

Normandy Invasion – The Airborne Assault Virtual Staff Ride (VSR) Fact Sheet

1. **General:** This Combat Studies Institute (CSI) virtual staff ride examines the American parachute and glider assaults of the invasion of Normandy – Operation Neptune. This study begins with the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions' air movement, landing, and ground tactical plans through the execution of the mission on D-Day and beyond.

2. **Content:** This virtual staff ride can be a stand alone study or part of a larger virtual staff ride of the U.S. Army in the Normandy invasion. This module can be tailored in a number of ways to suit the training audience. It can focus on both divisions to the end of 6 June or through the seizing of the bridgeheads across the Merderet River on 9 June. Other options include a study of just the 82d Airborne Division or just the 101st Airborne Division, with a possible follow-on study of the Battle of Carentan. The time and content of these options are:

Duration (approx.)	Content
5.5 Hours	<u>D-Day through the Merderet Objectives (D-Day – D-Day+3)</u> Stand 1: Campaign Introduction, Opposing Plans, Air Movement, and Parachute Assault Stand 2: La Fièvre Bridge, 6 June Stand 3: Chef-du-Pont Stand 4: Sainte-Mère-Église, 6 June Stand 5: Objective WXYZ and the Northern Causeways Stand 6: Brécourt Manor and the Southern Causeways Stand 7: Securing the Southern Flank on D-Day Stand 8: Ste.-Mère-Église, D+1 Stand 9: The 325 GIR and the Merderet River, D+1 – D+3 Integration Phase
4.5 Hours	<u>D-Day Only:</u> Stand 1: Campaign Introduction, Opposing Plans, Air Movement, and Parachute Assault Stand 2: La Fièvre Bridge, 6 June Stand 3: Chef-du-Pont Stand 4: Sainte-Mère-Église, 6 June Stand 5: Objective WXYZ and the Northern Causeways Stand 6: Brécourt Manor and the Southern Causeways Stand 7: Securing the Southern Flank Integration Phase
4 Hours	<u>82d Airborne Division Specific Study:</u> Stands 1-4 and 8-9, plus the integration phase.
3 Hours	<u>101st Airborne Division Specific Study (without Carentan):</u> Stands 1 and 5-7, plus the integration phase. If requested, the Carentan module adds another 2 hours.

3. **Themes for discussion:** The primary learning objective is to discuss the enduring

insights of combat applicable to leaders at the platoon through division levels. It is tailorable to the unit's training objectives, but is particularly relevant in discussing the following topics:

- a. Joint Forcible Entry
- b. The phases of an Airborne Assault
- c. Leadership
- d. Warfighting Functions
- e. Small Unit Tactics
- f. Characteristics of Offensive and Defensive Operations
- g. Troop Leading Procedures

4. **Methodology:** As with all CSI staff rides, this virtual staff ride will follow the three part methodology of preliminary study, field study, and integration. The United States Army's publication for conducting staff rides is *The Staff Ride* by Robertson and Knight. (available at the Army University Press website:

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Books/CSI-Press-Publications/Staff-Ride-Handbooks/#staff-rides>).

a. CSI provides read-ahead packets for the participants to focus their study as well as suggestions for role play.

b. The primary reading is an extract from *Utah Beach to Cherbourg, 6-27 June 1944*, American Forces in Action Series, CMH Publication 100-12, Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990. <https://history.army.mil/html/books/100/100-12/index.html>

c. Virtual terrain for the field study phase include La Fièvre Bridge, Chef-du-Pont, Sainte-Mère-Église, Objective WXYZ (Les Mézières), Brécourt Manor, and the lock at La Barquette.

d. The Integration phase occurs immediately following the field study.

5. **Support Requirements:** The hosting organization is required to provide the following:

a. A venue large enough to accommodate all participants. Standard audience cap is about 30 personnel. The quality of the facility, such as an AAR room in a mission training center, may allow an increase of up to 50-60 personnel.

b. Two projectors (with cables) and two screens, large enough for the audience to see. The staff ride instructor team will bring the computers to connect to the projectors.

c. Funding for government civilian travel with a DTS cross-org LOA.