance. The 3d Battalion moved up to the Biniville–Hautteville area to take over the defenses from the 47th Infantry. In the afternoon the 1st Battalion (minus Company C) was attached to the 60th Infantry.

The 9th Division Cuts the Escape Routes

The 60th and 47th Infantry Regiments meanwhile made spectacular progress westward in their drive to seize the principal roads leading out of the peninsula along the western corridor, thus cutting the peninsula. On 17 June the two regiments moved generally along the axis of the two main east-west roads. The 60th Infantry struck from Néhou west toward St. Pierre-d'Arthéglise and Hills 145 and 133, which dominated the entire countryside, including Barneville-sur-Mer; the 47th Infantry moved south to St. Sauveur-le Vicomte and then southwest along the highway toward its objective, the intersection northeast of St. Lô-d'Ourville. Enemy forces west of the Douve were believed to be small, but had not been identified. Vehicular traffic, observed moving southward out of the peninsula and westward from St. Jacques-de-Néhou, gave no clear indication of enemy intentions.

Freed for a new mission when one battalion of the 39th Infantry took over Hautteville during the night, the 47th Infantry began moving toward St. Sauveur-le Vicomte at 0500 on 17 June with the 3d Battalion acting as advance guard in the column of battalions. Opposition was light, although enemy riflemen and an antitank gun west of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte caused a slight delay. From this point the 1st and 2d Battalions moved directly west to Hill 110. The 3d Battalion turned southwest to Hill 90, where it was held up by enemy resistance until midafternoon. It continued west for several thousand yards and then cut south to the highway intersection. The 2d Battalion crossed Hill 110, advanced south to the highway, and then pushed on toward Canville after a sharp fire fight in the evening with enemy delaying units. At 2200 the 1st Battalion reached Grande Huanville and cut the la Haye du Puits–Barneville road, the last main exit from the peninsula.

These advances had been pressed vigorously on verbal orders, and the regiment was already at Hills 110 and 90 when division Field Order No. 3, naming these as objectives, was issued at 1500. The regiment was then given further verbal orders to continue its drive and completely block the corridor between St. Lô-d'Ourville and St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont.

Meanwhile the 60th Infantry moved out in column of battalions from its bridgehead at Ste. Colombe at 0600. The enemy had evacuated Néhou and the columns moved down the Néhou–Barneville highway without encountering any resistance except from small straggler units. An entire enemy field artillery battalion was captured by the 1st Battalion, last in the column. Late in the afternoon the 1st Battalion, 39th Infantry, joined the column pushing west and by nightfall all four battalions were strung out between the Douve and the sea. The 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry, was driving toward Barneville-sur-Mer; the 2d and 1st Battalions were pushing westward through St, Pierre-d'Artheglise toward Hills 145 and 133, respectively, which dominated the Barneville-sur-Mer–Bricquebec highway; and the 1st Battalion of the 39th was nearing St. Jacques-de-Nehou.

The progress had been so good all day that General Collins ordered the 9th Division to go as far as possible that night and to complete the sealing off of the peninsula. At 2210 General Eddy, passing the 60th Infantry CP group on the road, said: "We're going all the way tonight." The 3d Battalion received verbal orders to continue to Barneville-sur-Mer and cut the coastal road there; the 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry, was already astride that road farther south. Road blocks were established at the crossings of the Seye River, north of le Valdecie, to protect the division's line of communications.

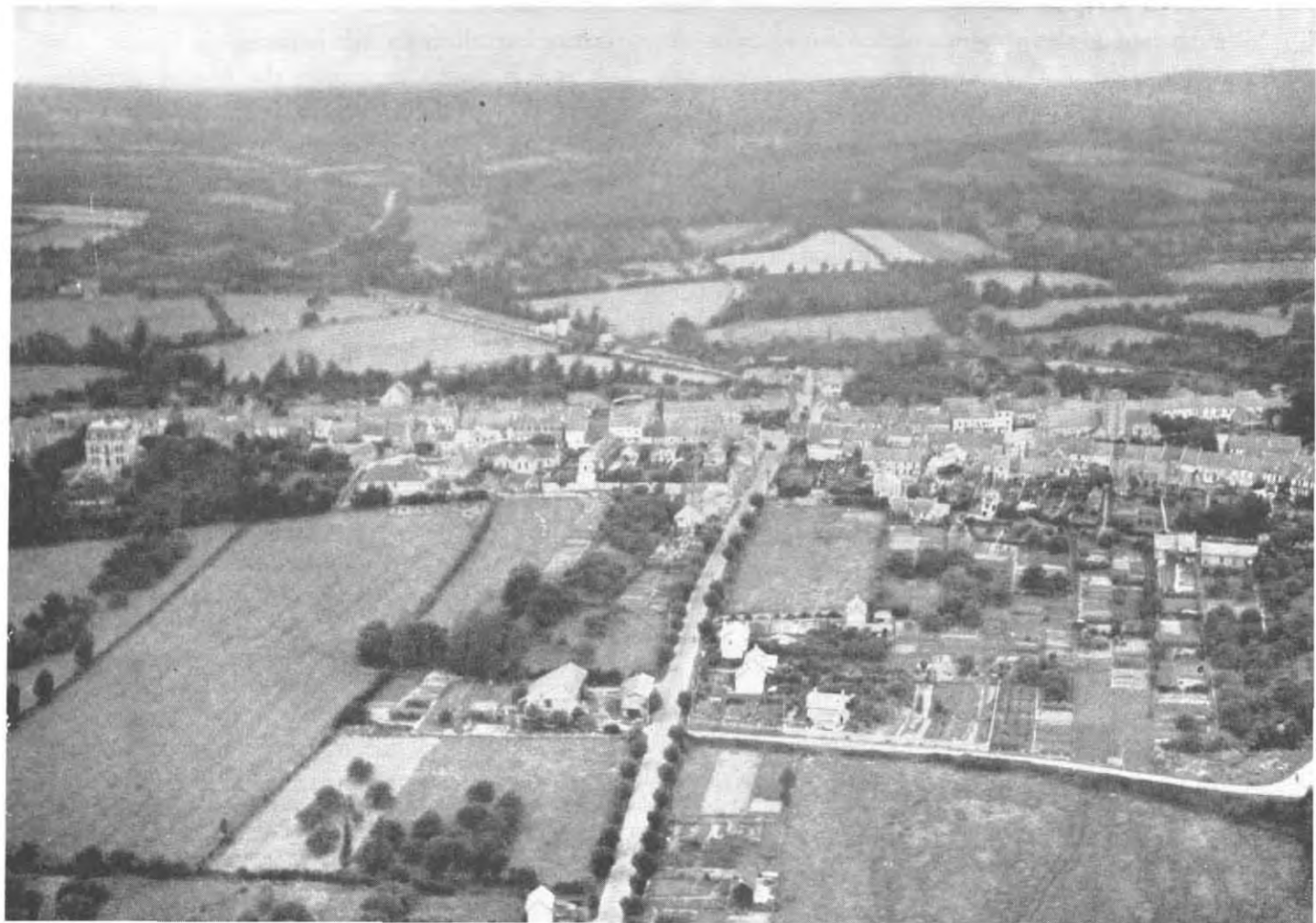
The 47th Infantry was also ordered by General Collins to push on, and at 2300 the 3d Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Clayman,

resumed its march southward toward St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont to secure the east edge of the corridor and block the secondary road through this village. Passing over lanes and trails so close to German positions that enemy voices could be heard at times, the Intelligence Section, leading the column, was finally challenged. Its twelve men opened fire with tommy guns and a short fight ensued, which involved part of Company L. The enemy outpost was at last overwhelmed and the march was resumed. Company K led the column to St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont. Resistance around this town was cleaned out the following day.

The actual cutting of the peninsula was accomplished on the night of 17 June. The 82d Airborne Division had secured control of the causeway over the Prairies Marécageuses south of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. The Barneville–la Haye du Puits highway had been cut at Gde. Huanville by the 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry, and the 2d and 3d Battalions were progressively plugging the Canville–Neuville-en-Beaumont gap, eliminating the remaining enemy forces around these two towns and St. Lô-d'Ourville the next day, 18 June.

In the 60th Infantry's zone the Barneville-sur-Mer mission was undertaken by the 3d Battalion, led by Company K riding 5 tanks (Company B, 746th Tank Battalion), 4 tank destroyers (Company A, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion), and the 4 half-tracks of the antitank platoon. At 2200 they jumped off from the crossroads south of le Valdecie,

BARNEVILLE-SUR-MER, *on the west coast of the Cotentin, was reached early on 18 June by the 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry. This completed the blocking of the western corridor, the 47th Infantry having cut the highway farther south on the previous night.*



moving southwest on the main highway. Two miles west of the line of departure an enemy antitank gun knocked the tracks off the leading tank destroyer. After some delay the force moved on, but at the crossroads north of St. Maurice it unintentionally continued southward to Villot, arriving at 0200. After a patrol had narrowly missed an encounter with an enemy bicycle force, the battalion advanced northwest along a ridge toward Barneville. Reaching the nose of the ridge at 0500, the troops could look down on the town, which appeared deserted.

While the other units of the 3d Battalion remained in position to cover from the high ground overlooking the town, Company K entered with the tanks, the tank destroyers, and a platoon of heavy machine guns. A few German MP's were taken prisoner. During the day the enemy made no concerted attempt to regain the town, although brief fire fights developed with small enemy groups which intended to pass through the town and were surprised at the presence of the Americans. At 1000 about 125 Germans attacked from the southeast but were beaten off by Company L, which took 85 prisoners.

At the same time, to the north and east, larger enemy units tried to break through the 60th Infantry's string of positions extending from Barneville-sur-Mer through Hill 133 (1st Battalion), Hill 145 (2d Battalion), and St. Jacques-de-Nehou (1st Battalion, 39th Infantry). An attempt to slash through the Bricquebec–Barneville road by a column of infantry and artillery vehicles was disastrous for the enemy. All available guns of the 60th Field Artillery Battalion were concentrated on the head of the column when it was first observed west of Hill 145, and the fire was then adjusted to creep five miles up the congested road. Infantry and antitank fire joined the artillery. The heavy fire destroyed thirty-five vehicles (including trucks, half-tracks, cars, and a tank), ten guns, and numerous machine guns and mortars, as well as wagons, trailers, motorcycles, caissons, bicycles, and horses. Other enemy columns were stopped and destroyed at road blocks north of le Valdecie. Several staff officers of the *77th Division* were captured in one of the columns.

The most serious threat to the 9th Division's northern flank developed north of St. Jacques-de-Néhou, where the 1st Battalion, 39th Infantry (Lieutenant Colonel Tucker), had gone into position on the night of 17 June. Attached to the 60th Infantry as reserve, following the capture of Orglandes, it had not received any definite mission other than to follow the 60th Infantry, presumably to aid in protecting the division's lengthening northern flank. The battalion finally settled down for the night at 0200 in position astride a road running north from St. Jacques-de-Néhou. The position commanded the draws to the front, but the flanks were unprotected.

At 0430 heavy machine-pistol and machine-gun fire was heard. It seemed to cover the entire battalion front. Riflemen in Companies A and B began to return the enemy fire and were able to fight largely from their bivouac positions. Machine guns and mortars were quickly unloaded from vehicles and started to fire without observation.

In the darkness, which made it difficult to find targets, a hot fire fight developed, the enemy advancing at times to within grenade-throwing distance. But the riflemen gave no ground, and 900 rounds were fired by the mortars, sometimes at ranges of 250 yards. Fighting at close quarters, one machine gunner found his fire masked by a herd of cows. A sergeant in Company A attempted to clear the cows from the line of fire by throwing stones and shellcases. Finally he gave up. "Mow 'em down, Mike," he told his gunner.

Despite this heavy fire the battalion's position remained precarious. It had no antitank guns and no artillery support. The 60th Field Artillery Battalion, endangered because of its

closeness to St. Jacques-de-Néhou, displaced during the enemy attack. As the enemy continued his thrusts and a breakthrough on the right appeared a possibility, Colonel Tucker ordered a withdrawal south to positions near an east-west road running into St. Jacques-de-Néhou. With the heavy weapons covering, the rifle platoons disengaged one by one and later the heavy weapons were moved back another 400 yards. Drivers had taken their vehicles to Blandamour earlier.

Communication with higher headquarters was established only after the withdrawal, when the division wire was finally located. General Eddy approved the withdrawal but ordered the battalion to hold its new line and promised support by a division artillery concentration. When the plight of the battalion was made known to Corps, General Collins directed the 79th Division to move an infantry battalion via motor to the vicinity of Ste. Colombe.

This order was countermanded, however, when General Eddy had become satisfied that Colonel Tucker's men were in no immediate danger. Colonel Tucker had already made plans to counterattack with division artillery support. Shortly after 0900 the artillery fired a "zombie" and the 81-mm. mortars fired their entire basic loads of ammunition. As a result, when the riflemen moved out, they were able to push straight through to their old positions and drove the enemy back to the Seye River. In all, the battalion suffered 39 casualties during the enemy attack and 4 or 5 in the counterattack. In the drive back to ground previously held, 60 German wounded were taken and 250 dead were found scattered at scores of points.

The Enemy Gamble

In the drive toward the Douve River from 14 to 16 June, elements of three German divisions, the *243d, 91st,* and *77th,* were identified. As the 82d Airborne Division and the 9th Division approached the Douve, some of these units retired across the river at St. Sauveur-le Vicomte and Ste. Colombe. Others probably withdrew northward, but their exact location was unknown. On the night of 16 June, when the 60th Infantry was still engaged in securing a bridgehead opposite Ste. Colombe, Lt. Col. Robert W. Robb, the 9th Division G–2, listed as an enemy capability in the sector west of the Douve an attack from the north in an effort to "evacuate certain personnel from the peninsula." This prognosis was apparently substantiated during the night of 17–18 June when enemy units tried to break through the road blocks on the Seye, when a motorized column tried to strike south on the Bricquebec–Barneville road, and particularly when others attacked the 1st Battalion, 39th Infantry, at St. Jacques-de-Néhou. A prisoner taken during the latter action stated that the German attack was made by the *3d Battalion* and part of the *2d Battalion* of the *1049th Regiment (77th Division).*

The problem actually facing the enemy was more than an effort to evacuate certain personnel from the peninsula. He was trying to delay to the maximum the American bid to cut the peninsula and, at the same time, to prevent having his best troops, the *77th Division,* trapped north of the breakthrough if it should occur. Most of the German units in the Cotentin had suffered severe losses in the fighting to date and the *91st Division* was so badly decimated that it could scarcely be counted as a division at all. How long was it a good gamble to leave the *77th Division* committed against the increasing American pressure?

By 13 June the enemy was sure that the intention of the U.S. forces was to cut the peninsula. At first Field Marshal Rommel thought that there was a possibility of preventing this by moving the *77th Division* down from the Merderet to block the American advance west



of St. Sauveur-le Vicomte. He ordered this move on 14 June, but he still had no intention of risking the isolation of the *77th Division* if the peninsula should be cut. He decided, on the contrary, that if the Americans broke through to the west coast, the *77th Division* would be withdrawn south and the defense of Cherbourg would devolve on the *709th, 91st,* and *243d Divisions.*

In anticipation of an American breakthrough, *LXXXIV Corps* on 15 June ordered the reorganization of German forces in the peninsula into two *Kampfgruppen.* The field order, copies of which were captured the next day by the 9th Division, organized the *709th Division* and *243d Division* into one *Kampfgruppe* under Generalleutnant Karl Wilhelm von Schlieben, commanding the *709th Division.* The *77th* and *91st Divisions* were combined in another *Kampfgruppe* under Generalleutnant Heinz Hellmich, commander of the *243d Division.* If the peninsula were cut, *Kampfgruppe von Schlieben* was to defend Cherbourg and *Kampfgruppe Hellmich* was to pull out to the south to prevent any further American penetration south of St. Lô-d'Ourville.

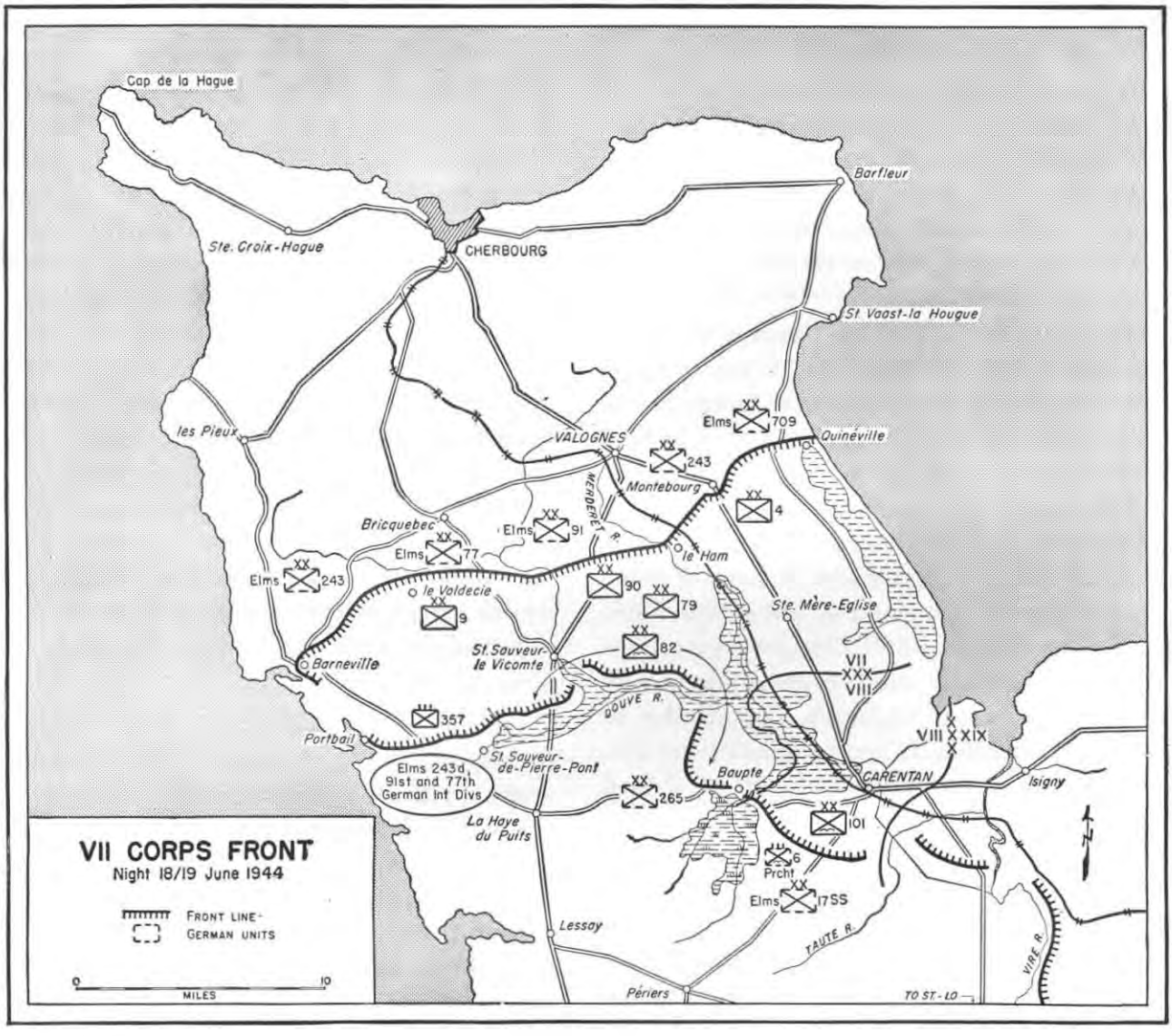
No movement of troops was undertaken under this plan because the whole situation had become the personal concern of Hitler. He countermanded the *Seventh Army's* planned redisposition of forces in the Cotentin on 15 June, and ordered the line of that date held at all costs. But there was little the German command could do to carry out this order. The breaking of the Merderet line and the drive west had compromised the whole enemy position by extending his lines of defense.

The problem was brought to a head on 16 June when the 82d Airborne Division surprised the enemy by advancing rapidly to St. Sauveur-le Vicomte and establishing a bridgehead across the Douve. Aware of the inevitable consequences of the continued American advance, *LXXXIV Corps* immediately asked permission to withdraw the *77th Division* southward in the hope that the westward surge of the 82d Airborne Division and 9th Division could still be stopped. *Seventh Army* also considered this move imperative and, fearing landings on the northwest coast, also regarded it as urgent that "movement Cherbourg" (of von Schlieben's group) be executed immediately. Both Rommel and von Rundstedt appreciated this and were particularly concerned over the likelihood that troops would be needlessly locked in the peninsula and sacrificed. But they would authorize only the movement of small forces of the *77th Division,* pending approval from Hitler's headquarters.

On 17 June permission was finally granted to implement the provisional clauses of the original plan of withdrawal as set forth in the Corps field order of 15 June. Hitler, however, again emphasized the importance of holding Cherbourg at all costs and enjoined the von Schlieben force to retard the progress of the Americans, reminding the general that "the possession of Cherbourg is decisive." Accordingly, von Schlieben was authorized to withdraw slowly from his "perilous position."

The redisposition of the *Kampfgruppe Hellmich* proved more difficult. General Hellmich was killed on 17 June, while attempting to redispose elements of the *709th Division* and his own *243d Division.* Meanwhile, Generalleutnant Rudolf Stegmann of the *77th Division* was ordered to disengage and withdraw to la Haye du Puits. The division field order for this movement, captured the fol-

ELEMENTS OF THE 39TH INFANTRY *are shown passing through St. Jacques-de-Néhou, near which the 1st Battalion had repulsed an attempted enemy breakthrough on the morning of 18 June.*



MAP NO. 25

lowing day, gave the march routes for the various units. The *1049th Regiment* (Col. Rudolf Bacherer) was assigned a route from Magneville across the Douve to St. Jacques-de-Néhou. This was the force which attacked and was then routed by the 1st Battalion, 39th Infantry, on the morning of 18 June. While directing the various elements of the *77th Division* in their attempted escape from the peninsula, General Stegmann was killed in an attack by an American fighter-bomber.

The division field order of 17 June, which stated that "eventual enemy resistance on the march route must be broken under all circumstances," had come too late. A battalion of the *1050th Regiment* temporarily wrested control of a bridge over the Ollande River near St. Lô-d'Ourville on 19 June, took a considerable number of Americans prisoner, and opened the way for Colonel Bacherer to lead from 1,200 to 1,400 men through the American lines, but large numbers of the *77th Division* were trapped in the peninsula and its artillery was completely destroyed.

The cutting of the peninsula by the 9th Division marks the end of a phase in the VII

Corps' operations in the Cotentin (Map No. 25). With the southern flank of the Corps secured, and the remaining German units bottled up in the peninsula, the Corps could now make a coordinated attack northward to its final objective, the port of Cherbourg. On 18 June General Eddy commended his troops for their accomplishment, and General Montgomery, commander of 21 Army Group, sent personal congratulations to the VII Corps commander on the "roping off" of the peninsula.

Actually the main roads leading out of the peninsula had been severed by the night of 17 June. The next day the 47th Infantry mopped up small pockets of resistance, mainly stragglers, in the vicinity of Neuville-en-Beaumont and St. Lô-d'Ourville. During the afternoon this regiment was relieved by the 357th Infantry, which assumed responsibility for the Corps' left flank security, and the 47th moved to Fierville as division reserve.

The 358th and 359th Regiments of the 90th Division had reached their objective line between Terre de Beauval and le Ham, relieving the 39th Infantry of responsibility east of the Douve. By noon the 39th was moving west to the vicinity of St. Jacques-de-Néhou, preparatory to the jump-off for Cherbourg. Later in the day the 357th Infantry was ordered to relieve the 47th Infantry to prevent enemy penetration through the St. Lô-d'Ourville gap.

The 82d Airborne Division was to undertake one more operation to the south before being relieved from attachment to VII Corps. It was to seize a bridgehead south of Pont l'Abbé and establish contact with other units of the division which had crossed at Beuzeville-la Bastille. This mission was successfully accomplished on 19 June.

Protection of the southern line gradually fell to VIII Corps (Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton), which became operational on 15 June. On that day it had taken over the 101st Airborne Division and on 19 June the 82d Airborne Division and elements of the 90th Division also came under its control. With these adjustments the VII Corps, with three divisions, was free to start the drive on Cherbourg.

THE DRIVE ON CHERBOURG

The original plan of VII Corps had contemplated a 2-division drive on Cherbourg, with the 90th Division on the right and the 4th Division on the left. The 9th Division was to be close at hand should the need for its employment in this operation arise. This plan of deployment was modified in the first days of the operation as a result of the protracted struggle for the Merderet bridgehead and the determined enemy resistance along the Quinéville Ridge. Still, until 18 June General Collins contemplated using the 4th and 90th Divisions for the drive on Cherbourg, though he had asked for and received the 79th Division as a possible replacement for the 90th. He wished to begin the attack northward as soon as possible and, on 16 June, with the 90th Division still short of its objective between the Douve and Merderet and the 9th Division not yet at the Douve, the 4th Division had been ordered to prepare for an attack northwestward in conjunction with the 90th Division. But the attack order was withheld pending the outcome of operations west of the Douve. The enemy expected an attempted breakthrough on 17 June and was surprised when it did not occur. When the peninsula was cut that day, plans were again made for the jump-off of the 4th and 90th Divisions to Cherbourg, and a surprise attack was tentatively scheduled for 19 June.

These plans were changed at the last minute after a meeting between General Bradley, General Collins, and some of the division commanders on 18 June. It was decided that the drive on Cherbourg would be made by three divisions abreast—the 4th on the right, the 79th in the center, and the 9th on the left. Among the factors which contributed to this change were recent intelligence concerning enemy dispositions, the unreadiness of the 90th Division, and the availability of a fresh division—the 79th. General Bradley had previously authorized the Corps to bypass the enemy positions along the east coast. This entire right flank was to be covered by elements of the 4th Cavalry Group. The attack was thus directed straight at Cherbourg.

The 9th and 79th Divisions were to attack at 0500, 19 June. The 9th Division's initial objective was the high ground between Rauville-la Bigot and St. Germain-le Gaillard (Map XII). The 79th's main effort was to be made on its left, to seize the high ground west and northwest of Valognes. Separating the two divisions was an oblong area approximately 6 miles long and 2½ miles wide, west of the Douve and the main railway, in which the 4th Cavalry Squadron was to reconnoiter and maintain contact between the 9th and 79th Divisions. The 4th Division's attack was to start as a night operation, beginning at 0300,

the objective being the commanding ground at Tamerville and northeast thereof.

For the next eight days the effort of the entire VII Corps was to be directed toward the capture of Cherbourg and was, in fact, the focus of attention of the whole First Army, since future operations were greatly dependent on the seizure of this port. The drive was expected to yield a considerable prize in prisoners, though the exact number of enemy forces in the peninsula was not known. Estimates varied between 25,000 and 40,000 troops, including not only the enemy units already encountered but also the Cherbourg garrison, Luftwaffe, antiaircraft, rocket, and naval personnel, and Todt Organization workers.

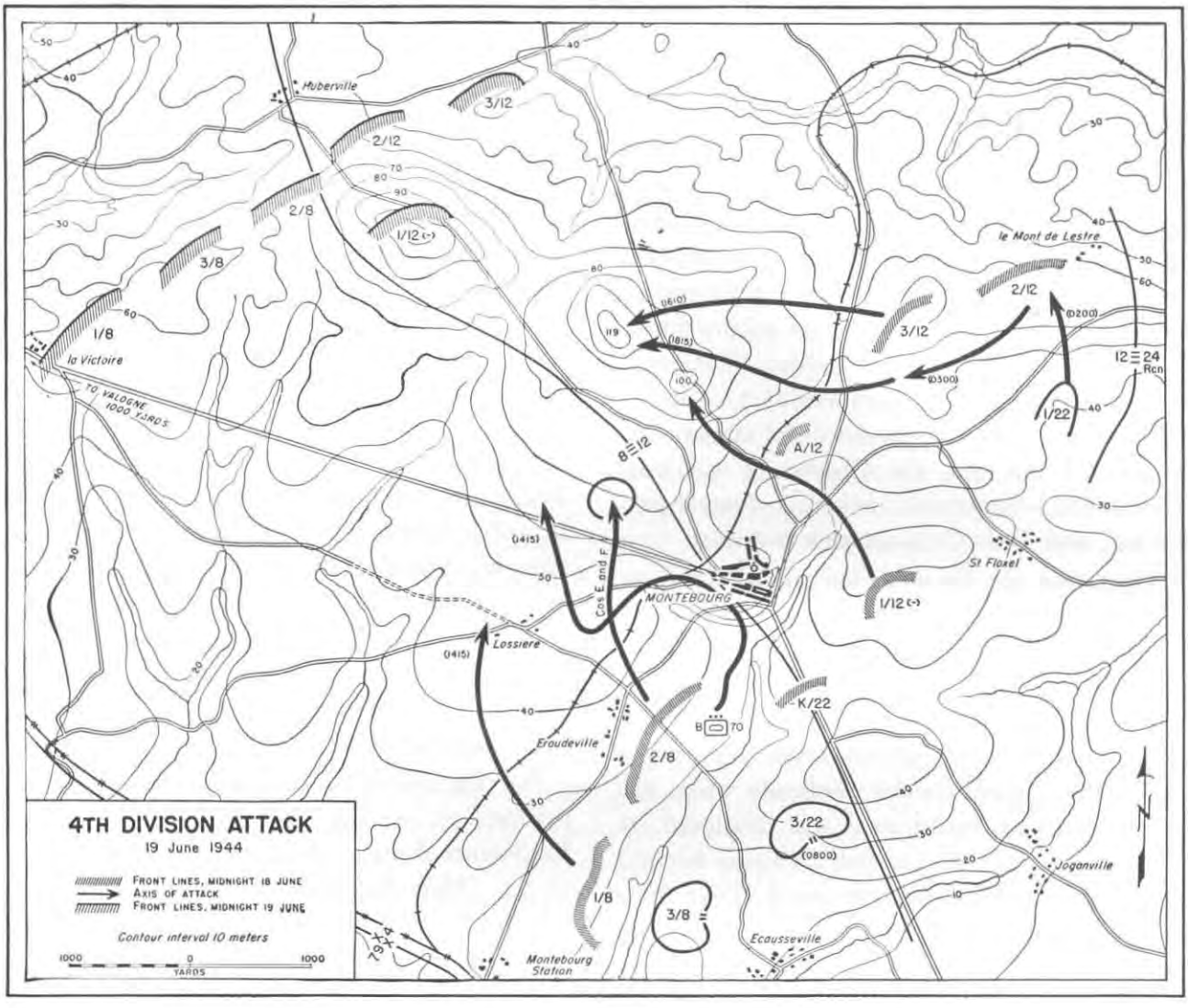
Opposing the three American divisions on 18 June were elements of four German divisions. The 9th Division had identified elements of the *920th* and *921st Regiments* of the *243d Division* and the *1049th* and *1050th Regiments* of the *77th Division.* The latter had been trapped in the peninsula when the enemy plan of withdrawal was disrupted by the rapid thrust of the 9th Division beyond the Douve, and by the firm stand of the 60th Infantry and 1st Battalion, 39th Infantry, along the northern flank. Between the Douve and Merderet, where the 79th Division was to pass through the 90th Division, were other fragments of the *1049th Regiment,* as well as elements of the *1057th Regiment (91st Division),* which was supposed to have withdrawn southward. Confronting the 4th Division were elements of all three regiments of the *243d Division, Sturm Battalion AOK 7,* all three regiments of the *709th Division,* and artillery and antiaircraft batteries. Some of these units had suffered heavy casualties in the past thirteen days and all were understrength. *Sturm Battalion AOK 7,* for example, was whittled down to a strength of about one hundred men. On the southern flank, facing the 357th Infantry, were elements of the *1057th, 1058th,* and *922d Regiments.* This disposition of the enemy's forces indicated that his units were split by the cutting of the peninsula. Fragments of the *243d Division* were on both the 9th and 4th Division fronts.

The First Day

During the four days prior to the jump-off for Cherbourg on 19 June the enemy opposite the 4th Division had had time to prepare defenses, especially in the Montebourg area. After the capture of Quinéville on 14 June the only American activity was patrolling and reorganization. The 8th and 12th Infantry Regiments improved their positions. The 22d Infantry temporarily took over the Quinéville area when the 39th Infantry was detached from the 4th Division, but in the following days the 22d Infantry was in turn relieved by the 24th Cavalry Squadron (part of the 4th Cavalry Group) and went into assembly at Fontenay-sur-Mer.

For the attack of 19 June, General Barton planned to use the 8th and 12th Infantry Regiments abreast, one on either side of Montebourg (Map No. 26). The railway running southwest and northeast from Montebourg was designated as the line of departure, although it was still in enemy hands. The attack was to begin at 0300, without artillery, and bypass the town. Beginning at 1000, the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, was to enter Montebourg from the west and capture it. The regiment's 2d Battalion was to remain in reserve and the 1st Battalion, in the vicinity of le Mont de Lestre, was to screen the 12th Infantry as it prepared for the attack. Artillery fires, available on call, included the reinforcing fire of the 183d Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm. howitzer) and the 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion.

The 8th and 12th Infantry Regiments planned the main effort along their common boundary, their intermediate objectives being the heights northwest of Montebourg. Since



MAP NO. 26

the 12th's first objectives were Hills 100 and 119, its attack was to lead it almost directly west from its line of departure. The regimental field order did not provide for supporting fires.

Fairly heavy resistance could be expected in front of the 8th Infantry. Patrols had located several enemy positions west of Montebourg and it was known that remnants of the *Sturm Battalion AOK 7* and *2d Battalion, 729th Regiment*, were dug in along the railway from Montebourg to Montebourg Station, and that the *2d Battalion, 921st Regiment*, was also in the area, although its exact location was not determined. The enemy's strength along this front was estimated at between 1,000 and 1,500 men. Colonel Van Fleet arranged for heavy fire by the mortars of all three battalions and by Company C of the 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion. The 1st and 2d Battalions were to lead the attack, with the 1st Chemical Mortar Battalion echeloned to the left rear. The first 1,500 yards were to be covered before daylight. This would take the regiment through the enemy's prepared positions.

Both the 8th and 12th Infantry Regiments attacked at 0300, as scheduled. The enemy was well dug in along the railway, the intend-

ed line of departure, and at dawn the 12th was still held up short of this line, subjected to heavy artillery and Nebelwerfer fire. At daylight, however, the German line was broken by the 1st Battalion with the support of Company A, 70th Tank Battalion, and Hill 100 was captured at about 1000. The 3d Battalion, on the right, had also been held up and was ordered to wait for the tanks, which arrived only after finishing the mission with the 1st Battalion. With their support, the 3d Battalion seized Hill 119 at 1600. Late in the afternoon the 2d Battalion passed through the center, relieved the 1st Battalion, and drove on to the next height, 3,000 yards east of Valognes. There the two battalions established their line that night.

Since the railway was strongly held, the 8th Infantry gauged its jump-off from the highway to reach the line of departure at 0300. The men of the leading platoons of Company F (Capt. John A. Kulp) crossed the road at 0250, following the mortar fire so closely that "it burned their faces." From then on the attack had the characteristic confusion of night operations. Company F walked right through the enemy lines almost without being fired on. But when Captain Kulp reached his objective 1,000 yards northwest of Montebourg, he discovered that he had only forty-five men and had lost two platoons. Meanwhile, Company E (Lt. John C. Rebarchek) crossed the tracks and reached a sunken trail where it picked up one platoon of Company F, which had been fighting there. This force then moved through the enemy position and joined Captain Kulp's men on the objective.

The rest of the 2d Battalion was also having a hard fight along the railway. It was impossible to reach the enemy in his deep entrenchments even with mortars. After several hours of fighting a platoon of tanks (Company B, 70th Tank Battalion) came up and, with its support, the battalion circled through the edge of Montebourg and attacked the German positions from the rear. This finally broke the enemy's resistance and forced him to withdraw. As he fell back, pursued by the 2d Battalion and pressed by the 12th Infantry on the right, he was driven into the position held by elements of Company F and Company E. Caught in the squeeze, large numbers of the enemy were killed.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had attacked on the left at 0300 and had encountered similar opposition, but, like the 3d Battalion, it finally broke through with the aid of tanks. Early in the evening the 2d Battalion moved abreast of the 1st Battalion and the 3d Battalion was committed in the center. By nightfall the three battalions held a line from la Victoire to Huberville. The 12th Infantry held the high ground to the right rear.

Due to the prolonged delay of the 8th and 12th Regiments in pushing past Montebourg, the 3d Battalion of the 22d Infantry, which was to have occupied the town at 1000, did not move in until 1800. Repeatedly shelled for a week, Montebourg was abandoned by the Germans. About three hundred French civilians emerged from the cellars. Later in the evening the bulk of the 22d Infantry was concentrated on the right flank of the division, intent on pushing the attack again early the next day.

Westward in the peninsula enemy opposition was progressively lighter. Advancing northward the 79th Division encountered only delaying action by enemy security and demolition detachments on the roads, and made good progress on its first day of combat. The 9th Division made an even more rapid advance up the west coast. In fact, it was little more than a road march.

Both the 79th and 9th Divisions jumped off at 0500, 19 June (Map XIII). The 79th Division's objective, the high ground west and northwest of Valognes, was divided between the 313th and 315th Infantry Regiments. Valognes was not within the division's zone and



THE CITY OF MONTEBOURG *was in ruins when the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, entered on 19 June. It had been subjected to heavy air and artillery bombardment to avoid costly street fighting in gaining possession of the city.*

the 315th Infantry was instructed to bypass the town and cut the Valognes–Cherbourg highway. The main effort of the division was to be made on the left by the 313th Infantry. The division's line of departure was the former objective line of the 90th Division, stretching roughly from Golleville to Urville.

The 313th Infantry attacked with its 1st and 3d Battalions. The 1st Battalion met only slight resistance and took its objective, the Bois de la Brique, northwest of Valognes, by 1400. The 3d Battalion encountered more opposition, but gained its objective after using the bulk of its artillery support.

The advance of the 315th Infantry was slower. The 1st Battalion drew fairly heavy enemy fire 2,000 yards north of Urville, and the 2d Battalion was counterattacked after passing Lieusaint, farther west. It could not move forward again until 1900, and made

only a slight advance before digging in for the night. It had been unable to reach its objective or cut the Valognes–Cherbourg road. The 3d Battalion came up early in the evening to clean out snipers around Lieusaint, but the situation at Valognes was still vague. A considerable number of stragglers offered scattered resistance west of town and around the Bois de la Brique. In view of this situation General Wyche decided to leave the 315th to contain the town from the west. The 313th was now to make the main effort on the right of the division's zone, and the 314th was to come up on its left. General Wyche decided to commit the 314th the same evening and at about 1920 ordered the regiment to move out immediately, designating as its objective the first high ground beyond the confluence of the Gloire and Merderet Rivers. Within a half hour the 2d Battalion was on the move, and reached its objective, Croix Jacob, at 0415 the next morning.

The 9th Division, meanwhile, made a relatively uneventful march of over ten miles, several thousand yards beyond its assigned objective—the high ground between St. Germain-le Gaillard and Rauville-la Bigot (Map XIII). The 60th and 39th Infantry Regiments moved out at 0550, each with two battalions abreast. Initially there was no contact with the enemy, but none had been expected. The best estimate was that the Germans had fallen back to Cherbourg, though it was thought they might have strong points at Bricquebec and les Pieux. Bricquebec was the objective of the 2d Battalion of the 39th In-

MAJ. GEN. IRA T. WYCHE, *Commanding General, 79th Division, with General Eisenhower.*



fantry, the right flank battalion of the division. No enemy was found in the town and it was occupied by 0700.

The advance of all four battalions was rapid. They simply marched to designated objectives, usually commanding heights and likely defense areas, and checked these for possible enemy occupation. There was no opposition all morning and shortly after noon all units were on their objectives. Approximately one hundred enemy stragglers were picked up in this period and the 39th Infantry found the body of General Stegmann of the *77th Division*, who had been killed on 17 June.

The advance of the division had been so rapid that it was necessary to pause momentarily to effect coordination with other elements of the Corps. The bomb line had to be moved forward. General Eddy issued fragmentary orders at 1330 for the 60th Infantry to reorganize at St. Germain-le Gaillard and Crosville, preparatory to continuing the advance, and authorized Col. Frederick J. de Rohan (commanding the regiment) to send motorized patrols to les Pieux pending further orders. The 39th Infantry was directed to reorganize at Rauville-la Bigot.

The 4th Cavalry Group (minus 24th Squadron and Troop B, 4th Cavalry Squadron) had divided its forces and moved out on schedule that morning to reconnoiter the area between the 9th and 79th Divisions and maintain contact between them. Troops A and C jumped off from Néhou toward Negreville and Troop E and Company F proceeded from Blandamour north toward Rocheville. For a while these units kept pace with the 9th Division, encountering only slight resistance on the Bricquebec–Negreville line and converging rapidly toward Rocheville. Near the town the advance elements of Troop A suddenly drew heavy artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire. A dismounted reconnaissance force discovered what was believed to be an enemy delaying force of approximately one reinforced platoon, with two antiaircraft guns, in the village. Troop E provided an artillery preparation with its assault guns, and then dismounted personnel of Troops A and C, with tanks from Company F, wiped out the position. The cavalry was still not abreast of the 39th Infantry at Rauville-la Bigot.

General Eddy was anxious to press the retreating enemy, reported to be badly disorganized in the previous day's action, to deny him time for reorganization in the rugged terrain around Cherbourg. However, further advance without flank protection seemed inadvisable. The cavalry's zone of operation, extending only a few thousand yards north of Rocheville, was therefore enlarged northward and the cavalry group (really a squadron in size) was attached to the 9th Division. The 9th Division's boundary was thus extended eastward to include the area east of the railway between Martinvast and St. Martin-le Gréard. It was in this area that General Eddy planned to use the 4th Cavalry for the protection of the division's flank, particularly in the vicinity of les Flagues, astride the highway.

Meanwhile, General Collins received the Army commander's authorization to have the 1st Battalion, 359th Infantry, take over the Rocheville area. This battalion, which had not yet moved out of the Biniville area, was attached to the 9th Division for this limited mission. It was approximately 1600 when these arrangements were made. An hour later General Eddy issued additional fragmentary orders for the resumption of the advance, and the division again moved northward.

The 39th Infantry moved north to Couville, where it secured the highway junction that night, the 3d Battalion advancing to St. Christophe-du-Foc. The regiment was supported by part of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The 60th Infantry also had tank destroyer support (899th) and tanks (Company B, 746th Tank Battalion), and moved forward to bypass les Pieux. The 1st Battalion



TERRAIN IN THE NORTH COTENTIN *gradually becomes hillier, with more pronounced ridges, deeper valleys, and frequent wooded areas. In the 79th Division sector along the Carentan–Cherbourg highway, shown above, there were patches of fairly open country. Below is a scene along the Cherbourg–Bricquebec road, farther west.*



patrols reported the town clear at about 1730. The two leading battalions were then able to go on to Helleville, where they stopped late that night. Contact was made with French Resistance forces in les Pieux that evening. A lieutenant of the French Forces of the Interior (FFI) had mobilized a platoon, which brought in forty prisoners by nightfall and supplied detailed information concerning German defenses farther north.

Under its new orders, the 4th Cavalry Squadron moved toward les Flagues. Artillery and small arms delayed the column near Rauville-la Bigot, but forward elements reached St. Martin-le Gréard early that evening. The 4th Cavalry, 39th Infantry, and 60th Infantry were then roughly abreast on an east-west line running through Couville.

Meanwhile, the 47th Infantry had also joined the 9th Division's drive. This regiment had had varied missions that day. After being relieved by the 357th Infantry east of St. Lô-d'Ourville, it went into assembly in the vicinity of St. Jacques-de-Néhou. At noon it was alerted to move north to Bricquebec and two battalions started out at 1330. The 2d Battalion sent a motorized detachment to the road junction at Cadets and Fierville to clean out a pocket of Germans reported to number three hundred. The rest of the battalion moved up the Barneville–St. Germain road to pick up German stragglers. In the evening it assembled at Crosville and was alerted to follow the 60th Infantry past Helleville and swing northeast across the front of the 39th Infantry to the Bois du Mont Roc. This part of General Eddy's late afternoon orders, however, could not be executed on 19 June.

Late in the afternoon General Collins directed the 79th and 4th Divisions to continue the drive north that evening and block all the roads leading north and northwest from Valognes before dark, thus cutting off any enemy units still holding out in the Valognes area. But neither division was able to accomplish the task that night. During the day the strongest opposition to VII Corps had been in the east and proportionately smaller gains were therefore made on the right flank.

Advance to the Fortified Line

On the evening of 19 June, VII Corps announced the objectives for the next day. The 79th Division was to complete the seizure of its initial objective northwest of Valognes and then, with the Valognes–Cherbourg highway as its exit of advance, make its main effort on the right to seize the height which dominated Cherbourg from the southeast. The 4th Division, advancing along the right of the 79th, was to seize Hill 178 near Rufosses and then isolate Cherbourg from the east by driving on to the high ground at Tourlaville, east of the Trotebec River. The 9th Division, on the west, was to seize the commanding ground between Flottemanville-Hague and Ôcteville and block any movement from Cap de la Hague by capturing Hill 170 east of Haut Biville. Cherbourg would thus be isolated from the east and west and the enemy forces in the extremities of the peninsula could be dealt with after the city's fall.

On the evening of 19 June, General Barton issued verbal orders for the 22d Infantry, part of which was still in reserve at Fontenay-sur-Mer, to move northward into a new assembly area on the Quinéville Ridge. This would bring the regiment into position to support the 12th Infantry and fill the gap which had developed between the 12th Infantry and the 24th Cavalry Squadron. The 22d Infantry established itself on the northern slopes of the ridge, making contact with the cavalry at le Mont de Lestre and with the right rear of the 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry, 2,000 yards to the west.

Later in the evening General Barton decided to commit the 22d Infantry for the resumption of the drive on the next day. The division plan for 20 June called for an attack by

all three regiments. The 8th Infantry's objective was still the Tamerville area (Map XIII). Valognes, which was within the regiment's zone, was to be bypassed and contained, and entered only if free of Germans. The 22d Infantry was to take over the objective originally assigned to the 12th Infantry—the ground northeast of Tamerville. The 12th Infantry was given only a limited objective in the center and its attack was intended mainly as a demonstration. It was to be pinched out as soon as the 22d Infantry came abreast and was then to support the latter with fire. The decision to commit the 22d Infantry was possibly made with the view of permitting it to clear the area west of the Sinope River. The 22d was to begin its movement at 0330 so that it might come abreast of the 12th Infantry by daylight. To facilitate this coordination, one reinforced company of the 22d Infantry was to seize the tank ditch on the small tributary of the Sinope near Vaudreville by 2400.

The 4th Division's experience on 20 June was similar to the 9th's on the preceding day. When the attacks began it was found that the enemy had broken contact and retired northward. The 22d Infantry moved up during the night, as planned, came abreast of the 12th Infantry by daybreak, and kept on going. The 12th also reached its objective without incident and, at 0830, General Barton ordered the 2d Battalion, with a company of tank destroyers, to relieve the 8th Infantry in containing Valognes. This proved unnecessary when Colonel Van Fleet reported that patrols from his 1st Battalion had found the town clear, although the streets were so filled with rubble from previous bombardment that troops could not pass through.

Unknown to the 4th Division, the German commander had decided to disengage and withdraw his entire force to Fortress Cherbourg. With the cutting of the peninsula General von Schlieben had lost physical contact with the main German forces outside the Cotentin and was now on his own. Execution of the delayed withdrawal to the Cherbourg defenses was completely in his hands. Threatened with outflanking by the rapid push of the 9th Division up the west side of the peninsula, and under heavy pressure in the Montebourg area, von Schlieben decided on 19 June to disengage. Withdrawals began during the night. The remnants of the four divisions which he commanded had been so hard-pressed and were so battle weary, by his own admission, that almost no delaying actions were fought.

Despite the absence of opposition, the 4th Division's progress during the morning was not rapid. The 8th Infantry was delayed by the necessity of investigating conditions at Valognes. The 22d Infantry moved cautiously, unwilling to believe that the enemy had withdrawn. At 0915, Col. R. T. Foster, now commanding the 22d Infantry, was told that his battalions were not moving fast enough. "Rumor has it," he told his units, "that the 9th is within artillery range of Cherbourg. Guess Division Commander Barton is worried that somebody else will beat the 4th to Cherbourg."

About noon Colonel Van Fleet (8th Infantry) ordered his battalions to get on the roads and move rapidly. The 22d Infantry also took a route march formation and moved northward. In the afternoon General Collins directed General Barton to have the 8th Infantry seize Hill 178, west of Rufosses, the 12th Infantry take la Rogerie, and the 22d Infantry advance still farther to Hameau Gallis and the road junction to the north, patrolling in the direction of the strong points near Maupertus. Except for Hill 178, these objectives were reached that night, although not without opposition.

The 22d Infantry stopped short of le Theil, part of the regiment going into position south of the Saire River. There it was under direct observation and heavy fire from the high ground to the north which caused considerable casualties in the 1st Battalion.



The 8th Infantry first contacted enemy outposts southeast and east of Rufosses, meeting some resistance. The 3d Battalion was subjected to heavy artillery fire but attacked and took the town before dark, establishing a line just east of the Bois de Roudou. The 2d Battalion came under fire as it advanced up the slope northwest of Rufosses. It was nearly dark when the battalion reached this point, and the men dug in along the road 600 yards east of the crossroads. Both the 8th and 22d Infantry Regiments had tanks from the 70th Tank Battalion in support. The 24th Cavalry Squadron protected the division's right flank, reconnoitering as far as Quettehou.

The 8th Infantry advanced more than six miles on 20 June, and the 22d more than eight miles. Due to the rapid progress units were often without communications with higher headquarters. General Barton, while finding it difficult to locate the command posts, nevertheless was gratified with the division's progress.

The 79th Division, like the 4th, had been unable to cut the road in its zone north of Valognes on the evening of 19 June. The division's main effort on 20 June was to be made on the right, along the Valognes–Cherbourg highway, in conjunction with the 4th Division, the objective being the heights dominating Cherbourg from the southeast (Map XIII). While the 315th Infantry remained to contain Valognes, the 313th was to move north to cut the highway and with the 314th attack northwestward along this axis.

Both regiments jumped off at 0600. The 313th Infantry, moving in a column of battalions, crossed the Gloire River to St. Joseph. From there it made rapid progress for a time, as did the 8th Infantry a few thousand yards to the east. The 4th Reconnaissance Troop maintained contact between the two divisions in the wooded and hilly region of the upper Gloire. At Hameau du Long four light enemy tanks and an 88-mm. gun were captured intact. A few hundred yards farther on, the leading 2d Battalion received heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, but after a slight delay the regiment went on to the crossroads at Delasse. There the outposts of the prepared German line were encountered and the advance stopped.

The 314th Infantry's experience was similar. After following the 313th through la Brique it moved up the left of the highway,

THE CITY OF VALOGNES *and enemy installations near by were targets of Ninth Air Force bombers for several days before the city was entered on 20 June. The 8th Infantry found the city deserted and the streets (below) so filled with rubble that they were impassable for several days.*



battalions echeloned to the left rear. No attempt was made to hold the rocket bomb site southwest of Brix. Near this town the 3d Battalion captured eight tanks. Late in the afternoon the 1st and 3d Battalions were halted by heavy artillery fire as they approached the east-west highway east of St. Martin-le Grèard. Both regiments now sensed that they had come up against the prepared fortifications which lay four to five miles out from Cherbourg.

During the day the 315th Infantry cleared the area west of Valognes of several isolated enemy groups and then moved to an assembly area behind the other two regiments.

The 9th Division meanwhile continued its efforts to envelop the Cherbourg defenses from the west. On the afternoon of 19 June, when the division was making rapid progress, General Collins authorized General Eddy to continue northward in order to seize the high ground between Flottemanville-Hague and Octeville and to block the main route into the Cap de la Hague Peninsula. The 4th Cavalry Squadron and the 1st Battalion, 359th Infantry, were attached to protect the right flank, and two additional companies of tank destroyers of the 899th Battalion were given to the division for antitank protection. That afternoon General Eddy roughly outlined the division's plan of attack and both the 39th and 60th Infantry Regiments advanced another several thousand yards that evening. But the part of the plan which dealt with the 47th Infantry's commitment could not yet be implemented.

The plan was based on two major considerations—the necessity of blocking off the Cap de la Hague Peninsula, with its prepared defenses from which part of the enemy forces could be expected to make a stand, and the belief that the two key defense points blocking the approaches to Cherbourg were the Flottemanville-Hague and Bois du Mont du Roc areas. One regiment was assigned to each mission. The 60th Infantry was to attack straight north and block the exits from the peninsula. Its objectives were Hill 170, east of Haut Biville, and the ground from Branville north to the sea. The 47th Infantry was to follow the 60th about as far as Vasteville and then swing east to the Bois du Mont du Roc (Hill 171). In this maneuver it was to cross the front of the 39th Infantry, which was containing the enemy on the east. The 39th was to support the attack with fire and then, when uncovered by the 47th, move northward across the 47th's rear to attack through the Flottemanville-Hague defense area toward the strong point of Henneville, west of Cherbourg.

This complicated scheme of maneuver was dictated by several considerations. First, a change of direction from north to northeast had been ordered by Corps, and it was desirable to establish a pivot on which the movement could turn. Furthermore, the division was concerned about its right flank. The left flank elements of the 79th Division had not yet cleared the area east of the railroad, and the protection afforded the 9th Division's right rear by the mechanized cavalry of the 4th Cavalry Group was not considered adequate. The 39th Infantry was to provide this security to the division's right flank, guarding particularly against a hostile thrust from the east along the east-west road through St. Martin-le Gréard, and after some adjustment of positions was also to assist the 47th Infantry's advance with fire. An additional consideration in the choice of this order of attack was the fact that the 47th Infantry was relatively fresh.

In the attack on 20 June each regiment was supported by a company of tank destroyers and two battalions of field artillery. The 60th Infantry also had one company of tanks. The 4th Cavalry continued to operate on the division's right and the 1st Battalion of the 359th Infantry outposted the right rear to prevent enemy crossings of the upper Douve.

General Eddy expected Cherbourg to fall in a day or two, but events of 20 June proved this view to be over-optimistic. In fact, before the day ended it was necessary to revise the entire plan of operation.

At first all went well. Neither the 60th nor the 39th Infantry Regiment was opposed when it jumped off at 0800. The 60th, with the 2d and 3d Battalions abreast, occupied Vasteville, its intermediate objective line, without encountering resistance. By noon it had reached the high ground south of Biville and prepared to go on to Hill 170. The 60th Infantry was now getting into relatively open country. Fields were larger, trees fewer, and some of the hill tops were nearly bare. The enemy was dug in on the high ground to the north and had good observation. As the 60th Infantry advanced, it received an increasing amount of artillery fire.

The 47th Infantry, with the 2d Battalion leading the column, followed closely the right rear of the 60th and turned toward the creek line at the Bois de Norest, preparatory to jumping off for Hill 171. Before reaching the creek the leading battalions diverged, the 2d moving to the left of the woods, the 1st to the right. About noon Brig. Gen. Donald A. Stroh, 9th Division assistant commander, ordered troops to halt at the stream line at the bottom of Hill 171 so that artillery fires could be laid preparatory to a coordinated attack. Apparently no serious opposition had been expected up to that point.

Early in the afternoon the two battalions crossed the first stream, the 1st Battalion moving toward Sideville and the 2d Battalion advancing up the road to Crossroads 114, southeast of Acqueville. Both battalions were suddenly stopped by artillery and small-arms fire from positions on the heights to the east. The first fire encountered by the 2d Battalion came from houses at Crossroads 114, used as an outpost. This was followed by heavy fire from 88-mm. guns, 20-mm. antiaircraft guns, and machine guns dug in on the crest of a hill a few hundred yards east. Companies E and F, advancing astride the road, were forced to earth by shell fire. One 88-mm. shell landed in the center of a small group of the command, killing the battalion commander, a platoon leader of Company F, and the artillery liaison officer, and wounding both the commander and the executive officer of Company F, a radio operator, and two runners. Some men from Companies G and E pushed across the road, but the battalion was unprepared to reduce the position and had to pull back.

The heavy resistance at Crossroads 114 had an immediate repercussion since the execution of the whole 9th Division plan hinged largely on the 47th Infantry breaking through at this point. With the 47th delayed, it would become difficult for the 39th Infantry to move through to Flottemanville-Hague. Consequently, General Eddy altered the original plan. He ordered two battalions of the 60th Infantry to proceed at once to Flottemanville-Hague and then to Henneville, originally the 39th's objective. The 3d Battalion was to continue to Crossroads 167, the junction of the les Pieux and Cherbourg roads into the Cap de la Hague Peninsula, and defend the flank of the division against enemy attack from the northwest. One battalion of the 39th Infantry was alerted to move north and occupy Flottemanville-Hague after its capture by the 60th Infantry.

At 1630, when he issued these orders, General Eddy was still optimistic and believed that, with these adjustments, the advance could be continued. Col. Harry Flint (39th Infantry) was ordered, two hours later, to prepare two battalions for an attack along the les Pieux–Cherbourg highway.

Colonel de Rohan of the 60th Infantry issued orders for an attack at 1915. The attack was to move eastward astride the main road to Flottemanville-Hague with the 1st Battalion on the right and the 2d Battalion on the

left. The 3d Battalion continued north toward the main highway intersection near Branville and came to within 1,300 yards of its objective. The 1st and 2d Battalions, however, immediately encountered enemy fire from prepared positions near Gourbesville and were unable to go farther. Near Acqueville to the south the 47th Infantry also continued to receive heavy fire in the evening and abandoned plans to capture the heights beyond Crossroads 114; its 2d Battalion withdrew several hundred yards. Consequently the 39th Infantry could not implement its plan either, and the orders were cancelled.

Thus, on 20 June, the rapid progress of the 9th Division came to a sudden halt. The resistance which the enemy began to offer on the line Gourbesville–Acqueville–Sideville was impressive, and the 9th Division, like the 79th and the 4th, was well aware that it had now run into the prepared positions around Cherbourg.

German Defenses in the Hilly North

Since the jump-off on 19 June the three divisions had come into a new type of terrain. In advancing up the peninsula they had gradually left the low-lying south Cotentin and were now in the hilly north (Map XII). In the eastern half of the peninsula a hilly region first becomes apparent at Montebourg and gradually leads to higher ground near Cherbourg. Between Valognes and the port are several large wooded areas. The approach along the western half of the peninsula is even less favorable, as the region west of the Douve is frequently broken by ridges and stream valleys. Much of the country is of the "bocage" type, with fairly steep hills and steep-sided valleys; toward the northwest it becomes rugged, with open relief and rocky cliffs. Immediately backing the city of Cherbourg is a collar of steeply rising ground with frequent outcroppings of bare rock. This ground rises abruptly from the city and then falls back to form a high rolling plateau, broken by the deep valleys of the Divette, the Trotebec, and their tributaries.

It was country ideal for the defense of Cherbourg and the enemy had taken full advantage of it. On a rough semicircle, from four to six miles out from the port, the Germans had constructed a belt of fortifications varying in depth and type (Maps XIII and XIV). Always on commanding ground, these fortifications covered all approaches. Defensive lines were often tied in with streams which served as obstacles to tanks and self-propelled weapons. Where natural barriers did not form a continuous obstacle they were supplemented by ditches, and roads were blocked with steel gates or bars. Along the 4th Division front the enemy positions generally followed the northern edge of the Bois de Roudou and the western edge of the Bois du Coudray. In the 79th Division zone, the defenses were concentrated astride the main highway on the high ground between the upper reaches of the Trotebec and Douve. In front of the 9th Division, the German positions occupied, generally, the high ground from Sideville northwest to Ste. Croix-Hague, and then followed one of the ridges north through Branville, Greville, and Gruchy to the sea. The German "crust" of fortifications thus ran approximately as follows, from east to west: Cap Lévy–Maupertus–Bois du Coudray–Hill 178–the upper Trotebec–Hardinvast–Martinvast–Sideville–Hills 128 and 131–Flottemanville-Hague–Ste. Croix-Hague–Branville–Gruchy.

The defenses were of various types. In some areas there were permanent structures of concrete, with machine-gun turrets and mortars, underground personnel shelters, and ammunition storage rooms. In other places the fortifications consisted mainly of trenches and ditches, sometimes enclosing "Crossbow"

(rocket bomb) sites, from which the Germans could fight delaying actions. Hedges were frequently cut to permit a better field of fire, and wire enclosed the fortified area. Within this ring of defensive works were many antiaircraft positions, and as the Americans approached the Cherbourg defenses the enemy made full use of these weapons for ground fire. Most German positions were clearly and accurately shown on the large-scale defense overprints issued to all commanders, but exact information on the strength of the enemy in these positions was lacking. Prisoners continually reported that their units had suffered complete disorganization. On the evening of 20 June, General Collins ordered all units to probe the enemy's main line of resistance during the night.

The Corps Front on 21 June

General Eddy had abandoned his original plan and once more altered the specific objectives of the 9th Division units. The 39th Infantry was now assigned a zone on the right flank of the division, where it would relieve the 4th Cavalry with one battalion and develop enemy positions in the direction of Martinvast and in the valley of the Divette with strong patrols. The 4th Cavalry was to relieve the 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry, west of Ste. Croix-Hague and take over part of the 60th's original mission, reconnoitering the Cap de la Hague area and blocking enemy egress therefrom. The 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry, was to return to its regiment as reserve and both the 60th and 47th Infantry Regiments were to develop the enemy positions to the front.

The execution of these orders was begun during the night. The 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry, relieved the 4th Cavalry in the vicinity of les Flagues at about 0300, and the latter began relieving the 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry, on the opposite flank of the division about noon on 21 June. By evening the 4th Cavalry occupied a line along the road running through l'Epinette to the coast. All units pushed out strong reconnaissance. Patrols from the 60th Infantry found it difficult to move, for enemy artillery interdicted all routes of approach. The 2d Battalion patrols repeatedly failed to get into Ste. Croix-Hague. The regiment's whole position, in fact, was vulnerable, lying between three draws and facing German positions to the northeast.

Early on 21 June, the 3d Battalion of the 47th Infantry moved up between the 1st and 2d Battalions, opposite the enemy position at Boguenville. All units had been cautioned against getting into heavy fire fights. General Stroh directed that the 3d Battalion was simply to come up abreast of the other battalions and not engage the enemy. Before attacking, more exact intelligence was desired, particularly on enemy positions on Hill 171 (Bois du Mont du Roc). The day was therefore devoted to patrolling.

The 79th Division was similarly occupied in the center. As in the 9th Division area, the Germans reacted violently to the patrols, with both artillery and small-arms fire. During the day the 315th Infantry moved up to St. Martin-le Gréard. Here it came up against an enemy defense area which throughout the attack had been a kind of no-man's land. Responsibility for this sector had changed hands two or three times. The 9th Division had established road blocks to keep the enemy penned in his defensive area, but did not try to clean it out. That task now became the main preoccupation of the 315th Infantry of the 79th Division.

On the Corps right flank the 4th Division, unlike the 9th and 79th Divisions, had not run into the main enemy defense line the previous day, and some progress was made on 21 June. Reconnaissance during the night of 20–21 June and the following morning yielded no enemy contact. During the rapid march

northward on 20 June the 8th and 22d Infantry Regiments had a few brushes with outposts and received some artillery fire. The enemy delaying action, though light, was just sufficient to prevent the two regiments from developing the main German defense line before dark. General Barton ordered attacks by all three regiments on 21 June, the principal tasks being the capture of Hill 178, west of Rufosses, which the 8th Infantry had failed to take the day before, the development of the enemy's main line of resistance somewhere beyond the Bois du Coudray, and the cutting of the St. Pierre-Eglise–Cherbourg highway west of Gonneville. These missions were assigned as objectives to the 8th, 12th, and 22d Infantry Regiments, respectively (Maps XIII and XIV).

Hill 178 was north of the east-west road from Hameau Gallis to Delasse, and beyond the Bois de Roudou. Barring the 8th Infantry's advance from the south were the woods and enemy positions at the northwest tip of the woods. The approach from the east was protected by positions astride the intersection near la Bourdonnerie (Crossroads 148) and other positions farther north and to the left of the road. The defense overprints did not show exactly what type of positions these were. At the northwest tip of the Bois de Roudou and in the woods north of Crossroads 148 there were numerous huts and concrete structures, and evidence of felling of trees and construction activity had been noted. These were suspected to be buzz bomb sites. The position at Crossroads 148 not only controlled the road intersection but also acted as a buffer for the other positions. Colonel Van Fleet's plan was to have the 1st and 3d Battalions advance north through the woods, while the 2d Battalion would attack the position at Crossroads 148 from the east.

The 1st and 3d Battalions moved out at 1000. The 1st Battalion drove into the woods on the left and then worked northward along the trail on the west edge of the woods. The 3d Battalion, after cleaning out remnants of resistance at Rufosses with tanks of Company A, 70th Tank Battalion, also entered the woods, swinging north toward the Gallis–Delasse road. Both battalions met heavy fire from the concrete structure at the unfinished installation beyond the northwest tip of the woods and from the fortified barracks east of the position. Despite artillery support on the initial advance, the battalions were stopped a few hundred yards from their objective by heavy fire from enemy 88-mm. and antiaircraft guns.

In the meantime, after artillery and mortar preparations, the 2d Battalion attacked westward against Crossroads 148 and positions to the northwest. Company G shortly became pinned along the north-south road; but Company E went through north of Crossroads 148 and advanced several hundred yards beyond the road. It then discovered that it had passed by the enemy positions at the crossroads and was cut off. Movement became impossible, but something had to be done either to extricate Company E or help G forward.

The battalion commander decided to commit Company F from reserve with a platoon of tanks, organized on the pattern of the infantry-tank team which had proved effective in the Normandy fighting thus far when properly coordinated. The narrow front, however, compelled a bunching of infantry platoons behind the tanks deployed in line, and the tight formation limited freedom of maneuver. Nevertheless, the attack was successful. Tanks sprayed the hedgerows, which, being low at this spot, constituted no obstacle to the advance. The tanks moved cross country easily and the enemy seemed to disappear. Company G fell in behind Company F and the two came up abreast with Company E to reestablish a continuous battalion line. By evening contact was also established with the 3d Battalion across the road to the south.



CROSSROADS 148, *at la Bourdonnerie, looking west, along the axis of attack of the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry, on 22–23 June. Taken in 1947, this photo still shows ruins of German construction activity in the wooded area on the right flank of the attack.*

Later, however, it became apparent that the Germans were still in position at Crossroads 148. They began to harry the companies from the rear, ultimately cutting the supply route during the night. A reinforced platoon sent to clean out the enemy proved unequal to the task. When at dawn, 22 June, the Germans raided the 2d Battalion command post, Company F was ordered to clear out the bothersome crossroads position once and for all. While one platoon made a wide flanking move to the south, using the Bois de Roudou as concealment, and then moved up the draw through Rufosses for the attack on the crossroads, arrangements were made for a heavy concentration of mortar and cannon fire on the woods to the north where enemy troops were thought to be concentrated. At a given signal mortars and cannon massed their fires in an 8-minute concentration on the woods

and the maneuvering platoon attacked the crossroads, supported by the fire of another. When the firing ceased, white flags appeared and seventy-four Germans came out of the woods and surrendered. From them it was learned that more were holding out. The heavy fire was therefore repeated and one hundred more gave themselves up. When the wounded were brought in, the total count of prisoners reached nearly three hundred. The threat to the battalion's rear had been eliminated.

The 12th and 22d Infantry Regiments to the east attacked late on 21 June. The 12th's mission was to break through the enemy's outpost line and determine his main line of resistance. Like the 8th Infantry, it was confronted by a wood—the Bois du Coudray, which lies between the Saire and one of its tributaries. The mission was initially assigned to the 2d Battalion, which moved out at 1730 and contacted the enemy half an hour later. Resistance was light at first and the battalion moved easily through the wood. On the northwest edge of the wood it found the bridge blown and received mortar and small-arms fire heavy enough to halt further advance. The enemy held the rising ground west and north of the Saire. That evening the other two battalions entered the wood, but no attack was launched that day.

The 22d Infantry was ordered to advance straight north and seize Hill 158, a critical terrain point which dominated the surrounding countryside, including the heavily defended Maupertus airport to the east. The main east-west highway into Cherbourg ran across the hill, and the main purpose of the 22d's



mission was to cut this highway. Possession of Hill 158 was a vital factor in the plan of isolating Cherbourg from the east; both the division and Corps commanders therefore attached great importance to the winning of this objective.

In the advance from le Theil, the 1st and 3d Battalions, supported by Company B, 70th Tank Battalion, moved out abreast at 1600 behind an artillery preparation. Four hours later they were ordered to dig in on favorable ground north of Pinabel. But since the 3d Battalion began to receive fire from enemy antiaircraft guns, both battalions were ordered to keep moving. The 1st Battalion could not advance in the face of heavy artillery fire, but the 3d pushed forward 500 yards to reach the objective.

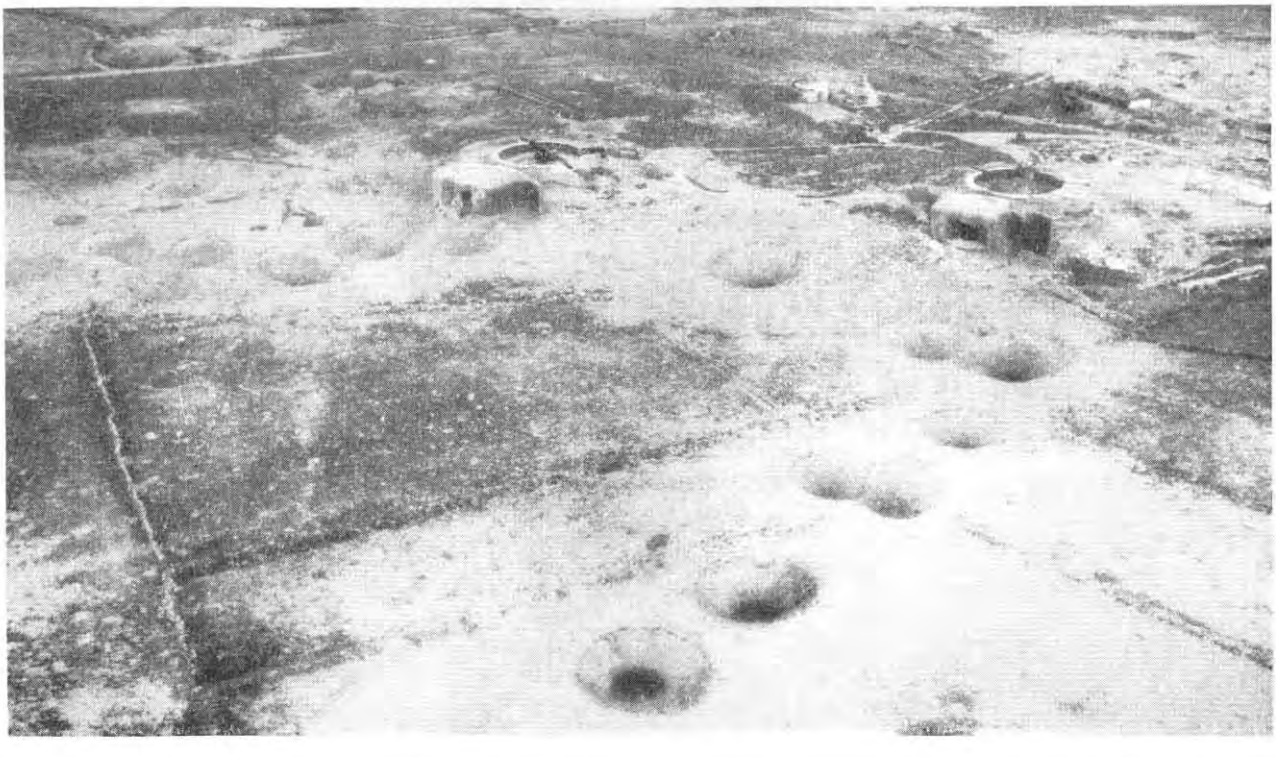
The battalions had hardly reached their new positions when large but apparently unorganized German forces began to infiltrate across their rear from defensive positions around Gonneville. For the next four days and nights the enemy interrupted communications and supply. All resupply convoys had to be escorted by tanks to get through. Even then it was touch and go. A convoy for the 1st Battalion on the morning of 22 June was hit by artillery and machine-gun fire and turned back with heavy casualties. Another convoy took a wrong turn and was ambushed in a narrow trail, losing two light tanks, three half-tracks, three 57-mm. antitank guns, and several jeeps.

The date 21 June marks the end of the first phase in the drive for Cherbourg. The 9th and 79th Divisions, after running into strong German resistance on 20 June, further developed the German positions on 21 June to determine more accurately the main enemy line. The 4th Division, encountering its first heavy opposition in the upper peninsula, established the enemy's main line of resistance, which ran generally from Hill 178 to the northwest edge of the Bois du Coudray and thence to Hill 158. The line took advantage of the commanding ground near the upper reaches of the Trotebec and Saire Rivers. Strong points were situated along the forward slopes. Pressed against this enemy line, the 4th Division, like the 9th and the 79th in their respective sectors, was now ready for the final phase of the assault on Fortress Cherbourg.

BUZZ-BOMB INSTALLATIONS *were overrun by all three divisions in the advance northward. This site, under construction in a wooded area where camouflage was easier, was uncovered by the 79th Division northwest of Valognes.*



DEFENSES AT THE PORT OF CHERBOURG *included the imposing Fort du Roule, built high into the cliff overlooking the city (above). Some distance out the city was ringed with various fortifications, of which some were semipermanent and others (shown below) were constructed of concrete and steel like the Crisbecq forts in the south.*



THE FORTRESS IS BREACHED

On the night of 21 June General Collins sent an ultimatum by radio and messenger to the commander of the German ground forces, General von Schlieben. Pointing out that Cherbourg was isolated and the German position hopeless, he asked for the surrender of the port. The message was broadcast in Polish, Russian, and French, as well as in German, to the members of the enemy garrison. The ultimatum was to expire at 0900 on 22 June.

Meanwhile General Collins proceeded with plans for the assault of the semicircular perimeter of fortifications surrounding Cherbourg. An outstanding feature of the attack was to be an intensive air bombardment of the main defenses south and southwest of the city. While the three divisions probed the German lines on 21 June, arrangements for the air support were made with Maj. Gen. Elwood R. Quesada of the IX Tactical Air Command. The plan called first for eighty minutes of bombing and strafing of known enemy installations prior to H Hour by Typhoons and Mustangs of the 2d Tactical Air Force (RAF) and by fighter-bombers of the Ninth Air Force. At H Hour medium bombers of the Ninth Air Force were to begin delivering a series of attacks designed to form an aerial barrage moving northward in anticipation of the advance of the ground forces. All eleven Groups of the IX Bomber Command were to participate in the attacks on eleven defended localities.

The day and hour of the attack depended largely on the weather, which was not promising at the time. General Collins, however, tentatively scheduled the attack for 1200–1600, 22 June, and outlined the plan to the three division commanders. The principal targets for the air bombardment were to be the heavily defended areas north and east of Flottemanville-Hague and Martinvast; the fortifications astride the Valognes–Cherbourg highway at les Chevres, which barred the 79th Division's advance; and three strong points, referred to as "C," "D," and "F." "C" was a strong antiaircraft position southwest of Cherbourg in the path of the 47th Infantry. "F" and "D" were strong points on the southern approaches to Cherbourg, "D" being the formidable Fort du Roule built into the cliff overlooking the port. For the pre-H-Hour bombing, troops were to be pulled back at least 1,000 yards behind the bomb line. Artillery fire was to immediately follow this bombing and the attacking troops were to move rapidly to their initial objectives.

General Collins directed the 4th Division to continue on its mission of isolating Cherbourg from the east. Its main effort was to be made by the 12th Infantry, which was to capture heavily defended Tourlaville and then cut through to the coast (Map XIV). The 79th Division was to make its principal drive on its right, moving up the highway and seizing the high nose which commands the city and ter-

minates in the fortified cliff at Fort du Roule. The 9th Division's chief effort was also to be on its right, the principal objective being the Octeville heights which overlook Cherbourg from the west and south.

During the last few days the capture of Cherbourg had taken on an even greater urgency than had existed before. On 19 June the highest tide of the year combined with a 4-day storm had damaged unloading craft and the floating piers and roadways, threatening serious delay in the unloading of supplies. As a precaution against future shortages First Army ordered a one-third reduction in artillery ammunition expenditure in the Cherbourg attack. General Collins, in his verbal orders on 21 June, said: "This attack on Cherbourg is the major effort of the American Army and is especially vital now that unloading across the beaches has been interfered with by weather. All Division Commanders surely appreciate the importance of this attack."

The Final Drive Begins

On the morning of 22 June the ultimatum expired without word from the German fortress commander. The weather had turned favorable. At 0940 the Corps commander therefore notified the division commanders that the attack would be launched. H Hour was 1400. Bombing was to begin at 1240. Division and regimental commanders had already made their plans and issued field orders on the basis of the previous day's verbal orders. All that remained was for unit commanders to give last-minute instructions regarding H Hour, the withdrawal for the bombardment, and the jump-off.

A few minutes before the fighter-bombers appeared, front lines were marked with yellow smoke and bomb lines with white phosphorus. At 1240 the pre-H-Hour bombing and strafing attacks were initiated by four squadrons of rocket-firing Typhoons, followed by six squadrons of Mustangs, all from the 2d Tactical Air Force (RAF). At approximately 1300 the attacks were taken over by twelve groups of fighter-bombers of the Ninth Air Force. For fifty-five minutes P–47's, P–38's, and P–51's (562 planes) bombed and strafed front-line strong points at low level, one group coming over approximately every five minutes. Between 1300 and 1330, the 47th, 60th, and 22d Infantry Regiments all called their headquarters to say that they were being bombed and strafed by friendly planes, and sought means of stopping the attacks. These units and others suffered several casualties from the air attacks. The errors were believed to have been caused at least in part by the drift of the marking smoke in the fairly strong northeast wind. As the mediums began to come over at 1400 to bomb the German lines in front of the 9th and 79th Divisions, the attacking units jumped off; at 1430 the three regiments of the 4th Division joined the attack. Between 1400 and 1455 the eleven groups of light and medium bombers of the IX Bomber Command (387 planes) delivered their attacks on the eleven defended areas expected to give trouble in the drive on the city.

Measured by sheer physical destruction the bombardment was none too effective, except on a few targets. Its greatest effect was in cutting German communications and depressing enemy morale, but in general the bombing was scattered—as indicated by the drops to the rear of the American lines. This was the first large-scale use of medium and fighter-bombers in close support of ground troops since the launching of the Normandy operation, and coordination of all elements had not been perfected. Arrangements for the bombardment had to be made through difficult command channels. While General Quesada went to VII Corps Headquarters to work out the initial air plan, he was chiefly with First Army Headquarters at this time, and most of the aircraft were still operating from Eng-

land. The bombardment had had to be planned very hurriedly; there was insufficient time to transmit details on last-minute changes in the plan to all the parties concerned, or to coordinate artillery fires against antiaircraft batteries with the bombing attacks or even in some instances to brief pilots properly. However, fighter-bombers did exceptionally effective work in destroying some of the German positions, particularly on the west side of Cherbourg. A later analysis of the fire support in the assault on Cherbourg concluded that the best air-artillery-infantry coordination had been achieved by the 9th Division, with artillery first firing effectively against flak positions, followed by the air bombing, and then artillery resuming fire to cover the infantry advance. However, while the Corps' attack achieved penetrations of varying depth, no real breakthrough was made immediately anywhere along the Cherbourg front. All the divisions were forced to a methodical reduction of strong points. Not until 24 June were the main defenses cracked.

The Right Flank

The primary objective of the 4th Division was the Tourlaville area, guarding the eastern approaches to Cherbourg (Map XIV). Attention was focused on the 12th Infantry, which had this mission as the center regiment. The 8th Infantry was to be pinched out when it had seized the high ground east of la Glacerie. It would then support the 12th Infantry with fire. The 22d Infantry, also assigned a supporting mission, was to assist the 12th by protecting its right and rear.

These plans were upset on 22 June when the 12th Infantry failed to break through the defenses north and northeast of the Bois du Coudray. The attack had to be launched from the edge of the woods across the Saire and up the slopes directly into enemy positions. The 2d Battalion was still in position at the northwest edge of the woods, where it had been stopped on 21 June by the enemy across the bridge.

The regimental plan on 22 June called for the 3d Battalion to attack north, circling around to the rear of the enemy opposing the 2d Battalion. The 3d Battalion moved up to the northern edge of the wood during the morning. The Germans, observing the movement, opened fire from the slopes above the creek and heavily shelled the draw formed by a small tributary of the river. The 3d Battalion replied with artillery and overhead heavy machine-gun fire. The axis of attack was shifted slightly to the right to avoid the interdicted draw. Companies I and L led out abreast at 1430, crossing the stream and proceeding up the opposite bank. With the first determined charge, the enemy broke and fled. About twenty were captured. Here the 12th Infantry identified some of the first miscellaneous units thrown into line by the Germans, such as labor service troops, which were found scattered throughout the Cherbourg area.

Across the stream the battalion wheeled to the left to carry out the original plan, but Companies I and L, after advancing west almost to the Digosville road, were stopped by heavy fire. The Germans were firing from across a draw just ahead and were entrenched around the road junction. To the rear, continued interdiction of the draw had the effect of isolating the lead companies from the rest of the battalion for a while, although Companies K and M and battalion headquarters, on the first nose north of the woods, were only about 800 yards back. The rear companies were at last guided forward across the draw, suffering only a few casualties from enemy artillery.

Reunited, the battalion tried to renew the advance, but enemy fire was so intense that the attempt had to be abandoned. Judging the forward position to be unfavorable, Lieutenant Colonel Dulin, the battalion commander,

decided to move back to the ground occupied earlier by the rear elements. The battalion retraced its steps about 2100 and found Germans again occupying some of this ground. The battalion commander was killed in the sharp skirmish which followed before the area was cleared. By the time the new commander, Maj. Kenneth R. Lindner, established a defense, the Germans had infiltrated to the south and cut the battalion's supply routes. The ammunition supply was satisfactory, however, and Col. J. S. Luckett (commanding the 12th Infantry) promised additional supplies from Regiment in the morning.

The whole situation between Gonneville and the Bois du Coudray was fluid. The 22d Infantry was already being supplied by tank-escorted convoys. The same solution was now indicated in the case of the 12th. Tanks were already attached to this regiment, but they had not participated in the attack because the infantry did not succeed in finding suitable routes for them. With the 3d Battalion cut off, it became vital to find a route the tanks could use. Regiment sent out a patrol four times before a satisfactory route was discovered. Over this route, at 0700 on 23 June, seven medium tanks loaded with ammunition and rations moved with infantry escort. They also carried orders for the day's attack which, except for the use of tank support, did not depart from the previous day's plan.

Two tanks were attached to each of the leading companies (I and K) and three were kept in reserve. As it finally worked out, the tanks were generally confined to the road and moved in an extended column, except when they were used to clear out fields. Companies I and K advanced on either side of the road, the tanks supporting the movement with fire from the road or entering the fields to cut down enemy resistance. In this way the attack made steady progress. Company L from time to time had to fight off enemy harassing attempts from the right rear. In one raid to the rear the enemy attacked the battalion aid station, but the attack was repulsed by a platoon of Company B which had come up with the tanks that morning and was guarding the aid station.

The opposition decreased as the battalion approached the Tourlaville–Hameau Gallis road. The Germans who had opposed the advance of Companies I and L with such determination the previous day had apparently retired before the tank-supported attack. At the crossroads the battalion made a sharp turn southeast and drove in on the enemy confronting the 2d Battalion in the woods. From bunkers on the slopes the Germans had been able to cover the stream bed and the approaches to their positions effectively but, hit from the rear, they gave up with hardly a struggle. The 2d Battalion was now free to cross the stream, and it was given the mission of mopping up the Mesnil au Val area. The 3d Battalion made an about-face and again took up the advance toward its objective, Tourlaville. Against sporadic opposition from detached riflemen and an occasional machine gun, the battalion moved steadily along the Tourlaville–Hameau Gallis road, its first objective being Hill 140, southeast of Tourlaville, the commanding ground between the battalion and Cherbourg. On its forward slope was a defended crossroads.

The battalion moved out once more at 2030, again with Companies I and K astride the road and the tanks between them. The tanks were withdrawn to assembly at 2100. The infantry, continuing alone, met gradually increasing enemy machine-gun and mortar fire as it neared the crossroads. Artillery was called for and, behind a succession of concentrations laid within fifty yards of the advancing troops, the battalion marched up the hill. It consolidated there for the night. Casualties in the attack had been light and an important terrain point had been captured on the route to Tourlaville.

To the east the situation in the 22d Infantry sector remained extremely fluid during 23 June. It had been planned that the 22d Infantry would assist the 12th in the advance on Tourlaville by clearing the fortified Digosville area on the latter's right flank. But the 22d Infantry was so harassed from Maupertus and Gonneville that its combat strength was devoted mostly to dealing with enemy infiltrations and keeping its supply route open.

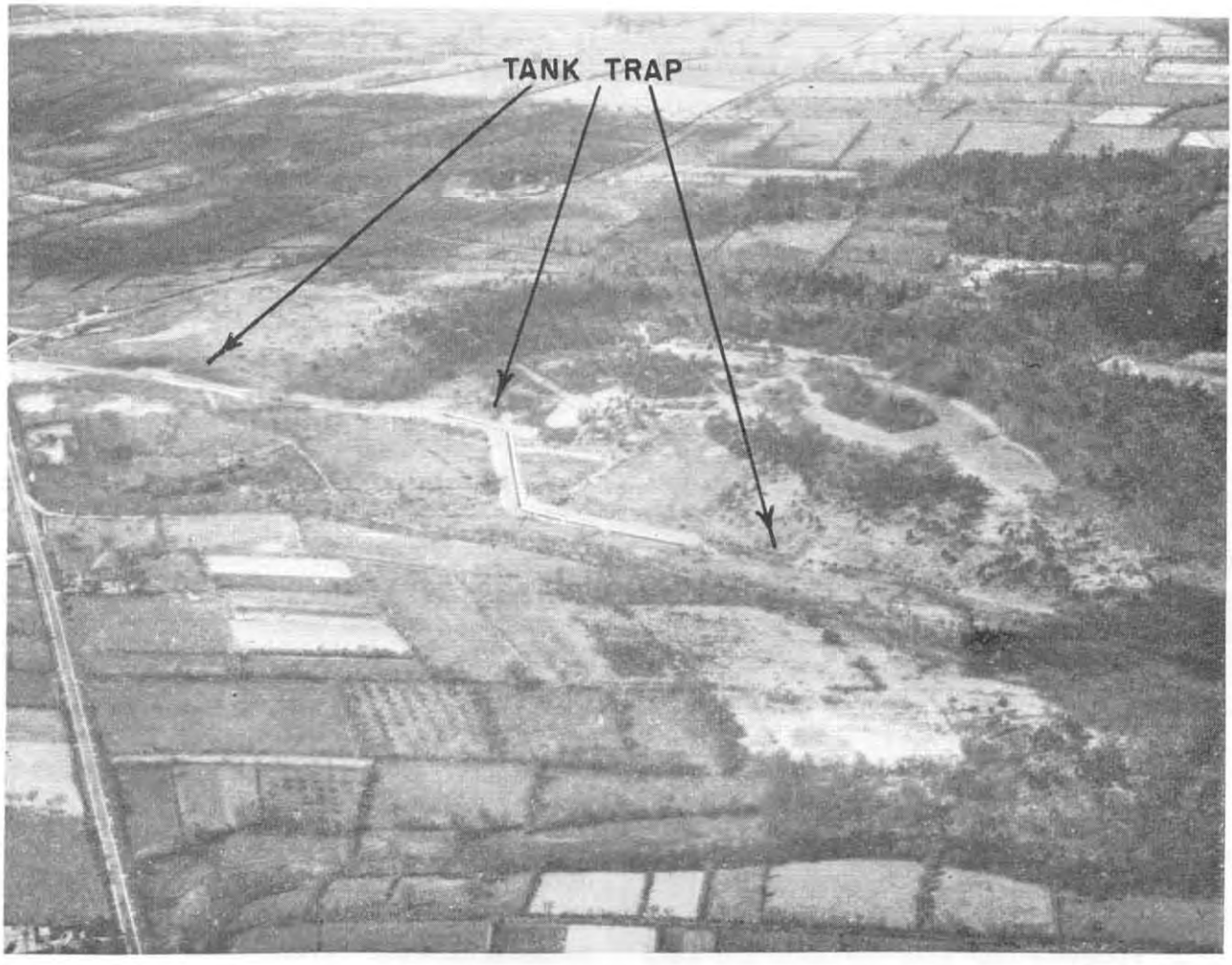
The 3d Battalion was to have led the attack on 22 June from its position on Hill 158, west of Gonneville, while the 1st Battalion held the hill and the 2d Battalion, in position to the south, prepared to come up later on the 3d Battalion's left. Before the attack could start, however, the enemy enveloped Hill 158 and the 2d Battalion had to be committed in a mission to clear the Germans from the rear of the 3d Battalion. It was late afternoon by the time this task was completed. All three battalions were dug in on the hill for the night. The attack westward in support of the 12th Infantry therefore failed to materialize on 22 June. However, the 12th Infantry had itself failed to shake free from the Bois du Coudray for the planned attack northwestward.

In a situation that precluded bold plans, it was decided that on 23 June the 1st and 3d Battalions, 22d Infantry, should completely clear and consolidate the high ground before any further missions were undertaken. Beginning at about 0900 the 1st and 3d Battalions began to carry out this task, while the 2d Battalion sent a combat patrol south to clean up resistance north of Hameau Cauchon. To cover the mop-up operation, heavy artillery and mortar fire pounded the enemy line from Maupertus to Gonneville; part of the 24th Cavalry Squadron, together with Company B, 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and 4th Reconnaissance Troop, contained the enemy in the vicinity of the airfield; and tanks demonstrated toward Gonneville. Late in the day the consolidation of this ground had progressed far enough to free the 2d Battalion for an attack westward. The attack began at 1930, but before it reached the line of departure it was turned back by heavy fire from the German position southeast of Digosville. Once more the attack had to be postponed. Late that evening the battalion was attached to the 12th Infantry for the advance against Tourlaville.

The objective assigned the 8th Infantry on 22 June was the high ground east of la Glacerie, lying between the Trotebec and its main tributary, which formed the regiment's boundaries. The regiment was attacking into a wedge and upon reaching its objectives was to be pinched out. But between the Bois du Roudou and the objective the enemy had at least three strong defensive positions. To reduce these took three full days.

On the morning of 22 June, the 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry, was still fighting for the possession of Crossroads 148, near la Bourdonnerie. While that fight was taking place the 1st and 3d Battalions prepared to jump off to the northwest. Several small enemy counterattacks had to be broken up by artillery before the two battalions could move out at 1430. The 1st Battalion made only small gains northwest of the Bois du Roudou. The 3d Battalion attacked northward, bypassing a buzz-bomb installation, and headed toward a strong point about 1,000 yards away. The Germans in this position had cut lanes of fire in the hedgerows and waited until the battalion was almost on the position, when they suddenly opened fire. The attack stopped short and flattened. In a flanking maneuver through the woods on the right, Company I was hit by tree-burst artillery fire and suffered over fifty casualties, but the battalion eventually reached its objective by night. Altogether the battalion lost thirty-one killed and ninety-two wounded.

The enemy, organized as *Kampfgruppe Rohrbach,* was a conglomeration containing



A TANK TRAP NEAR LES CHEVRES, *astride the main highway in the 79th Division sector, forming a part of the continuous belt of semi-permanent and field-type fortifications four to five miles from Cherbourg.*

elements of the *729th* and *739th Regiments (709th Division)*, as well as searchlight, panzer, labor front, marine, military police, antiaircraft, and coast artillery personnel. His exact strength was not known, but the defense he was offering from his prepared positions had been impressive.

On 23 June the attack was to be renewed at 0730, but was delayed for an hour by poor communications and by enemy harassment of supply routes, which held up resupply of the tanks. When the attack finally got under way it made little progress due to enemy artillery and mortar fire, which the 3d Battalion at first thought came from friendly units. After additional artillery, mortar, and cannon fires the two battalions again pushed the attack. By 1400 the 1st Battalion had moved about 1,000 yards west of the Bois du Roudou, but in the evening it was counterattacked and the 81-mm. mortar platoon had to abandon its equipment. Although the mortars were recovered later, the battalion's attack was temporarily disorganized. Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion assaulted a strong point 500 yards away and found the enemy forming an attack at the same time. As the American tanks and infantry moved through the wooded area east of the position, they found the Germans lying head to heel in the ditches along the hedgerows. A

wild shooting melee ensued and most of the Germans were routed with heavy losses from the combined infantry and tank fire. One more enemy strong point had fallen. To complete the job, one company was sent back to clean out the bypassed buzz-bomb installation. Blasted from concrete shelters by bangalores, satchel charges, and flame throwers, 228 Germans surrendered.

The Center

Similar in character to the 4th Division's struggle was the fight of the 79th Division, attacking in the relatively narrow middle sector between the Trotebec and Divette Rivers (Map XIV). The division's logical route of attack was the main Valognes–Cherbourg highway. Major obstacles to its advance were three prepared defense areas along the highway. The first, near les Chevres, straddled the road and tied in with the upper reaches of the Trotebec and Douve Rivers to form a continuous line of defense. The ground, relatively bare at this point, allowed good defensive fields of fire. In addition to the usual trenches, rifle pits, and emplaced guns, there was a zigzag tank ditch extending well to both sides of the highway and tying in with the streams on either side. About two miles farther along, commanding the highway approach, was strong point "F," at la Mare à Canards. Another two miles north was Fort du Roule, Target "D," dominating Cherbourg harbor and heavily defended against air and land attack. In addition to these three strong points, there was a fortified area to the west of the Cherbourg–Valognes highway on the forward slopes of the ridge along which ran the road to Hardinvast.

General Wyche's plan for 22 June called for an attack by three regiments abreast. The 313th Infantry was to continue the main effort, generally astride the highway, with the fortified positions at les Chevres as the first objective. At 1400, following the air bombardment, the division jumped off, each regiment in a column of battalions.

The 1st Battalion of the 313th was fired on from pillboxes and bunkers near les Chevres shortly after its jump-off, but these positions were reduced when the 3d Battalion, pushing up on the left, enveloped them while the 1st Battalion attacked frontally. The regiment then reorganized and resumed the advance with the 1st and 3d Battalions abreast and the 2d Battalion echeloned to the right rear. The 2d Battalion became involved with enemy troops in the wooded area of the upper Trotebec and lost direction, delaying the regiment. But the 1st and 3d Battalions, with about seventy men of the 2d, finally resumed the advance astride the highway and late that night (at 0200) reached a point 400 yards north of the junction of Hardinvast road with the Cherbourg highway (Crossroads 177). The 313th Infantry reported that the air bombardment had damaged the German installations very little, but that nevertheless it had made the attack easier.

The 1st Battalion of the 314th Infantry meanwhile led the attack in the center. All companies of the battalion met fierce resistance as they attempted to force their way through the draws east of Tollevast. Company C made a wide swing on the left, but was badly shot up and became disorganized in the vicinity of this village. All attempts to break through during the day were without success. After dark the 3d Battalion slipped around the enemy positions just to the west of the highway and succeeded in tying in with the 313th Infantry west of Crossroads 177. The 1st Battalion also disengaged late that night and followed the 3d, coming in on its left at about 0200 the next morning. Two battalions of the 314th and part of the 313th now held a line along the east-west road which crosses the Cherbourg highway at Crossroads 177.

The 315th Infantry meanwhile became occupied with the task of clearing the Hardin-



CROSSROADS 177. *From this concrete antitank position on the highway to Cherbourg the enemy attempted to bar the advance of the 313th Infantry. The sign points to an alternate route leading into Cherbourg from the east.*

vast area on the left flank of the division's zone. The enemy positions there were a threat to any advance along the main highway and had to be cleared or at least contained so that the 313th and 314th could proceed with the attack northward.

On the morning of 23 June both the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 314th found themselves cut off from the rear elements of the regiment. In skirting the enemy positions west of the highway during the night, the two battalions left the Germans free to move back and cut the regiment's supply route. The 313th Infantry was likewise without a line of communications to the rear. Measures were immediately taken to reopen the supply routes. The forward battalions of the 314th organized a task force for this purpose, and Regiment at the same time sent the 2d Battalion forward, thus reestablishing the main supply route.

In the meantime an attack on the two strong points straddling the highway at la Mare à Canards was planned by the 314th Infantry. Division arranged to have the position, known as "F" in Corps orders, divebombed at 0900. The air attack took place as scheduled, but had no noticeable effect, and another mission was therefore planned two hours later. While these arrangements were being made the 3d Battalion jumped off and occupied part of the objective. Division consequently requested that the air attack be can-

celled. But it was already late and no assurance could be given that the mission could be forestalled. Fortunately the division chief of staff took the added precaution to have the artillery commander order the marking smoke lifted a thousand yards. This diverted most of the bombing to the north of the target. The Germans meanwhile laid heavy artillery fire on the 3d Battalion and caused many casualties.

The 1st Battalion's attack, launched a bit later, was more successful. Company A, in fact, broke through to the northwest and occupied the long narrow ridge 1,500 to 1,800 yards northwest of the enemy fortifications at la Mare à Canards. Objective "F" had not been captured, and Company A therefore occupied a position well out in front of the rest of the division. However, the company continued to occupy the ridge, while the remainder of the regiment withdrew to permit still another air attack on the enemy positions the following day.

The Left Flank

Like the 4th and 79th Divisions, the 9th engaged in some of its hardest fighting in the day and a half following the jump-off, but by the night of 23 June it had broken the hard crust of the Cherbourg defenses and occupied the commanding ground southwest of Cherbourg near the Bois du Mont du Roc (Map XIV)

On 21 June the 39th Infantry had been committed on the right flank of the division to develop enemy positions east of the Divette. Late in the day its mission was changed. During the night it was withdrawn from its position east of the Divette and moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Helleville. Since the 9th Division's main effort was still to be made on the right, moving the 39th Infantry behind the 47th would place it in position to reinforce the latter and give depth to its attack.

The main impact of the division's drive on 22 June fell roughly along the line Acqueville–Sideville. East of the road running north from Teurtheville-Hague the Germans were well entrenched along a crest of high ground. The enemy line crossed a creek east of Boguenville and more strong points were located on the forward slopes of Hill 171 (Bois du Mont du Roc), west of Sideville. North of Acqueville the 60th Infantry was to attack with battalions echeloned to the left, since the whole left flank was open and the enemy situation on this side was vague. From Crossroads 114 to Sideville the attack was to be carried by the 47th Infantry, all three battalions attacking at once.

Profiting from the air bombardment, the units of the 9th Division made good initial gains. Within half an hour, the 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry, passed Crossroads 114 and the 3d Battalion pressed beyond Boguenville. Within an hour the 1st Battalion was across the stream east of the village. The 60th Infantry took Acqueville half an hour after the jump-off.

But the ease of this advance was deceptive. Both the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 47th Infantry had bypassed strong enemy positions along the high ground northeast of Crossroads 114 and between the crossroads and Boguenville. In probing for weaknesses one company of the 2d Battalion had passed to the left of the crossroads position, and one to the right. Meanwhile the 3d Battalion pushed through Boguenville while artillery fire neutralized the enemy positions northwest of the town. With the continuing aid of artillery, Colonel Clayman (3d Battalion) pushed two companies across the stream and started up the slopes of Hill 171. The 3d Battalion soon found itself dangerously out on a limb, for on its right the 1st had been stopped shortly after crossing the stream. Before attempting any further advance Colonel Clayman therefore wanted his flanks cleared, particularly the left.

THE BOIS DU MONT DU ROC AREA, *showing the valley from which the 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry, launched its attacks to seize Hill 171 on 22-23 June. The town of Sideville can be seen in the lower right.*



At 1920 Colonel Smythe, the regimental commander, ordered Company G to clear the enemy entrenched above Crossroads 114 while the other two companies moved forward to come abreast of the 3d Battalion. With very close coordination of mortar fire from Company H, one platoon of Company G charged directly into the crossroads position and took fifty prisoners. The positions north of Boguenville remained uncaptured, but the division commander decided to deal with them later. That night the 3d Battalion dug in on the southwest slopes of Hill 171, with the 2d Battalion nearly abreast farther north.

Similarly, the 60th Infantry, after taking Acqueville, found progress more difficult. It attacked the fortifications southwest of Flottemanville-Hague initially with one battalion and made little progress. After a small counterattack early in the evening another battalion was committed on the left, and the two were able to fight their way to the edge of the enemy positions, where they were nearly on a line with the 47th Infantry on the right. There was still a gap between the regiments, through which some enemy infiltrated during the night.

By the night of 22 June the 9th Division had maneuvered into position to make the final thrust through the main Cherbourg defenses. The critical enemy defense areas at Flottemanville-Hague and Hill 171, though not yet overrun, were closely pressed, and another day's action was likely to result in their capture. The enemy was committing miscellaneous static troops to eke out a thin defensive line, and commanders were ordered to save





A STRONG POINT IS DESTROYED IN THE ADVANCE ON CHERBOURG. *Concrete fortifications like the one shown here were common within the perimeter of the Cherbourg defenses. They were normally built into hills or mounds and were protected by small-caliber weapons and wire.*

men by spreading them out and to conserve ammunition by trying to repulse the American attacks with small-arms fire.

On 23 June, the 39th Infantry joined the attack with tank destroyer support and cleared fortified positions on the heights northwest of Boguenville bypassed the previous day. At the same time the 47th and 60th Infantry Regiments resumed their attempt to break through toward Cherbourg. The 47th attacked to consolidate its hold on Hill 171 and reduce an enemy antiaircraft position to the west. After the 1st Battalion had been stopped by heavy concentrations from the German antiaircraft guns, the 2d and 3d Battalions were finally sent against the flak positions late in the day. Before dark the 2d Battalion was on its objective and the 3d had reached the southern edge of the German positions. The attack netted four hundred prisoners and large quantities of materiel.

The 60th Infantry waited nearly all day for air bombardment of the Flottemanville-Hague defenses. After the bombing, which was delivered at 2000, and the artillery concentrations which followed, it took the 1st and 2d Battalions less than two hours to move up and occupy their objectives.

The enemy's fortified line had been broken. The 9th Division was ready for the final drive into Cherbourg with the 60th Infantry in position to protect the northern flank from counterattack and the 47th Infantry, supported by the 39th, astride the ridge leading to the port.

THE FALL OF CHERBOURG

Until 23 June General von Schlieben had commanded only the remnants of the four divisions immediately confronting the advancing American forces. On that day he was appointed commander of the entire Cherbourg Fortress, relieving Generalmajor Robert Sattler, who became his subordinate. The new commander of all the German forces remaining in the Cotentin Peninsula found himself in desperate straits. His desperation is reflected in the fight-to-the-death orders which he issued to his troops and his urgent request for air support and reinforcements by air or sea. The *15th Parachute Regiment* was alerted to move from St. Malo to Cherbourg in answer to these requests, but no transport was available when the time for transfer came. Von Schlieben had to make the best of his miscellaneous personnel, his battered units, and his dwindling supply of ammunition.

Though the conglomerate German force continued to resist with determination and delayed the American advance, VII Corps progress was steady after the penetration of 22–23 June. In the final phase the three infantry divisions reduced the remaining strong points one by one, seized the last ground commanding the port, and closed in on the beleaguered city.

General Collins' verbal orders for 24 June made no fundamental changes in the plans outlined several days earlier. The flank regiments of the Corps, the 22d and the 60th, were assigned the mission of containing the enemy in the northeast and northwest respectively. The 47th and 39th Infantry Regiments were to make a coordinated attack toward Octeville, a suburb southwest of Cherbourg, and the 8th and 12th Infantry Regiments were to attack in the east. The 79th Division was to capture the strong point at la Mare à Canards by double envelopment, following a dive-bombing early in the morning. Air preparation was also planned on other major strong points.

The City Is Reached

On 24 June the 22d Infantry, with the exception of the 2d Battalion, protected the right flank of the Corps by containing the enemy cut off in the Maupertus–Gonneville area. Fragmentary German forces continued to infiltrate to the south of Hill 158 throughout this period. A complete mopping up of the airport region was indicated, but this was postponed for the present.[1] General Barton limited the 22d Infantry to "policing" its positions and whatever action was necessary to maintain the security of the main supply route south to le Theil. The 8th Infantry attacked and captured the last strong point in its zone, one of the most heavily armed positions yet encountered. Well located on the high ground east of la Glacerie and straddling a road junction, it was a semipermanent entrenched position including several 88-mm. guns, four

[1]The enemy airport positions were contained by the 24th Reconnaissance Squadron, the 4th Reconnaissance Troop, and a company of the 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion. One troop of the 24th Reconnaissance Squadron reached the beach at the northeast extremity of the peninsula. On 25 June combat patrols were sent north to the coast to clear the area and blow the railroad, but enemy resistance was too strong to accomplish this mission.

105-mm. horse-drawn field pieces, a 40-mm. gun, and several 20-mm. antiaircraft guns, as well as mortars and machine guns.

Capture of this position was the mission of the 2d Battalion, which was to pass through the 3d and make the main regimental effort. The 1st Battalion was to attack on the left and come abreast of the most advanced positions. In support of this attack, twelve P–47's carried out one of the most accurate dive-bombing missions thus far seen in the operation. Of the twenty-four 500-pound bombs, twenty-three dropped squarely on the target. A 15-minute artillery preparation followed before the battalion jumped off.

With continued artillery and mortar support the 2d Battalion moved forward, two companies abreast. But neither the bombing nor the artillery concentrations had destroyed the enemy position, and the lead companies were stopped and came under heavy artillery fire. With no assurance of immediate aid the companies withdrew. Company E, which had borne the brunt of the attack, could account for only forty men when it got back to the line of departure. Two hours later the attack was resumed with tank support. The tanks turned the enemy's left flank and the Germans abandoned their guns, most of which were intact despite the bombing. About one hundred prisoners were taken in the vicinity that day and twenty-seven more surrendered the next morning. The 8th Infantry lost thirty-seven killed, including Lieutenant Colonel Simmons, 1st Battalion commander.

For the 8th Infantry the capture of this strong point was the last day of hard fighting in the Cotentin operation. On 25 June it cleaned out scattered resistance in the regimental area and consolidated its position east of la Glacerie. With this last action it was pinched out and took no further part in the capture of Cherbourg.

The main effort of the 4th Division on 24 June was made in the center, where the 12th Infantry paced the advance on the division's final objective, the fortified Tourlaville area. Several enemy positions lay in the path of the regiment. The strongest were known to be on a line westward from Digosville. Two battalions were to be used for the initial attack. On the right flank, the 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, attached to the 12th the night before, was assigned the Digosville objective and given the support of one company of the 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, which had come up on the 3d's right during the night, was to attack roughly abreast of the 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, toward Tourlaville. The 3d Battalion was to remain on Hill 140, supporting the attack with fire. The 2d Battalion was held in reserve but prepared for commitment on the left.

Before the day was over all four battalions had been committed. The 1st, aided by six tanks of Company B, 70th Tank Battalion, advanced up a slope and overran an artillery position, taking many prisoners. During the mop-up and reorganization it received artillery fire from other enemy batteries and lost its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Merrill, who had assumed command only a day or two before.

Meanwhile, Company K of the 3d Battalion, also supported by tanks, moved east to join the 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, in attacking Digosville.[2] The company advanced toward Digosville in an approach march formation and scouts came within 200 yards of the German emplacements before machine guns opened fire on them. The four tanks deployed, returned the fire, and then overran the first gun positions. As the main enemy body began to concentrate a heavy volume of automatic and rifle fire on Company K, the tanks provided a base of fire with both 75-mm. guns

[2]Communications were poor and the attack was badly coordinated. The commander of the 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, received his orders from the 12th Infantry through 22d Infantry headquarters. To make matters worse, the two regiments used different reference numbers for the objectives.

and machine guns, and two platoons worked forward. At that point twelve P–47's dive-bombed and strafed the German positions and, as soon as the last bombs fell, tanks and infantry closed in rapidly and destroyed the enemy in a short, sharp fight. A few Germans managed to withdraw, leaving six field pieces, several machine guns, and other materiel. When the 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, arrived, a general mop-up of the area yielded about 150 prisoners. While the 2d Battalion of the 22d and the 1st Battalion of the 12th cleaned out their areas, the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, moved up on the left and easily captured a large, concrete fortification, taking three hundred prisoners. By evening the 12th Infantry occupied the last high ground opposite Tourlaville. From the 2d Battalion's position, commanding the road into Cherbourg, the whole city was visible.

General Barton decided to exploit these successes as far as possible. The 12th Infantry was ordered to move into Tourlaville that evening. The 3d Battalion, still in position at Hill 140, was to be used for this mission. Despite the approaching darkness, tanks were ordered to accompany the battalion, and, with many of the men riding the tanks, the 3d moved into Tourlaville unopposed. An all-around defense was organized and the tanks were released at 0200. The 12th Infantry had captured eight hundred prisoners during the day, in itself a fair indication of the disintegration of the enemy's left.

The capture of Tourlaville did not end the 12th Infantry's activity for that night. At 0300 Colonel Luckett, its commanding officer, ordered all four battalions to continue the attack still further. The 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry, was to move north from Digosville to the sea. The 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, was to follow the road north, just east of a big coastal battery position. The 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, was to clean out the Tourlaville area, assisted by the 3d.

At 0900 the regiment again had air support. P–47's dropped thirteen bombs on the coastal battery position and half an hour later the 1st Battalion moved down the road to the fort. From a distance, two white flags could be seen above the position. But when the two leading companies entered a wooded draw in front of the objective they were fired on by mortars and 20-mm. guns. Six men were wounded. The flags still waved but the fighting went on. Tanks were brought up for the attack and not until early afternoon, after several hours of fighting, did the enemy garrison of 400 finally surrender. Three 8-inch guns, several 88-mm. and 20-mm. guns, and mortars were found in the fort.

Meanwhile both the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 12th Infantry moved north to the sea. The 3d Battalion went to Bourbourg to patrol the coast to Pointes des Grèves. Company I missed its turn north, entered the outskirts of Cherbourg by mistake, and then joined Company K west of Bourbourg. The 2d Battalion was directly south, below the Tourlaville–Cherbourg road. The two battalions were thus in position to enter the city.

Until 25 June no part of Cherbourg had been included in the 4th Division's zone. Early in the afternoon, however, General Collins altered the boundary between the 4th and 79th Divisions so that the former could share in the capture of the city. At 1800, Colonel Luckett met his battalion commanders and issued the order for the 12th Infantry's attack into Cherbourg. The 2d and 3d Battalions were to lead the advance, which was to begin at 2000.

Elsewhere on the Corps front, German resistance was also crumbling. The continuing American attacks were given added impact by the effective air support of the dive-bombing P–47's of the Ninth Air Force. Like the 4th Division at Digosville, Tourlaville, and the strong point east of la Glacerie, the 79th Division now had air support in its attacks on

the fortifications at la Mare à Canards and also at Fort du Roule.

On 24 June the 313th Infantry veered slightly east to attack the strong points west of la Glacerie and at Hameau Gringor to the north. Advancing in a column of battalions, the regiment enveloped the first position from the right and proceeded on to Hameau Gringor despite continuing opposition, taking 320 prisoners and several artillery pieces in the area. Meanwhile, in the 314th Infantry's zone twelve P–47's again bombed strong point "F" at 0800, and the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 314th Infantry moved out to attack the two enemy positions astride the highway. Within an hour the 2d Battalion was on its objective to the east of the highway, and within another half hour the 3d also reached the main enemy position on the left. From these positions the battalions could see Fort du Roule, which Colonel Robinson, the regimental commander, hoped to capture the same day. The two battalions moved north about 1,000 yards astride the highway in preparation for the attack. The 3d Battalion tried three times to break through on the left. But because of the division's exposed left flank, which permitted the enemy to deliver fire from the heights of Octeville, across the river, the 314th was unable to push the attack farther that day. Hardinvast continued to be a troublesome spot, resisting capture by the 315th Infantry until the following day.

Meanwhile, on the west flank the 9th Division, advancing down the ridge which parallels the Divette River, also closed in on Cherbourg. Fairly heavy resistance was encountered on 23–24 June, but one by one the strong points fell and by noon of 25 June the 39th and 47th Infantry Regiments were in the suburbs of the city. The 60th Infantry continued guarding the flank of the division against possible attack from the west, pushing reconnaissance in the direction of Tonneville and Ste. Croix-Hague. Road blocks were maintained in the vicinity of Martinvast and Hardinvast against the threat of counterattack by enemy forces still holding out in that area.

By the morning of 24 June the 47th Infantry was ready to drive down the ridge against the last strong points overlooking Cherbourg. For this drive it was joined by the 39th Infantry, on the right. Along the ridge, in the path of the two regiments, lay three enemy positions. The regimental boundary ran generally through these positions, the 47th being responsible for everything north of the Cherbourg–Flottemanville-Hague road. The second strong point, target "C," a flak position, had been one of the five principal targets of previous air force bombings.

The 39th Infantry moved abreast of the 47th at 0800 on 24 June, but coordination between the two regiments was poor at first and they did not seem to be aware of their relative positions until late in the morning. The 47th's attack was delayed, first by fire from the Flottemanville area and then from a hill south of Nouainville. General Eddy ordered the 60th to clean out the remaining positions south of Tonneville to eliminate the first source of fire. Before jumping off, the 47th Infantry decided to put artillery fire on the hill position, and warned the 39th to hold off its attack. But when it attempted to have the target marked with smoke the Germans also threw up smoke, misleading the American artillery. The 47th Infantry suspected that the enemy was intercepting its radio messages, and the 3d Battalion finally moved out without artillery support about 1330. The division G–3 ordered the 39th Infantry to move also, sending two battalions straight down the ridge without waiting for the 47th Infantry.

The first two strong points were taken with comparative ease, but in front of the last position outside of Octeville both the 2d and 3d Battalions, 39th Infantry, were held up for several hours. An artillery concentration ar-



ON THE HEIGHTS SOUTH OF CHERBOURG *artillery observers direct the shelling of enemy positions on the outskirts of the city, 25 June. Elements of all three divisions entered either the outskirts or the city proper this day.*

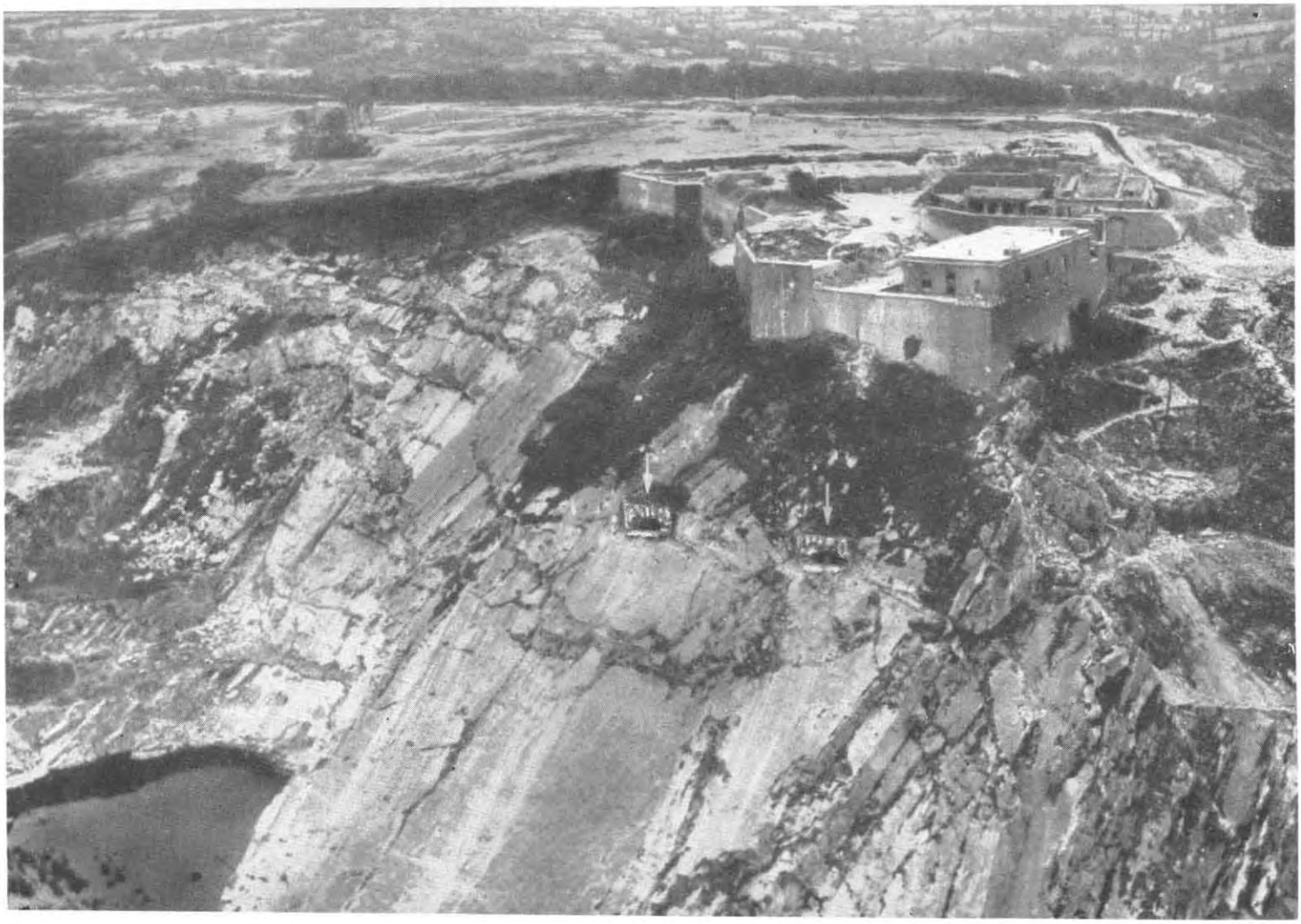
ranged at 1845 was ineffective because the 26th Field Artillery fired at maximum range and the dispersion was too great. A rolling barrage by the 34th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm.), arranged at 2100, was cancelled, since by that time 2d Battalion men worked forward without support. As Company G moved in a few minutes later all resistance in the enemy position crumbled. Since the Corps commander had ordered that the division should not become further involved in the city that day, the 39th Infantry consolidated gains farther down the slope outside Octeville.

The 47th Infantry, with the 2d and 3d Battalions abreast, meanwhile advanced along the northern slope of the ridge and, after assisting the 39th in the capture of the flak position, turned almost directly north toward the fortress of Equeurdreville and the Redoute des Fourches. Late in the day both battalions prepared to assault the Redoute after an artillery concentration, but darkness forced postponement of the attack.

The Drive Into the City

German forces in Fortress Cherbourg were well aware of the desperateness of their position as early as the morning of 24 June. By that time VII Corps had broken through the main defense line, although it had not yet captured all of the principal strong points. In an intercepted message to higher headquarters General von Schlieben stated: ". . . communi-





FORT DU ROULE'S DOMINATING POSITION *over the port of Cherbourg is clearly visible in the two photos at left. The 314th Infantry approached the fort from the right. Gun ports in the lower levels on the seaward face (below) can be seen.*

THE VALOGNES–CHERBOURG HIGHWAY, *with Fort du Roule in the distance. The 79th Division moved generally astride the highway up to this point, and the 314th Infantry assaulted the fort along the ridge as indicated.*



cations to several battalions no longer available. Phosphorus shells have put eight batteries out of action. Tomorrow heavier enemy attack expected. . . . Completely crushed by artillery fires." Other captured documents revealed that losses of unit leaders were heavy and that morale was low.

On 25 June, at approximately 0700, a German medical officer, adjutant of the Naval Hospital at Cherbourg, accompanied by a captured American Air Forces officer, came through the lines of the 9th Division to request that the hospital be spared from shelling and that blood plasma be sent for the wounded Americans there. He was given the plasma and returned to Cherbourg bearing also a demand for the immediate surrender of the city: "The Fortress Cherbourg is now surrounded and its defenses have been breached. The city is now isolated. . . . You are tremendously

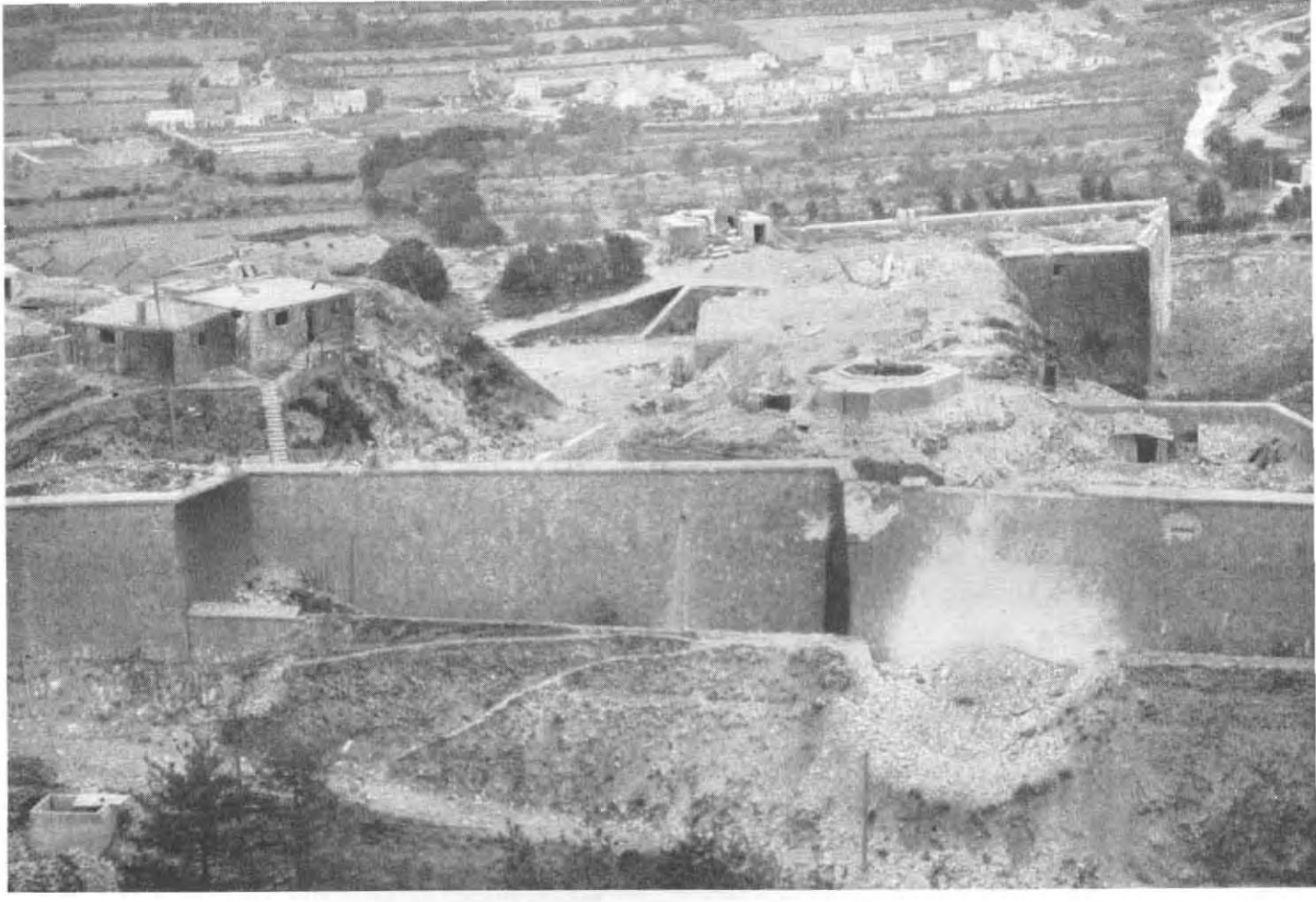
outnumbered and it is merely a question of time when Cherbourg must be captured. The immediate unconditional surrender of Cherbourg is demanded. . . .".

As the German commander received this demand, the 12th Infantry was storming Tourlaville and pushing on to the coast; the 314th Infantry was assaulting Fort du Roule; the 39th Infantry was fighting its way into Octeville; and the 47th Infantry was battering at the western outskirts of the city near Equeurdreville.

The outstanding event of 25 June was the capture of Fort du Roule. Built high and secure into the steep rock promontory which stands immediately back of the city, the fort dominated the entire harbor area and was a formidable-appearing bastion, particularly from the sea. Fort du Roule was primarily a coastal fortress, with its guns housed in the lower levels of the fort pointing seaward. However, it was also defended against land attack from its top level, which mounted automatic weapons and mortars in concrete pillboxes, and enjoyed a favorable defensive position with the steep sides of the promontory restricting the approach to the fort along a solitary ridge. Only the top level of the fort was visible from the land side. A few hundred yards southeast of the fort the Germans had dug an antitank ditch. Several hundred yards farther south was a stream bed, still another hindrance to the attackers.

At 0800 on 25 June one squadron of P–47's bombed Fort du Roule, but for the most part the planes overshot their mark and no damage was done to the subterranean tunnels housing the guns. The land attack was undertaken by the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 314th Infantry. The 3d Battalion at first attempted an attack straight across the draw which lies approximately 700 yards south of the fort. But on reaching the slopes which lead down into the draw the battalion was met with a tremendous volume of small-arms fire. This fire originated from a row of well dug-in positions along an east-west trail on the forward slope and just a few yards beyond the stream bed. Resistance from these positions came as a surprise, and there was at the moment nothing to counter this fire except the 3d Battalion's own small arms and mortars, for the artillery supporting the attack (the 311th Field Artillery Battalion) was firing on the fort itself, 700 yards beyond. The resistance from these bunkers was finally eliminated by the concentration of all machine guns in the 2d and 3d Battalions. Few Germans escaped to the fort. Almost all of them were wiped out by the great volume of automatic fire.

It was now possible to move against the fort itself. From this point the attack was taken over by the 2d Battalion, with the 3d providing covering fire from positions on the slopes south of the draw. Companies E and F led the attack, moving around on the right, first to capture various outlying enemy installations, including a motor pool, and then moving along the broad ridge northwest toward the fort. In its advance the two companies were under continuous fire, not only from the weapons of the fort but also from artillery on the heights of Octeville across the Divette River. The tempo of the attack slowed considerably in the last few hundred yards and then settled down to normal assault tactics, involving covering fires, the use of bangalore torpedoes to blast gaps in the wire, and the careful placing of demolitions. In the course of these operations the capture of the fort was given its most notable impetus by the action of Cpl. John D. Kelly of Company E. Kelly's platoon had become pinned down on the slopes by enemy machine-gun fire from one of the pillboxes. Volunteering to knock out the position, Corporal Kelly armed himself with a 10-foot pole charge with fifteen pounds of TNT, inched his way up the slope under heavy automatic fire, and placed the charge at the



AIR BOMBARDMENT CHIPPED AND SCARRED FORT DU ROULE, *and artillery supported the attack on the fortress, as is evidenced in this photo, but the fort's capture was primarily the work of infantrymen of the 314th Infantry Regiment.*

base of the strong point. The first blast was ineffective. Kelly therefore returned for another charge and braved the slope again to repeat the operation. This time the ends of the enemy guns were blown off. Kelly then returned for still another charge and climbed the slope a third time to place a charge at the rear entrance of the pillbox. Following this blast he hurled hand grenades into the position, forcing the surviving enemy crews to surrender.[3]

Meanwhile the 3d Battalion moved up to clear resistance from the left flank of the assaulting battalion. Here again the fight was aided by an individual exploit. When Company K was stopped by combined 88-mm. and machine-gun fire, 1st Lt. Carlos C. Ogden, who had just taken over the company from the wounded company commander, armed himself with an M1 rifle, a grenade launcher, and a number of rifle and hand grenades and advanced alone up the slope toward the enemy emplacements. Although wounded in this advance, Ogden continued up the slope and finally reached a point from which he destroyed the 88-mm. gun with a well-placed rifle grenade. Again wounded, Ogden continued, found the two machine guns which had held up his company, and with hand grenades

[3]For this action Corporal Kelly was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. He died of wounds in November 1944 and the award was made posthumously.

knocked them out also.[4] These destructive attacks gradually induced various sections of the fort's top level to surrender. Some sections held out until nearly 2200 that night, and even then only the capture of the top level was completed.

Meanwhile on the division's right flank the 313th Infantry, led by the 2d Battalion, moved from Hameau Gringor down into the flats southeast of Cherbourg. Patrols were sent into the outskirts of the city and took a few prisoners, but it was impossible to enter the city in strength on 25 June due to the fire from the guns in the lower level of Fort du Roule.

On the 9th Division's front the 39th Infantry made only slight gains on 25 June. The 2d Battalion was held up by 20-mm. antiaircraft fire on the outskirts of Octeville and spent most of the day combating this fire with tank destroyers and artillery. The 3d Battalion was diverted by the threat of enemy infiltration over the division boundary from the direction of Martinvast.

The 47th Infantry, on the other hand, made the first penetration in the suburbs by taking the enemy position at Equeurdreville. Surrounded by a dry moat with a single bridge, and well-wired and located atop a high hill, the position looked like a medieval fortress. Actually, however, the structure constituted only the observation post and control point for a battery of coastal guns on the reverse slope. It had overhanging observation rooms and tunnels connecting with the batteries to the north, but apparently was not well protected from the south. The 2d Battalion had approached to within 500 yards of it during the previous night.

Reconnaissance in the morning showed that the road fronting the hill had been mined. Before the jump-off, tank destroyers cleared a path for the infantry and a squadron of P–47's bombed the position at 0930. At 1045 it was shelled by artillery and then Company E started out behind a mortar barrage. Although the Germans had good defensive positions, they were not disposed to fight and eighty-nine men surrendered fifteen minutes after the assault had started. That evening Company E set up an arc of defense on the northern slopes of the hill. Company F also met only ineffective resistance at the Hameau du Tot strong point and advanced rapidly into Equeurdreville with the aid of tanks, tank destroyers, and engineers. The company actually pushed a platoon to the beach west of the arsenal during the evening, but withdrew it to the edge of the city for the night. While the 2d Battalion was breaking the last defenses west of the city, the 3d captured the Redoute des Fourches after a heavy artillery concentration. During this day of crumbling enemy resistance the 9th Division took more than 1,100 prisoners.

That evening all three battalions of the 12th Infantry entered Cherbourg from the east. The 2d and 3d Battalions, which earlier had reached the vicinity of Bourbourg, were ordered to move into the city at 2000 and experienced only slight delays. The 2d received scattered fire from houses and a concentration of oil-filled Nebelwerfer rockets which fell to the rear, but losses were light. The 3d Battalion, delayed only by mines, crossed the railway and moved down the Rue Carnot and Boulevard Maritime. At Rue Jules Ferry, Company K came under heavy fire from beach guns to the north and turned south to follow Company I. Both the 2d and 3d Battalions advanced along undefended streets to Rue de la Bretonniere, the limit of the 4th Division zone.

In contrast to the comparative ease of these advances, the 1st Battalion encountered stubborn resistance and engaged in sharp fighting as it cleared out the coast west of Pointe des Grèves. Detailed information about the beach fortifications east of Fort des Flamands was

[4]Lieutenant Ogden also received the Congressional Medal of Honor, 2 April 1945.

supplied by a British agent, and an attack with tanks was planned. But darkness made their use impracticable and a series of 155-mm. concentrations were substituted to support the infantry attack.

At 2323, exactly as planned, the first artillery concentration blew up an ammunition dump one block ahead of the battalion line. The second landed 100 yards farther north and the third 100 yards beyond, setting fire to buildings. The final concentration came at 2340 and Companies A and C moved ahead 500 yards before automatic fire from pillboxes halted them. Three hours were consumed in fruitless attempts to destroy these pillboxes with explosives, while the Germans shot flares and fired at anything that moved. The companies finally abandoned the attack and organized a defensive position.

During the night the Germans were busy destroying their installations. Port des Flamands went up in flames, followed by the Amcot Aircraft Works, the Gare Maritime, and other buildings. At 0550 American tanks were brought up to the beach defenses to fire point-blank at the pillboxes, but the appearance of the armor was sufficient. Nearly 350 Germans filed out of the fortifications to surrender. As engineers performed the final act of destroying guns and clearing mines, the 4th Division's role in Cherbourg's capture reached completion.

The attacks of 25 June received support from the Navy. General Bradley had requested naval shelling of the Cherbourg batteries, to be synchronized with the final land assault. A task force of three battleships, four cruisers, and screening destroyers, formed for this purpose, was scheduled to support the ground forces on 24 June, but held its fire because of uncertainty regarding troop dispositions. The next afternoon the task force moved in at close range to fire on the Cherbourg batteries, but enemy shore batteries as far west as the Cap de la Hague Peninsula opened accurate return fire and forced the task force to shift to counterbattery in self-defense. Perhaps the chief value of the naval support was that, by drawing enemy fire, it enabled the 9th Division artillery observers to spot several large enemy batteries in the Cap de la Hague area.

Organized Resistance Ends

The 79th and 9th Divisions virtually cleared the city on 26 June. The 79th, responsible for the area east of the Divette River, moved against the city early in the morning with the 313th Infantry on the right and the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 314th on the left. Elements of the 313th Infantry reached the beach in their sector by 0800. The 314th was delayed by fire from the left, for the 39th Infantry on that flank lagged behind, but reached the beach by midafternoon. There was some street fighting and firing from concrete bunkers. Enemy positions were finally neutralized by small-arms and mortar fire and then battered into submission by antitank gun fire.

Fighting became doubly difficult for the Americans in the city when the guns in the lower levels of Fort du Roule began firing on them in the afternoon. Only the top level of the fort had been cleared the preceding day. The 2d Battalion of the 314th Infantry had remained on the lid of the fort during the night, and on the morning of the 26th resumed their efforts to reduce the remainder of the fort. This task occupied the entire day. There was no way of reaching the lower levels of the fort from the top. The reduction of the fort, therefore, became primarily a matter of finding ways to place demolitions in the lower levels. Several charges were lowered through the ventilating shafts and packages of TNT on wires or ropes were let down the sides of the fort to the level of the gun embrasures and set off by means of a trigger device. More suc-

cessful was the exploit of a demolitions team, led by S/Sgt. Paul A. Hurst (Company E). It made a path around the precipitous west side of the fort and blasted one of the tunnel mouths with pole charges and bazookas. Meanwhile antitank guns down in the city were turned against the embrasures. Resistance in the two lower levels finally came to an end early in the evening, placing Fort du Roule entirely in American hands. The fort yielded several hundred prisoners.

To the southwest the 315th Infantry cleared the Martinvast area, taking 2,200 prisoners. Employing a loudspeaker, Col. Bernard B. McMahon, commanding the regiment, persuaded one group of 1,200 Germans to surrender. The German commander's honor was appeased by an "overwhelming display of strength"—two white phosphorous grenades.

In the meantime, the 47th and 39th Infantry Regiments of the 9th Division fought their way through the western half of Cherbourg, which was the most strongly defended portion of the city. In the 47th's action both the 2d Battalion, in the extreme northwest of the city, and the 1st Battalion were stopped by fire from the thick-walled arsenal. The 2d was unable to get beyond the railway, which runs diagonally across the front of the Naval Hospital and along the southwest edge of the arsenal area. The 1st Battalion captured the hospital, where 150 American wounded were found, but was halted by the arsenal guns directly to the front. The 3d Battalion's advance on the right was hotly contested by defenses behind the stadium and in the mined cemetery. The battalion's attack was supported initially by a battalion of artillery and mortars, but supporting fires were made more difficult during the day by the poor visibility caused by smoke, the dust of demolitions, and bad weather. Both the 1st and 3d Battalions used tanks and tank destroyers without much success against heavy concrete pillboxes, but the armor gave effective support in knocking out roof-top positions where the enemy had emplaced 20-mm. antiaircraft guns. French civilians aided considerably by pointing out gun positions and mined areas.

The most dramatic incident of the day occurred in the 39th Infantry zone. Both the 2d and 3d Battalions moved down the ridge in the morning. Their objectives were Octeville and the Cherbourg area lying between the 47th Infantry and the Divette. A captured German reported that General von Schlieben, the commander of the Cherbourg Fortress, was in an underground shelter in St. Sauveur, just beyond Octeville.

For several hours the two battalions were slowed by Nebelwerfer fire and direct fire from antiaircraft and 88-mm. guns in the Octeville area, but by midafternoon Company E and Company F had reached von Schlieben's shelter. After covering the tunnel entrances with machine-gun fire, a prisoner was sent down to ask for the fort's surrender. When surrender was refused, tank destroyers began to fire directly into two of the tunnel's three entrances and preparations were begun to demolish the stronghold with TNT. After a few rounds the enemy began to pour out. Among the 800 who surrendered were General von Schlieben, Admiral Walter Hennecke, of the Port of Cherbourg, and their staffs. The surrender was made to General Eddy, who demanded that von Schlieben surrender the whole Cherbourg garrison. The fortress commander refused, however, adding that communications were so bad that he could not ask the others to surrender even if he wanted to. When General Collins offered to provide the means of communication von Schlieben still declined.

After reorganization, the 39th Infantry pushed on to the coast. At the City Hall, which the Germans had fortified and defended all day, a German colonel appeared to negotiate the surrender of his command. Convinced of von Schlieben's capture and prom-

ised protection from French snipers, he surrendered with 400 troops to Lt. Col. Frank L. Gunn, 2d Battalion commander.

There remained only one major stronghold to take in the city itself, the arsenal. This structure, partially protected by a moat, was high-walled and mounted antitank, antiaircraft, and machine guns on its parapets. Because of darkness, assault on it was postponed until the morning of 27 June, when all three battalions of the 47th Infantry were to attack. Detailed artillery and engineer plans were drawn up.

Early in the morning Colonel Smythe (47th Infantry) decided to test the enemy's determination to fight before the main attack began, and one platoon of the 1st Battalion (Company A), with one light machine gun and a 60-mm. mortar, started toward the arsenal at 0800. A tank followed but remained under cover. The platoon drew small-arms fire at the railway and two 20-mm. guns, spotted on a parapet, were knocked out by the tank. Having drawn fire, the platoon, assuming its mission accomplished and that the assault would take place, started back. Actually the enemy had decided to surrender.

A psychological warfare unit had broadcast an ultimatum to the enemy. At 0830 unarmed men were observed walking on the arsenal wall. A few minutes later white flags were flown, and Colonel Smythe went forward to

INFANTRYMEN WORK THEIR WAY AROUND FORT DU ROULE *in an effort to destroy the lower level guns with demolitions. It was necessary to silence the seaward-facing guns before the clearing of the city could proceed.*





STREET FIGHTING IN CHERBOURG *continued most of the day, 26 June. The above photo shows two infantrymen attempting to locate enemy riflemen in a shell-torn building. By the end of the day only the arsenal and the outer breakwater forts remained in German hands.*

receive the surrender. General Sattler, deputy commander of the fortress, stated that he could surrender only the men under his immediate control, because he had no communication with other parts of the arsenal. Colonel Smythe agreed to this and four hundred Germans came out of the bunkers and laid down their arms.

The surrender of the arsenal at approximately 1000, 27 June, brought to an end all organized resistance in the city of Cherbourg. Except for the outlying forts along the jetties



INTERROGATION OF GERMAN COMMANDERS *took place shortly after their capture by the 39th Infantry on 26 June. In this photo General von Schlieben (center) is shown answering the questions of General Collins (right) through a VII Corps Order of Battle Section interpreter. Admiral Hennecke is at the left.*

and breakwater, where small enemy groups still held out, all of the port and city was now occupied. Over 10,000 prisoners had been captured in the preceding day and a half, including 2,600 patients and the staffs of two hospitals. The arsenal yielded 50 sides of beef and 300 sides of pork, which gave VII Corps its first fresh meat in a month.

For their last stand on the Cherbourg Peninsula, the Germans had been forced to use every man available regardless of his specialty. Many of the units used in the line had been converted only in the last days.[5] With their backs to the sea, they showed little disposition for a last-ditch fight. The breakdown of communications within the beleaguered fortress left scattered German units without control or infor-

[5]Identifications made on the narrow 79th Division front between 20 and 23 June, for example, included the *921st, 922d, 729th,* and *1058th Regiments* of the *243d, 709th,* and *91st Divisions;* the *235th* and *14th Antiaircraft Battalions,* the *16th Artillery Battalion,* the *298th Antiaircraft Searchlight Battalion,* the *1st Parachute Training Regiment,* and the *144th* and *604th Ost Battalions.* The latter were special units formed of Russian or Ukrainian personnel and later incorporated in regular infantry organizations.



mation and made them an easy mark for appeals to surrender.

For the Americans, 27 June marked the achievement of the first major objective of Operation NEPTUNE. In the final drive on Cherbourg some of the enemy forces had withdrawn to strong positions both east and west of the port city. On 26–27 June, while the final fighting was taking place in the city, the 22d Infantry pushed eastward and captured the last enemy strongholds in Cap Lévy. What still remained was to clear the enemy from outlying forts and the cape west of Cherbourg, and to put the great port into working order. Two days were now consumed in reducing the remaining harbor forts with dive-bombing and tank destroyer fire. Meanwhile the 9th Division prepared to drive into the Cap de la Hague area, where an estimated 3,000 Germans were thought to have retreated for a last stand. Between 29 June and 1 July the 9th Division was engaged in heavy fighting, but there was never any doubt about the successful and speedy outcome of the operation. The last organized enemy defense line between Vauville and Gruchy was cracked by the assault of the 60th and 47th Infantry Regiments on 30 June. In the final clean-up more than 6,000 Germans were captured. At 1500, 1 July, the 9th Division reported to VII Corps that all organized resistance had ceased.[6]

The campaign thus ended had cost heavily, despite an unexpectedly easy beginning in the weakly opposed landing on Utah Beach, and it had fallen behind the schedule set in the NEPTUNE Plan. In the fight for its objective VII Corps suffered a total of over 22,000 casualties, including 2,800 killed, 5,700 missing, and 13,500 wounded.[7] The Germans had lost 39,000 captured in addition to an undetermined number of killed and wounded. Cherbourg was captured on D plus 21, and the last enemy were cleared from the peninsula on D plus 25. The estimated date of capture mentioned in earlier planning had been D plus 8, and this had been changed to D plus 15 only a few days before the invasion as the result of late intelligence and the resultant alteration in the VII Corps plan. Both dates were admittedly optimistic, however, and represented primarily a date of reference for logistical planners in the phasing of material to the port, rather than a schedule for tactical commanders.

From the German point of view, however, the fall of Cherbourg came much sooner than expected and represented a major defeat which foreshadowed the evacuation of France and the loss of the war. Throughout German tactical thinking, both in anticipation of invasion and after the blow struck, the denial to the Allies of the French ports assumed a major place. Hitler and the army believed that the principal Allied asset was overwhelming materiel superiority and that it could be thrown decisively into the conflict only through the possession of a large port. Even after the Cotentin Peninsula was cut, preventing the reinforcement of the Cherbourg Fortress, the German command still anticipated that the port could hold out for at least several weeks, as Brest was to do later. Cherbourg's quick capitulation was taken hard by Hitler, and thereafter in Nazi circles General von Schlieben was held up as the very model of a poor commander.

[6]For a detailed story of these final operations see Appendix A.

[7]There are discrepancies between Corps and division statistics. Since division figures are not available in all cases, the Corps tabulation is used in its entirety. Scattered airborne landings account for 4,500 of the missing.

THE NAVAL ARSENAL, *on the northwest side of Cherbourg, was the last position in the city to surrender. The 47th Infantry had cleared the last enemy resistance from the western suburbs on 26 June and on the following day received the surrender of the arsenal itself, shown here.*



THE CITY AND PORT OF CHERBOURG, *final objective of the VII Corps, as it appeared on 6 July 1944. The first supplies were brought ashore by DUKW's on 16 July, 19 days after capture of the port.*

The conquest of the Cotentin Peninsula did not immediately break German defenses in the west or irrevocably insure a quick Allied victory. A month of hard fighting in the same type of difficult Normandy terrain lay ahead. Until the end of July the enemy continued to contest bitterly nearly every Norman field; he launched strong counterattacks in the hope of containing Allied forces in their narrow beachhead. Nevertheless, the end of June saw the disappearance of the last slim chance the enemy may have had to dislodge the Allied foothold on France, and he was faced with what would become a hopeless battle of attrition in which Allied armies were to build up an irresistible superiority of men and materiel and strike out of Normandy for their sweep through France.

APPENDIX A

Clearing the Cap Lévy and Cap de la Hague Areas

In the Corps drive northward to envelop Cherbourg two well-fortified areas had been bypassed and contained so that the main objective, the city, could be isolated and captured without delay. On the northwest flank of the 9th Division, the 4th Cavalry Squadron and the 60th Infantry were blocking off an unknown number of enemy troops in the Cap de la Hague Peninsula. In this area the enemy's main line of defense ran roughly across the base of the peninsula from Gruchy to Vauville, and it was to this line that the Germans had retired as the fall of Cherbourg became imminent (Maps XII and 27).

On the opposite flank of the Corps was a fortified line running north from Gonneville, embracing the airport at Maupertus and continuing on to Cap Lévy (Map XIV). This line contained large-caliber casemated coastal batteries in the north, heavy concentrations of flak guns around Maupertus, and the usual semipermanent field defenses. A considerable number of enemy troops still held out in this area, and, after the 22d Infantry had driven north to Hill 158 and cut the main highway to Cherbourg, they continued to harass the American advance. The Germans had been particularly active west of Gonneville, where, by cutting the 22d Infantry's supply route, they had forced the regiment to provide armored escort for its trains and to conduct daily mop-up operations.

For roughly four days, 21 to 25 June, the activities of the 22d Infantry had been confined to maintaining a link with the rest of the 4th Division to the south, mopping up along the main supply route, and containing the enemy in the Maupertus area. In providing this flank protection for the division, the 22d Infantry had covered the 12th Infantry's drive on Tourlaville and the coast. Both the 2d and 3d Battalions accompanied the 12th Infantry to the coast on 25 June and that evening the 22d Infantry finally became free to turn its full effort against the enemy holding out to the east. General Barton gave Colonel Foster instructions to clean up the area east to St. Pierre-Eglise and north to Cap Lévy.

This action on the eastern flank of the Corps took place concurrently with the clearing of the last resistance in Cherbourg. The 22d Infantry opened the attack on the Maupertus airport at 1100 on 26 June with three battalions abreast and a troop of cavalry protecting each flank. Heavy fire from enemy antiaircraft guns held up all three battalions for several hours, but, with the aid of supporting fires from the 44th Field Artillery Battalion, the 1st Battalion took a series of positions south of the airport and captured Gonneville; the 2d Battalion occupied the western edge of the field; the 3d Battalion captured Maupertus and the defenses along the northern side of the field. The enemy, however, continued to offer determined resistance and not until the following day was the airport finally taken.

After clearing the airport positions, the 1st and 3d Battalions pivoted northward against

other fortifications. Despite strong resistance, all the gun positions were overrun and late in the day the last strong point was silenced by howitzers of the 44th Field Artillery Battalion. When the commander of the position, Major Kauppers, surrendered the 990 troops under his control before midnight on 27 June, all resistance in the northeast of the peninsula was ended.

Clearing the Cap de la Hague area turned out to be a longer and more difficult task and entailed some heavy fighting by the 9th Division. With the fall of Cherbourg, the 79th Division moved south to join the VIII Corps, and the 4th Division began to take over the policing of the city, gradually relieving the 9th Division, which turned its attention to the operation in the cape. It was estimated that 3,000 enemy troops still held out in this area. Before the fall of Cherbourg they had held a line running roughly from Vauville through Ste. Croix-Hague to Henneville. On the afternoon of 26 June, apparently learning of Cherbourg's imminent surrender, the enemy began to fall back to the line Vauville–Branville–Querqueville (Map No. 27). The 60th Infantry, which had been containing the enemy, now moved northwest to maintain contact, and occupied Ste. Croix-Hague by the next morning. Later in the day patrols captured a battery of four 105-mm. guns and another of three 88-mm. guns, together with 300 prisoners, at a crossroads southeast of Tonneville. It was not thought that the enemy would attempt to hold the Vauville–Querqueville line. which was long and discontinuous. His



MAP NO. 27

strongest positions were believed to be along the Vauville–Gruchy line, which was shorter and well fortified.

The 9th Division used 27–28 June to regroup for the last peninsula operation. Reconnaissance along the northern coast began immediately. The 47th Infantry was ordered to assemble in the Henneville area on 27 June, preparatory to an attack on 29 June. Combat patrols of the 2d Battalion pushed as far as Querqueville on 27 June and captured three hundred prisoners around Henneville and the Querqueville airport. The regiment did not go into the assembly area until 28 June, when it was relieved in Cherbourg by the 8th Infantry. The 39th Infantry assembled west of Octeville on the evening of 27 June.

Meanwhile, enemy field batteries and long-range coastal guns in the northwest continued to shell the division's installations, and the 9th Division attempted to knock them out with combined counterbattery fire from its organic and attached Corps artillery and by air attacks.

On 27 June P–47's bombed Querqueville, Gruchy, Nacqueville, and Jobourg with undetermined results, and on 28 June fighter-bombers dive-bombed the heavy batteries at Laye and Goury on the northwest tip of the peninsula and also strong points at la Rue de Beaumont and Beaumont-Hague, inflicting some damage. But still the heavy fire continued from the peninsula.

The division field order for 29 June called for an attack up the peninsula by the 4th Cavalry Squadron and the 60th and 47th Infantry Regiments moving abreast. The cavalry was to take a narrow sector along the west coast, the 60th Infantry was to move astride the main highway, and the 47th Infantry was assigned successive objectives along the north coast—the ridges lying between the several streams which cut down to the sea. Colonel Smythe of the 47th Infantry planned to leapfrog his three battalions to successive objectives. When patrols found the area east of Nacqueville free on 28 June, he initiated his plan this same day. The 1st Battalion occupied Querqueville at approximately 2100. Occupation of Nacqueville by the 2d Battalion was delayed by darkness and the knowledge that the area was mined.

An artillery concentration by the 60th Infantry and 957th Field Artillery (155-mm. howitzers) and a dive-bombing of Beaumont-Hague by P–47's preceded the next morning's attack of the 60th Infantry, whose first objective was the fortified Branville area. The 1st and 3d Battalions, left and right respectively, went through the area unopposed in an hour, but then they ran into the main enemy line of resistance and drew fire from positions in Beaumont-Hague and west of Fleury. The 1st Battalion was stopped at Road Junction 167, where the main road into the peninsula meets the north-south highway.

The enemy apparently was prepared to fight one of the main delaying actions at this junction. A tank ditch extending far to both sides of the point tied in with a natural stream obstacle and the Greville defensive position to the north. The junction was covered by antitank guns and emplacements on the forward slopes of the Lande de Beaumont hills to the southwest. Unlike the hedgerow region, this terrain, particularly the commanding ground to the west, was barren and desolate, with almost unobstructed fields of fire, and the Germans had placed many machine guns on the slopes. Small-caliber guns in pillboxes or protected by concrete hutments covered the highway approach.

The efforts of the 1st Battalion to break through beyond the road junction were initially unsuccessful. On the right, however, the 3d Battalion with tank destroyer and tank support made a wide sweep to the north and, after the 60th Field Artillery Battalion had fired a concentration on enemy tanks reportedly preparing a counterattack, worked

through the defense line west of Fleury and drove to the junction of the Greville road with the Cherbourg highway, the second objective. Despite three air attacks, Beaumont-Hague remained the source of much of the enemy fire on both battalions.

The 47th Infantry, meanwhile, cleared some of the coastal strong points. Occupation of Querqueville was completed by the 1st Battalion as the 2d Battalion passed on to Nacqueville, with the 3d Battalion following. When the 2d peeled off to mop up toward the coast before noon, the 3d moved toward the ridge west of Nicolle, where little was known of the enemy's strength or location. The objective—a road along the ridge 1,000 yards west of the town—was occupied by midafternoon without opposition.

Until this time the original plan had been followed. Each battalion had, in turn, peeled off to its objectives, and finally the 1st Battalion had fallen in behind the 3d so that these two battalions could attack the Greville–Gruchy line together. But two unexpected difficulties forced a postponement of the attack. It was first delayed when the poor road network along the coast retarded both the 1st and the 2d Battalions. Later another delay was necessitated when the 3d Battalion found its next objective—the last before the main line—stubbornly defended, and still had not completely cleared it at 2200 that night.

This objective was a fortified position on high ground across a stream and northwest of the Nicolle ridge taken in the afternoon. Regiment had decided not to attack Greville until this position was cleared, but the original plan had been based on the assumption that the position would not be strongly held.

Initially, Companies L and K, leading the 3d Battalion advance, found forward trenches and fire positions undefended as forty Germans surrendered. When the companies moved on to the Greville–Urville road, however, they came under heavy enemy shell fire.

After a heavy preparation by a light and a medium artillery battalion, the companies assaulted the next fortified position, which was visible from their line of departure. After 2 hours' fighting, 250 Germans gave up and 3 guns were captured. This did not end all resistance. Yet it still seemed possible that Greville might be occupied after twenty-two prisoners, netted by a public address appeal, reported they were the only Germans in the town. If true, the 2d Battalion could move across the rear and to the left of the 3d, and enter the town. Patrols, however, reported activity in Greville and, as the 3d Battalion still had not fully cleared the enemy position, the attack on Greville was postponed.

There was still no positive indication of the enemy strength facing the 9th Division. It was known that the German forces, containing elements of the *919th* and *922d Regiments* as well as miscellaneous flak and artillery troops, were organized in two battle groups under Lieutenant Colonels Keil and Mueller. Despite the counterbattery fire and the dive-bombing of the past few days, enemy artillery, estimated to consist of 3 light and 2 medium batteries and 4 heavy caliber guns, 2 of which were certainly railway guns, was still active. There were some signs, however, that morale was low.

The mainstays in the German line, which was to be assaulted on 30 June, were Beaumont-Hague, Greville, and Gruchy. Civilians reported that Greville was the strongest point in the peninsula. The entire ridge from Greville north was strongly fortified with concrete shelters built into the slopes, as well as turreted machine guns, mortars, and antitank guns. The forward approaches were defended by firing trenches and antitank ditches. Entrenchments of the secondary line were located several hundred yards back.

The 4th Cavalry Squadron jumped off at 0700 on 30 June. Moving out in a column of troops, it kept generally abreast of the 60th



AIR SUPPORT IN THE CAP DE LA HAGUE PENINSULA *was called for repeatedly in the final mop-up. In this photo a Ninth Air Force bomber is seen following its attack on a coastal battery at Auderville, in the extreme northwest tip of the peninsula.*

Infantry all day, continuing through successive objectives with the support of artillery. By dark it had almost completed its mission, reaching a point southwest of Jobourg.

The attacks of both the 47th and 60th Infantry Regiments began without the aid of scheduled bombing of Beaumont-Hague and Greville, which could not be executed because of bad weather. Artillery preparations began at 0805 after the regiments had moved to their lines of departure. The 47th's line was the stream bed approximately 1,000 yards from the enemy's main positions. During the night the 2d Battalion had moved in on the 3d's left and they were to take Greville and Gruchy respectively, each battalion committing two companies.

The artillery fire delivered on the German positions from 0805 to 0815 destroyed a number of 88-mm. guns and mortars, and the enemy abandoned his outlying trenches, which were then used by the 2d Battalion to work

forward. As Company F approached Greville, Germans were encountered in the trenches and a close-in, grenade-throwing fight developed. The town, supposedly the strongest point in the German line, was entered by 0900. The enemy had been overwhelmed by superior American fire power. The capture of Greville occurred so much more rapidly than expected that planned artillery concentrations had to be cancelled.

The 3d Battalion attacked toward Gruchy but was stopped short of the village by heavy mortar fire. The 2d Battalion was asked for assistance and it adjusted mortar and artillery on the Gruchy position. Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion continued to advance to a road junction west of Greville, where it was ordered to hold until the 3d could draw abreast. It continued to get 20-mm. and mortar fire from positions to the northeast and southwest, and the 1st Battalion was committed on the left to relieve some of the pressure. Advancing slowly in the face of mortar fire, the 3d Battalion reached Gruchy by noon but was still under fire from the main German positions on the ridge to the west and south. In the early afternoon a 2-battalion concentration of artillery fire began to flush prisoners from the ridge, and both Gruchy and the main German positions were cleared by 1700, the 3d Battalion mov-

RAILWAY GUNS NEAR LAYE, *in the Cap de la Hague Peninsula, continued to fire on 9th Division troops until 30 June, when the position was overrun. A second gun can be seen on the right.*



ing on to a hill 900 yards west of Gruchy. By this time the 1st and 2d Battalions, moving against diminishing resistance, were almost at Digulleville, three miles farther west.

The German line in the 60th Infantry's zone was also completely broken during the day through action of the 2d Battalion. The 1st Battalion continued to be held in the vicinity of Road Junction 167 and did not reach its line of departure. The 3d Battalion was halted after an advance of about 300 yards. But the 2d Battalion had moved up during the night to a position north of the highway junction, and it was ready for the advance. Its attack was to be led by Company E, which was to move south of the road, while the rest of the battalion was to advance directly up the road. The men had had only two hours' sleep and Company E had no officers except Captain Sprindus, commanding, and Lt. John I. Cookson, the executive officer. The attack was delayed as it became necessary to fill in an antitank ditch, and the 2d Battalion did not jump off until an hour after the other battalion.

Company E crossed the road despite machine-gun fire, slipped through a mine field south of the highway, and advanced up the hill in a dramatic charge, squads in line of skirmishers, firing as they went. It had no supporting fire except for a short time from 60-mm. mortars. Smoke laid down at 0800, the time originally set for the attack, had long since faded. Captain Sprindus removed a mine from time to time to clear a path for the men as they surged forward in their bold assault.

As the 1st and 2d Platoons moved across the first hill, the 3d Platoon went into a draw to the south, swung west, and then advanced north on the town of Beaumont-Hague along the river bed east of the Vauville road. Company F, meanwhile, was driving up the right side of the main highway, with tanks of Company C, 746th Tank Battalion, moving ahead several times to fire into hedges and at other targets. The tanks apparently demoralized the Germans and Colonel Kauffman ordered Company F to get on the road with the tanks and proceed directly into the town and aid Company E. Before noon the town was cleared and 150 Germans were taken prisoner. Continuing the push, Company F started out for Jobourg.

The enemy's organized defensive line in the peninsula had been thoroughly shattered by the attacks on the Beaumont-Hague and Greville positions. Although other fortified points lay farther west, the enemy never again offered anything more than delaying opposition, and the drive up the peninsula became, for the most part, a mop-up operation.

Shortly after noon, Colonel de Rohan asked for an air attack on the extensive flak and other installations at Lande de Jobourg, and at 1540, despite poor visibility, a squadron of P–47's bombed these installations with good effect. General Eddy urged an advance by the 60th Infantry on Jobourg as quickly as possible in order that the 39th Infantry could be shoved through to clean up the tip of the peninsula. The three battalions moved forward steadily after the bombing, marching abreast and generally astride the highway. The 2d Battalion occupied Jobourg by 1800. The 3d came up on the right and the 1st swung from left rear to occupy the flak installations to the east.

In this movement up the peninsula, the 4th Cavalry Squadron remained approximately abreast and as these units, along with those of the 47th Infantry, closed in on the final objectives, the groups of captured prisoners gradually increased in size. About 2,000 surrendered by midnight, June 30. Artillery fire decreased with the ebbing resistance, but the Germans continued to shell 9th Division positions sporadically through the drizzling night.

The 39th Infantry, which had moved up to an assembly area near Ste. Croix-Hague the previous afternoon, meanwhile prepared to clear the tip of the peninsula and bring the

operation to a close. At 2000 the 3d Battalion, reinforced by Company A, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Troop C, 4th Cavalry Squadron, was motorized. By midnight it was 2,000 yards beyond Jobourg on the road to Auderville, ready to attack that town before morning. Colonel Stumpf moved the battalion out at once, preceded by the 9th Reconnaissance Troop. The first 100 prisoners were taken so easily that he decided to continue to the objective. The town was secured by 0500.

The 47th Infantry mopped up northward during the night and at 0230 reported the capture of Colonel Keil, senior commander of the Cap de la Hague forces.

In all, nearly 3,000 prisoners were gathered up in the early morning hours of 1 July, bringing the total captured in the peninsula to over 6,000, double the original estimate. Armament taken included two 10-inch railway guns, four 155-mm. howitzers, five 88-mm. self-propelled guns, two 47-mm. guns, and ten 20-mm. guns. As patrols finished their work, areas were reported clear by the 39th Infantry at 1310, the 60th Infantry at 1400, and the 47th Infantry at 1430. At 1500, 1 July, the 9th Division reported to VII Corps that all organized resistance on Cap de la Hague had ceased and that the division was assembling preparatory to the move south for further operations. Relieved of duties in Cherbourg, the 4th Division had moved south the previous day. Policing of Cherbourg was taken over by the 99th Port Battalion, while the 101st Airborne Division moved up to assume responsibility for the tactical defense of the city.

UTAH BEACH, October 1945.



INSIGNIA OF MAJOR UNITS PARTICIPATING IN THE UTAH BEACH OPERATION



82d Airborne Division



9th Division



101st Airborne Division



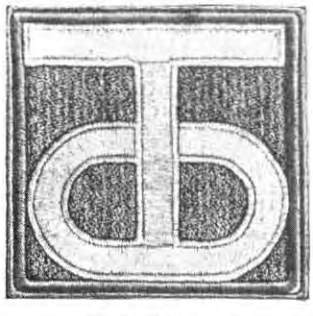
VII Corps



79th Division



4th Division



90th Division

APPENDIX B

Battle Casualties Sustained by VII Corps, 6 June–1 July 1944

Unit	Total	Type of Casualty			
		Killed	*Wounded*	*Missing*	*Captured*
All Units	22,119	2,811	13,564	5,665	79
4th Division	5,452	844	3,814	788	6
9th Division	2,438	301	2,061	76	
79th Division	2,376	240	1,896	240	
90th Division	2,399	386	1,979	34	
82d A/B Division	4,480	457	1,440	2,571	12
101st A/B Division	4,670	546	2,217	1,907	
Corps Troops	304	37	157	49	61

Source: VII Corps, G–1 Reports, June 1944.

APPENDIX C

Allied Chain of Command and Order of Battle

Supreme Allied Commander
Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower
21st Army Group
Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery
First Army
Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley
VII Corps
Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins

Unit	*Commander*
4th Division	Maj. Gen. Raymond O. Barton
8th Infantry	Col. James A. Van Fleet
12th Infantry	Col. Russell P. Reeder
	Lt. Col. James S. Luckett (11 June)
22d Infantry	Col. Hervey A. Tribolet
	Col. Robert T. Foster (26 June)
9th Division	Maj. Gen. Manton S. Eddy
39th Infantry	Col. Harry A. Flint
47th Infantry	Col. George W. Smythe
60th Infantry	Col. Frederick J. de Rohan
79th Division	Maj. Gen. Ira T. Wyche
313th Infantry	Col. Sterling A. Wood
314th Infantry	Col. Warren A. Robinson
315th Infantry	Col. Porter P. Wiggins
	Col. Bernard B. McMahon (24 June)
82d Airborne Division	Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway
505th Parachute Infantry	Col. William E. Ekman
507th Parachute Infantry	Col. George V. Millett, Jr.
	Col. E. D. Raff (15 June)
508th Parachute Infantry	Col. Roy E. Lindquist
325th Glider Infantry	Col. Harry L. Lewis

Unit	*Commander*
90th Division	Brig. Gen. Jay W. MacKelvie
	Maj. Gen. Eugene M. Landrum (13 June)
357th Infantry	Col. Philip D. Ginder
	Col. John W. Sheehy (13 June)
	Lt. Col. Charles M. Schwab (15 June)
	Col. George B. Barth (17 June)
358th Infantry	Col. James V. Thompson
	Col. Christian H. Clark, Jr. (12 June)
	Col. Richard C. Partridge (16 June)
359th Infantry	Col. Clarke K. Fales
101st Airborne Division	Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor
501st Parachute Infantry	Col. Howard R. Johnson
502d Parachute Infantry	Col. George V. H. Moseley, Jr. (WIA 6 June)
	Lt. Col. John H. Michaelis (6 June)
506th Parachute Infantry	Col. Robert F. Sink
327th Glider Infantry	Col. George S. Wear
	Col. Joseph H. Harper (10 June)
4th Cavalry Group	Col. Joseph M. Tully
4th Cavalry Squadron	Lt. Col. E. C. Dunn
24th Cavalry Squadron	Lt. Col. F. H. Gaston, Jr.
6th Armored Group	Col. Francis F. Fainter
70th Tank Battalion	Lt. Col. John C. Welborn
746th Tank Battalion	Lt. Col. C. G. Hupfer

APPENDIX D

Enemy Chain of Command and Order of Battle

Supreme Command West
Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt

Army Group B
Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel

Seventh Army
Generaloberst Friedrich Dollman (died 28 June)

LXXXIV Corps
General der Artillerie Erich Marcks (KIA 12 June)
General der Artillerie Wilhelm Fahrmbacher (to 17 June)
General der Infanterie Dietrich von Choltitz

Units of *LXXXIV Corps* identified on VII Corps front:

17th SS-Panzer Grenadier Division
(Goetz von Berlichingen)
Genlt. Werner Ostendorf, CG
37th Panzer Grenadier Regiment
38th Panzer Grenadier Regiment

77th Division
Genlt. Rudolf Stegmann, CG
(KIA 17 June)
Obst. Rudolf Bacherer

91st Luftlande (Airborne) Division
Genmaj. Wilhelm Falley, CG
(KIA 6 June)
Obst. Eugen Koenig, CO
1057th Grenadier Regiment
1058th Grenadier Regiment

243d Division
Genlt. Heinz Hellmich, CG
(KIA 17 June)
Obst. Bernard Klosterkemper, CO
920th Grenadier Regiment
921st Grenadier Regiment
922d Grenadier Regiment

265th Division
Genlt. Walter Duevert, CG
894th Grenadier Regiment
895th Grenadier Regiment
896th Grenadier Regiment

352d Division
Genlt. Dietrich Kraiss
914th Grenadier Regiment

709th Division
Genlt. Karl W. von Schlieben, CG
919th Grenadier Regiment
729th Grenadier Regiment
739th Grenadier Regiment
649th Ost Battalion, attached
795th Georgian Battalion, attached

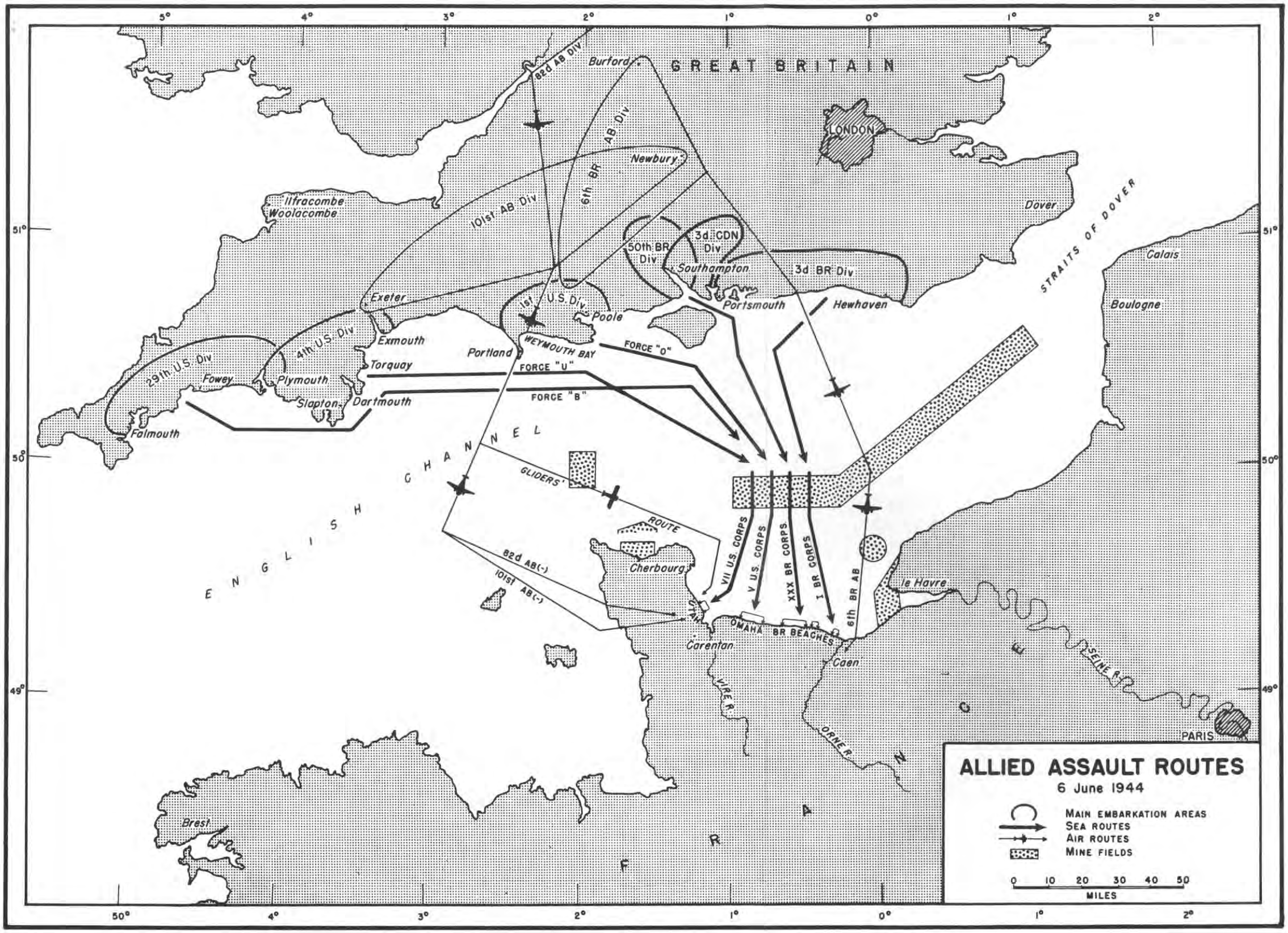
Sturm Battalion AOK 7 (attached to 709th Division)
Maj. Hugo Messerschmidt, CO

6th Parachute Regiment (attached to the 91st Division)
Maj. von der Heydte

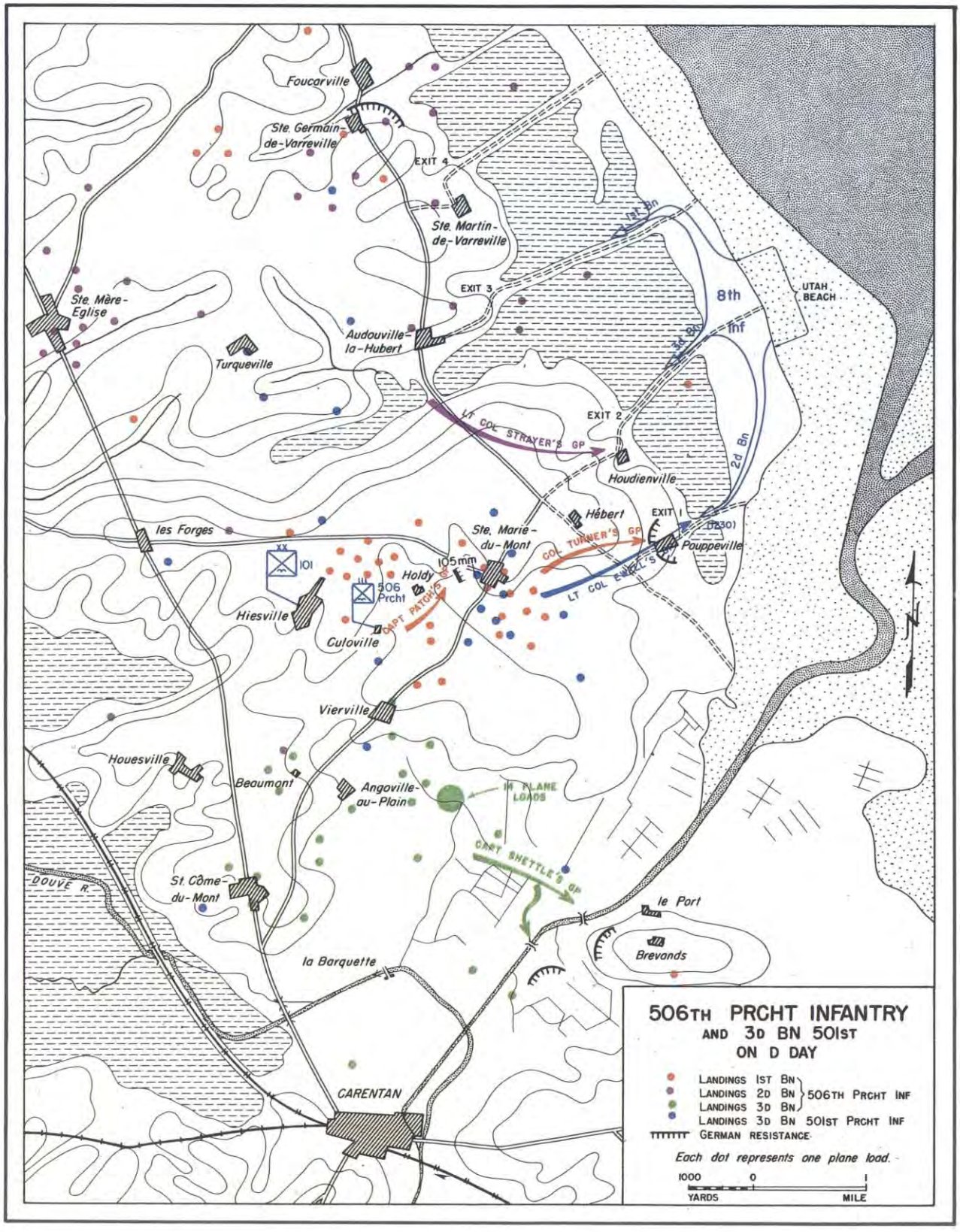
The maps have been arranged in inverse order to enable the reader to leave any map unfolded for purposes of later reference.

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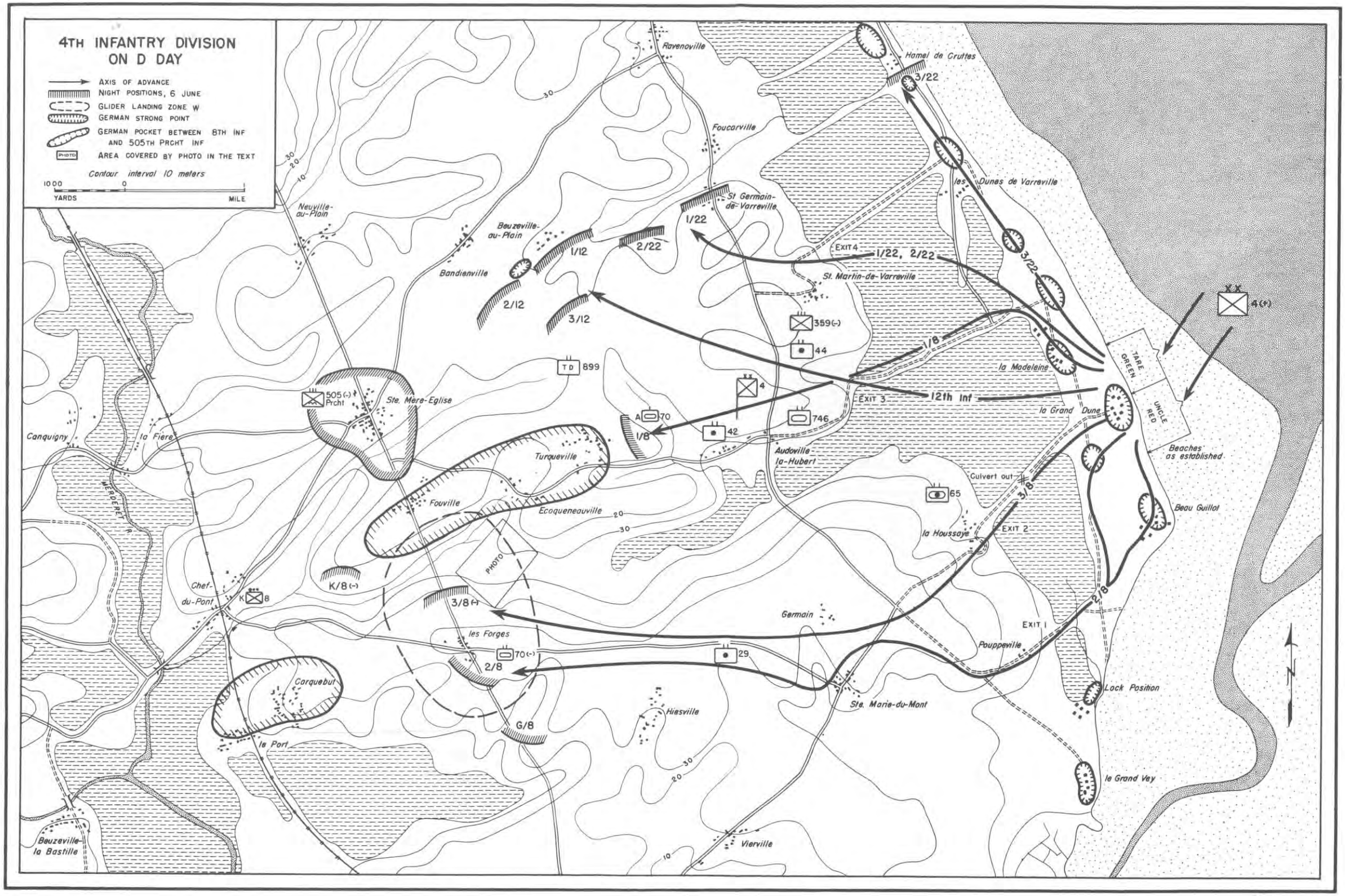
MAP NO. 2


GREAT BRITAIN
ENGLISH CHANNEL
NORTH SEA
FRANCE
LONDON
Burford
Newbury
Ilfracombe
Woolacombe
Exeter
Exmouth
Torquay
Fowey
Plymouth
Slapton
Dartmouth
Falmouth
Portland
Poole
Southampton
Portsmouth
Hewhaven
Dover
Calais
Boulogne
STRAITS OF DOVER
82d AB Div
101st AB Div
6th BR AB Div
1st U.S. Div
3d CDN Div
50th BR Div
3d BR Div
4th U.S. Div
29th U.S. Div
WEYMOUTH BAY
FORCE "O"
FORCE "U"
FORCE "B"
GLIDERS' ROUTE
82d AB(-)
101st AB(-)
Cherbourg
Carentan
VIRE R.
ORNE R.
Caen
OMAHA
UTAH
BR BEACHES
VII U.S. CORPS
V U.S. CORPS
XXX BR CORPS
I BR CORPS
6th BR AB
le Havre
SEINE R.
PARIS
Brest
50°
4°
3°
2°
1°
0°
1°
2°
51°
50°
49°
ALLIED ASSAULT ROUTES
6 June 1944
MAIN EMBARKATION AREAS
SEA ROUTES
AIR ROUTES
MINE FIELDS
0 10 20 30 40 50
MILES

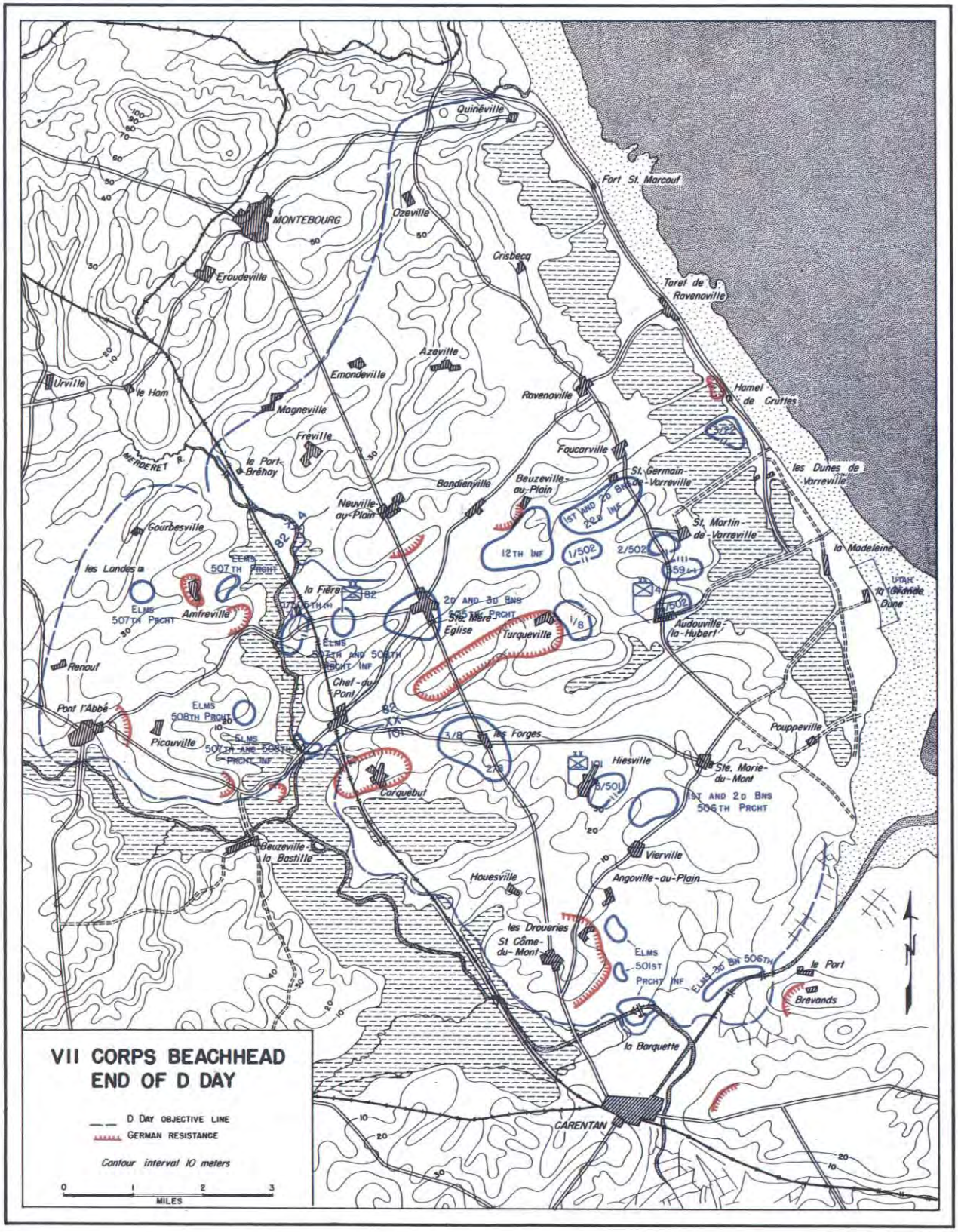
MAP NO. 4


Foucarville
Ste. Germain-de-Varreville
EXIT 4
Ste. Martin-de-Varreville
1st Bn
EXIT 3
Ste. Mère-Eglise
Audouville-la-Hubert
Turqueville
8th Inf
UTAH BEACH
3d Bn
LT COL STRAYER'S GP
EXIT 2
2d Bn
Houdienville
Hébert
EXIT 1
(D230)
les Forges
Ste. Marie-du-Mont
COL TURNER'S GP
Pouppeville
XX
101
105mm
Holdy
506 Prcht
LT COL EWELL'S
CAPT PATCH'S GP
Hiesville
Culoville
Vierville
Houesville
Beaumont
Angoville-au-Plain
14 PLANE LOADS
CAPT SHETTLE'S GP
DOUVE R.
St. Côme-du-Mont
le Port
Brevands
la Barquette
CARENTAN
N
506TH PRCHT INFANTRY
AND 3D BN 501ST
ON D DAY
LANDINGS 1ST BN
LANDINGS 2D BN
LANDINGS 3D BN
506TH PRCHT INF
LANDINGS 3D BN 501ST PRCHT INF
GERMAN RESISTANCE
Each dot represents one plane load.
1000 0 1
YARDS MILE

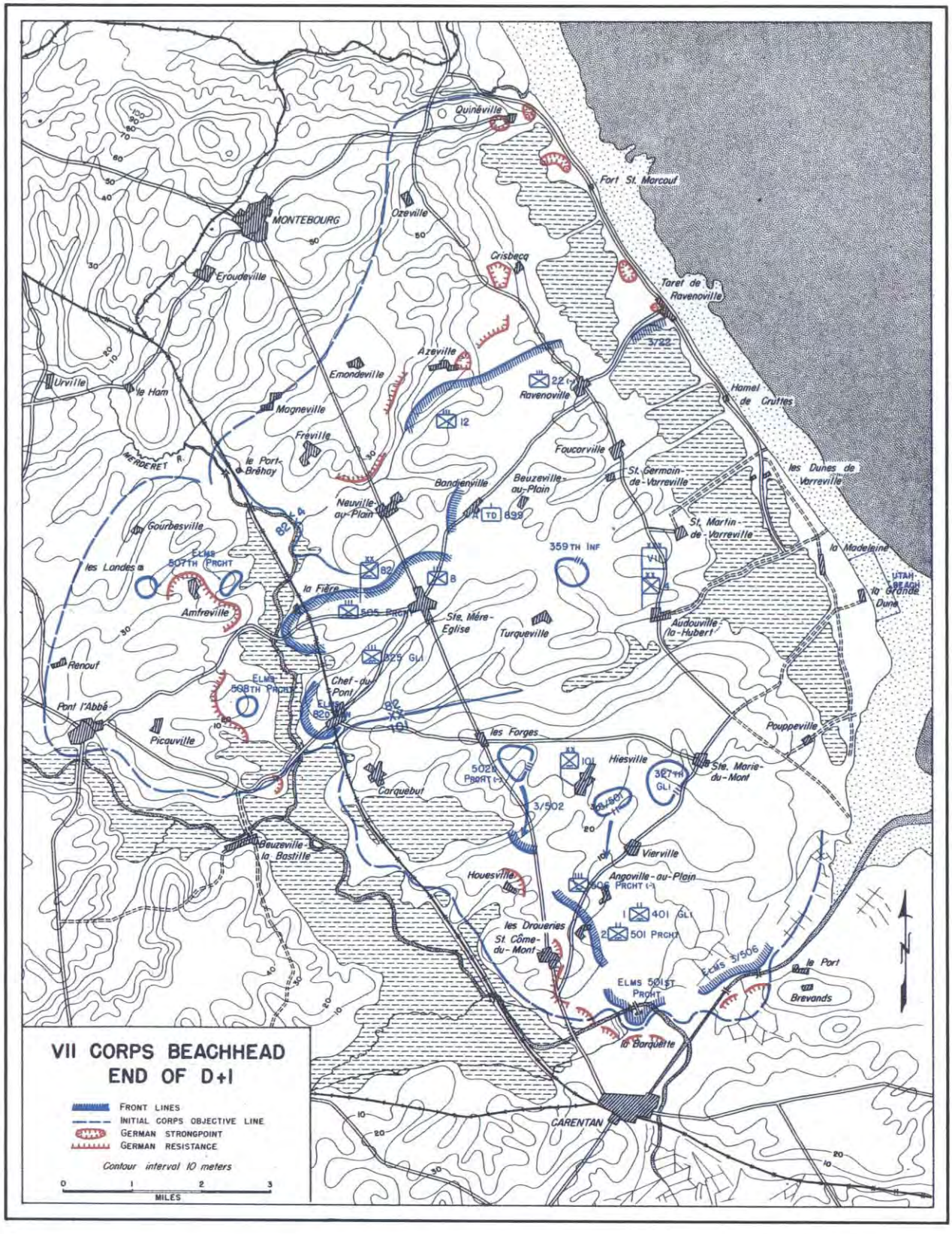
MAP NO. 8

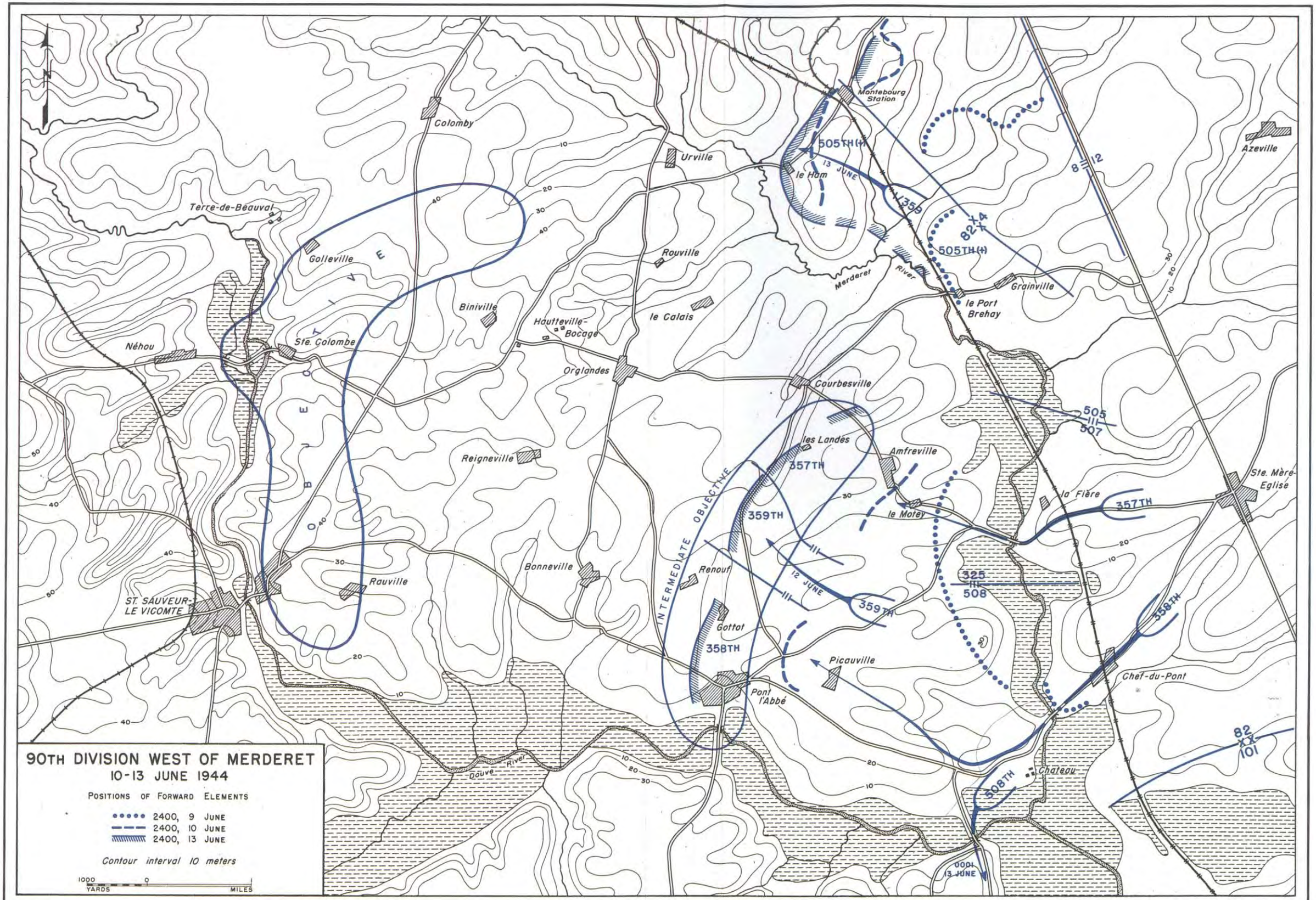

4TH INFANTRY DIVISION
ON D DAY
AXIS OF ADVANCE
NIGHT POSITIONS, 6 JUNE
GLIDER LANDING ZONE W
GERMAN STRONG POINT
GERMAN POCKET BETWEEN 8TH INF AND 505TH PRCHT INF
PHOTO
AREA COVERED BY PHOTO IN THE TEXT
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0 1
YARDS MILE
Ravenoville
Hamel de Cruttes
3/22
Foucarville
les Dunes de Varreville
St Germain-de-Varreville
1/22
Neuville-au-Plain
Beuzeville-au-Plain
1/12
2/22
Bandienville
EXIT 4
1/22, 2/22
St. Martin-de-Varreville
2/12
3/12
359(-)
44
TD 899
505 (-) Prcht
Ste. Mere-Eglise
la Madeleine
EXIT 3
12th Inf
la Grand Dune
TARE GREEN
UNCLE RED
4
A 70
746
1/8
42
Audouville la-Hubert
Beaches as established
Turqueville
Culvert out
65
Canquigny
la Fiere
Fouville
Ecoqueneauville
la Houssaye
EXIT 2
3/8
Beau Guillot
MERDERET R.
PHOTO
Chef-du-Pont
K 8
K/8 (-)
3/8 (-)
Germain
EXIT 1
2/8
les Forges
70 (-)
29
Pouppeville
Corquebut
Hiesville
Ste. Marie-du-Mont
Lock Position
G/8
le Port
le Grand Vey
Vierville
Beuzeville-la Bastille

MAP NO. 9

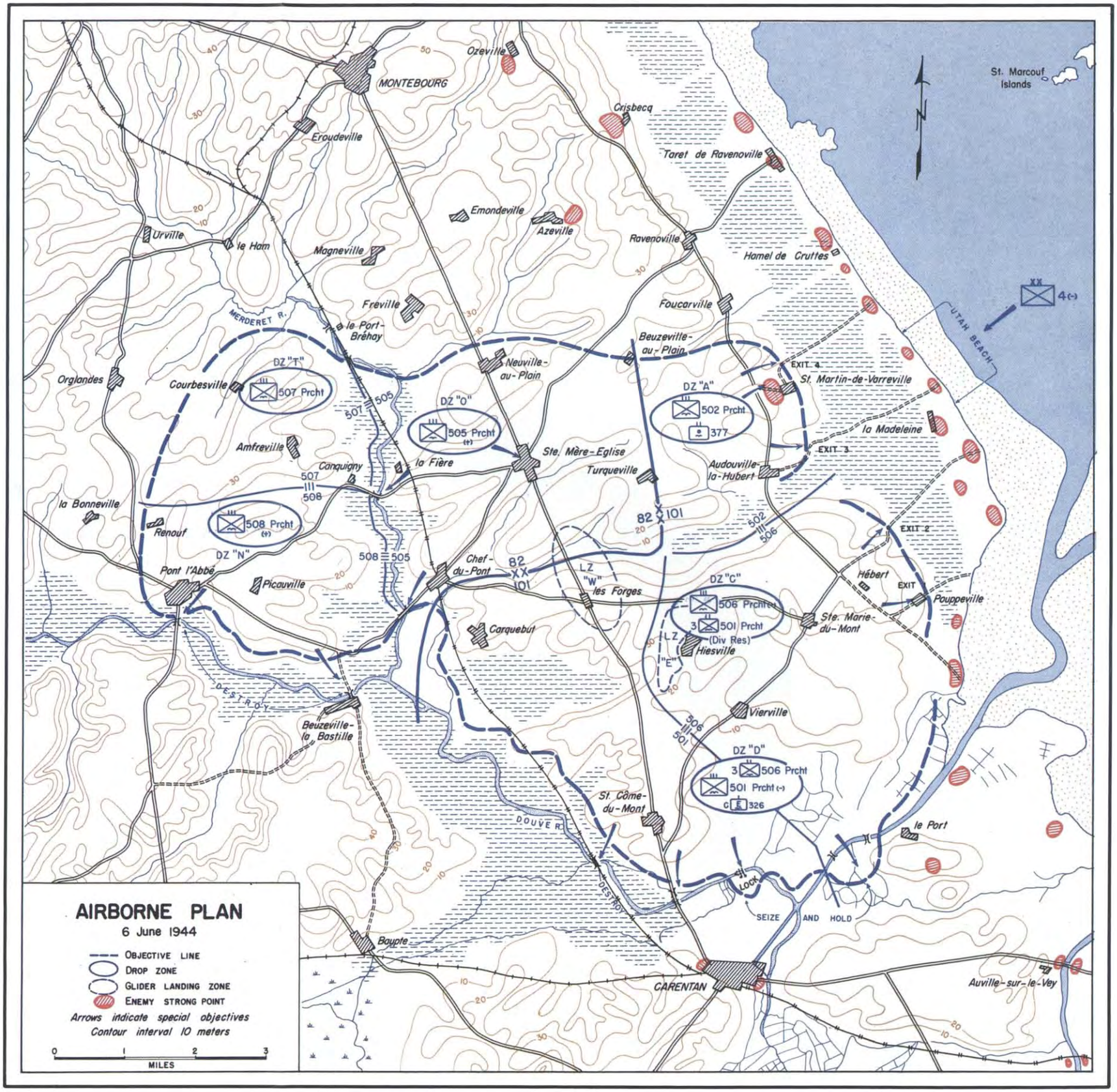

VII CORPS BEACHHEAD
END OF D DAY
D DAY OBJECTIVE LINE
GERMAN RESISTANCE
Contour interval 10 meters
0 1 2 3
MILES
Quinéville
Fort St. Marcouf
MONTEBOURG
Ozeville
Crisbecq
Turet de Ravenoville
Éroudeville
Azeville
Emondeville
Urville
le Ham
Magneville
Ravenoville
Hamel de Cruttes
Freville
Foucarville
les Dunes de Varreville
le Port-Bréhay
Bandienville
Beuzeville-au-Plain
St. Germain-de-Varreville
Neuville-au-Plain
Gourbesville
St. Martin-de-Varreville
la Madeleine
les Landes
Amfreville
la Fière
Église
Turqueville
Audouville-la-Hubert
la Grande Dune
Renouf
Chef-du-Pont
Pont l'Abbé
Picauville
Pouppeville
les Forges
Hiesville
Ste. Marie-du-Mont
Carquebut
Vierville
Beuzeville-la-Bastille
Houesville
Angoville-au-Plain
les Droueries
St Côme-du-Mont
le Port
Brévands
la Barquette
CARENTAN

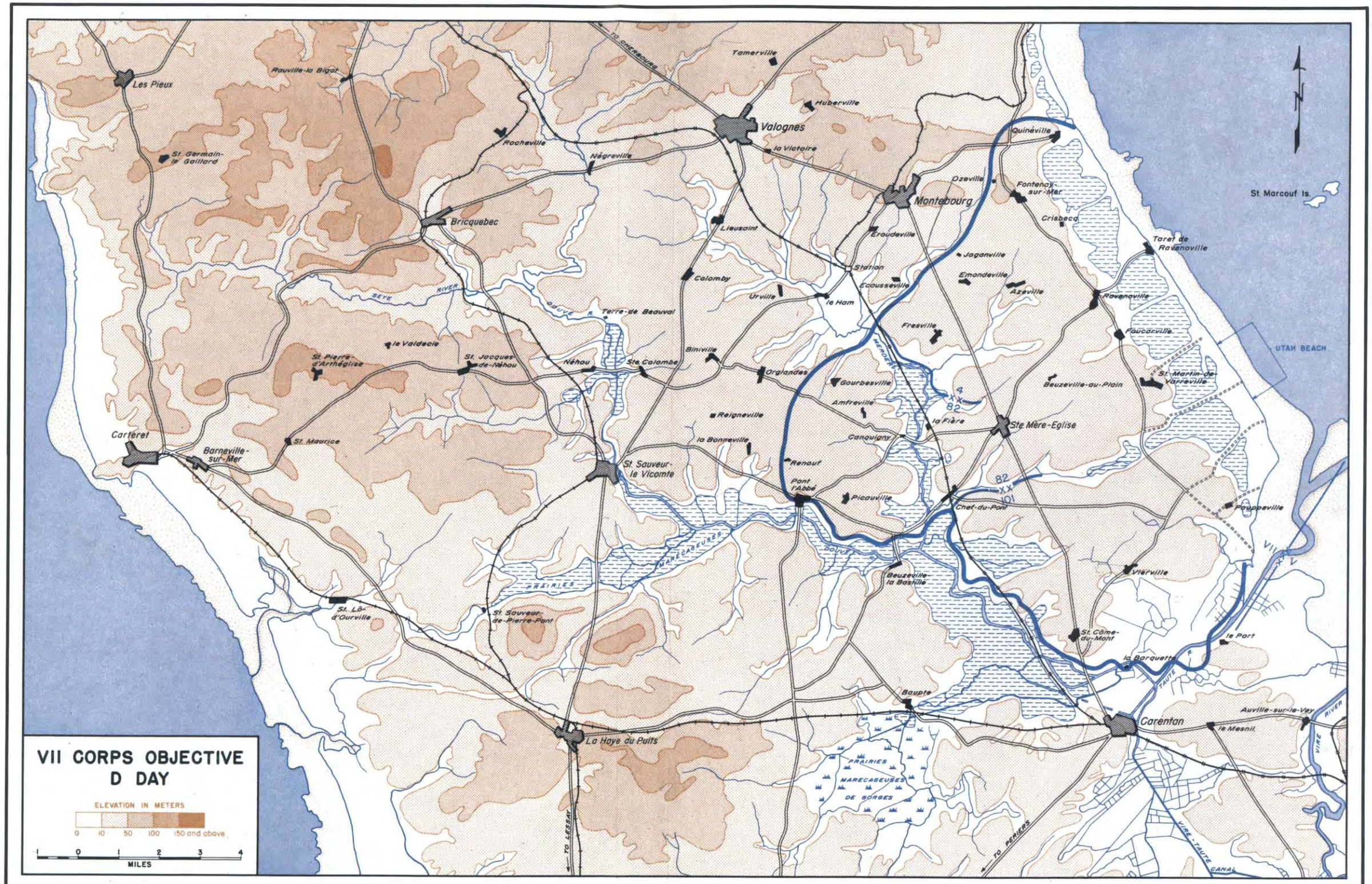
MAP NO. 14


VII CORPS BEACHHEAD
END OF D+1
FRONT LINES
INITIAL CORPS OBJECTIVE LINE
GERMAN STRONGPOINT
GERMAN RESISTANCE
Contour interval 10 meters
0 1 2 3
MILES
MONTEBOURG
Quinéville
Fort St. Marcouf
Ozeville
Crisbecq
Taret de Ravenoville
Eroudeville
Azeville
Emondeville
Ravenoville
Hamel de Cruttes
Urville
le Ham
Magneville
Freville
Foucarville
les Dunes de Varreville
MERDERET R.
le Port-Bréhay
Bandenville
Beuzeville-au-Plain
St. Germain-de-Varreville
Neuville-au-Plain
St. Martin-de-Varreville
Gourbesville
359TH INF
la Madeleine
les Landes
505TH PRCHT
la Fière
Ste. Mère-Eglise
Turqueville
Audouville-la-Hubert
UTAH BEACH
la Grande Dune
Amfreville
Renouf
Chef-du-Pont
Pont l'Abbé
Picauville
les Forges
Pouppeville
Hiesville
Ste. Marie-du-Mont
Carquebut
Beuzeville-la-Bastille
Houesville
Vierville
Angoville-au-Plain
les Droueries
St. Côme-du-Mont
le Port
Brévands
la Barquette
CARENTAN

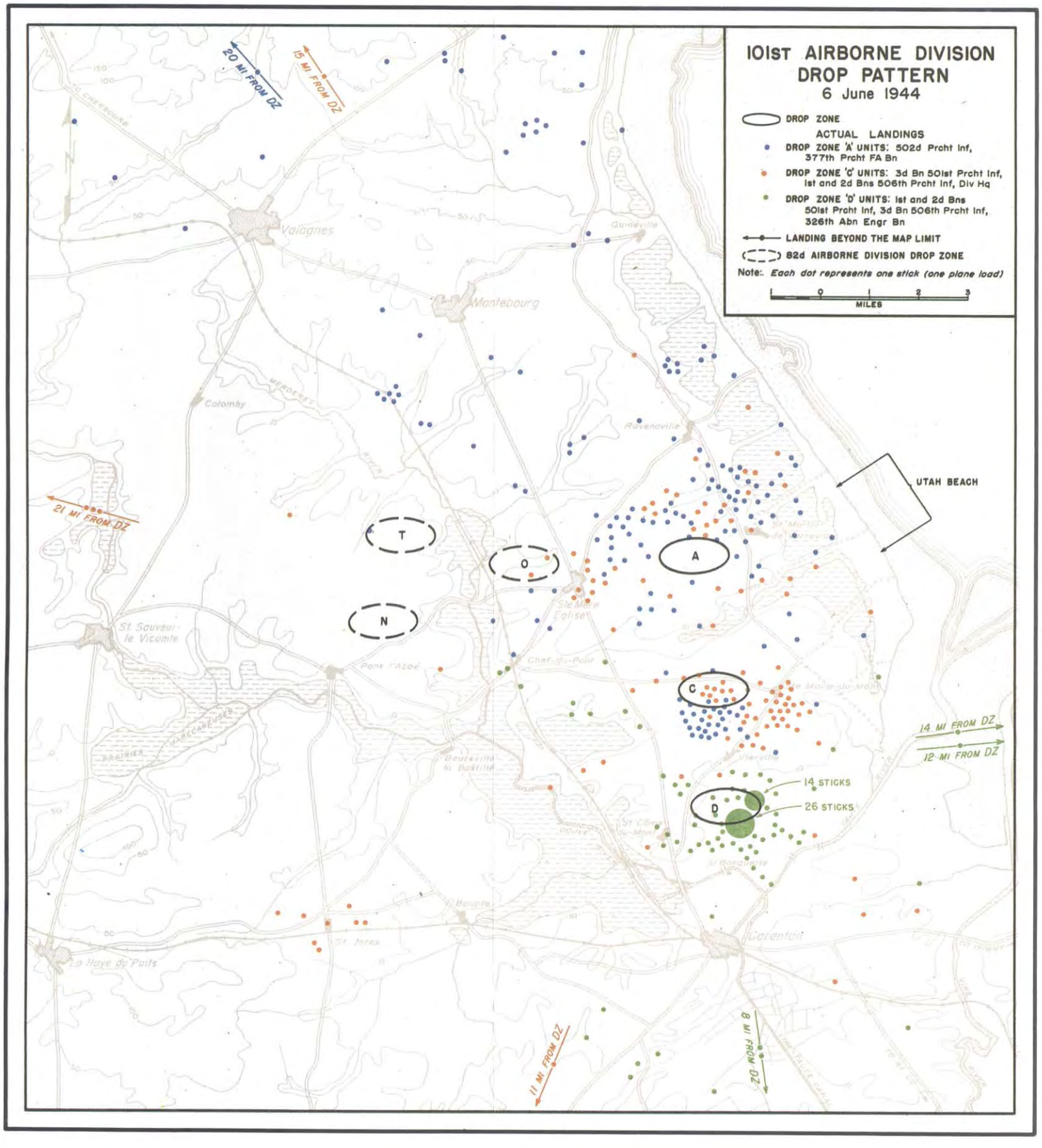

Colomby
Urville
Montebourg Station
505TH(+)
13 JUNE
le Ham
+135P
82 XX
505TH(+)
Azeville
Terre-de-Beauval
Golleville
Rouville
Merderet River
Grainville
le Port Brehay
Biniville
Hautteville-Bocage
le Calais
Néhou
Ste. Colombe
Orglandes
Courbesville
les Landes
Amfreville
357TH
505 III 507
Ste. Mère-Eglise
la Fière
357TH
le Motey
Reigneville
359TH
INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVE
Renouf
12 JUNE
325 III 508
359TH
Bonneville
Rauville
ST. SAUVEUR-LE VICOMTE
Gottot
358TH
Picauville
Pont l'Abbé
Chef-du-Pont
82 XX 101
Douve River
308TH
Chateau
0001 13 JUNE
90TH DIVISION WEST OF MERDERET
10-13 JUNE 1944
POSITIONS OF FORWARD ELEMENTS
2400, 9 JUNE
2400, 10 JUNE
2400, 13 JUNE
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0
YARDS
MILES

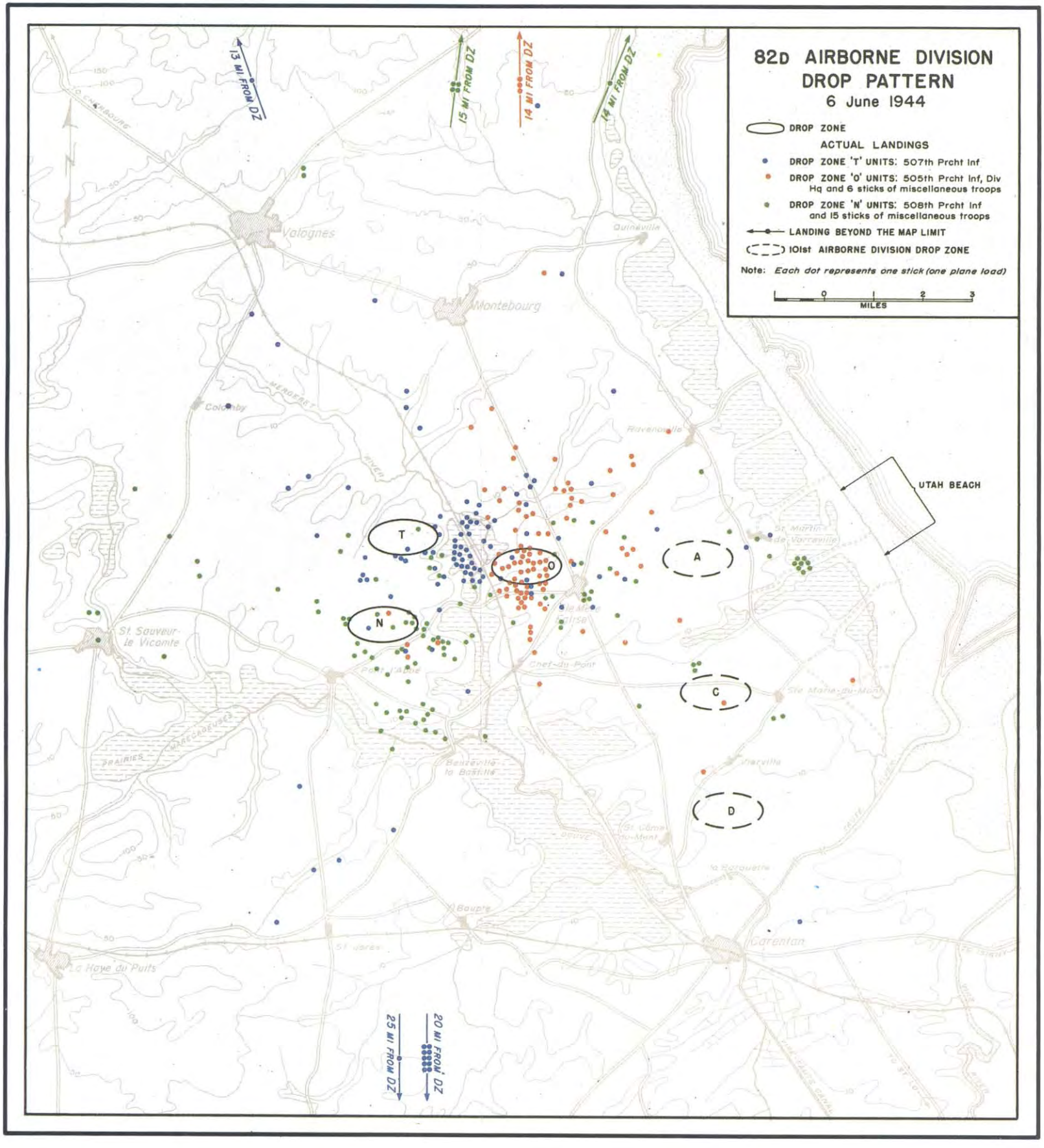

Cap de la Hague
Beaumont Hague
CHERBOURG
St. Pierre-Eglise
River
Saire
la Divette River
St. Vaast-la Hougue
les Pieux
Valognes
Quinéville
St. Marcouf Islands
Montebourg
Bricquebec
Saye
River
Merderet
River
Ravenoville
UTAH BEACH
Douve
St. Martin-de-Varreville
la Fière
Ste Mère-Eglise
Carteret
Barneville-sur-Mere
St. Sauveur-le Vicomte
Pont l'Abbé
Chef-du-Pont
Pouppeville
Grandcamp-les Bains
Marécageuses
Prairies
Beuzeville-la Bastille
St. Côme-du-Mont
St. Lô d'Ourville
St. Sauveur de Pierre Pont
la Barquette
Carentan
Isigny
St. Jores
La Haye du Puits
Prairies Marécageuses de Gorges
Lessay
Périers
Taute
Canal
COTENTIN PENINSULA
INUNDATED AREA
ELEVATION IN METERS
0 10 50 100 150 and above
0 5 10
MILES


AIRBORNE PLAN
6 June 1944
OBJECTIVE LINE
DROP ZONE
GLIDER LANDING ZONE
ENEMY STRONG POINT
Arrows indicate special objectives
Contour interval 10 meters
0 1 2 3
MILES
MONTEBOURG
Ozeville
Crisbecq
St. Marcouf Islands
Eroudeville
Taret de Ravenoville
Emondeville
Azeville
Ravenoville
Urville
le Ham
Magneville
Hamel de Cruttes
Freville
Foucarville
MERDERET R.
le Port-Bréhay
Beuzeville-au-Plain
Neuville-au-Plain
UTAH BEACH
Orglandes
Courbesville
DZ "T"
507 Prcht
DZ "O"
505 Prcht (+)
DZ "A"
502 Prcht
377
EXIT 4
St. Martin-de-Varreville
la Madeleine
EXIT 3
Amfreville
Conquigny
la Fière
Ste. Mère-Eglise
Turqueville
Audouville-la-Hubert
la Bonneville
507
508
508 Prcht (+)
Renouf
DZ "N"
82 XX 101
502
506
EXIT 2
Pont l'Abbé
Picauville
508 505
Chef-du-Pont
LZ "W"
les Forges
Hébert
EXIT
Pouppeville
DZ "C"
506 Prcht
3 501 Prcht (Div Res)
LZ "E"
Hiesville
Ste. Marie-du-Mont
Carquebut
Vierville
DEST R.
Beuzeville-la-Bastille
506
501
DZ "D"
3 506 Prcht
501 Prcht (-)
C E 326
St. Côme-du-Mont
le Port
DOUVE R.
Lock
SEIZE AND HOLD
Baupte
CARENTAN
Auville-sur-le-Vey


Les Pieux
Rauville-la Bigot
St. Germain-le Gaillard
Carteret
Barneville-sur-Mer
St. Maurice
Bricquebec
Rocheville
Négreville
Tamerville
Huberville
Valognes
la Victoire
Quinéville
Montebourg
Ozeville
Fontenay-sur-Mer
St. Marcouf Is.
Crisbecq
Taret de Ravenoville
Lieusaint
Eroudeville
Station
Ecausseville
Colomby
Urville
le Ham
Jaganville
Emondeville
Azeville
Ravenoville
Foucarville
UTAH BEACH
St. Martin-de-Varreville
Beuzeville-au-Plain
Fresville
Biniville
Orglandes
Gourbesville
Amfreville
la Fière
Ste Mère-Eglise
Canquigny
Renouf
Pont l'Abbé
Picauville
Chef-du-Pont
Pouppeville
Reigneville
la Bonneville
St. Sauveur-le Vicomte
Néhou
Ste Colombe
Terre-de Beauval
le Valdecie
St. Pierre-d'Arthéglise
St. Jacques-de-Néhou
SEYE RIVER
DOUVE R.
DOUVE
MARECAGEUSES
PRAIRIES
Beuzeville-la Bastille
Vierville
St. Côme-du-Mont
le Port
la Barquette
TAUTE R.
St. Lô-d'Ourville
St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont
La Haye du Puits
Baupte
Carentan
Auville-sur-le-Vey
le Mesnil
VIRE RIVER
PRAIRIES MARECAGEUSES DE GORGES
TO LESSAY
TO PERIERS
VIRE-TAUTE CANAL
TO CHERBOURG
HEROPEN
VII CORPS OBJECTIVE
D DAY
ELEVATION IN METERS
0 10 50 100 150 and above
0 1 2 3 4
MILES


VALOGNES
MONTEBOURG
Quinéville
Ozeville
Fl. St. Marcouf
St. Marcouf Islands
DET 4
Crisbecq
Brucheville
Taret de Ravenoville
Urville
le Ham
Mogneville
Azeville
Ravenoville
Hamet de Cruttes
Foucarville
Freville
le Port-Bréhay
MERDERET R.
Beuzeville-au-Plain
Neuville-au-Plain
Orglandes
Courbesville
Amfreville
Conquigny
la Fière
Ste. Mère-Eglise
St. Martin-de-Varreville
la Madeleine
Audouville-la-Hubert
Turqueville
la Bonneville
Renouf
Pont l'Abbé
Picauville
Chef-du-Pont
les Forges
Carquebut
Ste. Marie-du-Mont
Pouppeville
Hiesville
Vierville
Beuzeville-la Bastille
St. Côme-du-Mont
DOUVE R.
le Port
LOCK
Baupte
CARENTAN
ISIGNY
Auville-sur-le-Vey
UTAH BEACH
GREEN BEACH
UNCLE RED BEACH
EXIT 4
EXIT 3
EXIT 2
EXIT 1
1st Bn
2d Bn
3d Bn
359 Div Res
INITIAL OBJECTIVE
8TH INF
THE 4TH DIVISION PLAN
6 June 1944
AXIS OF ADVANCE
4TH DIVISION OBJECTIVES
AIRBORNE DIVISIONS OBJECTIVE AREA
ENEMY STRONG POINTS
Contour interval 10 meters
0 1 2 3
MILES


101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
DROP PATTERN
6 June 1944
DROP ZONE
ACTUAL LANDINGS
DROP ZONE 'A' UNITS: 502d Prcht Inf, 377th Prcht FA Bn
DROP ZONE 'C' UNITS: 3d Bn 501st Prcht Inf, 1st and 2d Bns 506th Prcht Inf, Div Hq
DROP ZONE 'D' UNITS: 1st and 2d Bns 501st Prcht Inf, 3d Bn 506th Prcht Inf, 326th Abn Engr Bn
LANDING BEYOND THE MAP LIMIT
82d AIRBORNE DIVISION DROP ZONE
Note: Each dot represents one stick (one plane load)
0 1 2 3
MILES
20 MI FROM DZ
15 MI FROM DZ
21 MI FROM DZ
14 MI FROM DZ
12 MI FROM DZ
11 MI FROM DZ
8 MI FROM DZ
UTAH BEACH
T
O
N
A
C
D
14 STICKS
26 STICKS
Valognes
Montebourg
Colomby
Quinéville
Ravenoville
St Sauveur-le-Vicomte
Pont l'Abbé
La Haye du Puits
Carentan


82D AIRBORNE DIVISION
DROP PATTERN
6 June 1944
DROP ZONE
ACTUAL LANDINGS
DROP ZONE 'T' UNITS: 507th Prcht Inf
DROP ZONE 'O' UNITS: 505th Prcht Inf, Div Hq and 6 sticks of miscellaneous troops
DROP ZONE 'N' UNITS: 508th Prcht Inf and 15 sticks of miscellaneous troops
LANDING BEYOND THE MAP LIMIT
101st AIRBORNE DIVISION DROP ZONE
Note: Each dot represents one stick (one plane load)
0 1 2 3
MILES
13 MI FROM DZ
15 MI FROM DZ
14 MI FROM DZ
14 MI FROM DZ
UTAH BEACH
T
O
N
A
C
D
25 MI FROM DZ
20 MI FROM DZ
Valognes
Montebourg
Quinéville
Colomby
Renonville
St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte
Chef-du-Pont
Ste Marie-du-Mont
Carentan
La Haye du Puits
MERDERET
RIVER
PRAIRIES MARECAGEUSES

LEGEND

GERMAN DEFENSES
- TRENCH
- INF WEAPON EMPLACEMENT
- PILLBOX
- CONCRETE SHELTER
- MINES
- WIRE
- ANTITANK DITCH
- STEEL ANTITANK OBSTACLE

- LCVP
- LCT
- LGM
- NAVY DEMOLITION TEAM
- DET, 237TH ENGR C BN
- INUNDATED AREA

UTAH BEACH
8TH INFANTRY LANDING PLAN

BEACHES AS PLANNED
BEACHES AS ESTABLISHED ON D DAY
Landing plans as of 24 May 1944
Enemy defenses as known 6 May 1944

250 0 500 YARDS

la Madeleine *la Mesnilde* *la Pecherie* *les Dunes de Varreville*

UNCLE RED TARE GREEN UNCLE RED TARE GREEN

HIGH WATER MARK

ACTUAL LANDING

H-Hour	Co F / Co E	Co C / Co B	1st Wave
H or as soon after as possible	Co B 70th Tk Bn	Co A 70th Tk Bn	1st A Wave
H + 5	Cos 8th Inf; FREE	FREE; Cos 8th Inf	2d Wave
H + 15	Co C 70th Tk Bn	Co C 70th Tk Bn	3d Wave
H + 17	Det 237th Engr C Bn	Det 299th Engr C Bn	4th Wave
H + 30	Co H 8th Inf; Co A 237th Engr C Bn	Co C 237th Engr C Bn; Co D 8th Inf	5th Wave

LOW WATER MARK

DRIVE TO THE QUINEVILLE RIDGE

FIRST PHASE, 8-11 JUNE 1944

FRONT LINES, EVENING 7 JUNE
POSITIONS REACHED:
8 JUNE — 9 JUNE
10 JUNE — 11 JUNE
GERMAN RESISTANCE
GERMAN STRONG POINT

Contour interval 10 meters

1000 0 1000
YARDS

N

Les Fieffes-Dancel
22D INF OBJECTIVE
8TH INF OBJECTIVE
Quinéville
Elms 1056
Elms 922
12 ≡ 22
1ST, 3D, 20 BNS
3D BN 9 JUNE
Elms 1056
MONTEBOURG
St. Floxel
3/12 2/12 1/12
3 E 243
Ozeville
Elms 3 922
Fontenay-sur-Mer
Fort St. Marcouf
3 739
3/22 1/22 10-11 JUNE
Dangueville
Elms 3 922
Crisbecg
Chateau de Fontenay
13 JUNE
2/12 1/12
E 44
8 ≡ 12
3/22 2/22
9-12 JUNE
C/22
St. Marcouf
C TD 899
Joganville
Taret de Ravenoville
Bas Village de Dodainville
Basse Emondeville
Ecausseville
Emondeville
la Lande
2/12 1/12 3/12
Azeville
9 JUNE
3/22 2/22
Ravenoville
Magneville
le Bisson
2/12 1/12
Hamel de Cruttes

DRIVE TO THE QUINEVILLE RIDGE

SECOND PHASE, 12-14 JUNE 1944

FRONT LINES, EVENING 7 JUNE
POSITIONS REACHED:
12 JUNE — 13 JUNE
14 JUNE
GERMAN RESISTANCE
GERMAN STRONG POINT

Boundaries as of 2330, 12 June
Contour interval 10 meters

1000 0 1000
YARDS

N

MONTEBOURG
TF STEINER 12 JUNE
les Fieffes-Dancel
St. Floxel
Ozeville
Fontenay-sur-Mer
Dangueville
Quinéville
Fort St. Marcouf
Crisbecq
Chateau de Fontenay
St. Marcouf
Taret de Ravenoville
Bas Village de Dodainville
Ravenoville
Hamel de Cruttes
Joganville
Basse Emondeville
Emondeville
Ecausseville
la Lande
Magneville
le Bisson
Azeville

SECURING THE DOUVE LINE
14-16 JUNE 1944

POSITIONS OF FORWARD ELEMENTS

- 2400, 13 JUNE
- 2400, 14 JUNE
- 2400, 15 JUNE
- 2400, 16 JUNE
- AXIS OF ADVANCE, 14 JUNE

BOUNDARIES AS OF 14 JUNE

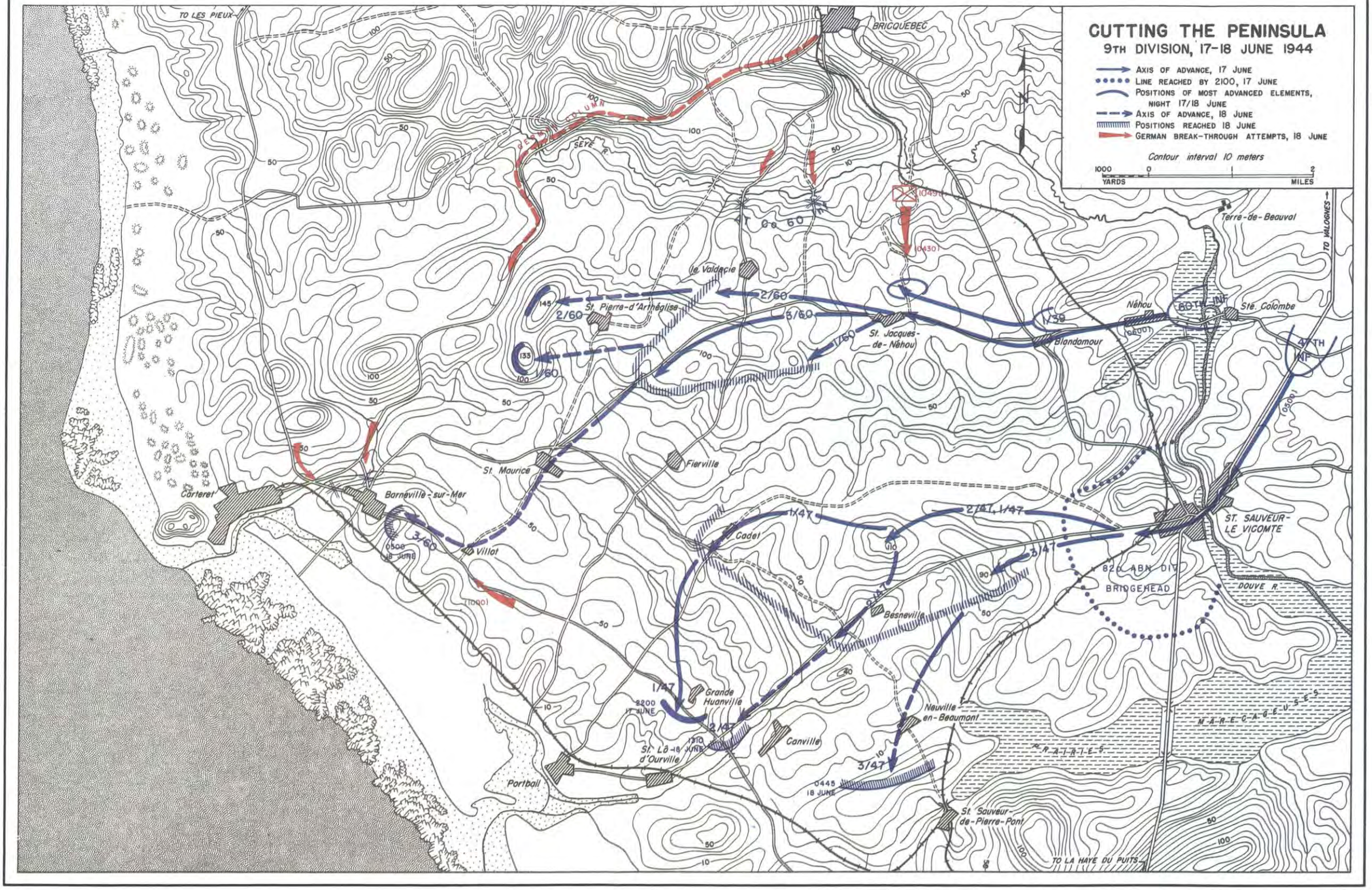
Contour interval 10 meters

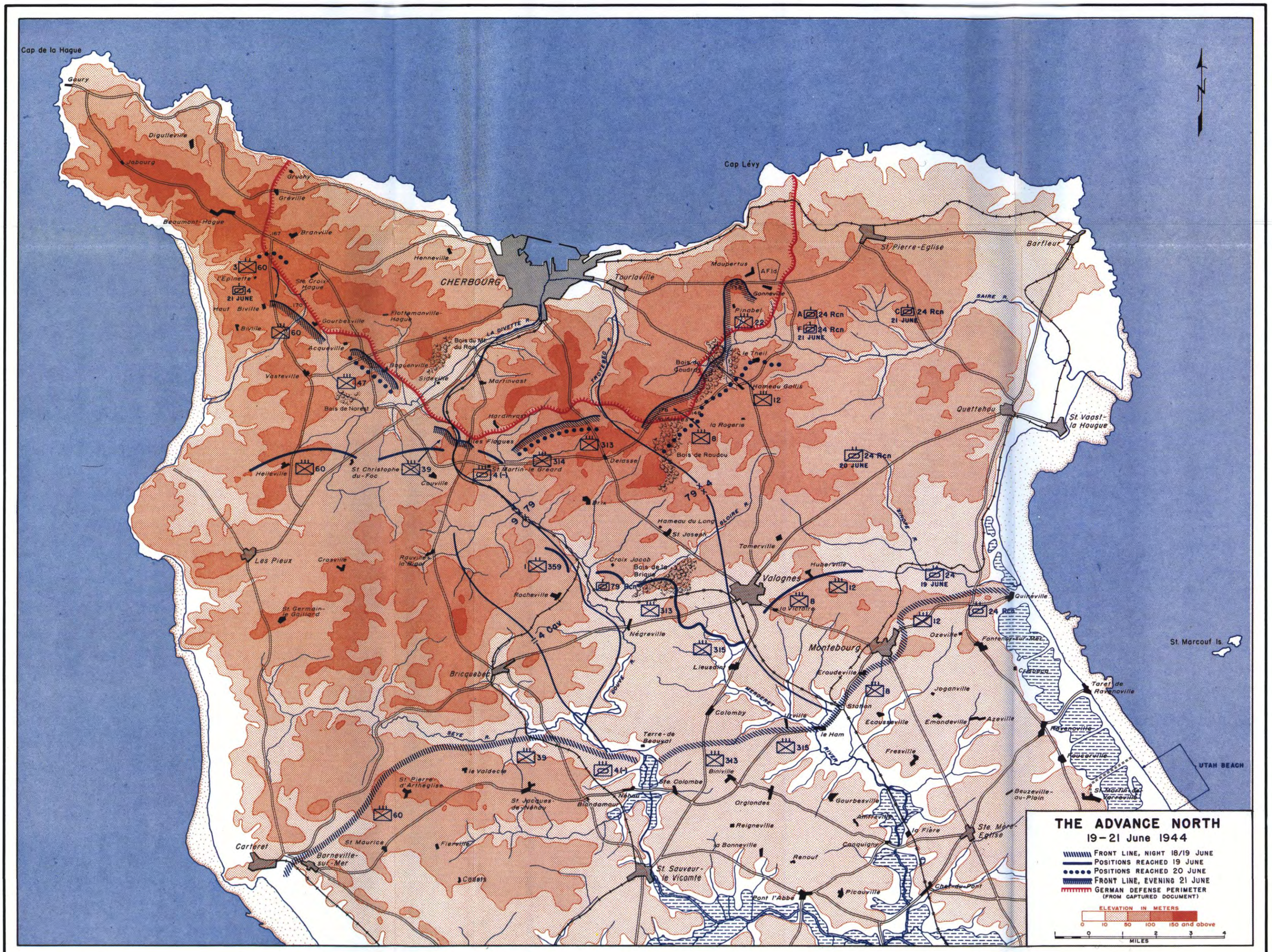
1000 YARDS 0 MILES

90TH DIV'S NEW OBJECTIVE

Colomby
Urville
Montebourg Station
le Ham
1/359TH (+)
Terre-de-Beauval
Golleville
Rouville
Merderet River
Grainville
le Port Brehay
Biniville
Hautteville-Bocage
le Calais
Néhou
Ste. Colombe
Orglandes
Courbesville
des Landes
Amfreville
Reigneville
la Fière
Ste. Mère-Eglise
le Motey
Bonneville
Renouf
Gottot
Rauville
ST. SAUVEUR-LE VICOMTE
Picauville
Pont l'Abbé
Chef-du-Pont
Douve River
Chateau

90 XX 4
90 XX 9
9 XX 82
1/47
2/47
3/47
47TH
39TH
359TH
357TH
60TH
507TH
325TH
505TH
508TH
358TH
3/357
15 JUNE
16 JUNE


CUTTING THE PENINSULA
9TH DIVISION, 17-18 JUNE 1944
AXIS OF ADVANCE, 17 JUNE
LINE REACHED BY 2100, 17 JUNE
POSITIONS OF MOST ADVANCED ELEMENTS, NIGHT 17/18 JUNE
AXIS OF ADVANCE, 18 JUNE
POSITIONS REACHED 18 JUNE
GERMAN BREAK-THROUGH ATTEMPTS, 18 JUNE
Contour interval 10 meters
1000 0 2
YARDS MILES
TO LES PIEUX
BRICQUEBEC
TO VALOGNES
GERMAN COLUMN
SEYE R.
(1049)
(0430)
Terre-de-Beauval
le Valdacie
St. Pierre-d'Arthéglise
St. Jacques-de-Néhou
Néhou
Ste. Colombe
Blandomour
60TH INF
4TH INF
(0400)
(0500)
2/60
3/60
1/60
1/39
145
133
100
50
10
St. Maurice
Fierville
Carteret
Barneville-sur-Mer
Villot
0500 18 JUNE
(1000)
Gadet
1/47
2/47
3/47
110
90
ST. SAUVEUR-LE VICOMTE
82D ABN DIV BRIDGEHEAD
DOUVE R.
Besneville
Grande Huanville
2200 17 JUNE
St. Lô-d'Ourville
1310 18 JUNE
Canville
Neuville-en-Beaumont
0445 18 JUNE
Portbail
St. Sauveur-de-Pierre-Pont
MARAIS
MARECAGE
TO LA HAYE DU PUITS


Cap de la Hague
Cap Lévy
Goury
Digulleville
Jobourg
Gruchy
Gréville
Beaumont-Hague
Branville
Henneville
CHERBOURG
Tourlaville
Maupertus
AFld
Gonneville
St. Pierre-Eglise
Barfleur
SAIRE R.
Pinabel
22
A 24 Rcn
F 24 Rcn
21 JUNE
C 24 Rcn
21 JUNE
3
60
l'Epinette
4
21 JUNE
Ste. Croix Hague
Haut Biville
Biville
Gourbesville
Flottemanville-Hague
LA DIVETTE R.
Bois du Mont du Roc
Acqueville
Vasteville
Baguenville
Sideville
Martinvast
TAUTEBEE R.
Bois du Coudray
le Theil
Hameau Gallis
12
47
Bois de Nordet
Hardinvast
les Flagues
313
314
Delasse
la Rogerie
8
Bois de Roudou
Quettehou
St. Vaast-la Hougue
24 Rcn
20 JUNE
Helleville
60
St Christophe du-Foc
39
Couville
St. Martin-le Greard
4
79 Rcn
Brix
Hameau du Long
St. Joseph
Tamerville
Les Pieux
Graville
Rauville-la-Bigot
359
Croix Jacob
Bois de la Brique
Valognes
Huberville
12
8
la Victoire
19 JUNE
24
Quinéville
24 Rcn
St. Germain-le Gaillard
Rocheville
313
Négreville
12
Ozeville
Fontenay-sur-Mer
St. Marcouf Is.
315
Montebourg
Lieusaint
Bricquebec
Eroudeville
Joganville
Taret de Ravenoville
Stanan
Ecausseville
Emandeville
Azeville
Calomby
Urville
le Ham
Ravenoville
SEYE R.
Terre-de Beausal
39
41
343
Biniville
315
RIVER
Fresville
Ste. Colombe
Nehou
St. Jacques de Néhou
Blandamour
Orglandes
Gourbesville
Beuzeville-au-Plain
St. Martin de Varreville
UTAH BEACH
60
Reigneville
Amfreville
la Fière
Ste. Mère-Eglise
Carteret
St Maurice
Fierville
Barneville-sur-Mer
la Bonneville
Renaut
Canquigny
St. Sauveur-le Vicomte
Cadets
Picauville
Chef-du-Pont
Pont l'Abbé
THE ADVANCE NORTH
19 – 21 June 1944
FRONT LINE, NIGHT 18/19 JUNE
POSITIONS REACHED 19 JUNE
POSITIONS REACHED 20 JUNE
FRONT LINE, EVENING 21 JUNE
GERMAN DEFENSE PERIMETER
(FROM CAPTURED DOCUMENT)
ELEVATION IN METERS
0 10 50 100 150 and above
0 1 2 3 4
MILES

VII CORPS OBJECTIVES
19 June 1944

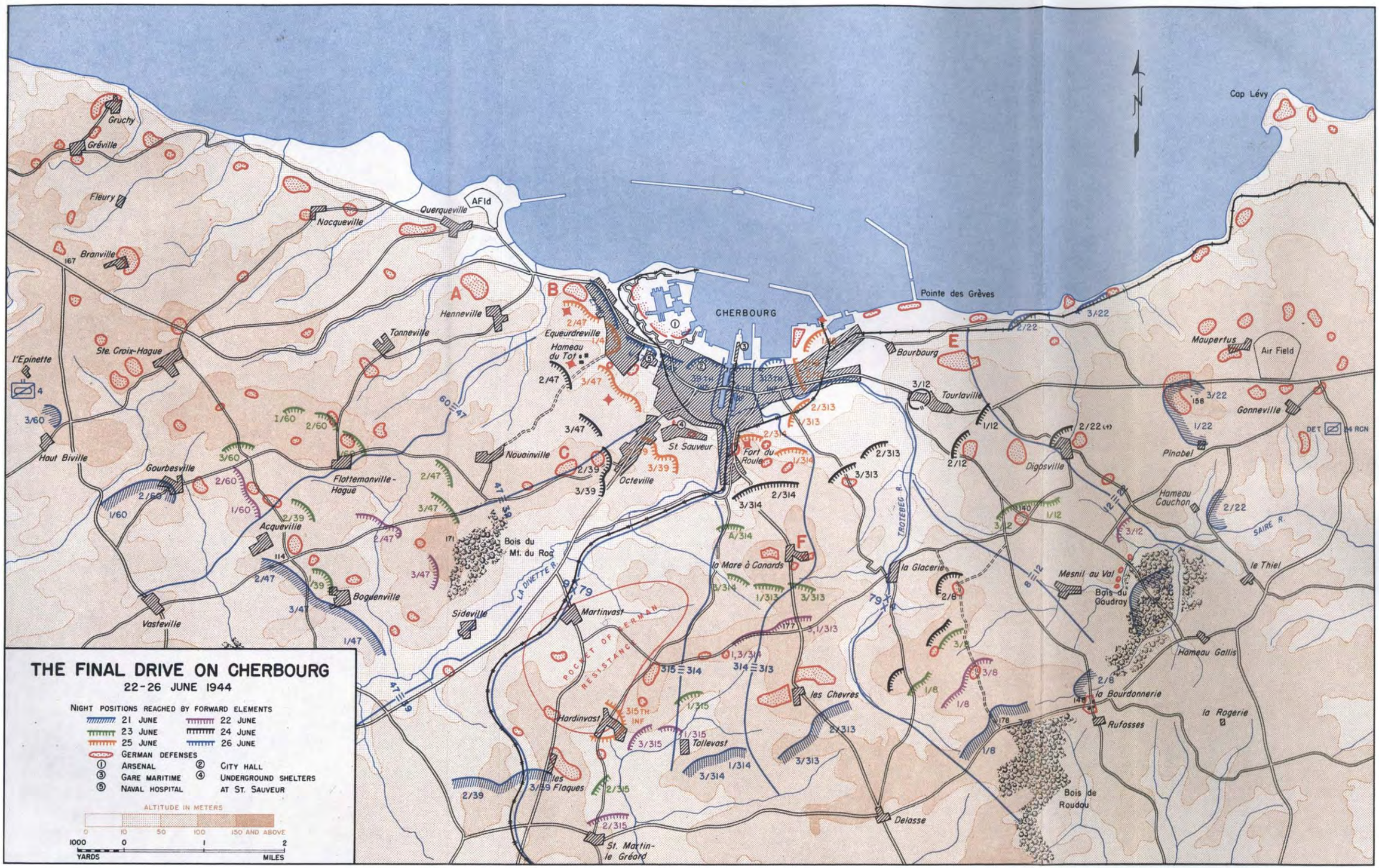
FRONT LINE, NIGHT 18/19 JUNE

RESERVE REGIMENT

ELEVATION IN METERS
0 10 50 100 150 and above

0 1 2 3 4
MILES

Cap de la Hague
Goury
Digulleville
Jobourg
Gruchy
Gréville
Beaumont-Hague
Branville
Henneville
CHERBOURG
Cap Lévy
Tourlaville
Maupertus
Gonneville
Pinabel
St Pierre-Eglise
Barfleur
SAIRE R.
L'Epinette
Ste Croix Hague
Haut Biville
Biville
Flottemanville-Hague
Gourbesville
Acqueville
LA DIVETTE R.
Bois du Roi
Vasteville
Bois de Norest
Beguenville
Sideville
Martinvast
Hardinvast
Les Flagues
St Christophe-du-Foc
Couville
Helleville
Les Pieux
Crosville
Rauville-la-Bigot
9th DIV OBJ
St Germain-le Gaillard
Zone of Operations 4th Cav Gp (–)
Rocheville
Bois de la Brigue
Croix Jacob
St Joseph
Hameau du Long
Delasse
St Martin-le Greard
79th DIV OBJ
4th DIV OBJ
Tamerville
Valognes
Huberville
la Victoire
Négreville
Bricquebec
Lieusaint
Colomby
Ste Colombe
Orglandes
Reigneville
la Bonneville
Renouf
St Sauveur-le Vicomte
Pont l'Abbé
Picauville
Conquigny
Ste Mère-Eglise
la Fière
Chef-du-Pont
Amfreville
Gourbesville
Beuzeville-au-Plain
Fresville
Ecausseville
Emondeville
Azeville
Joganville
Ravenoville
Foucarville
St Martin-de-Varreville
UTAH BEACH
St Marcouf Is.
Taret de Ravenoville
Fontenay-sur-Mer
Crasbecq
Quinéville
Ozeville
Mooteboure
Froudeville
Station
Urville
le Ham
Biniville
Terre-de-Beauval
Quettehou
St Vaast-la Hougue
Hameau Gallis
le Theil
Bois du Coudray
Rufosses
la Rogerie
Bois de Roudou
Hameau du Long
Croix Jacob
Bois de la Brigue
Rauville-la-Bigot
Les Pieux
Carteret
Barneville-sur-Mer
St Maurice
Fierville
Cadets
St Pierre-d'Arthéglise
St Jacques-de-Néhou
Blandamour
Néhou
Lieusaint
Elms 709
Elms 921
Elms 1049
Elms 920
1049 (–)
1050 (–)
1057
Rem AOK 7
24 Recn
12
22
8
4
39
9
41
313
315
314
79
47
60
VII
SEYE R.
DOUVE R.
MERDERET RIVER
AFld
158
170
167
148
176
Cap de la Hague



THE FINAL DRIVE ON CHERBOURG

22-26 JUNE 1944

NIGHT POSITIONS REACHED BY FORWARD ELEMENTS

- 21 JUNE
- 22 JUNE
- 23 JUNE
- 24 JUNE
- 25 JUNE
- 26 JUNE
- GERMAN DEFENSES
- ① ARSENAL
- ② CITY HALL
- ③ GARE MARITIME
- ④ UNDERGROUND SHELTERS AT ST. SAUVEUR
- ⑤ NAVAL HOSPITAL

ALTITUDE IN METERS

0 10 50 100 150 AND ABOVE

1000 0 1 2

YARDS MILES

MAP ERRATA

Map No. 12—The 353th Inf Regt should be the 359th Inf Regt.

Map No. IX—"Front lines, evening 7 June" in the legend should be "Front lines, evening 11 June".

Positions of the 1st, 2d, 3d Bns, 12th Infantry, and of the 2d Bn, 22d Infantry shown as of 14 June are those of 11 June.

1st Bn, 3d Inf as of 13 June should be 1st Bn, 8th Inf.

Map No. X—The symbol in the legend for "Axis of advance, 14 June" should be a solid arrow instead of an outline of an arrow.

The position of the 507th Prcht Inf as of 2400 15 June is that of the 505th Prcht Inf at the same time.

Map No. XI—The symbol in the legend for "Line reached by 2100, 17 June" should be vertical-line shading instead of dots.

Map No. 23—The boundary between the 325th Gli Inf and the 505th Prcht Inf should be between the 325th Gli Inf and the 508th Prcht Inf.



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