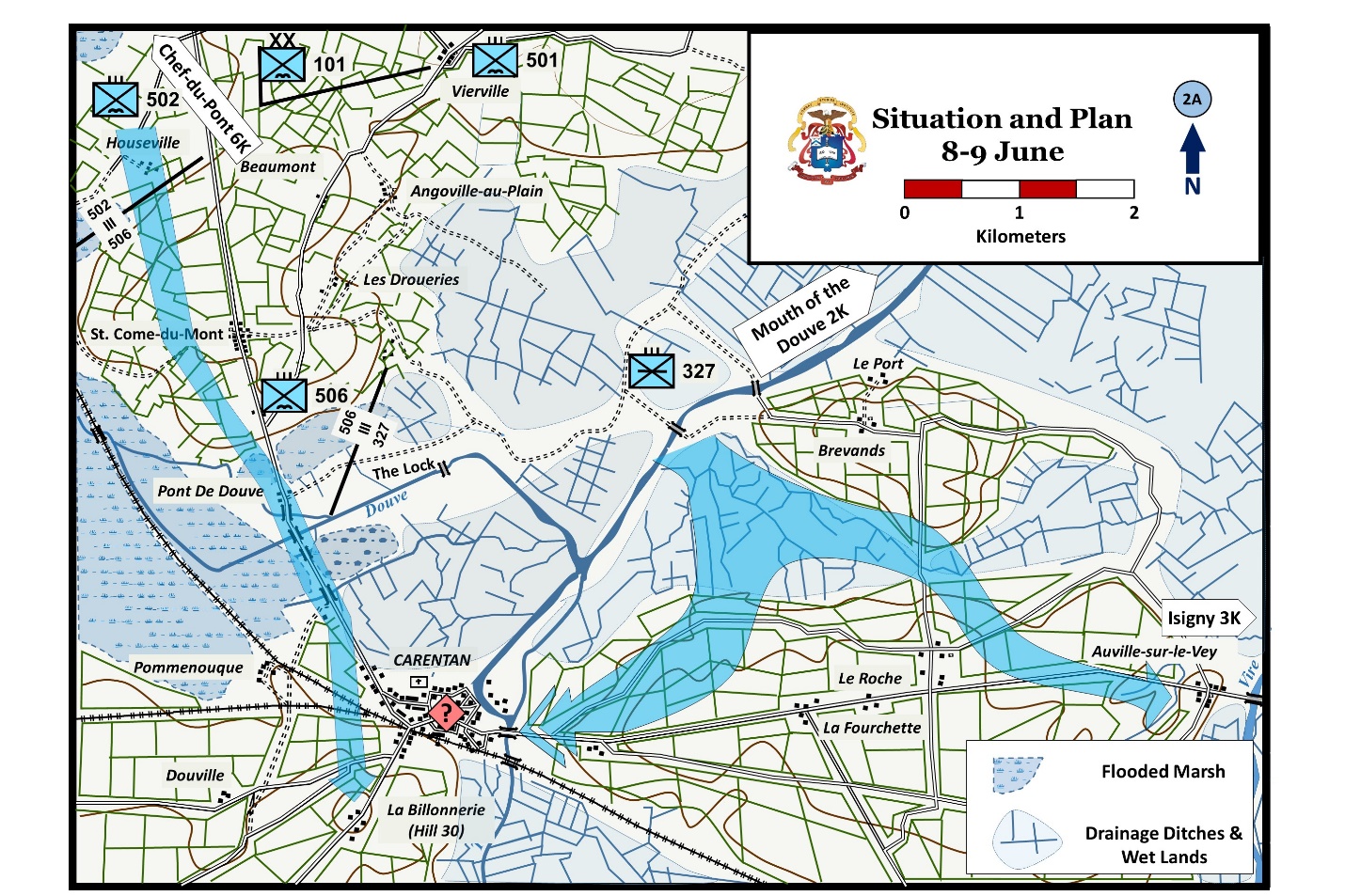
**The Battle of Carentan**

**Consolidating the Omaha and Utah Lodgments**

**(7-15 June 1944)**

****

**3-Hour Virtual Staff Ride**

**Normandy Module #7**

**Charles D Collins**

**Staff Ride Team**

**Army University Press-Combat Studies Institute**

The body of the walkbook is from **CMH PUB 100-12. *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, Chapter 5 - The Battle of Carentan,** 77- 93.

**Additional details from the following sources:**

* **Ambrose, Stephen**. *Band of Brothers*.
* **Badsey, Stephen.** Battlezone Normandy.
* **Bando, Mark.** *101st Airborne: The Screaming Eagles in World War II* [*https://books.google.com/books?id=NmitTETNSxwC&pg=PA90&lpg=PA90&dq=ost+battalions+at+carentan&source=bl&ots=U2GOxKyEO0&sig=ACfU3U3jAhaEEjZiujepJkD9t6jjW\_MgVA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiDn\_3r7fXtAhUPR6wKHfxqBqM4KBDoATAJegQICRAC#v=onepage&q=ost%20battalions%20at%20carentan&f=false*](https://books.google.com/books?id=NmitTETNSxwC&pg=PA90&lpg=PA90&dq=ost+battalions+at+carentan&source=bl&ots=U2GOxKyEO0&sig=ACfU3U3jAhaEEjZiujepJkD9t6jjW_MgVA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiDn_3r7fXtAhUPR6wKHfxqBqM4KBDoATAJegQICRAC#v=onepage&q=ost%20battalions%20at%20carentan&f=false)
* **Burgett, Donald** R. *Currahee! A Screaming Eagle at Normandy.*
* **Carell, Paul**. Invasion-They’re Coming! A German Account.
* **Regimental Unit Study Number 1,** Carentan Cause Way Fight. – CSI files.
* **Greene, Dr. Ralph C**. The Triumph and Tragedy of Major General Maurice Rose, Armor Magazine March-April 1991. <https://static.dvidshub.net/media/pubs/pdf_33962.pdf>
* **Griesser, Volker.** [*The Lions of Carentan.* Excerpts can be found at The Lions of Carentan Part II: Defending Carentan - Warfare History Network](https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/2019/01/02/the-lions-of-carentan-part-ii-defending-carentan/)
* **Harrison, Gordon.** CMH Pub 7-4-1, Cross-Channel Attack (C-CA).
* **Operations Report, Headquarters “Combat Command A” (CCA) 2nd Armored Division June 1 to June 30, 1944**. <https://www.17th-engineers.nl/nl/headquarters-combat-command-a-cca-2nd-armored-division-june-1-to-june-30-1944/>
* **Isby, David.** *Fighting* in Normandy -,The German Army from D-Day to Villers-Bocage.
* **Isby, David.** *Fighting the Invasion – D-Day***.**
* **Lefevre, Eric.** Panzers in Normandy, Then and Now.
* **Marshal, S.L.A**. Night Drop
* **Operations of the 101st Airborne Division in the Invasion of Normand**y –CSI files.
* **Ptak, Steven**, Cobra, the Normandy Breakout.
* **Spiers, Ronald C narrative.** Advanced Infantry Officers Course Paper. The Operations of the 2d Platoon, D Company, 506th Parachute Infantry (101st Airborne Div) in the vicinity of Carentan, France, 11-13 June 1944. (He was a plt ldr in D Co. at Carentan)
* **Regimental Unit Study Number 1,** Carentan Cause Way Fight. – CSI files.
* **Regimental Unit Study Number 3**, 506th Parachute infantry Regiment in Normandy Drop – CSI files.
* **Smith, Seven.** Spearhead, 2nd Armored Division, ‘Hell on Wheels’
* **Zaloga, Steven**. *D-day 1944, Utah beach & us airborne landings*

**The Battle of Carentan**

**Merging Omaha and Utah Beaches**

**(8-15 June 1944)**

**STAND 1: ST. COME-DU-MONT (8-10 JUNE)**

**Visuals:**

1. 1A: US First Army Situation, 7 June 1944
2. 1B: St. Come-du-Mont, 8 June 1944

**STAND 2: THE CAUSEWAY FIGHT, (9-10 June 1944)**

**Visuals:**

1. 2A: Situation and Plan, 8-9 June
2. 2B: Purple Heart Lane, 8-10 June
3. 2C: Armored Forces Enter the Fight at Carentan

**STAND 3: THE BATTLE FOR INGOUF FARM (11 JUNE 1944)**

**Visuals:**

1. Stand 3 Orientation
2. 3A: Cole’s Charge, 0400 to Noon, 11 June
3. 3B: Cassidy’s Advance, 11 June
4. 3C: The Cabbage Patch

**STAND 4: THE LEFT-WING ATTACK ON CARENTAN (10 and 11 June)**

**Visuals:**

1. 4A: The Left-Wing Attack on Carentan, 10-11 June
2. 4B: McAuliffe’s Plan, 10-11 June

**STAND 5: THE FALL OF CARENTAN (12 June)**

**Visuals:**

1. 5A: The Fall of Carentan, 11-12 June
2. 5B: Carentan’s Roads, 12 June

**STAND 6: SECURING CARENTAN (12 and 13 June)**

**Visuals:**

1. 6A: Securing Carentan, 327th Glider Infantry, 12 to 13 June 1944
2. 6B: The German Counterattack, 13 June 1944
3. 6C: The US Attack, 13 June 1944
4. 6D: Consolidated Lodgment

**STAND 1**

**ST. COME-DU-MONT (8-10 JUNE)**

**Orientation:**  **VSR: From the top platform of the church steeple in St. Come-Du-Mont looking to the NE.** Currently located in the village of St. Come-Du-Mont. Although not visible, Utah Beach is 12K to the NE, Omaha Beach is 25K is to E, and the city of Carentan is 4K to SE.

**Visuals:**

1. **1A: US First Army Situation, 7 June 1944**
2. **1B: St. Come-du-Mont, 8-10 June 1944**
3. **1C: 101st ABD Vs, 6th FJR**

**Description:**

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 1A: US First Army Situation, 7 June 1944** [CMH PUB 100-12. Utah Beach to Cherbourg, 77-78] Other details as noted. |

1. After the successful landings on **6 June 1944** there was serious danger that the enemy would drive a wedge into the gap between V Corps at Omaha Beach and VII Corps at Utah Beach. LTG J. Lawton Collins (VII Corps) IAW guidance from U.S. First Army and General Eisenhower directed the 101st ABN DIV to capture the important road junction city of Carentan and consolidate the U.S. lodgment into one continuous beachhead.
2. The joining of the Utah and Omaha beachheads had acquired an added urgency as neither Corps had achieved their D-day goal.
3. Considerable anxiety existed, especially in the V Corps sector, where only a precarious foothold had been won on Omaha Beach on D Day.
4. There was serious danger that the enemy would attempt to drive a wedge into the gap between V and VII Corps.
5. General Eisenhower, viewing the situation 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.
   1. V Corps was ordered to thrust westward through Isigny.
   2. VII Corps was to seize Carentan.
6. The latter mission fell to the 101st Airborne Division. General Bradley even suggested to General Collins that the 101st Airborne Division be reinforced.
7. **On 6-7 June**, the 101st Airborne Division was already engaged in efforts to dislodge the enemy from St. Come-du-Mont area:[[1]](#endnote-1)
8. On the 6th, the 101st had: **VSR: from the steeple look in these directions.**
   1. **About 11K to NE**, ad-hoc elements of all three parachute regiments had secured the beach exits in support of the 4th ID landing.
   2. **About 1000m to the E** - LTC Robert Ballard (Co. 2/501s) who’s objective was St. Come–du-Mont was trying to fight his way through Les Droueries.
   3. **About 4.2 E** elements of the 3/506th had seized the bridges at Le Port.[[2]](#endnote-2)
   4. **About 2.3 K SE** of our current position - Col. Howard Johnson (Co 501st PIR) and disparate group of paratroopers had seized “The Lock” at Barquette and established a small bridge head over the Douve River.[[3]](#endnote-3)
   5. Fighting at all these locations continued on into 7th.
   6. **VSR: Look 1.5K to the south at the bridges**. On the 7th, St. Come-du-Mont the 506th PIR’s objective was not the village, it was to proceed down the main highway to the south and control the bridges on the Carentan causeway in order to protect the flank of the VII Corps.

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 1B: St. Come-Du-Mont -6/7 June** [CMH PUB 100-12, 77-78] Other details as noted |

1. **VSR: From the steeple, look to NE.** The **night of 6/7 June,** Col. Robert Sink, commander 506th PIR, collected 277 men from his 1st BN, 301 men from the 2d BN, another 50 or so strays, and 40 from the 82d near Vierville (about 2k to the NE).[[4]](#endnote-4)
2. **On 7 June,** the 506th’s attack was a confused affair. The regiment was reinforced with several tanks from 70the Armor, 4th ID.
3. **VSR: Fly toward the red tree to the SE and take up a position near the Sherman tank.** In the attack, LTC Turner, Commander 1/506th and a former armor officer, commandeered one of the tanks and he personally led the attack from the TC hatch. However, the attack stalled when a sniper shot him in the forehead.
4. **VSR: Then move toward Deadman’s Corner.** Then a lone company - **D/2/506 -** with one M5 tank broke through the German resistance and penetrated all the way to the crossroads south of St. Come-du-Mont
5. **VSR: Take position in looking out the 2d floor window at the M5 tank.** The Germans had made the house and corner into a strongpoint.
   1. D Company’s attack faltered when a panzerfaust hit knocked the tank out. Supposedly one of the dead crewman remained in the tank for several days and the 101st referred to the crossroads as Dead Man’s Corner.
   2. Before falling back, Dog Co. rescued a column of supply trucks that was serenely parked at the crossroad and was miraculously unbothered by the Germans in the area.
6. The 506th then regrouped about **2K to NE**.

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 1C: St. Come-Du-Mont – 8 June** [CMH PUB 100-12, 77-78] Other details as noted |

1. **VSR: From above Dead Man’s corner looking back up the road to the NE.** Late on the 7th, the VII Corps commander’s new orders were to seize Carentan and effect a link-up with the V Corps in order to merge Utah and Omaha beaches into one continuous beachhead. Their orders were now to seize the bridges on the Carentan Causeway – not to destroy them.
2. The new attack on St. Come-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. (1st and 2d BNs 506th PIR, 3/501st PIR, 1/401st Glider Infantry)
3. **VSR: look to the north.** Behind effective artillery preparatory fire followed by a rolling barrage, the attack jumped off at **about 0500**. Colonel Ewell's men, despite considerable confusion and intermingling of units, reached the vicinity St. Come-du-Mont within three hours.[[5]](#endnote-5)
4. The division operations log stated, **“The attack on St. Come du Mont was launched at dawn and very severe hedge and street fighting took place though out the day.”**
5. **VSR: Look back up the road to the NE.** LTC Ewell’s 3/501st went on and reached Deadman’s Corner, about midmorning.
   1. **VSR: Rise up and look toward St. Come and then to at the RR to the west – then to the bridges to the south.** He saw signs of the enemy's withdrawal westward from St. Come-du-Mont, and he decided to go south along the Carentan highway to seize the causeway and the bridges.
   2. **VSR: Move down the road and stop short of Pont De Douve (just past the kubelwagen on the side of the road.)** But as his men moved onto the highway they were met by small-arms, mg, and AT fire from the buildings near the first bridge, and AT guns in Carentan began to shell them.
   3. **VSR: Return to the corner and look to the north.** Since no communications with the American artillery were available, Ewell's battalion pulled back to the Corner.
6. As it withdrew, the battalion was suddenly faced by a German counterattack from the north. The counterattack was repulsed.
   1. At the time, US commanders believed the Germans were trying to break through the American block and take the direct route to Carentan.
   2. However, they were instead spoiling attacks to cover the German withdrawal from St. Come-du-mont to the west and then the railroad causeway back to Carentan.
7. The German withdrawal involved severe fighting with the US paratroopers and glider troops closing on the town as they attempted to break contact. (Regimental Unit Study Number 3, 64-66)
8. **VSR: Rise up from the corner look at the St. Come and then the RR to the west.** Eventually the majority of the Germans got out to the west and retreated on Carentan following generally the axis of railroad embankment.
9. **VSR: Move up the road into St. Come and the wagons**. The US paratroopers captured forty wagons loaded with food and ammunition on the highway north of Deadman’s corner.[[6]](#endnote-6)
   1. Airborne Trooper Donald Burgett (A/1/506) remembered, **“To the victors goes the spoils…and we were all busy looting the wagons.”**
   2. He also found a German field kitchen and recorded, **“I took several loafs of black bread, a couple tubes of cheese… a can of coffee, two cans of cigarettes, and a canteen of water.”**
   3. **VSR: Move up to the 3d /2d cart and turn left to the truck**. He also found a German payroll truck, and **“We all dug in and filled our pockets with as much [French] money as we could carry.”**
10. **VSR: Rise up and look south at the causeway.** A patrol found that the enemy's withdrawal had left St. Come-du-Mont completely clear. The 101st Division could now prepare to move south to attack the four causeway bridges. .

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 1D: 101st ABN Vs. 6th FJR** [Zagola, Steven. US Airborne Divisions in the ETO 1944-45 and Organization of the German IN BN <https://us-west-1-02800070-inspect.menlosecurity.com/safeview-fileserv/tc_download/a02557401ed20c293dbbde4efd5a81c65219679d267d878c3ac6c43741ccbb4f/?&cid=N64EF1B24D048_&rid=1b9dd554fac0d50e3957b973edcc0320&file_url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bayonetstrength.uk%2FGermanArmy%2FGerInfBn%2FOrg%2520of%2520the%2520German%2520Inf%2520Bn%25201938-45.pdf&type=original> |

1. The brunt of the US attack was borne by the *3d Battalion, I058th Grenadier Regiment* reinforced with two companies of Major Friedrich *von der Heydte,’s* 3d BN/*6th Fallschirmjäger (Parachute) Regiment (* *6th FJR*)*.[[7]](#endnote-7)* 
   1. The *3d Battalion, I058th Grenadier Regiment* belonged to newly reformed *91st Luftlande (Air Landed) Infantry Division.*
   2. The unit was originally organized to be lifted by air transport or gliders for operations in Scandinavia. However, by June 1944 it was organized as a standard German Infantry Regiment.
2. The first six-days of the Battle of Carentan was primarily a light infantry fight with two superbly trained parachute organizations battling to control the city.
   1. The 101st Airborne Division was authorized 8,184 infantry organized into 3 PIR and 1 GIR.
   2. However, the big-picture look of a division fighting a regiment is misleading.
   3. The *6th FRJ* was a large regiment with approximated 3,457 men – significantly larger than the 1954 man PIR.
   4. The 6th FRJ also assumed control of 3 other infantry Bns during the fight. Assuming authorized strengths that brings the 6th FJR battlegroup up to about 5,557 men.
3. However, actual strengths were probably much less.
   1. 101st still collecting strength after their scattered drop
   2. 6th FJR battle group much less than the authorized strength shown.
      1. The 3/1058 took heavy casualties on 7 June and the 1/6 FJR destroyed that same day.
      2. More on the OST or Eastern BNs later in the staff rides. By the time these two OST BNs joined with the 6th FJR they were probably significantly under strength.
4. Nevertheless, the 101st Airborne was attacking across difficult terrain into a built up area with maybe 2 to 1 odds.
   1. Another advantage that the 6th FJR possessed was an abundance of squad LMGs.
      1. The 101st had 54 squad LMG
      2. The 6th FJR had 129 squad LMG plus maybe as many as 108 LMGs with the three attached battalions.
   2. Artillery support was a significant advantage for the 101st.
      1. The 6th FJR had no supporting artillery battalions.
      2. It maybe 21 heavy mortars and 12 small 75mm Infantry support guns to counter the 101st’s division artillery, Corp Artillery, and Naval supporting fire.
5. The *6th Fallschirmjäger (Parachute) Regiment (6th FJR*) served as the 3d regiment in the *91st Luftlande (Air Landed) Infantry Division*. However, by the 8th of June it was controlled by the LXXXIV (84th) Corps HQ.[[8]](#endnote-8)
   1. The *6th FJR* cadre was formed from veteran paratroopers and Luftwaffe ground personnel in early 1944.
   2. With attachments the regiment had a combined strength of 4500 men in June 6, 1944. This would increase to maybe as high as 5,000+ later in the fight.
   3. Its chief weakness was the lack of motor transport.
6. The *6th FJR* was heavily engaged on D-day (6 June). Initially the regiment’s 3 foot mobile battalions were scattered west of Carentan in a 15 by 20K box performing anti-air-landing patrols.[[9]](#endnote-9)
   1. The 1st battalion was sent to reinforce the defense of Utah Beach. **On June 7**, the battalion was destroyed in a fighting withdrawal towards Carentan. About 300 men surrendered. Only 25 reached Carentan.
   2. The 2nd battalion advanced towards Sainte-Mère-Église and attempted to make contact with 795 Ost battalion (Georgian). The battalion fought against the 82d ABN DIV at Sainte-Mère-Église until its ammunition ran low and then withdrew towards Carentan.
   3. The 3rd battalion – in Carentan - sent two companies to reinforce the 3d Battalion, I058th Regiment at St. Come-Du-Mont*.*

**Analysis:**

1. JP 3-8 Joint Forcible Entry Operations (May 2017/June 2018) list “Stabilization of the Lodgment” as the Forcible Entry Phase III. Within this phase the JFC ‘s analysis of the threat and available forces is used to continue with the expansion of the lodgment. (pg. IV-7) **Evaluate the 101st as the “available force” to stabilize the lodgment.**
2. Joint Publication 3-18, Joint Forcible Entry Operations (May 2017/June 2018) when discussing the “Principles for Forcible Entry Operational Success” lists “Expand the Lodgment” as one of the key principles. It states, “The joint force quickly builds combat power in order to enhance security and the ability to respond to enemy counter attacks, enable continuous landing of troops and materiel, and facilitate transition to subsequent operations. Failure to expand the lodgment can severely hamper or stall the momentum of the overall operation.” (pg. I-6) **Why is Carentan important to the senior allied commanders in Normandy?**

**STAND 2**

**THE CAUSEWAY FIGHT, (9-10 June 1944)**

**Orientation: VSR: From the vicinity of Deadman’s corner continue to look south at the causeway.** Currently located in the vicinity of Deadman’s Corner near the village of St. Come-Du-Mont. Additional orientation IAW visual 2A is in the discussion below.

**Visuals:**

1. **2A: Situation and Plan, 8-9 June**
2. **2B: Purple Heart Lane, 10 June**
3. **2C: Armored Forces Enter the Fight, 9-10 June**

**Description:**

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 2A: Situation and Plan** [CMH PUB 100-12, 78-82] Other details as noted. |

1. **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.
   1. The 502d Parachute Infantry had taken positions on the right flank of the division, from Chef-du-Pont to the vicinity of Houesville (about 2K north of St. Come-Du-Mont).
   2. The 501st Parachute Infantry was assembled near Vierville as division reserve (about 3.5K NE of our present location).
   3. The 327th Glider Infantry, which had arrived by sea, relieved Colonel Johnson's and Captain Shettle's men in the vicinity of the lock (about 1.5K SE of our current position). and the le Port bridges (about 3.5K E of our current position).
   4. The 506th Parachute Infantry held the center, astride the Carentan highway at our present location.
2. The plan of the 101st Division provided for two crossings of the Douve. The left and right wings of the division were coordinated to form a ring about the town to prevent the Germans from escaping.
   1. **VSR: Look to the E.** The 327th GIR - the left wing (the main effort) 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, while the main force was to drive southwest to seize Carentan.
   2. **VSR: Look to the S.** The 502d PIR - the right wing was to pass through the 506th, cross the causeway northwest of Carentan, bypass Carentan, and seize Hill 30 **(about 3.5k to the south and just to the right of the city),** southwest of the city.
3. Hill 30 considered key terrain because it controlled the principal German escape route from Carentan.
4. The enemy situation was very sketchy and the 101st was unaware that a reinforced Fallschirmjager Regiment defended the city.
5. The U.S. leadership assumed that a division level attack would overwhelm what little resistance the enemy had to offer. More on this is the next discussion.

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 2B: Purple Heart Lane, 10 June** [CMH PUB 100-12, 78-82] Other details as noted. |

1. **VSR: From the present location fly down till just short of Pont Du Douve (about the vicinity of the kubelwagen) . The move forward along the road to second bridge – stay to the right of the lumber pile to see the damaged bridge.** With St. Come-du-Mont clear, the division's right wing was ready to begin its attack across the causeway.
   1. As stated earlier, there were indications that Carentan was not heavily defended.
   2. **On 8 June** Colonel Sink of the 506th Parachute Infantry had out-posted the first two bridges across the causeway after the enemy's withdrawal from St. Come-du-Mont.
   3. **VSR: Rise up and look down the causeway toward Carentan. Late that night,** Sink made a personal reconnaissance to the outskirts of Carentan. (Marshall, 338)
      1. He crossed the Douve R. in a rickety boat.
      2. In the vicinity of the fourth bridge **(the Red Tree)** he drew fire and withdrew.
      3. He reported the incident and believed that he conveyed that his reconnaissance was inconclusive.
      4. However, div passed the information to the 502d as **“The town seems to be lightly held.”**
      5. Trooper Burgett stated this about Col “Bob” Sink, **“Colonel Bob won’t ask a man to do something he wouldn’t do himself. You don’t mind going out for someone like that, even getting shot at a little if necessary.**”(Burgett, 201)
   4. Additionally, airplane reconnaissance (by the S2, 3/502 and later by 502d S-3) 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 from the north.
2. The causeway was straight and narrow. It rises some 2 to 3M above the marshes and spans the Douve and Madeleine Rivers and the two Douve canals.
   1. Any attack would thus be canalized and expose the infantry to fire from the front and both flanks.
   2. A 40’ wide paved road runs straight and level the entire causeway
   3. On either side the marshes extend out of rifle range.
   4. The western bank of the causeway falls away sharply to the water's edge.
   5. The more gradually sloping eastern bank offered some opportunity for cover.
   6. In the swamps – either side -there were large hammocks of fairly solid ground – large enough to accommodate a MG or snipers.[[10]](#endnote-10)
3. The attack was to be carried out by the 502d Parachute Infantry.
4. **VSR: At the present location continue look at the 4th bridge. Shortly after midnight, 9-10 June,** the 3d Battalion (Colonel Robert Cole) started out for St Come-du-Mont. A patrol, led by Lt. Ralph B. Gehauf (BN S-2), set out to the front to reconnoiter the road.
   1. 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.
   2. When they had gone about 50m beyond the bridge a mortar shell dropped near them, flares went up, and then machine guns and more mortars fired on them.
   3. Gehauf identified the fire from 7 MGs from the front and right front, and a light cannon or howitzer to the right.[[11]](#endnote-11) [Most likely a 7.5 cm light infantry support gun that was very popular with the *Fallschirmjägers]*
      1. He sent word back to have mortars at the head of the column.
      2. However, the soldier that delivered the msg told LTC Cole, **“The LT says don’t bring the battalion through because the fire is much too heavy.”[[12]](#endnote-12)**
   4. At **about 0530** the patrol withdrew after making a detailed sketch of the enemy defense and Lt Gehauf pass the correct msg to LTC Cole.
5. **VSR: Return to ground and look at the blown bridge without looking at the improvised crossing**. Meanwhile, LTC Cole discover the inability of the engineers, working under fire, to repair Bridge No. 2 and regiment decided to postpone the attack.
6. 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 (The fire was based upon LT Gehauf’s recon map).[[13]](#endnote-13)
7. **VSR: Look at the improvised crossing on the left side of the lumber pile. At noon** the engineers had still not spanned the gaps at Bridge No. 2, but Colonel Cole and his men improvised a footbridge with engineer planking and Belgian Gates, enabling the battalion to start crossing in single file in the middle of the afternoon. It was said to be **“a bit wobbly.”[[14]](#endnote-14)**
8. From Carentan an AT-gun (either a 75mm or 88mm) continued to interdict the causeway, but it did not stop the movement and caused no casualties.
9. **VSR: Move to just short of bridge #4 – move along east side of the road and emphasize this took 3x hours.** The men moved low or crawled along the embankment – primarily on the east side. 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.
10. At this point, the enemy opened fire from the hedgerows, a large farmhouse to the right front, and from the hammocks in the swamp.
    1. The men in the point hit the ditches.
    2. As they attempted to move forward, an enemy machine gun behind a hedgerow only a 100M away searched the ditches, and, after three men were hit, the group withdrew.
    3. LTC Cole was said not to be a **“gentle talker”** and his men noted that this day in his efforts to keep the BN moving, **“he was at his cussingest best.”** (Marshall, 350)
11. The battalion, extended in a long thin column on the road and, unable to maneuver to either flank, or withdraw, and it was under enemy small-arms fire along its whole length.
12. 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. **VSR: Move up to the obstacle and then rise up slightly in the air.** 
    1. The whole precarious maneuver would have been impossible without artillery support, which worked over German positions from **1600 to 2330**.

* 1. Between **1600 and 2300:**
     1. **T**he BN inched forward with Company H, under heavy fire, and established a small perimeter on the other side of the gate.
     2. Company G provided supporting fire from the left side of the causeway
  2. **At 2300**, the artillery fire ceased due to the lack of ammunition.

1. The battalion advance was stalled and it was decided to wait for daylight to reorganize and resume the advance.
2. **VSR: Rise up and look back toward bridge #3**. Company I was exposed on the right bank near Bridge No. 3 where men had no tall grass for concealment and could not dig in.
   1. It was hit hard with rifle and mortar fire and t**hen at 2330,** two German planes bombed and strafed the causeway.
   2. Soon after 21 men and 2 officers of the company's original 80 moved back behind Bridge No. 2.
3. Companies G and H maintained their tenuous hold at bridge #4. The BN had available:[[15]](#endnote-15)
   1. How Company: 84 men
   2. George Company: 60 men
   3. Headquarters: 121 men

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 2C: Armored Forces Enter the Fight** [CMH PUB 100-12, 89-90] Other details as noted. |

1. Meanwhile, armored forces were moving to join the fight at Carentan. The lead elements of the US 2d Armored Division disembarked at Omaha Beach **on 9 & 10 June (about 26K E of our current position) ,** and the German *17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division (Goetz von Berlichingen)* was ordered, on **7 June**, to move to Carentan and assume responsibility for the defense of city.[[16]](#endnote-16) **On 1 June**, the *17th PzGD* was in Thouars **(268K S of Carentan)**.
2. MG Edward Brooks’ **2d Armored Division “Hell on Wheels”** was a veteran unit that had fought in both the North Africa and Sicily Campaigns.[[17]](#endnote-17)
   1. The division was organized as a "heavy" armored division with over 300 tanks organized into two armored regiments. Other core elements of the division included: an armored Infantry Regiment, three Armored Field Artillery BNs, an armored Engineer BN, and an armored reconnaissance BN.
   2. The division tasked organized to fight into 3 battlegroups called: Combat Command A (CCA), CCB, and Combat Command Reserve (CCR). CCA was the first echelon to land on Omaha Beach and was the command engaged at Carentan.
   3. Initially, the 2d AD was deployed on the V Corps left flank and participated in the fighting to close the gap between the US and UK forces.
3. ***SS-Gruppenfuhrer* (MG) *Werner Ostendort’s*,*17th PzGD*** like all *SS divisions* it was substantially stronger than the corresponding army division. However, its combat strength in fact was much less than it appeared on paper.
   1. The division had 17,321 of its authorized 18,354 personnel (94%).
   2. Its six rifle battalions were organized in two regiments. Four battalions had improvised motor transport, the other two BNs had bicycles. There were very few armored halftracks.
   3. The *17th SS Tank Battalion* had 37 assault guns in lieu of tanks and these did not join the division until early June – there had been no time combined arms training.
   4. The *17th SS Reconnaissance Battalion* should have had an armored car company, but it appears that it instead deployed with only its infantry companies mounted in light *VW Schwimmwagens*.[[18]](#endnote-18)
   5. The division also had an anti-tank BN with Marder III tank destroyers, an anti-aircraft BN with 12x 88mm guns, and an artillery regiment with towed 105mm howitzers.
   6. Potentially, the *17th PzGD* had the firepower to overwhelm the lightly equipped 101st .
   7. However, the *17th PzGD* had no combat experience and had serious training deficiencies. Carentan was to be the divisions “baptism of fire.” [[19]](#endnote-19)
      1. Its officer and NCO strength was less than 60%.
      2. The division started organizing in **November 1943** in France and was still standing up units in **early June 1944**. Created from replacement units and conscripts. There was a significant reliance upon Romanian conscripts and French equipment.
      3. The training deficiencies encompassed the entire division and it lacked the skills needed to conduct combined arms operations. This deficiency were most noteworthy in the artillery regiment. Its officers lacked the skills needed to concentrate fires or fire hedge to hedge to support an infantry attack. It was noted after Carentan that the artillery regiment fought its battle separate from the infantry.
   8. **On 7 June**, the *17th PzGD* started its 268K road march to Carentan. A combination of allied air attacks, lack of fuel, and indifferent transportation greatly delayed the move.
   9. A divisional Staff Officer recalled how moving in daylight drew the unwanted attentions of the Allied fighter-bombers: **“Our motorized columns were coiling along the road towards the invasion beaches. Then something happened that left us in a daze. Spurts of fire licked along the column and splashes of dust staccatoed the road. Everyone was piling out of the vehicles and scuttling for the neighboring fields. Several vehicles were already in flames. This attack ceased as suddenly as it had crashed upon us fifteen minutes before. An hour later the fighter-bombers were back inflicting even more damage, wrecking the division’s anti-tank guns and even more vehicles.”**
   10. The division decided to give up any attempt to move during the day and only traveled toward Normandy at night.
   11. **On 10 June**, the lead elements of the division bumped into 182 82d ABN troopers at the village of Grainges **(about 8K SE of Carentan).** These troops had been dropped almost 30K SE of their assigned drop zone and decided to hold the village. The rightwing of the *17th PzGD* was not able to push past the village until the **12th.**
   12. **O**n **10 and 11 June**, other elements of the *17th PzG* approached Pieriers. (**about 16K SW of Carentan).**

**Analysis:**

1. FM 3-90-1, Offense and Defense (March 2013) when discussing the execution of the attack emphasizes “The key to success is to strike hard and fast, overwhelm a portion of the enemy force, and then quickly transition to the next objective or phase, thus maintaining the momentum of the attack without reducing the pressure on the enemy. (pg. 3-15). **What challenges does the terrain along “Purple Heart Lane / the causeway” present to the attacker?**
2. JP 3-18 when discussing the “Principles for Forcible Entry Operational Success” lists “Isolate the Lodgment” as one of the key principles. It states, “The joint force attacks or neutralizes any enemy capabilities with the potential to affect the establishment of the lodgment… Failure to isolate the lodgment can hamper or stall momentum.” (pg. I-5) **Evaluate the efforts of the 17th PzGD to reinforce the German forces at Carentan.**

**STAND 3**

**The Battle for Ingouf Farm**

**(11 June 1944)**

**Orientation: VSR: Remain at Bridge #4 and rise up to match IAW the Orientation Slide.**

1. Currently located above Bridge #4 which is just off the slide to the west.
2. Carentan is just down the road – **the cathedral is visible.**
3. On 11 June, most of the fighting for Carentan centered on a **Ingouf Farm** which was about 600M NW of the edge of the city. Key areas include:
   1. **The Cabbage Patch**
   2. **The Farm Complex**
   3. **The Orchard**
   4. **The Crossroads**
4. The US objective was to pass by the farm and seize Hill 30 about 2K to the south –**high ground to the right of the city.**

**Visuals:**

1. 3A: Cole’s Charge (parts 1 and 2)
2. 3B: Cassidy’s Advance
3. 3C: The Cabbage Patch

**Description:**

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 3A: Cole’s Charge** [CMH PUB 100-12, 82-85 & Regimental Study #1, The Causeway Attack, 29- 52 ] Other details as noted. |

1. **VSR: Move past the obstacle to the next road intersection – east side of road in ditch near red bush. At 0400 on 11 June**, artillery ammunition was again available and regiment ordered the 3d Battalion to continue the attack.  
   1. In the darkness, with only minor harassment fire, Company G and Headquarters Company followed Company H across Bridge #4.
   2. The battalion deployed along both sides of the highway.
      1. G and HQ on the east side of the road.
      2. H Co. on the west side of the road
   3. The plan was to move SSW cross country toward Hill 30 – the regiment’s objective.
2. **VSR: Focus on the farm House. About 0530,** the leading scouts on the right approached the farmhouse and they were fired on by rifles, machine guns, and mortars.
   1. The center of the enemy's positions appeared to be a large farmhouse and the hedgerows to the west. Cole’s Bn took cover in ditches and along the road. Nevertheless, the BN suffered numerous casualties.
   2. **From 0530 to 0615**, in an attempt to neutralize the position, an artillery concentration was placed on the area but had no perceptible effect.
   3. **Dilemma:** Cole’s attack was stalled and he considered the following:
      1. Withdrawing back down the causeway.
      2. By passing the farm house with an advance down the Carentan Road.
      3. An assault to clear the way.
   4. Decision: Colonel Cole decided upon an assault to clear the way. He called across the road to Maj. John P. Stopka, the battalion executive officer (with G Co.), that he was going to execute a bayonet charge on the farmhouse.
3. **VSR: Rise up slightly to see the 2- story south SE down the road.** Meanwhile, 1st Sgt Hubert Odem, G Company, advanced along the roadside hedgerow with a small group toward two MG positions near a two story house that were firing on the company.
   1. Odem silenced the enemy MGs with grenades.
   2. Odem’s mortar engaged the MG positions that was in a house and started it on fire.
   3. Odem was successful in silencing the fire. However, he, along with the platoon leaders were unaware that the Co commander had been wounded.
4. **VSR: Focus on Ingouf Farm**. LTC Cole, concentrated on directing the artillery fire and other than his yell to Maj Stopka (Sto ka) did very little to coordinate the attack. Maj Stopka later acknowledge that he failed to pass the plan to charge to the company commanders.
   1. **At 0615:** Cole put down smoke in a wide arc around the objective and as the artillery fire was lifted, Colonel Cole blew his whistle and yelled **“charge!”**
   2. **VSR: IAW the discussion below, pass over the road and small hedge and then pause in the wet ditch.** After yelling charge there was a slight twist to the infantry moto of **“Follow Me,”** Cole jumped over a low hedge and came down in a ditch almost up to his neck in water and mud, and he yelled back to the men behind him, **“Don’t follow me!”**
   3. Of the 250 men who should have followed him only 20 got up to go; another 50 followed Major Stopka.
      1. 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.
      2. Most of the Company G leadership was unaware that company commander was wounded and the Company 1st Sgt was involved in the firefight with the 2-story house.
      3. 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.
   4. **VSR: Move up along the road and pause near the farm cart and then look toward the farm house.** Despite the initial disorder, the men charged across fire-swept field.
   5. Elements of H Co. led by 1st Sgt Spreckter reached the farmhouse first and found it abandoned.
   6. The fighting around the farm continued for about 3 ½ hours **(0615 to about 1000)**
5. **VSR: Angle to the right, charge the hedgerow and pause at the 75mm IN Gun – marked with a red bush.** LT. Provost’s Plt (H Co.) passed around the farm house and found the enemy still occupied rifle pits and machine-gun emplacements along a hedgerow running at right angles to the road west and SW of the farm house.
   1. Under the momentum of the charge the men also secured this objective and eliminated the Germans with grenades and bayonets. They also captured a 75mm Infantry Support Gun.
   2. **VSR: Rise up and look South at the orchard south of the farmhouse.** LT. Provost was wounded clearing the orchard and 1st Spreckter took command of H Co’s lead elements.
   3. **VSR: Look at the hedgerows east of the farm house.** Meanwhile, Cpt. Simmons (H Co.) was with another group of men cleared the hedgerows east of the farm house.
6. The remnants of I Co. came forward to join the fight. Its two remaining officers were wounded in the advance and the soldiers joined with the other two companies.
7. **VSR: Move to a position slightly above the farmhouse.** 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.
8. 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.
9. The battalion consolidated near the farmhouse, but units were badly mixed and had suffered heavy casualties.
   * 1. Cpt. Simmons (H) regrouped his remaining 30 men near the farm house - he started the day with 84 men.
     2. G. Co. also suffered significant casualties.
     3. The Bn staff, which had gathered in farmhouse to plan the transition to the defense was hit by mortar fire and many had to be evacuated.
10. **VSR: First look toward bridge #4 then toward Hill 30 – large red tree 1.5K to the south.**  LTC Cole requested for the 1/502, to come up and pass through the 3d and continue the attack south to the high ground at La Billonerie (Hill 30).
11. Cole also requested that Regt send ammunition, ambulances, and additional aid men. (The engineers had rigged a slightly more substantial crossing of bridge #2 and were clearing the obstacle at bridge #4).

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 3B: Cassidy’s Advance** [CMH PUB 100-12, 82-85 & Regimental Study #1, The Causeway Attack, 52- 65 ] Other details as noted. |

1. **VSR: From above the farm house look toward bridge #4.** The 1/502 (Colonel Cassidy) was north of Bridge # 4 when it received Cole's message. **About 1000**, the BN moved to Bridge #4, the BN was engaged by MG positions in the marsh to the right of the road.
   1. Lt. Robert Rogers with the lead company (B) remembered the fire being so intense that, **“A man could scarcely raise his head.”**
   2. Many remembered the bravado of LTC Cassidy standing in the middle of the bridge encouraging the men to keep moving forward. (Marshall, 382)
   3. Lt. Rogers anticipated passing through 3/502 and moving to Hill 30.
   4. **VSR: Look at Rogers (B/1/502) movement to the farm and orchard. Soon after 1000,** B company swung to the right of the farm house and found that 3/502 had only fractions of squads holding the ground and he paused to regroup on the west side of the road near the orchard.
2. **VSR: Look to back toward bridge #4. About 1100**, A/1/502 – the next company in the advance - was hard hit by mortar and arty fire crossing the bridge and in the farm house meadow loosing 30 men on the approach.
   1. LTC Cassidy paused to regroup the BN – which took about 1 hour. The 2 BNs were intermingled.
   2. **VSR: Look to hedgerow west of the farm house.** Colonel Cole commanded the positions on the right from his command post in the farmhouse – this included Cassidy’s B Company.
   3. **VSR: Look to A/1/502 at the cabbage patch.** Colonel Cassidy commanded on the left – this included elements of Cole’s Bn along the hedgerow from the cabbage patch to the farmhouse.
3. **VSR: IAW the discussion move down the road to the strongpoint near the RR.** 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.
   1. Lt. Combs took a 6-man patrol all the way to the RR tracks. In his advance strays joined up with him bringing him up to 13 men.
   2. Combs ended up hunkering down along a brick wall and hedges. Additional strays increased his strength to 20+.
   3. 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.
   4. For the rest of the day, Lt. Combs strongpoint was virtually isolated, some 200M out ahead of the other American positions.
4. **VSR: Return to the farm house.** Cole and Cassidy were good friends, but both admitted, **“…that day there was curiously little exchange to information.”** 
   1. Cole, the senior LTC, believed he was responsible commanding the defense. Cassidy believed he had taken over responsibility for the ground. Col Moseley, the regimental commander, broke his leg during the airborne drop into Normandy and the regimental XO LTC John Micaelis commanded the regiment at the Battle of Carentan. His location during this fight is not known. However, there are references to Cole speaking with him by radio.
   2. **VSR: Move to the 2d floor of the farm house and look out the east and south windows IAW the discussion**. In the farmhouse, Colonel Cole remained apprehensive.
      1. He did not know how far the men had pushed out to the west and south.
      2. His communications with regiment was spotty at best which hindered supporting artillery fire.
      3. Additionally, because of the hedgerows, the artillery observers could not see where their shells were landing and had to adjust fire, in the manner of jungle warfare, by sound.
      4. Their backs were up against the river, the troops had no rear area and hence no local reserve.
   3. The fighting among the hedges was confusing and continued till **about 1200**.
      1. They fought in small groups and had little understanding who was to their left and right.
      2. Most remembered that they never saw the enemy, they just fired at where they thought they were and remembered, **“It was like fighting an army of phantoms.”**
5. **VSR: Look to the orchard and strongpoint IAW the discussion. In the middle of the morning** enemy artillery and mortar fire increased in intensity, and the Germans began a counterattack.
   1. One of the strongest thrusts came through the orchard toward the farmhouse.
   2. However, the machine guns at the farmhouse and Lt. Combs strongpoint broke up the attack and the Germans fell back.

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 3C: The Cabbage Patch, 11 June** [CMH PUB 100-12, 82-85 & Regimental Study #1, The Causeway Attack, 65 -x] Other details as noted. |

1. **VSR: From the farm house look at Bridge #4 then toward the cabbage patch. About noon** an unexplained lull occurred in the fighting and the 502d took advantage of this to re-form its left flank positions.
   1. 1/502d adjusted the defensive line.
      1. C Co. 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.
      2. A Co. took positions just behind Company C and extended its line across the road.
      3. Mixed in with A and C were fragments of 3/502.
      4. B Co. remained SW of the farmhouse – controlled by 3/502.
   2. Cole and Cassidy talked briefly and continued with Cole commanding in the west and Cassidy in the east.
   3. **At noon** Regiment notified the battalions that the enemy had requested a truce and ordered cease firing.
      1. 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.
      2. 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.
      3. During the lull, the 502d chaplain came forward with vehicles and evacuated about 50 casualties from the farm house. (Marshall, 397)
   4. 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.
   5. Colonel Cole called Regiment and asked permission to return fire. He was ordered to wait. Major Davidson had not yet returned to the regimental command post with definite word of the end of the truce.
      1. But the men in the line made their own decision and returned the enemy’s fire.
      2. Cole had observed enemy movements of the enemy during the truce and believed they had used the ceasefire to move into attack positions.
   6. **VSR: Look at the strongpoint near the RR tracks.** The group at the RR tracks had not received the cease fire order and had continued to fire on the Germans whom they had observed moving about near their position.
2. **VSR: The IAW the discussion move to the south edge of the cabbage patch. About 1300**, when the truce ended and the enemy renewed the attack all along the front. ------------- Elements of *3/1058/91* attacked in the west (other parts of the 3d BN were engaged against the 82d ABN near Baupte – 6K to the west. The strongpoint held. ------- *3/6 FJR* reinforced with elements of the *2d BN* and *Ost Battalions* attacked all along the front. **VSR: Look to the SE.** The Germans came down the hedgerows along both sides of the road toward the cabbage patch. **VSR: Look to the S.** Other attacks came through the farm fields to the south. US Fire stopped both of these attacks.
   1. **VSR: Move to the NW corner of the cabbage patch and take of view of the hedgerow that connects with the orchard.** The renewed German attack strained the American positions to the breaking point. (Marshall, 399-401)
      1. Along the 2d hedgerow, a squad leader was seriously wounded in the neck and own his own ran back to the farm to get aid. Several men in his squad followed him back.
      2. A LT ran to catch them and get them back on the line. Nearby men saw the LT move to the rear and thought they had missed the word to withdraw. Soon the whole middle of the US position was retreating.
      3. A group of supply officers and NCOs at the bridge refused to allow them to cross and herded them back to the south.
      4. LTC Cassidy, other unit officers and NCOs then regained control and reestablished the line before the Germans could exploit the hole in the line.
   2. The fighting near the cabbage patch and along the nearby hedgerows continued throughout the afternoon.
      1. US soldiers remembered that at times the Germans came so near that they could hear the Germans working their rifle bolts.
      2. The enemy gave the two battalions no respite and no opportunity to reorganize or evacuate the wounded.
      3. Enemy artillery was weak, but his mortars never stopped firing.
3. **VSR: Move to above the farm house looking E and then S.** LTC Cole, looking out from a second-story window in the farmhouse at the cabbage patch and to the south expected the line to crack. He spent most of his time directing artillery fire.
   1. **At 1830,** Cole informed Regiment that he planned to withdraw and asked to have covering fire and smoke ready when the time came.
   2. VSR. Rise above the farmhouse and look at bridge #4. During the heavy afternoon fighting, regiment could not bring resupply or evacuation vehicles forward along the exposed causeway.
      1. Nevertheless, the wounded worked their way down the ditches that paralleled the causeway.
      2. These same wounded passed ammunition boxes to the south conveyor belt style.
   3. Cole believed that only closer and heavier artillery support would enable him to hold out. But his artillery liaison officer, Capt. Julian Rosemond, had struggled with spotty communication.
4. However – early in the evening, Captain Rosemond finally managed to establish good commo with the artillery command post. During most of the day only two battalions had been firing in direct support - now every gun in the 101st, some of the 4th Div and Naval fire - was brought to bear.
   1. The shells arched high over the American positions and fell in the fields directly beyond the farmhouse and cabbage patch.
   2. The concentrated artillery lasted only five minutes, but when the fire lifted the Germans could be seen retreating. Cole and Cassidy sent out patrols and ascertained that the enemy had fallen back.
5. The *6th FJR* last effort hold the Americans at Bridge #4 had failed. They had expended vast amounts of ammunition. This, combined with the loss of regimental supply train at St. Come-du-Mont meant that most of the rifle ammunition had to be collected and used for their machineguns.
   1. *Fallschirmjager Eugen* believed the battle was decided by the **“American material superiority.” He remembered:** (Griesser, 114-116) **“I only had a little ammunition left for my submachinegun, two full magazines on my belt … The war could not be won with this meagre arsenal.”**
   2. Additionally, the *Fallschirmjager*s were severely crippled by concentrated heavy artillery fire.
   3. At first individual men, then soon whole groups, fell back because they had run out of ammunition.
6. **At about 2000** the 2d Battalion came up to take over, and the 1st and 3d Battalions withdrew. After the evacuation of the wounded, 3/502 had only 121 men remaining – it had brought about 500 men to Normandy. (Marshall, 412; Badsey,108)
   1. 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.
   2. It requested relief, and the 506th Parachute Infantry was sent in to finish the job.
7. *Major Heydt* requested resupply by air. (Isby-Normandy, 125)
   1. Ju-52 transport aircraft dropped 13 tons of supplies about 14K south of Carentan. Major Heydte believed it was too little and too late.
   2. Additional air-drops requested, but none materialized.

**Analysis:**

1. LTC Cole received the Medal of Honor for leading the bayonet charge at Ingouf farm. FM 3-0, Operations (Oct 2017) defines leadership as “…the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction and motivation to accomplish the mission…Good leaders are the catalyst for success.” (Pg.2-22). **Analyze LTC decision to execute a bayonet charge against the farm house strongpoint blocking the advance of his battalion.**
2. FM 3-90-1, Offense and Defense (March 2013) has a discussion about “Team Development Between Commanders” and states “Sound organization provides for unity of effort, centralized planning, and decentralized execution.” (pg. 1-25).
   1. Cole and Cassidy were good friends, but both admitted, **“…that day there was curiously little exchange to information.”** Cole, the senior, believed he was responsible commanding the defense. Cassidy believed he had taken over responsibility for the ground.
   2. **Evaluate the unity of effort between the two commanders. Was it effective and efficient?**

**STAND 4**

**THE LEFT-WING ATTACK ON CARENTAN**

**Orientation: VSR: From the farm rise up in the air look at the areas noted below.** Currently at the Ingouf Farm.

1. The Le Port Bridges over the Lower Douve River are **4.5K to the NE.**
2. City center of Carentan is about **1.25K to the SE**.
3. Hill 30 is about **1.5K to the South**.

**Visuals:**

1. **4A:** **The Left-Wing Attack on Carentan**
2. **4B**: **McAuliffe’s Plan**

**Description:**

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 4A: The Left-Wing Attack on Carentan** [CMH PUB 100-12, 88, 90-92] |

1. During the two days of the fight across the causeway the 101st Airborne Division's left wing had also been pressing southward.
   1. The first mission of the 327th Glider Infantry was to cross the lower Douve and secure the high ground around Brevands. **VSR: About 5K to the NE.** 
      1. The glider men, unlike the parachutists, were draftees.
      2. They did not receive extra pay or jump boots, and were required to wear canvas leggings like the infantry.
      3. The glider men tended to be older than the parachutists, usually in their late twenties or early thirties. Colonel Harper believed the age was an advantage and that they were more effective fighters that the younger, wilder, and more impulsive paratroops.
      4. A paratrooper received $55 per month extra as hazardous duty pay. The glider men received no extra pay and one of their chants was **"No flight pay, no jump pay, but never a dull moment!"**
      5. After the Normandy invasion, when glider troops suffered heavier casualties per unit in the direct assault than parachutists, flight pay was authorized.
   2. **At 0145 on 10 June**, Company C crossed the river and established a small bridgehead. Unfortunately, during the crossing the company was hit hard by friendly mortar fire.
   3. A follow-on 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.
2. **At noon** Company A of the 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry was ordered to reconnoiter toward Auville-sur-le-Vey on the west bank of the Vire River. The 1-401 GIR was attached as a third battalion of the 327th GIR. [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.]
   1. The company encountered a strong resistance, and in a running battle it broke the enemy line and knocked out twelve machine guns.
   2. It then proceeded to Auville-sur-le-Vey, where it made contact with the 29th Reconnaissance Troop and Company K of the 175th Infantry (29th Division).
   3. The assistant G-3 of the 101st AD, who had accompanied Company A, went to the 29th Division headquarters to establish liaison between the two divisions.
   4. There was now a physical connection with the VII Corps on Utah and V Corps on Omaha.
   5. However, the 101st still needed to liberate Carentan in order to control the road between the two beachheads.
3. **VSR: Swing around to the E side of Carentan and about 500M east of the highway bridge look for a Red Tree in the vicinity of the 327 icon on the visual. Throughout the afternoon (10 June)** the regiment advanced rapidly, but it was stopped at **1800** about 500 meters from the canal by enemy fire from the houses and hedgerows on the east bank.
   1. 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.
   2. **VSR: Move up to the HWY bridge.** The regiment regrouped and attacked again and drove the enemy across the canal and **by midnight** the regiment dug-in along the canal and could fire into the city.
4. **VSR: Rise up and look at the forest on the north side of the Flot**.
   1. **At dawn on 11 June** the attack into the city resumed.
   2. On the west bank, the wood bordering the Bassin à Flot provided a covered approach to Carentan. Col. Joseph H. Harper, who had assumed command of the 27th Glider Infantry the afternoon of the 10th. He decided to use this approach when he was ordered to continue the advance on Carentan.
      1. The regiment was commanded by Col. George S. Wear through 10 June, when command was turned over to Col. Joseph H. Harper (401 GIR).
      2. Although not official, the men of the 327th understood that Wear was replaced because of friendly-fire artillery casualties while crossing the Douve River.
   3. **VSR: Move to Foot Bridge on the NE end of the Flot. Then IAW the discussion Cross over the footbridge then fly SW over the forest going then going to the ground and moving up to the edge of the forest with a view toward the city.** 1-401 GIR repaired the footbridge, and then **about 1000** the BN continued the attack into Carentan.
      1. Elements of the BN crossed over the north end of the Flot and then attacked through the woods.
      2. Meanwhile, the 1st and 2d BNs 327 GIR held their positions to the south along the canal and support the attack by firing into the city.
      3. At the edge of the woods, the lead units were pinned down by machinegun and small-arms fire from the houses on the NE outskirts.
5. The primary opposition to the left-wing attack was two *“Eastern”* or *“Ost” Battalions* that were attached to the *6th FJR* on 9 June. (Isby-Normandy,83)
   1. *Ost (Russian) BN 439* – under Major Becker was officially the *IV BN/726 Gdr Rgt* of the *716 IN Div.*
   2. The other was a BN from the *795 Georgian Regiment* (Bando, 90)
   3. The *“Eastern” BNs* contained personnel form non-German territories in the east that were conscripted or coerced into serving. Many were former Soviet personnel, recruited from prisoner of war camps.
   4. *Major Heydte* believed their combat efficiency was limited – however, *BN 439* is credited with fighting well.
   5. Pvt Burgett in his book **Currahee!** Provided the provided the private’s view of the **“Easterners.”** He referred to them as “**Japanese reinforcements “**sent toteach the Germans better camouflage techniques**.**

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 4B: McAuliffe’s Plan** [CMH PUB 100-12, 87-89] |

1. **VSR: Fly to the vicinity of Hill 30. 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.
2. 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.
   1. The 506th at Ingouf Farm **(about 1.5K N),** was to pass through the 502d seize Hill 30 **(our current location)** and then attack into the city from the southwest.
   2. **VSR: Look to the NE.** The 501st was to cross the river near Brevans, where a treadway bridge had been built, and swing southwest to join Colonel Sink's men of the 506th near Hill 30, completing the division's ring around the city.
   3. **VSR: Look toward the NE corner of the city.** The 327th GIR was to press their attack into Carentan from the northeast.
3. The intent was to prevent the escape of the German forces and then overwhelm them with multiple thrust into the city.

**Analysis:**

1. There was significant professional rivalry between the glider troops and the parachute troops in the U.S. airborne divisions. However, the need for a solid and effective team as discussed in FM 3-90-1, Offense and Defense (March 2013) [pg. 1-25] was also applicable in 1944. **How was this rivalry between the glider and paratroops both a strength and weakness for the airborne divisions?**
2. The 6th FJR’s defense of Carentan was in-line with today’s defensive doctrine of “…reinforcing obstacles… to improve the natural restrictive nature of the terrain to halt or slow enemy movement, canalize enemy movement into engagement areas, and protect friendly positions and maneuver.” (FM 3-90-1, pg. 6-9). **Considering the nature of the terrain, evaluate the 101st efforts to encircle the city.**

**STAND 5**

**THE FALL OF CARENTAN**

**11-12 June 1944**

**Orientation: VSR: From Hill 30 look north toward Ingouf Farm.** Currently located on Hill 30 about 600M from the outskirts of Carentan.

1. Ingouf Farm is about 1600M to the north.

2. The east side of the city is 1500M to the NE.

**Visuals:**

1. **5A: The Fall of Carentan, 11-12 June**
2. **5B: Carentan’s Roads, 12 June**

**Description:**

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 5A: The Fall of Carentan** [CMH PUB 100-12, 89-90] Other details as noted. |

1. **VSR: Continue to look NE: On 11 June**, *Maj Heydte* – the commander of the *6th FJR* - reached the conclusion that he could not prevent the U.S. forces from seizing Carentan.[[20]](#endnote-20)
   1. **At 1705, 11 July**, *Heydte* reported to the *91st Air Landing Divisio*n, “**All leaders of Jager companies have fallen or been wounded. Hardest fighting on the city limits of Carentan. The last of the ammunition has been fired; at 1800 hours we will vacate Carentan and fall back to Elevation 30. This line can only be held if ammunition and provisions arrive.”[[21]](#endnote-21)**
   2. He was unwilling to sacrifice his regiment to hold the city for one more day and **Late Afternoon (11 June**) in broad daylight, his forces withdrew from the city and established a new defensive line on Hill 30.
   3. Heydte left behind a 50- man rearguard to delay the U.S. advance – mostly light mgs at intersections. (some sources say 105 men) and established the new line on Hill 30 with his two “Eastern” BNs. The exhausted *6th FRJ* in reserve.
   4. During the evacuation, A liaison officer from the *17th SS-Panzer Grenadier Division (17th PzGD)* met with *Maj. Heydte* to inform him the division was in route to defend the city. However, combat troops and resupply would not be available until **13 June**. *Maj. Heydte* decided it was too late to cancel the evacuation.[[22]](#endnote-22)
      1. *Maj. Heydte* claimsthat he had Corps’ permission to evacuate and that they had not informed him of the eminent arrival of the *17th PzGd.*
      2. Afterwards, *LXXXIV Corps* claimed that *Heydte* was informed of the eminent arrival of the *17th PZGd* and that they were not informed of the evacuation until after it had occurred.
      3. At the time, it proved impossible for the *German 7th Army* to fix blame for the premature evacuation of Carentan. Their official justification for the **“misguided order”** was *Maj Heydte’s* “temporary physical and mental breakdown” due the heavy fighting experienced by the *6th FRJ.*
      4. *German 7th Army* also decided not to relieve or punish *Maj Heydte* because his unit had performed very well and his supposedly speedy recovery from his breakdown.
2. **The night of 11-12 June,** the 101st was unaware that the Germans had evacuated the city and set Carentan ablaze by artillery, naval guns, mortars, and several AT guns which fired on point targets from the 327th Glider Infantry's positions along the canal.
3. **VSR: Look north toward Ingouf Farm. Soon after 2200, 12 June**, the 1st and 2d Battalions, 506th Parachute Infantry, moved out.
   1. Near the farmhouse which had been Colonel Cole's command post they left the highway and moved cross country directly south to Hill 30.
   2. Lt. Ronald Speirs (D Co.) remembered the movement was **“slow”** and **“uncertain”** and the column **“was stopping and starting as the 1st Battalion up ahead probed their way through the dark silent hedgerows.”** (Speirs narrative, 13 -14)
   3. The slow movement caused the tired men to doze off to sleep when the column stopped.
   4. **VSR: First identify that currently on Hill 30 then fly down to the road vicinity the E/2/506 icon. At 0100,** the 506th pushed the German outpost line on the north face of Hill 30 to the south, the 2d bivouacked nearby on the Baupte Road.
4. Most Ost BN 795 melted away in the night and the Germans lost control of the NW face of the hill without a significant fight.
5. **At 0230,** the 506th, unaware that the Germans had mostly abandoned Carentan, issued an attack order to seize the city. (Speirs narrative, 14)
   1. 1st BN was to hold the North face of Hill 30 and the 2d Bn was to attack on-order soon after dawn and meet the glider troops, who were coming from the NE, in the center of the town.
   2. Lt. Richard Winters, the acting commander of E Co. was furious. The movement to Hill 30 had taken all night. He remembered, **“It shouldn’t have been, … It wasn’t that difficult. We had screwed away the night, just getting into position.”** There was no time for reconnaissance, no plan for artillery preparation or air support. (Ambrose,94)
   3. **VSR: Rise up in the air and point out the location of the 506 CP IAW the visual.** Unknown to all, Colonel Sink (506th Parachute Infantry) had 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 along the north side of Hill 30 and then dug in forward of the two battalions north of Hill 30.[[23]](#endnote-23)
   4. **At 0500**, while still unaware that his CP was forward of the rifle Bns, Colonel Sink ordered the 2d Battalion to attack toward Carentan **at 0600**.
6. **At dawn (about 0530),** when enemy fire made it apparent that the CP was isolated and surrounded; regiment decided to temporarily delay the 2d BN attack and ordered the 1st Battalion to attack east over Hill 30 through the hamlet of Billonerie and extract the Regt’s CP.
   1. Heavy fighting against Ost BN 439 through the hedgerows and houses to break through and rescue the regt’s CP.
   2. Private Burgett remembered, **“We made the attack through the houses and out into the hedgerow country... we gained hedgerow after hedgerow until we were in command of the high ground to the right of the city.”**[[24]](#endnote-24)

* 1. The *6th FRJ* then fell back and establish a new defensive line near Auverville about 2.8k SW of La Billionnerie.

1. **VSR: IAW the discussion move up to the Y Junction. At 0620,** E Co. attacked NE up the Baupte road into Carentan toward the Y junction.
   1. **VSR: To the front is a 3 bldg. block. Move to the center 3d floor window on the brown bldg**. **on the left.** An enemy mg team stalled Easy Co.at the Y junction and caused several casualties. Lt. Dick Winter, the company commander, rallied his company and cleared the area.[[25]](#endnote-25)
   2. **VSR: IAW the discussion move up the road to the NNE into the city and stop at the RR Tracks.** 2/506th continued the attack into the city against sporadic resistance.[[26]](#endnote-26)
   3. **VSR: Rise up and look toward the city center.** The 2/506th battled against snipers and was targeted by enemy mortars which caused several casualties.
      1. Father John Maloney (Regimental Chaplain) was awarded the DSC for his actions. Citation: **… Completely disregarding his own personal safety, he assisted medical-aid men in administering first aid to the wounded under intense enemy machine gun fire… [and] continuous mortar fire.[[27]](#endnote-27)**
      2. Lt. Winters was wounded in the leg, but stayed with his company.
2. **VSR: Look to the NE.** To the NE, the 327th GIR had attacked **at 0600,** and drove rapidly into the center of Carentan. **At 0730,** the 506th linked up with 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry near the city center and RR station.
3. **VSR: From the current location show the 501 route IAW the visual.** Simultaneously with the attacks into the city, the 501st wide envelopment passed to the south and completed the encirclement of city. The airborne’s trap closed too late. The *6th FJR* had escaped to the south.

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 5B: Carentan’s Roads** [CMH PUB 100-12, 89-90] Other details as noted. |

1. **VSR: Return to ground level, pass over the RR tracks, turn to the left and take up a view IAW the picture on Visual 5B. By 0830,** the 101st Division had secured most of Carentan.
2. The importance of the small city was the road network.
   1. Cherbourg, a key port city for the allies, was **51K down the road to NW.** From this road you could also access roads to Utah Beach about 7K to the N.
   2. A road to the south led to **Periers about 20K distant** and the interior of the Cotentin Peninsula. From this road you could also access roads to Baupte and the left flank of the 82d Airborne Division.
   3. The road to the east led to Omaha Beach about **25K distant**.
3. Controlling this road network was key step in consolidating the allied lodgment into Normandy.

**Analysis:** FM 3-90-1, Offense and Defense (March 2013) states defines an **Area Defense** as “a defensive task that concentrates on denying enemy forces access to designated terrain for a specific time rather than destroying the enemy outright.” (pg. 6-2) [note consider backing up to Visual 4B for this discussion]

1. Brief review of the *6th FJR’s* defense of Carentan.
   1. 8 June: withdraws from St.Come-du-Mont. The village was a 6 June objective for the 101st.
   2. 8-10 June: Holds the left wing of the 101st on the north side of the Douve River. Bridgeheads over the Douve were a 6 June objective for the 101st.
   3. 9-11 June: Hold’s the causeway and block’s the right wing advance of the 101st’ABD’s into Carentan.
   4. 11 June: The *6th FJR* escapes the encirclement of Carentan and reestablishes a defensive line SW of the city.
   5. 12 June: The *6th FJR* rearguard maintains the deception of still holding the city until 0830.
2. **Evaluate the 6th FJR Area Defense of Carentan.**

**STAND 6**

**SECURING CARENTAN**

**Orientation: VSR: Return to Hill 30 (over the La Billionaire Mansion) and look SW.** Currently located on Hill 30 to the SW of Carentan. The area was known as La Billionaire. It was an area of chateaus and mansions of the city’s social elite. Other key locations are pointed out in the discussion below.

**Visuals:**

1. **6A: Securing Carentan**
2. **6B: Securing Carentan, German Counterattack**
3. **6C: Securing Carentan, US Attack**
4. **6D: Consolidated Lodgment**

**Description:**

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 6A: Securing Carentan** [CMH PUB 100-12, 89-90]. |

1. With the capture of Carentan, VII Corps had acquired the vital link for its communication with V Corps.
2. 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.
3. The 101st mission was to establish a deep defense of Carentan connected in the east with the 82d Airborne and in the west with 29th IN Div.[[28]](#endnote-28)
   1. **VSR: Continue to look SW.** The 506st and 501th Parachute Infantry Regiments were to push out southwestward toward Auverville (4K SW) and Baupte (8k West).
   2. **VSR: Look to the east.** The 327th Glider Infantry, were to secure the ground to the east.
4. East of Carentan, **on in the afternoon of 12 June,** the two battalions of the 327th Glider Infantry set out along the Isigny highway. The 1st Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry, remained in Carentan as the division reserve.
   1. At le Mesnil, they turned south. Shortly after crossing the railroad they ran into strong resistance.
   2. **At about 2100-2200** they were held up in the vicinity of Rouxeville.
5. The 327th GIR contacted a force of about eighty men from the 29th Div, including BG Norman Cota (assistant division commander), near Montmartin-en-Graignes and occupied some high ground south of the village.
6. Col Harper in his CP to the rear of his two BNs had lost contact and had only a vague idea of their situations. When he succeeded in reestablishing radio communication, he ordered his lead units to organize a defense line near Rouxeville. He did not know that Montmartin-en- Graignes and the high ground had been taken.
7. Gen. Bradley ordered 2d AD to move an armored task force into the Montmartin area to be **"prepared for action to the south toward St. Lo."[[29]](#endnote-29)** Col Harper was confident that with the armor he could push on to St. Lo with or without the 29th ID’s help. **(24k SE of Carentan)**.
8. However, the move did not take place. Ultra-intercepts –which allowed Allied Intelligence to read coded German messages - indicated the Germans planned a major counterattack from the southwest and the armored task force was diverted to go to the support of the 506th PIR on the west side of Carentan.
9. Col. Harper’s regiment remained on the defense near Rouxeville until 15 June.
10. Meanwhile, the battle for the merging of the two beachheads was being decided SW of Carentan.

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 6B: Securing Carentan, German Counterattack** [CMH PUB 100-12, 92-93]. |

1. **VSR: Look SW down the Periers Highway. 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 501st on the left set out southwestward from Hill 30 along the Carentan-Periers highway – initially with only minor contact.
2. **VSR: Move to the Red Tree to the NW and then onto the next Red Tree. Then move slight down the dirt road to west and stop (Currently in the vicinity of the 2/506 icon).** The 506th - about 1000m to NW moved out westward along the Carentan-Baupte road.
   1. **At noon,** the *6th FJR* hit 1/506 hard with mortars and attacked the 2/506.[[30]](#endnote-30)
   2. **VSR: IAW the discussion, move down the dirt road to the red bush just short of Douville Manor.** 2/506 repulsed this counterattack and pursued the enemy toward Douville, where it was stopped at a strongly organized position manned by parachutists and panzer troops at the Douville Manor.[[31]](#endnote-31)
   3. The ensuing fight lasted the **rest of the day** and **during the night .**
3. **At daylight (13 June**), the 506th and the 501st held a line about 2K west of Carentan. Here in the north, Col. Sink called up his 3rd battalion, which was in reserve, to support a general attack by the regiment at 0500, 13 June along the Baupte Highway.
   1. **VSR: Rise up and look SW toward Douville Manor.** Here in this area, the 2/506th PIR was to seize Douville Manor and then continue the attack to deepen the defensive base around Carentan.
4. Before the attack could get well under way a strong enemy counterattack struck along both the Carentan-Baupte and Carentan-Periers roads.
   1. The Germans had planned a counterattack for t**he 12th**, with the *17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division* to retake Carentan.[[32]](#endnote-32) The attack was delayed till the 13th because the assault gun battalion, which moved north by train, was held up in the assembly areas by air attacks.[[33]](#endnote-33)
   2. Included in the 13th attack were elements of the *37th* and *38th Panzer Grenadier Regiments* and the *17th Tank Battalion,* and the 2/*6th FJR.*
   3. The *17th SS PzGD* and the *6th FJR* established their forward outpost at Douville Mano and planned the main effort to attack eastward on the Baupte-Carentan into the city.[[34]](#endnote-34)
   4. The *17th’*s commander was confident of success and in a discussion with *Von der Heydte* stated, **“After Carentan has been captured, would you prefer to continue advancing towards Isigny or wheel to the left toward Ste-Mere-Eglise?”[[35]](#endnote-35)**
   5. **PPT Build to show the German attack.** The *17th SS, in typical SS style,* attacked without reconnaissance or artillery prep in order to gain tactical surprise. The division commander believed the surprise appearance of armor would overwhelm the US Airborne.[[36]](#endnote-36)
   6. **VSR: Fly SW of the Douville Manor and take position along the Baupte Highway looking east on. The move up the Hwy to the vicinity of the 506 CP (farm with 2x jeeps in the road).** The 101st operations report stated, “**The 506th was again struck by heavy enemy counter-attack, and forced back to within 500M of the west edge of the city.[[37]](#endnote-37)**
5. **VSR: From the 506th CP look west. PPT build to #5.** Lt. Speirs recalled, **“F Company was thrown back by a savage tank-infantry attack, which drove them back to the [2d] battalion reserve line. Here E Company [on the BN north flank] had deployed along the road…It was a serious move, exposing…the entire left flank of the battalion.”[[38]](#endnote-38)**
6. **VSR: Look NW and fly to the Red Tree on the wood line. The move to the vicinity of the farm house just beyond the Red Tree.** The Easy Company line held in this area and allowed time for the 2/506th to rally In the fighting, E Co destroyed an enemy assault gun with a bazooka.[[39]](#endnote-39). **PPT build to show #6**. **VSR look north up the dirt road and them fly around to the north side of the assault gun to match the picture.**
7. **VSR: Rise up and look S toward the 501st area.** **PPT build to show #7.** South of our current position the German attack pushed the 501st back about 100M. The 101st operations report stated, **“The 501st was immediately pinned down by heavy small arms fire, but managed to hold its position.”** One assault gun did break through the 501st’s line but was knocked out near La Billionarie.[[40]](#endnote-40)

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 6C: Securing Carentan- US Attack** [CMH PUB 100-12, 89-90]. |

1. **VSR: From the current location look back to east toward Carentan. At 1030, 13 June,** elements of CCA, 2d Armored Division, arrived in Carentan.[[41]](#endnote-41)
   1. Initially, the US First Army directed the 2d AD to send a Task Force with 1x tank BN and 1x Infantry BN to support the 101 ABN.
   2. However, MG Brooks (2d AD) was hesitant to piecemeal his command and received permission to send all of Combat Command A (CCA).
      1. 66th Armored Regiment (-)
      2. 41st Armored Infantry Regiment (-)
      3. 14th Armored FA BN
      4. Elements of:
         1. 17th Armored Engineer BN
         2. 82d Recon BN
   3. The combat commands typically tasked organized into 2 or more Task Forces to conduct combat operations.
2. **PPT Build for the CCA Attack (#2).** **At 1400**, CCA attacked. One task force attacked west along the Carentan-Baupte road followed by the 502d Parachute Infantry and passed through the 506th Parachute Infantry and drove westward.
   1. Sgt Don Marsh (CCA, 2d AR) remember, "At the hour for attack**," Sergeant Don Marsh remembers, "the 101st troopers held fast in their foxholes ... General Rose, alone, in his 'pink' riding breeches, polished boots and tank jacket, walked up, ignoring danger ... He came upon an airborne captain and demanded, 'Get your men out of their holes and moving forward. We're attacking, and I mean right now!' The troops successfully counterattacked, buoyed by CCA."**[[42]](#endnote-42)
   2. LT Winters, Easy Co, 2/506 remembered, **“…what a wonderful sight it was to see those tanks pouring it to the Germans with those 50-caliber machine-guns and just plowing straight from our lines into the German hedgerows with all those fresh infantry soldiers marching along beside the tanks.”** Lt Welsh also E Company remembered, **“Oh, what a mess they made.”[[43]](#endnote-43)**
   3. A tanker from the 66th AR Regt wrote home, “**Hardly off the beach, we pushed inland to support the 101st Airborne… Fortunately we made it just in time.”[[44]](#endnote-44)**
3. **VSR: Move slightly south and follow the dirt trail toward Douville Manor. IAW the discussion - go to the ground on to the south side of the east/west trail leading back to the Manor. Continue forward into the fields. Just short of the manor look for the red bush marking the gate into Bloody Gulch then pass into the gulch. PPT build to show #3.**
   1. Most of TF 2 was on the main highway. At least one tank team moved down the dirt road just to the north and the 502d PIR attacked in support.
   2. The attack pushed into a sunken road just to the NE of the manor. This was the third time in two days that the sunken road had changed hands and dead soldiers, from both side, were laying in a farm path.

* 1. Many of the dead had been crushed by the tracks of German assault guns and US tanks. This resulted the survivors nicknaming the place **“Bloody Gulch.” [Note: the location of “Bloody Gulch” is debated by historians – this is only one of the likely locations – but is the location of today’s Bloody Gulch Museum]**
  2. **VSR: Rise up in the air and look at the Manor.** The 502d then pushed the Germans back and cleared the manor.

1. **VSR: Fly slightly to the south then move west down the Baupte HWY. IAW the discussion move to the tip of the attacking arrow in the 502 area and match picture #1 on V6C. PPT build to show #4.** The 2d Armor’s TF pushed past Douville Manor and several of the German Assault guns were destroyed as they attempted to withdraw along the Baupte road. [Note: 17th SS PZ GD had Stug IVs. We only have the very similar Stug IIIs to represent them].
   1. The CCA/2d AD established a defensive line in this area.
   2. They then pushed on to Baupte the next day.
2. **VSR: Rise up and look south. PPT build to show #5.** The 501st and another armored TF attacked along the Carentan-Periers highway and pushed to the outskirts of Auverville and also destroyed a retreating German assault gun. (Smith, 24)
3. **PPT build to show #6.** CCA, 2d AR lost 8 killed, 45 wounded. Plus 4 tanks. (CCA Operations Report).
4. **PPT build to show #7.**The *17th PzGD* reported the loss of 446 men: 79 killed, 316 wounded, 61 captured or missing. Plus they lost 7 StugIVs and another 13 damaged.[[45]](#endnote-45) The inexperienced SS troopers referred to the 2d AD as **“Roosevelt’s Butchers.”**

|  |
| --- |
| **VISUAL 6D: Consolidated Lodgment** [CMH PUB 100-12, 93]. |

1. **By 14 June**, the junction with V Corps was completed.
   1. On the 101st’s right flank, the 502d Parachute Infantry made contact with elements of the 82d Airborne Division at Baupte.
   2. In the center, the 501st Parachute Infantry secured the road which runs southeast from Baupte to join the Carentan-Periers highway.
   3. On the 101st’s, the 327th Glider Infantry held the railroad from Carentan to the Vire River and tied-in with elements of the 29th Division.
2. The 101st Airborne Division had thus completed its mission by extending the southern arc of the beachhead and welding together the two US Corps.

**Analysis:**

1. FM 3-90-1, Offense and Defense (March 2013) in the discussion “**Exploit the Advantages of Terrain”** emphasizes that “The defending commander exploits the advantages of occupying the terrain where the battle will occur. The defending force engages the attacker from locations that give the defending force an advantage.” (pg. 6-5).
   1. The German counterattack hit the two defending airborne infantry regiments with significant combat power. This included:
      1. Two Panzer grenadier regiments and one field jaeger regiment.
      2. One tank battalion equipped with assault guns.
      3. Mobile elements of the anti-tank battalion
      4. Division artillery.
   2. **How did the terrain contribute to the 101st’s success in stalling the attack?.**
   3. **What other factors contributed to the 101st’s success?**
2. Joint Publication 3-18, Joint Forcible Entry Operations (May 2017/June 2018) when discussing the “Principles for Forcible Entry Operational Success” lists “Introduction of Follow-on Forces” as one of the key principals. Within the discussion of this principal it states, “…the follow-on forces will conduct ground offensive operations to link up with forces in the lodgment. (pg. IV-9). **Evaluate the commitment of the U.S. 2d Armored division into the fight.**
3. JP 3-18 states, “A successful forcible entry operation is completed… wherein a lodgment is established for follow-on combat operations /transition (pg. IV-11). Considering the stated doctrine evaluate the following statement by Gen. Eisenhower in his report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff: **“On the 12th Carentan fell. The Germans made desperate but fruitless efforts to recover the town and reestablish the wedge between our forces. Out initial lodgment are was now consolidated, and we held an unbroken stretch of the French coast from Quineville to the east bank of the Orne.”** (Speirs narrative, 27).

1. Harrison, 356 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Marshall, 275-290 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. (Marshall, 243-258, Ambrose, D-Day, 234; Harrison, 280-9) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. (Marshall, 291-299) [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. (Harrison, 356) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. (details from Burgett, 177, 186) [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. [Different sources show his rank as major, LTC, and colonel – the Official Army History, and Isby-Normandy, 253 state that he was a major]. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. (Harrison, 239 and Isby-D-Day, 153-155) [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. (Carell,61-63) [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. (Regt Study #1, 4). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. (Regt Study #1, 13-14). [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. (Marshall, 342) [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Marshall 344-45 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Rgt Study #1, 12 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Marshall, 360 & Rgt Study #1, 31 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Goetz von Berlichingen was a famous folk hero of the 16th Century. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. (Smith, 23). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Isby-Normandy, 86. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. (Lefevre, 160) [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Isby-Normandy, 125 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Zaloga, 73 & Griesser, LofC. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. (Isby-Normandy, 126. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. The location of the regimental CP is speculative. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Burgett, 207-208. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. (Speirs Narrative, 15-16; Ambrose, 97; & Attack on Carentan, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_I29ev-sFQ>) [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. <https://military.wikia.org/wiki/John_S._Maloney> [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. (Harrison, 364) [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. (Harrison, 365) [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Pvt Burgett (the author of *Currahee!*) was seriously wounded in the mortar fire about 500m NE of Douville Manor. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. <https://www.normandyamericanheroes.com/blog/bloody-gulch> [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Goetz von Berlichingen was a famous folk hero of the 16th Century. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. (Harrison, 365) [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. (Isby-Normandy, 146) [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. (Isby-Normandy, 147) [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. (Zaloga, 74) [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. (101st op report, 110) [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. (Speirs, 23-25) [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. (Amborse, 100) [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. (101st op report, 110) [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Smith, 21-22. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Greene, Dr. Ralph C. The Triumph and Tragedy of Major General Maurice Rose, Armor Magazine March-April 1991, 22. <https://static.dvidshub.net/media/pubs/pdf_33962.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. (Ambrose, 101). [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. (Ptak, 50). [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. (Zaloga,75 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)