**Pointe de Hoc**

**(6-8 June 1944)**

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**3-Hour Virtual Staff Ride**

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**Army University Press-Combat Studies Institute**

The body of the walkbook is from **CMH PUB 100-14. Small Unit Actions, Pointe du Hoe, 1-63]**

**Additional details from the following sources:**

* **Ambrose, Stephen**. *D-Day*.
* **Badsey, Stephen**. Battle Zone Normandy, Omaha Beach
* **Black, Robert.** The Battalion
* **CMH Pub 100**-11. Omaha Beachhead
* **Ryan, Cornelius**. The Longest Day – June 6, 1944
* **Gawne, Jonathan.** Spearheading D-Day.
* **Harrison, Gordon**. CMH Pub 7-4-1,Cross Channel Attack
* **Kaufmann, J. E.** Fortress Third Reich
* **O’Donnell, Patrick.** Dog Company
* **Zaloga, Steven.** Ranges Lead the Way
* **Zaloga, Steven.** D-Day 1944
* [**https://www.battleorder.org/usa-ranger-bn-ww2**](https://www.battleorder.org/usa-ranger-bn-ww2)

**STAND 1: Pointe du Hoc**

**STAND 2: The Assault Landing**

**STAND 3: The Guns of Pointe du Hoc**

**STAND 4: German Counterattacks at the Pointe**

**STAND 5: Actions on the Coastal Highway**

**STAND 6: The Relief**

**STAND 1**

**Pointe du Hoc**

**Orientation: VSR: From a position over the fields south of the Coastal Highway assume a distant bird’s eye view of the Pointe looking north – replicating Visual 1A (See Visual 1B for the location of Coastal Highway).**

1. Currently overlooking Wiederstandsnest (WN) 75 or Resistance Nest 75 at Pointe du Hoc. It was roughly ½ between the US beaches at Omaha and Utah.
	* Omaha Beach center is 9K to the east.
	* Utah Beach center is 14K to the west.
2. It was considered key terrain for the Allied invasion plans because the Germans had positioned 6x French made 155mm guns at the Pointe that had a range of over 23,000 meters and could range both American beaches and the shipping areas leading to them.
3. The Allied intelligence assessment believed that neither aerial nor naval bombardment would be sufficient to destroy the guns and that the position needed to be neutralized with a ground troops.

**Visuals:**

* **1A: Resistance Nest 75**
* **1B: Obliterated Terrain Features**

**Description:**

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|  **VISUAL 1A: Resistance Nest 75** [CMH PUB 100-14. Small Unit Actions, Pointe de Hoe, 1-63] Other details as noted.  |

1. **VSR: From the Birdseye view, circle around to looking south at the Pointe and then close in just to the NW of the OP and look up the cliff.** The Germans believed the position to be nearly impregnable from the sea due to the high cliffs along the coast.
2. **VSR: Circle around again to the south side of the Pointe with a bird’s eye view of the strongpoint looking north.** The ground defenses were oriented to defeat inland threats. Mines and barbed wire were laid around the perimeter and were covered by smaller machine gun positions.
	1. A few MG positions were sited to put enfilade fire onto the beaches.
	2. Additionally, two casemated AA guns were positioned on each flank.
3. The Pointe’s 6x 155mm gun emplacements were in the center of the strongpoint with the observation/FDC bunker was at the north apex of the Pointe.
4. There were two types of 155mm gun emplacements at the Pointe. Show the two PPT builds.
	1. Kettle positions were open – circular positions and the guns could fire 360 degrees.
	2. Casemate positions were enclosed and could only fire to the front.
5. **[Use the zoom on the PPT slide show to focus on the gun positions]**
	1. Gun positions 1-3 are open “Kettle” emplacements.
	2. Gun positions 4 and 5 are casemate positions with their former open emplacements located nearby and partially dismantled.
	3. Gun position 6 was an open “Kettle” emplacement.
6. Allied intelligence also believed the guns to be mobile and reasoned that the Germans would have alternate positions outside the strongpoint.
7. The rest of the bunkers are for personnel and ammunition storage.
8. The Pointe was garr*isoned by the* 2d Battery of Army Coastal Artillery Regiment 1260 (2/HKAA.1260), consisting of 85 artillerymen. There were also an estimated 125 infantrymen from *III/726 Grenadi*ers *(GR)* defending the position.[[1]](#endnote-1)
9. The position fell under the defensive sector of the *726th Infantry Regimen*t which was responsible for a 10K portion of the beach with the Pointe roughly in the center.
10. The *726th* parent division was the *716th IN Div*, however the regt had been attached to the 352d IN Div.
11. The Germans had too much coast and not enough men. The next closest strongpoint was about 2K to the west and 3K to the east.

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|  **VISUAL 1B: Obliterated Terrain Features [**CMH PUB 100-14. Small Unit Actions, Pointe de Hoe, 1-63] Other details as noted.  |

1. **VSR: Circle around to the south side of the strongpoint looking north IAW visual 1B.** The pocked mark ground is from preparatory aerial bombardment and naval gunfire.[[2]](#endnote-2)
2. The Rangers trained with detailed maps and terrain models of WN 75. However, prior to 6 June, the Allies had dropped 380 tons of bombs onto the Pointe and most of the expected terrain features had been obliterated.
3. Unknown to Allied intelligence, the 25 April raid (40tons) had been accurate and devastating.
	1. Two of the open “kettle” emplacements were destroyed.
	2. One gun damaged beyond repair.
	3. Two other guns rendered inoperable.
	4. The bunkers proved their worth - only 2 KIA and 3 WIA.
4. The allies were also unaware that the Germans moved the guns to an alternate position about 1.3K south of the Pointe.
5. French resistance had passed the information that the guns had been moved to an alternate position. However, allied aerial reconnaissance believed the guns to be still at the Pointe. The Germans had positioned camouflaged wooden guns at the Pointe positions to mislead Allied aerial reconnaissance.[[3]](#endnote-3)
6. **The Plan:** The mission fell to the Ranger Group to destroy the big guns and secure the Pointe.
	1. **Ranger Force A**: The 2d Ranger Bn (-) with three of its six companies designated to make the assault (D, E, and F)
		1. D Company was to attack from the **west side** of the point and seize **Gun Positions (GP) 4, 5, & 6.**
		2. E & F from the **east side**.
			1. E Company was to seize the **Observation Point and GP #3***.*
			2. F Company was responsible for **GPs 1 & 2.**
		3. The Ranger companies had only 68 men each – which was half the size of a normal rifle company.[[4]](#endnote-4)
		4. The company’s only heavy weapons were four BARs, two 60mm mortars, and a bazooka per company.[[5]](#endnote-5)
		5. Altogether, the Ranger force (with attachments) for the Pointe du Hoc mission totaled 225 men.
	2. **Ranger Force C**: the main Ranger force with approximately 600 men (5th Battalion plus Co’s A and B of the 2d) would wait off shore for the signal that the cliff assault was successful and then land at the Pointe.[[6]](#endnote-6)
	3. The combined Ranger Group (11 companies) would then move inland, cut the coastal highway (a major lateral line of communication), and await the arrival of the 116th Infantry from Omaha before pushing west.
	4. **Ranger Force B:** The 2d BN’s C Co. had an independent mission on the west flank of Omaha Beach (4K to the east). It would then move to Pointe and link up with the rest of the Ranger Force.[[7]](#endnote-7)

1. **If Ranger Force A was defeated on the beach or unable to secure the cliff by H+30 then** Ranger Force C had orders to land on the western end of Omaha Beach behind the 116th Infantry and proceed overland toward the Point, avoiding all unnecessary action in route to its objective.
2. The plan called for LTC James Rudder to command the **Ranger Group** from the Command Ship **USS ANCON**. [[8]](#endnote-8)
	1. The **ANCON** was the CP for: Admiral Hall (Commander of the Omaha Naval Forces) General Gerow (5th Corps), General Huebner (1st Infantry Division) and General Hoge (1st Special Engineer Brigade).
	2. On the night of 5 June, Rudder relieved Major Cleveland Lytle, the commander of **Force A**, because of a drunken brawl and his lack of faith in the feasibility of the mission. Then Rudder took direct command of **Force A**. **[Lytle was transferred to the 90th Infantry Div where he commanded the 1st BN 358 Infantry and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroic action in Sept 1944]. See citation[[9]](#endnote-9)**
	3. Both LTG Bradley (US 1st Army) and LTG Huebner reluctantly approved the last minute change. There was concern that no one was now overlooking the activities of the Ranger Group.
3. **Preparation:** The three companies selected for the mission at Pointe du Hoc had received intensive training and had developed special equipment for the operation.
	1. During April and May, the personnel had trained with British Commandos who had experience in coastal raids.
		1. They had been conditioned by hard practice in rope and ladder work on English cliffs like those of the French coast, combined with landing exercises in difficult waters.
		2. Most of the Rangers were highly confident that they could accomplish any mission asked of them. One of the most confident was Staff Sergeant Larry Johnson (D Co). The company leadership kicked back a letter he wrote the night of 5 June asking his girlfriend to meet him in Paris in early June.[[10]](#endnote-10)
	2. The three assault companies experimented with all types of equipment for climbing, main reliance was placed on grappling ropes to be carried over the cliff tops by rockets. In addition, the assault wave would take along light tubular steel extension ladders and four DUKWs that mounted 30M extendable fire engine ladders.[[11]](#endnote-11)
	3. British LCAs, operated by British sailors, were used in training and in the actual operation. A total of twelve craft were allocated for the mission (22 pax per craft). LCAs were similar to the American LCVP (Higgins Boat), except that it had some armor protection, which made it slower and heavier. As a result, it rode lower in the water than its American counterparts.[[12]](#endnote-12)

**Analysis:**

1. Joint Publication 3-18, Joint Forcible Entry Operations (May 2017/June 2018) when discussing the **“Principles for Forcible Entry Operational Succes**s” lists **“Visualize the Operation Area”** as one of the key principals. **Evaluate the allied commander’s decision to designate the Pointe as key terrain and their assessment that neither aerial nor naval bombardment would be sufficient to destroy the guns and that the position needed to be neutralized with a ground troops.**
2. FM 3-0, Operations (Oct 2017) states, “The willingness to incur risk is often the key to exposing enemy weaknesses that the enemy considers beyond friendly reach. Understanding risk requires assessments coupled with boldness and imagination.” (pg. B-1). **On the night of 5 June, Rudder relieved Major Cleveland Lytle, the commander of Force A, because of a drunken brawl and his lack of faith in the feasibility of the mission – he believed it to be a suicide mission. Evaluate the allied planners consideration for risk with the Pointe du Hoc mission.**
3. FM 3-0, Operations (Oct 2017) states, “Training is the most important thing the Army does to prepare for operations, and it is the cornerstone of combat readiness (pg. 2-52). **Evaluate the Ranger’s preparation to execute the Pointe du Hoc mission.**
4. **Note:** **We will not analyze LTC Rudder’s decision to take direct command of Ranger Force A and his senior commander’s concerns that no one was overlooking the activities of the Ranger Group. However, keep that decision in mind as it will be evaluated later in the staff ride.**

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**STAND 2**

**The Assault Landing**

**Orientation: VSR: Continue with the Birdseye view to the north of the Pointe looking south. Then IAW the 2A discussion look to the SE.**

1. The assault force loaded into the landing craft 13K to the north of the Pointe.
2. Simultaneously, the battleship Texas bombarded the Pointe with 14” shells.

**Visuals:**

* **2A: Bombers, Battleships, and Motor Launches**
* **2B: The Assault Landing**

**Description:**

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| **VISUAL 2A: Bombers, Battleships, and Motor Launches** [CMH PUB 100-14] Other details as noted.  |

1. **Early morning (0450-0503**) 6 June, Allied heavy bombers in **Operation Flashlamp** dropped 635 tons of bombs onto the Pointe.[[13]](#endnote-13)
	1. This raid, along with the earlier raids, obliterated most of the communication trenches, damaged the field telephone lines, and tore up the roads.
	2. Most of the personnel bunkers survived. However, many of the occupants were rendered combat ineffective due to punctured eardrums and other concussion injuries. Additionally, the bunker entrances were buried and the survivors had to dig their way out.
2. **From 0550 to 0630,** the **Battleship *USS Texas*** bombarded the Pointe with 250x 14-inch shells.[[14]](#endnote-14) The bombing and bombardment was devastating.
	1. The 2d Battery notified the Pointe OP that one group of artillerymen that had taken cover in a farmer’s cellar and were intoxicated. Karl Jager, a German artillery Sergeant, remembered that he and his gun crew deserted.[[15]](#endnote-15)
	2. It is estimated that only a few dozen Germans were still active on the Pointe at daylight.[[16]](#endnote-16)
3. Concurrent with the fires, **Ranger Force A launched at 0400** for the 2 ½ hour trip for the almost 13K approach to the beach.
	1. Ranger Force consisted of 10x troop carrying LCAs, 2x Cargo LCAs, and a LCT with 4x DUKWs.

* 1. The Royal Navy Motor Launch (ML) 304 was responsible for leading the Force A flotilla to the Pointe.
1. From almost the start of the operation, the Rangers encountered a number of unforeseen events. Unfortunately, **the navigation system on ML 304 failed**. This combined with the rough seas, strong current, and darkness resulted in the ML leading the Rangers toward Pointe de la Percée, about 5k east of their objective.[[17]](#endnote-17)
	1. **VSR: move to the north east corner of the virtual box behind the Ranger Force A flotilla. Then take position in the lead LCA of the right column. About 0630,** when daylight revealed the shoreline at about 1000M, LTC Rudder realized the navigation error and took the lead in his LCA.
	2. At first the British crews of the LCAs were reluctant to change course. Their orders were to follow ML 304.
	3. Getting the Army ashore was a Navy Responsibility. No Army officer had authority to overrule the commander of ML 304.
	4. Some sources indicate there was heated discussion between the Ranger leaders and the British Coxswains commanding the LCAs. However, all fell in behind LTC Rudder’s LCA and ML 304 quickly took the lead of the group toward Pointe du Hoc.
2. **VSR: IAW the discussion below approach the Pointe du Hoc from the east. Stay about 1000M off shore.**
	1. The **change in course** required the flotilla to hug the coast line back to Pointe du Hoc against a gauntlet of fire.
	2. The commander of the destroyer Talybont remembered, **“Their course… along the shore to Pte. du Hoc was suicidal**.”[[18]](#endnote-18)
3. Soon after the turn, LCT 415 released the four DUKWs. Enemy fire and rough seas, coming at a right angle caused problems for the small boats.[[19]](#endnote-19)
	1. **At O640,** LCA 860, carrying the D Co Cdr and 20 Rangers from his company, sank. All personnel were eventually rescued and sent to hospitals in England.
	2. **O**ne of the two supply boats sank (LCA 914) and all but one its crew drowned. The 2d supply boat discarded most of its cargo and remained afloat.
	3. And German MG and 20mm fire sank another of the DUKWs.
	4. Lt. James Eikner (Commo Officer) remembered, **“…bailing water with our helmets, dodging bullets, and vomiting all at the same time.”[[20]](#endnote-20)**

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| **VISUAL 2B: The Assault Landing** [CMH PUB 100-14] Other details as noted. **NOTE: North is at the bottom of the visual.**  |

**Note: Point out that North is at the bottom of the map and looking to the south in the VSR.**

**Consider using the zoom function of the LCA portions of the visual.**

1. **VSR: Take up a position 100M behind and centered on the nine LCAs on the east beach looking to the south.** Because the flotillas came from the east instead of from the north, there was no time for D Co to reach the west side of the promontory. To maintain the synchronization of the attack, LTC Rudder directed the nine LCAs to deploy on line along the east side of the Pointe.
2. **At 0708,** the nine remaining LCAs hit the beach on the east side of the Pointe. They were 38 mins late.
	1. The late landing disrupted the synchronization of the pre-assault fires with the assault. The USS TEXAS had ceased fire 30mins earlier IAW the plan. Some of the Germans were able to recover from the bombardment.
	2. A few Germans fired upon the Ranger’s and tossed grenades down the cliff.
	3. **VSR: Take up position of ML 304 near its stern gun.** The USS Satterlee, HMS Talybont, and ML 304 provided covering fire and drove off most of the Germans from the edge of the cliffs. Royal Navy Lt. Beever (ML 304), despite his navigation challenges, was no coward and took his wooden ML very close inshore and fired 20 rounds from his small main gun and over 1,000 20mm rounds.[[21]](#endnote-21) [This is a model of a US Patrol Gunboat build for the Okinowa VSR and is used here to represent the British Motor Launch].
3. **[Use the zoom function to focus of the LCAs]** The LCA was designed to achieve a “Dry Landing.” Rudder’s boats had mixed success getting to the beach. **VSR: Take up positions behind the identified LCAs.**
	1. **LCA 668 (Blue Pennant – 6th from right)** grounded short of the beach strip on a boulder knocked from the cliff by bombardment. The men had to swim in about 6M. 1st Sgt. Leonard Lomell (D Co.) was wounded in the landing, but stayed in the fight.
	2. **LCA 858 (Green Pennant – next to the left)** put the men out into a crater. The muddy water went over their heads. Despite the wetting, one bazooka was the only piece of equipment lost. Three men were hit by machine-gun fire.
	3. **LCA 861 (Red Pennant – at the pointe)** **grounded** about 23M from the cliff in a relatively dry landing with two men wounded in the landing. Other crafthad similar experiences to those already mentioned.
4. **VSR: Look to the left along the landing beach.** Each LCA had three pairs of rocket guns that would shoot grappling hooks to the top of the cliff. Due to the ropes getting wet only one rope, on average, was successfully shot to the top from each LCA.
5. Due to the cratering of the beach from pre-assault fires and poor traction on the shale, the DUKWs were not able to get onto the beach and deploy their extension ladders.
6. The Rangers experienced further difficulties in scaling the cliffs. The wet ropes were harder to climb. Pre-assault fires damaged the cliff face and piled wet clay and other debris into a loose mounds 10 to 12M high along the base.
7. However, the damages done to the landing area also helped in the assault. Craters on the exposed beach provided cover and the mounds of debris lessened the height of the climb.
8. The nine LCA's touched down on a front of about 500 meters, the right-hand craft just under the tip of Pointe du Hoe, and the others spaced fairly evenly.
9. No great distance separated the boat teams, but according to plan they went into action as separate units – not as platoons or companies, each facing its particular problems of escalade and opposition with little knowledge of what was happening on their flanks.
10. **VSR: IAW the discussion show the movement of the men from LCA 861 (Red Pennant) to the OP Bunker.** 1st Lt. Theodore Lapres had to use hand rockets to grapple the cliff.
	1. Pfc. Harry W. Roberts started up the rope against the 80-degree slope. He made about 8M; the rope slipped or was cut, and Roberts slithered down. The second rocket was fired and the grapnel caught. Roberts went up again, made the top and pulled into a cratered niche just under the edge. As he arrived, the rope was cut again, marooning Roberts.
	2. However, Lt Lapres’ men climbed a 6M mound of clay knocked off the cliff and threw a rope to Roberts. Lapres and 4 other men made a quick assent. Without waiting for further arrivals, the six Rangers started for their objective, the heavily constructed OP at the north tip of the fortified area. **About 10 mins** had elapsed since touchdown.
		1. **VSR: Move up close to the OP’s observation slit.** Here on the seaward side, Lt. Lapre’s men attack with grenades and a bazooka – successfully silencing MG fire from the bunkers forward observation slit.
		2. **VSR: Move into the OP bunker at show the view to the east and west through the slit**. This OP bunker was responsible for directing the fire of the German artillery at Pointe du Hoc. Its neutralization was the primary mission of E/2d Rangers.
		3. **VSR: Swing around to the south side (outside) of the OP with visibility onto the entrance.** Two other small groups from E Co. attacked the OP’s East Flank and south side. At first, none of the groups were aware of the other's presence.
		4. None of the groups could force their way into the OP bunker and the decision was made to contain the position by posting guards on the entrance and move to their other objective to neutralized gun pit #3 –more on this later. **On the afternoon of D+1**, 8 Germans surrendered the OP to the Rangers.
11. **VSR: Move to LCA 888 (American Flag):** None of the 888’s rockets reached the cliff top. The E Co. men used the large spoil to emplace a light extension ladder. **Within 15 minutes**, the E Co group was up the cliff. **At 0725,** LTC Rudder, after setting up the CP in a small cave, sent the code word for **“men up the cliff.”** The message was acknowledged by an unknown source, but it never relayed to Ranger Force C.[[22]](#endnote-22) Nevertheless, it was the Rangers first and last successful transmission for the morning.
12. **VSR: Move to LCA 887 (Yellow Pennant):** Sgt. William L. Petty, nicked named L-Rod, fell into a water-filled crater and ruined all of his hoarded tobacco.
	1. Just getting to the ropes was difficult. Running and walking on the beach was described as **“…trying to gain traction on a deep pile of roller bearings.”[[23]](#endnote-23)**
	2. L-Rod started up one of the ropes, got 10M up, and then slid back down the wet rope.
	3. At the bottom the BN Surgeon, Cpt Walter Block, yelled at L-Rod to quit fooling around and get up the rope. L-Rod yelled back, **“Go the hell captain…what does it look like I’m trying to do? You do your damn job and I’ll do mine.”** Later that morning, L-Rod apologized to the doctor. He stated it was **“…not a good policy for a combat man to out of favor with the battalion surgeon.”[[24]](#endnote-24)**
13. **VSR: Move to the Tobruk MG position on the east flank of the beach. The German view of the landing.** Within 15 mins most of the Rangers were on top of the cliff. Casualties on the beach totaled about 15, some from enfilading machine gun fire emanating from the eastern flank of the beach.
	1. **From this position,** a German gunner wounded several men as the boats approached the beach. One was Pfc. John J. Sillman **in LCA 722** (the 6th LCA to the front). He was wounded three times as the craft came in and twice on the beach; amazingly he survived.
	2. Several others were hit trying to cross the beach.
	3. LTC Thomas Trevor a British Commando Liaison officer with the Rangers was wounded on the beach.[[25]](#endnote-25)
		1. He walked along the beach encouraging the Rangers and was grazed in the head by a German bullet**.**
		2. After having his wound treated he returned to moving among the Rangers and offering encouragement.
		3. He then took charge of moving supplies up the cliff.
	4. **Later in the morning** , the Shore Fire-control Party directed the USS Satterlee’s fire unto the MG and silenced it. During the engagement, the destroyer closed to within 180M of the shore and literally blew the tobruk off the side of the cliff.[[26]](#endnote-26)
14. **At 0745,** when Rudder sent the message **PRAISE THE LORD ("all men up cliff")** there was no response.
15. **LTC Max Schneider’s Ranger Force C** (5th Battalion and Co’s A and B of the 2d) had waited off shore for the signal of success. However, as a result of Rudder’s force landing 38 minutes late, Schneider assumed that the mission had failed and went ashore **at 0745** with the 116th RCT at Omaha Beach. Rudder’s three small companies were on their own.

**Analysis:**

1. JP 3-02, Amphibious Operations (Jan 2019) states, “All ship-to-shore movement is controlled by the Commander Amphibious Task Force.” (pg. VI-10). The doctrine was similar in 1944. The British crews of the LCAs reported to the commander of ML 304. LTC Rudder had no authority to overrule the commander of ML 304 who had responsibility to guide the assault group to the Pointe. Additionally, no Ranger officer or NCO had authority over the British coxswains (E4 to E6 equivalent) in command of the LCAs. **Evaluate LTC Rudder’s decision to redirect the course of the assault group to the west. Additionally consider how the months of training with their assigned LCA crews may have influenced the situation.**
2. JP 3-02 states, “Naval Surface Fire Support is used to destroy or neutralize enemy defense installations that could prevent the landing…” The JP goes on to say, “The major portion of the fires delivered in close support of the landings consists of prearranged fires delivered on a closely fixed schedule…” (pg. VI-13). **Analyze the effectiveness of the prearranged and unscheduled fires in the battle for the Pointe.**

**STAND 3**

**The Guns of Pointe du Hoc**

**Orientation:**  **VSR: Take up a position on the west side of the East AA in a crater looking SW.**

1. Currently located at the East AA Position. The antiaircraft gun at this position had been knocked out during the bombing or bombardment.
2. The bomb and shell holes in this area provided good cover for the rangers coming up the cliff to regroup and prepare to move toward their objectives.

**Visuals:**

* **3A: Faux Guns**
* **3B: The Gus of Pointe du Hoc**

**Description:**

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| **VISUAL 3A: Faux Guns: TBD** [CMH PUB 100-14] Other details as noted. **NOTE: North is at the bottom of the visual. Note: Point out that North is at the bottom of the map and looking to the south in the VSR.** |

1. **VSR: Look toward the Pointe and the OP:** At the Pointe, some of the E Co. Rangers used the distinctive terrain of the Pointe and easily recognized OP to orient their maneuvers.
	1. **VSR: Shift the view to SW.** However, the majority of the Rangers, once they made it to the top, found themselves in a bewildering wasteland of ground literally torn to pieces. They had studied maps and terrain models for weeks. However, the expected landmarks were gone; craters and mounds of wreckage were everywhere. Lt George Kerchner (D Co.) recalled, **“As I got over the top of the cliff, it didn’t look anything at all like what I thought it was going to look like. It was just one large shell crater after the other.**”[[27]](#endnote-27)
	2. Using the craters as cover, groups of Rangers maneuvered their way to their assigned gun emplacements and casemates. In the move, the Rangers experienced sniper fire that caused numerous casualties. These included, Cpt. Sammy Buagh’s (E. Co Commander) right hand was mangled, Pvt. Sheldon Bare hit in the shoulder, and numerous others.[[28]](#endnote-28)
2. **[Use the zoom function to focus of Lomell’s route]** 1st Sgt Lomell’s (LCA 668, D Co.) experience mirrored that of the estimated 9 small groups[[29]](#endnote-29) of Rangers that maneuvered toward their assigned objectives.[[30]](#endnote-30)
	1. **VSR: Move west following the Yellow 55 gal. drums. Pause between at GPs # 2 and #3**. He left the cliff top with 22 men and moved toward Gun Position #4. His group most likely passed by pit #2 or #3. However, he makes no mention of the positions because they were not his objective. He did pause near #3 to render basic medical care to Cpt. Buagh (E Co).
	2. **VSR: Continue to the west to Casemate #4 and then pass around to SE side (the front of the casemate).** He then continued on to Casemate #4. He arrived at #4 with about ½ his men.
		1. Most of the losses were not casualties, instead small groups had become separated in the confusing terrain or men who had deviated to the flanks to overcome opposition.

* + 1. At #4, they found a faux gun made of wood. Ranger Sigurd Sundby, was unsure of the wires used to construct the fake gun and true to his training decided, **“Well, I better cut them, just in case.”**
	1. **VSR: Move to #5 and #6 again following the Yellow Drums.** Lomell’s group continued on to a large personnel bunker and GP #5 – again there was only a fake gun. He continued to GP #6 and again found a fake gun, and he thought, **“Jesus Christ, there’s no guns here. They gotta be somewhere.”**
1. **VSR: Shift to the West AA Position and point out Casemates #4 and #5.** Throughout the Lomell’s maneuvers, the German 37mm AA gun at the western AA gun position fired on the Rangers and proved to be one of the most troublesome position in the fortification area.
2. **VSR: Rise up and move to crater just north of the Farm #1 (marked with Orange Maple Tree).** After examining the gun positions, parts of D and E companies converged on the ruins of the Guelinel Farm (Farm #1). The Rangers secondary mission was block the Coastal Highway and protect the flank of the Omaha Beachhead.[[31]](#endnote-31) Additionally, the Ranger were determined to find the guns.
	1. At the farm, the Rangers encountered substantial amount of small arms fire and occasional mortar fire. The farm was near the entrance to the strongpoint and many of the German defenders had gathered along the perimeter to defend the Pointe from a landward attack and were in the process of regrouping. 1st Sgt Lomell remembered that some of the Germans were looking for their weapons as they were putting on their uniforms.[[32]](#endnote-32)
	2. The fighting was not well organized on either side. The Germans were unprepared for an attack from the sea. The Rangers, moving in small patrols, were focused not fighting the Germans or seizing the farm, but in bypassing the farm and continuing their movement to the south. Additionally, the cratered landscape made it difficult for either side to see any distance.
	3. **VSR: Look to the rear.** Additionally, naval gunfire onto the fortification area motivated the Rangers to continue their move to the south. They could not stop the naval fires due to the lack of radio communication between the Ranger CP and the forward Ranger Teams.
	4. The Rangers moved south along the north-south access road toward the coastal highway.
	5. **VSR: Move past the farm on the access road to then hold at the second farm.** The Rangers suffered about a dozen casualties moving past Guelinel Farm and in the movement to farm #2 a little further to the south.
3. **VSR: Rise up and look to east (left) at F Co. maneuvers.** Meanwhile, elements of F Co. (LCA 883) landed outside the WN 75 perimeter and decided to move directly toward the coastal highway.

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| **VISUAL 3B: The Guns of Pointe du Hoc** [CMH PUB 100-14] Other details as noted. **Note: the visual is now orientated with north at the top. [Point out that North is back to the top]** |

1. **VSR: Pass the 2d farm move to the ditch marked with red bush.** Once outside the strongpoint, the amount of German small-arms fire and artillery significantly lightened. In some cases Ranger Patrols passed within earshot of German patrols, with neither side actually encountering the other. Near Farm #3, 1st Sgt Lomell hid in a ditch and avoided a German platoon marching past him to the south, **“Three men against 35 was stupid, and it would ruin our mission. So we let them pass.”[[33]](#endnote-33)**
2. **VSR: Move to the intersection with the Coastal Road.** **At 0815,** about an hour after the landing, approximately 35 Rangers (D and E Cos) reached the coastal road.
3. **VSR: Rise up and look E toward the Church (Large Red Tree).** 12 Rangers from F Co. had landed outside the strongpoint and then moved due south skirting the strongpoint’s mine field. Past the church and then west of the coastal highway.
	1. **VSR: Point out Au Gay.** At Au Gay, they subdued a small group of Germans that were eager to surrender.
	2. Shortly thereafter the F Co. group linked up with D and E company.
4. **VSR: From the intersection continue to look east. Omaha Beach is about 4K to the east.**
	1. The Rangers on the coastal road needed to protect the flank of the Omaha Beachhead.
	2. **VSR: Look south and then west**. IAW that mission they established blocking positions against German attacks from the south and west.
	3. They established no block to the east because they believed Ranger Force C and the 116th RCT would arrive momentarily form Omaha Beach.
5. **VSR: Move down the road to the west. In the kubelwagen turn left and follow the path to the guns.** With the blocks established, both D and E companies sent patrols to reconnoiter the area and look for the guns.
	1. One of those patrols was 1st Sgt Lomell and Sgt Jach Kuhn (D Co.), who moved forward of their outpost and down a path running south between two parallel hedgerows.
	2. **About 0800** and approximately 230M from the road, they found five of the German guns. The guns were in a battery with ammunition, nearby crew tents, and pointing west toward Utah Beach.
	3. **VSR: Move to the 2d gun and look the west.** Amazingly, the guns were unguarded and unmanned, but appeared to be ready for action.
	4. Lomell jammed the traverse mechanisms on two guns using thermite grenades. He then smashed the gun sights on the other guns.
	5. All that time, Sgt Kuhn over-watched about 75 Germans assembling several hundred meters away in the corner of a field. Lumell recalled, **“The Germans were in various stages of undress. They were putting jackets and shirts on; they were being rallied by an officer standing in his vehicle.”**[[34]](#endnote-34).
	6. After damaging the guns, Lomell and Kuhn returned to the D Co. outpost to get more thermite grenades.
6. **VSR: Rise up and look to the east. IAW the discussion point out yellow trees that mark Sgt. Rupinski’s route.** In the meantime, Sgt. Frank Rupinski (E. Co) led another patrol to look for the guns.
	1. **VSR: Go to the ground in the vicinity of the farmers shed about 250M to the east and then follow the hedge row back to the west to sixth gun (IAW the photo).** His patrol came into this area from the east and he found the sixth gun that 1st Sgt Lomell had missed. This gun was inoperative and waiting for replacement parts.
	2. **VSR: Cross through the hedge row to the south side of the 6th gun and then continue west to the other guns.** Rupinsk found the guns shortly after Lomell’s departure. Rupinski’s men placed a thermite grenade in all six gun tubes. They also removed all the gun sites and threw them away. Before departing, they looted the nearby tents grabbing a camera and a number of German grenades.[[35]](#endnote-35) The patrol then blew up the main cache of propellant charges. Soon after that, Lomell returned with more men, but on seeing the work of E Co, headed back to their blocking position.
7. **VSR: Rise up in the air and look back at the Pointe.**  Both companies sent runners back to inform Rudder that the guns had been neutralized.

**Analysis:**

1. ADP 3-90, Offense and Defense (July 2019) states, “Commanders understand, visualize, describe…” the terrain in the planning process and direct.” (pg 3-7) and FM 3-90-1, Offense and Defense (March 2013) emphasizes, “… the commander and subordinate leaders focus on the routes, formations, and navigational aids they will use to traverse the ground from the LD or PD to the objective.” (pg 3-5). The Rangers demonstrated a good understanding of these principals in their planning and preparation for the assault. **Evaluate how the heavy pre-bombardment of the objection created unforeseen challenges in the execution of the mission and how the Rangers overcame those challenges.**
2. FM 3-0, Operation (Oct 2017) states, “Throughout operations, commanders encourage disciplined initiative through a clear commander’s intent while providing enough direction to integrate and synchronize the force at the decisive place and time (pg. 2-23).” **Evaluate the Ranger’s use of small teams Vs. organized squads or platoons to search for the guns and move inland to block the coastal highway.**

 **STAND 4**

**German Counterattacks at the Pointe**

**Orientation:**  **VSR: Take position in the shell holes on the north side of the East AA Position. The cliff top Ranger CP. IAW the orientation below look at the areas discussed.**

1. **At 0745,** LTC Rudder moved his command element from the beach to this location and established his CP in the bomb craters next to the eastern flak bunker.[[36]](#endnote-36) From this position LTC Rudder could look -
	1. **NW** toward the Pointe and the German observation bunker about 260M distance.
	2. **SW** into the interior of the German strongpoint.
	3. **SE** towards farms and villages along the coastal highway about 1200M distance (not on the visual).
2. **To the N**, he could maintain blinker light communication with the naval ships off the Pointe**.**

**Visuals:**

1. **4A: Securing the Pointe**
2. **4B: German Counterattacks**

**Description:**

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| **VISUAL 4A: Securing the Pointe** [CMH PUB 100-14, 24-26, 34-39, 43-45] Other details as noted.  |

1. While the Ranger forward elements blocked the coastal highway, another group of about 100 Rangers attempted to secure the Pointe (about 2/3 of F Co and elements of both D and E Co.) Initially, the German resistance was not organized. However, there were several resistance points on along the outside edge of the strongpoint.[[37]](#endnote-37)
	1. **VSR: Rise up and look east at the machine-gun position (marked with truck).** One troublesome resistant point was to the east. on the cliffs about 1,400M to the east outside the strongpoint where the Germans had set up a MG.
	2. **VSR: Look SW:** Also within the strongpoint a number of German soldiers were digging themselves out of their bunkers and trenches that had been buried in the pre-dawn bombing and were now harassing the Rangers.
	3. **VSR: Rise and look west at the western Flak bunker**. The German West AA position continued to harass the Rangers.
2. **At 0745,** from his new CP, Rudder made the decision to not move the remainder of the battalion (-) to the coastal highway and directed CPT Otto Masny (F Co.) to take charge of securing the battery area.
3. **VSR: Rise up and look at the western flak bunker.** At the CP the Navy fire-control party called in an airstrike on the western flak bunker. A P-47 FB almost attacked the Ranger CP, but the Rangers waved them off with an American Flag and radio calls.
4. The Rangers made two attempts to seize the West AA Position and sustained several casualties.
	1. **VSR: Fly to to Gun Pit (GP) #6 and then move on the ground slightly to the trench marked with Green 55 Gal. Drum. About 0830**, the **first attempt** was made. Eleven rangers maneuvered west from Gun Pit #6.
		1. The group was bombarded with mortars and artillery fire, and soon after that overrun by a German counterattack. The Germans came from the flak bunker and from the surrounding maze of trenches and shell craters.
		2. Only one Ranger returned and it is believed all the others were captured. Their weapons were later found in a pile.
	2. **VSR: Rise up slightly and look toward the area of attempt #2. Late morning**, CPT Masny made **another attempt.** He left the CP area with 8 men and moved south along the exit road and then west along a hedgerow lane.
		1. In route he picked up several more men including a mortar team from E Co and a LMG team from one of the DUKWs.
		2. About 100M west of the exit road they got into a serious firefight with Germans to the south and at the flak bunker – losing two Rangers killed.
		3. The Germans then hit them with artillery or mortar fire. The fire killed four men and wounded several others including Mansy.
		4. Mansy ordered a retreat and lost 2 more men killed getting back to the CP.
	3. **VSR: Fly back to the Ranger CP.** It was the last effort to take the position. The two attempts had cost at least 20 causalities. Rudder then switched to naval fire that was only partially successful in suppressing the flak bunker which would continue to hamper movement until D+2.
5. **VSR: Rise up and point out the Ranger defensive line IAW the discussion below.** The Rangers at the Pointe transitioned to the defense.
	1. The defensive went from the vicinity of the **OP**.
	2. To **GP #5** then over to **GP #1.**
	3. Then continue on to the vicinity of the once troublesome **Tobruk position on the cliff.**
	4. Rudder and Masny also dispatched several small patrols (about a dozen men each) to scout and clear out isolated pockets of German troops within the perimeter.[[38]](#endnote-38)
	5. The Rangers sustained numerous casualties in numerous small skirmishes. **At 1000,** Rudder, was wounded in the thigh, but remained in the fight.
6. **At about 1100** and after receiving word that the guns had been located and destroyed,Rudder’s CP sent a message by signal lamp, and pigeon - **“Located Pointe du Hoc-mission accomplished-need ammunition and reinforcement-many casualties.”**
	1. V Corps was decisively engaged at Omaha Beach, and LTC Rudder’s decision to personally lead Ranger Force A now had serious consequences.
		1. He appointed no one to take his place on the command ship to oversee the direct interest of the Ranger Group and no direct action was taken on the message.[[39]](#endnote-39)
		2. The V Corps had much bigger challenges with the Omaha Beach Landings than the concerns of 3 small ranger companies at Pointe du Hoc.
7. **VSR: Look out to sea.** The Navy destroyers and their command had fair situational awareness of the situation at the Pointe and it appears that they tried to press the issue with V Corps and at **approximately 1300** notified LTC Rudder, **“No reinforcement’s available-all rangers have landed.”[[40]](#endnote-40)** Amazingly, the pigeon did arrive in Allied HQ in the UK with the **“mission accomplished”** message.
	1. The commander of the TEXAS considered sending his USMC detachment (86 men) to reinforce the Rangers. However, he was told to stand down and specifically told that the marines could not ride shotgun on the LVCPs that would attempt to take supplies to the Pointe on the 7th.[[41]](#endnote-41) **[the historical record is not clear on who ordered the stand down]**
	2. The Navy did try to send a whaleboat towing rubber rafts to the Pointe to evacuate the seriously wounded but it was driven back by German MG and AA fire.
8. **VSR: Look toward GP #4. Later in the morning, LTC Rudder was wounded again. One of his men had repaired a German radio in GP #4. Rudder and part of his command group went to the bunker to use the radio.[[42]](#endnote-42)**
	1. However, I 6” shell from the HMS Glasgow fell short and hit the bunker.
	2. The shell killed the Army Artillery Observer (Captain Harwood) and Rudder’s radio man. It also wounded the Naval Fire observer (Lt Norton) and LTC Rudder (2d wound).

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| **VISUAL 4B: German Counterattacks** [CMH PUB 100-14, 24-26, 34-39, 43-45] Other details as noted.  |

1. **Initial German Counterattack at mid-day** was not a major effort. The *352d IN DIV* was aware of the attack at the Pointe. However, due to the troubling events at Omaha the news was not a priority. Only the assault platoon of *726th Grenadiers* was sent to counterattack what they believed to be a small commando element.[[43]](#endnote-43)
	1. **VSR: Rise up from the CP and look toward the Church at St. Pierre du Mont. Early** **afternoon,** the German platoon advanced out of St. Pierri-du-Mont against the Ranger’s eastern flank. The attack was supported by artillery, but most of it fell long, landing in the sea.
	2. **VSR: Look to the SE. The MG position is right of the large Red Tree.** It was an hour long fight, with the Germans setting up a machine gun in a hedgerow south of the Rangers’ position. The Rangers beat back the German with mostly with small arms.
2. **VSR: Fly to interior GP #4 and look SW. By late afternoon**, the Germans were ready to make more serious attack against the Rangers’ western flank. The *352d ID* deployed elements of the *III/GR. 726* and *I/GR. 914* to the Pointe.
	1. Although the history is not definitive, it appears that the *III/GR. 726* maneuvered against the Pointe and *I/GR. 914* operated against the Coastal Road.
	2. **At 1600,** elements of 12/III/GR. 726 attacked the Ranger’s west flank.[[44]](#endnote-44) On this wing the Rangers had only a couple of BAR teams and a mortar. (The 12th Company is the battalion’s Heavy Company/Weapons Company – See readings Appendix A for additional details).
	3. The first group Germans (about plt strength)[[45]](#endnote-45) approached along the edge of the cliff and was dispersed by a well-aimed BAR fire and mortar fire that killed several attackers and forced the others to withdraw.
	4. **VSR: Rise up above GP #4 and look at the farms and access road.** Another group (also plt strength)[[46]](#endnote-46) moved north along the exit road and closed to about 50M from gun pit #1. Again BAR fire stalled the attack and forced the others into a short withdrawal.
	5. After the failure of the second attack, the *III/GR. 726* were content to contain the Rangers through the remainder of the day.
3. Naval supporting fire was crucial to the successful defense. By 1723 the *Satterlee* had expended 70 percent (the prescribed maximum) of her ammunition, having fired 164 salvos, plus six minutes of fire for effect, in support of the Rangers since H Hour. The Baton and *Thompson* moved in near the Point to relieve the *Satterlee*, and before dark the NSFCP transmitted data for night fire on road junctions and other targets.[[47]](#footnote-1)

1. **VSR: Rise up and look toward the Coastal Highway and Access Rd intersection.** While the fighting against German counterattacks persisted at the Pointe, on the coastal highway the main action was vigorous patrolling to the west and south

**Analysis:** FM 3-90-1, Offense and Defense (March 2013) states, “A transition occurs when a commander makes the assessment that units must change their focus from one element of decisive action to another.” LTC Rudder’s mission was to secure the Pointe, neutralize the guns, and block the coastal highway. **Analyze his decision to not move the remainder of the Rangers to the coastal highway, but to hold them at the Pointe and secure the area. Consider:**

* 1. **How did the message from the Navy, “No reinforcement’s available.” Influence the decision?**
	2. **How effective was the Ranger defense and how did the German reaction contribute to the Ranger success?**

**STAND 5**

**Actions on the Coastal Highway**

**Orientation: VSR: Take up a low hover position above the intersections of the access road and the coastal highway looking north.**

1. Currently located at the intersection of the access road and the coastal highway.
2. The Pointe is about 1000 meters to the north.
3. **VSR: Look to the east.** Omaha Beach is about 4000 meters to the east.
4. **VSR: Look to the W and SW. By noon** there were over 60 Rangers from all 3 companies in this area - throughout the morning, small parties of Rangers had drifted in to join their platoons here on the coastal highway.
5. Their mission was to block enemy reinforcements from moving towards Omaha Beach.

**Visuals:**

1. **5A: Actions on the Coastal Highway**
2. **5B: German Attacks**

**Description:**

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| **VISUAL 5A: Actions on the Coastal Highway** [CMH PUB 100-14] Other details as noted.  |

1. As stated in the last stand - while the fighting against German counterattacks persisted at the Pointe, on the coastal highway the main action was vigorous patrolling to the west and south.
	1. The patrols found no organized forces and a number of Germans straggled into the Rangers' positions from the seaward side and were captured.
	2. **VSR. Look to the south.** Altogether, about 40 prisoners were taken in by Ranger patrols and outposts, to be grouped under guard in the field to the south **–marked with a German Truck.**
2. **VSR: Fly over the POW Field Truck and continue south to the second hedgerow to Sgt Petty’s Outpost- Marked with a wagon.** Sgt Petty’s 10 man (F Co.) outpost was situated to watch the east/west valley to the south and the small bridge to the SW.
	1. Throughout the day small groups of enemy came into easy range, moving west along the country road toward Grandcamp. Perhaps fleeing from the Omaha area.
	2. The outpost estimated that they inflicted about 30 casualties during the afternoon.
3. **VSR: Assume a low hover and look toward west and then NW to the chateau. Late in the day**, other Ranger outposts and patrols noticed that the Germans were regrouping at the farm complex west of Sgt. Petty’s position and the Chateau De M. Le Baron and.
4. **VSR: Fly to the D Co. blocking position near the Kublewagen. About 1600 (the same time as the German counterattack at the Pointe),** Sergeant Lomell, at the D Co. position happened to glance over the stone wall edging the highway and saw a well-organized force of about 50 men with two machine-gun sections and a mortar.
	1. The Germans were coming through an orchard from the direction of the Pointe. Lomell had only 20 men and no time to organize an ambush, and he decided to let them pass.
	2. The Germans moved to within about 30 feet from the wall and then turned westward and moved parallel to the highway beyond the roadblock position, then south across the blacktop and out of sight.
5. Naval supporting fire directed by spotter planes engaged German concentrations near the farms. Occasionally rounds fell uncomfortably close – but caused only one casualty among the Rangers – actually at missed dropped paratrooper that had attached himself to the Rangers.
6. **VSR: Rise up and look east down the Coastal Highway. About 2100,** still two hours before dark, 1Lt Charles Parker (commander A/5th Ranger BN) and Lt. Zeplepsky and party of 22 men from A/5th Ranger BN came into the Ranger lines from the east.
	1. Parker's group became separated from the 5th Ranger BN at Omaha and made its way south to Pointe-Du-Hoc IAW its original orders.
	2. Parker was surprised to learn that the 5th Rangers had not arrived, but was sure they must be close behind him. A patrol was sent in at once to Colonel Rudder with this heartening news.
	3. Parker's men stayed with the forward group at the highway as they prepared their night defenses.

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| **VISUAL 5B: German Attacks** [CMH PUB 100-14] Other details as noted.  |

1. **VSR assume the low hover above the truck in the center of the POW field looking initially to the south, then look IAW the directions below. By late early evening**, the Rangers on the Coastal Road number about 85 men. They occupied an L-shaped line 650M long behind hedgerows oriented primarily to the west and south.
	1. During the day, the D, E, and F parties had cooperated on a more or less informal basis, with coordination secured by consultation of the four officers, Lieutenants Kerchner (D), Leagans and Lapres (E), and Arman (F). Lieutenant Arman was the senior officer (2d Rangers) at hand and seems to have made the decisions. However, he did not consider himself in command in any formal sense.
	2. D Co. along the west hedgerow oriented to the west. They also had small Ops to the front along the coastal highway and another west of “the angle.”
	3. E Co. was along the south hedgerow from “the angle” to the vicinity of the farm shed. They had an OP south of “the angle.”
	4. The F Co. men occupied the hedgerow from the vicinity of farm shed. The 5th Rangers were reinforced the F Co Rangers .
	5. Sgt Petty’s (F Co.) maintained the forward outpost about 180M to the front of the main defensive line.
	6. Despite the full moon, observation to the south was poor because several orchards blocking the view.
2. **VSR: Move up to the Ranger Forward CP.** LT Arman (F Co.) established command post in an abandoned German bunker on the east side of the line. However, he had no telephones, radios, or runners to exercise command over the other Lieutenants. Additionally, the Lts made the decision to put all their men on the line and did not constitute a reserve.
3. **VSR: Rise up and look back toward the Pointe. Duri**ng **daylight hours (0600 to 2200),** supporting fire from the destroyers off shore was critical to the Ranger defense.
	1. Amazingly, the Rangers had no radio to coordinate the fire with the Navy. They had to send a patrol back to the Ranger CP at the cliffs with the fire support request – about 1000 meters to the rear. [Lt. Lapres (E/2) served as an LNO and made several trips between the highway and the Pointe).
	2. There was no way to adjust the fire other than to send another patrol back with the changes.
	3. **VSR: Look toward west toward Chateau de M. la Baron. At 1950hrs**, the USS Thompson fired on concentration of troops from the *I/GR. 914* around the Chateau de M. la Baron. The Thompson’s first salvo hit the chateau and forced the German company concentrating there to wait till dark to stage their attack.
	4. **Shortly before nightfall (2200),** the Rangers coordinated another naval strike against seven targets to the west and south of their perimeter.
4. **VSR: Move to the angle and look SW into the orchard. About 2330** – 30mins after sunset, elements of the *I/GR. 914 (3d and 4th Company)[[48]](#footnote-2)* initiated its attack against the Rangers.[[49]](#endnote-47)
	1. The Germans were able to infiltrate through the orchard almost to the edge of the Ranger defensive line near “the angle” without being discovered.
	2. The fight was a confused and short-range skirmish that lasted only a few minutes. The Germans backed off after a significant powder explosion occurred at the abandoned battery positions that disrupted their assault.
5. **VSR: Same as before. At 0100**, *I/GR. 914* commenced the second attack. Again, the Germans were able to close to within 50 meters of the Ranger line before they were detected.
	1. The assault hit E Co., slightly to the east of the first attack and succeeded in pushing into “the angle.” Most of the D Co. Rangers at the “Angle” picked up their wounded and retreated to the north. Fortunately for the Rangers the Germans did not exploit their success at “The Angle.”
	2. On the east side of the line, Lt Arman at the command post had no communication with Companies D & E and was unaware that Germans had seized the angle..
6. **VSR: Move east along the hedgerow to just to the west of the farm shed and look SW into the orchard. (PPT build for this attack). At 0300hrs,** the *I/GR. 914* executed a third attack.
	1. The Germans broke through the E Co. positions to the east of the “angle,” and soon after that poured enfilade fire along the inside of the hedgerow line.
	2. About 20 E Company Rangers near the German breakthrough were captured.
7. **VSR: Rise up and look north toward the Pointe. (PPT build for this withdrawal).**  Lt Arman directed the Rangers from Co F and the 5th Rangers near the command post to withdraw back to the Ranger positions at the Pointe.
	1. Lt Arman’s F Co. group with a few men from Companies E and F headed back to the Pointe along the access road. The 5th Ranger Platoon infiltrated back in small groups.
	2. About a dozen Rangers from D Co. and a few from E Co. remained hidden in the hedgerows. Most these remained hidden until the relief force came up from Omaha Beach on D+8.
8. **Shortly after 0400**, about 50 men got back to the Pointe and joined the defensive line. Lt. Arman told Colonel Rudder that the rest of the force had been destroyed.

**Analysis:**

1. FM 3-0’s (Oct 2017) discussion of “Command Post Organization and Employment Considerations” is focused on a larger organization that is staffed, equipped and organized to control operations. However the principal of “personnel, equipment, and facilities arranged to facilitate coordination, exchange of information, and rapid decision making (pg. 2-38) are applicable. **Evaluate the effectiveness of Lt Arman’s (F Co.) and the command post.** (Note: the CP had no telephones, radios, or use runners to communicate with the three platoons and there was no reserve).
2. Earlier in the staff ride we notedFM 3-0, Operation (Oct 2017) emphasis on commanders encourage disciplined initiative. (pg. 2-23) Evaluate **the strengths and weaknesses of the Rangers to operate as small teams in lieu of organic platoons and companies.**

**STAND 6**

**Point du Hoc – The Relief**

**Orientation:**  **VSR: Remain at the Ranger CP.** We are back at the Ranger CP. From here Rudder could -

1. **Look to the N**, and maintain blinker light communication with the naval ships off the Pointe**.**
2. **SW** is the interior of the German strongpoint where is Rangers established a defensive perimeter to hold the Pointe – more on this soon.
3. **And SE,** about 1200m to the farms and villages along the coastal highway where he anticipated a relief force from Omaha Beach coming to his rescue.

**Visuals:**

1. **6A: The Crazy March.**
2. **6B: The Relief.**

**Description:**

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| **VISUAL 6A: The Crazy March – 7 June** [**CMH Pub 100**-11, Omaha Beachhead, 126] Other details as noted.  |

1. **The morning of 7 June**, the force on the Point numbered 90 to 100 men available for action, many of them with light wounds. They had no food, their ammunition supply was short, they had only the machineguns from the damaged LCAs and DUKWs, and only two 60mm mortars remained in action.
	1. **VSR: Point out the area discussed below.** The Rangers were pinned on a strip about 650M wide and little more than 100M deep.
	2. Within the perimeter were many of the wrecked enemy fortifications. Snipers were still appearing inside this area, and enemy movements indicating preparation for attack could be seen close by.
	3. LTC Rudder’s communications were limited to occasional contact with the supporting destroyers.
2. Naval fire support was the Rangers' main defense and was called on heavily to shell suspected assembly areas. Throughout the day the Rangers skirmished with the Germans and their two mortars which fired 300 rounds.
3. Rudder was unaware that a relief force was very near and was battling to reach them. The horrendous casualties suffered by the 116th RCT at Omaha and repeated German counterattacks delayed the start of the relief effort till the **morning (0745)[[50]](#endnote-48) of 7 June** (D+1).
	1. The relief column consisted of:[[51]](#endnote-49)
		1. 1/116th Infantry
		2. Composite Company A, B and C 2d Rangers
		3. C & D Companies 5th Rangers
		4. B Co. 743d Tank Bn (10 tanks)
	2. Most of the 5th Rangers stayed at Vierville to help the 116th Infantry hold the beachhead.
4. **VSR: Fly over to east side of St. Pierr-du-Mont and at a low bird’s eye view look down the coastal highway to the west. About noon**, a relief column reached St-Pierre-du-Mont – our current location.
	1. The Germans referred to the relief effort as the **“Crazy March”** because they ignored and by-passed the strongpoints along the coast.
	2. The relief column believed that the Rangers at the Pointe had been overrun and destroyed. However, the Rangers with the relief were anxious to get to the Pointe and rescue and survivors.
	3. The plan was to push the tanks along the coastal highway to the junction of the access road and then move into the Pointe from the south.
5. **VSR: Fly down to the Chateau Pierre. IAW the discussion rise up and look back to the east. Soon after noon**, the composite company/2d Rangers, forming the column's point arrived at Chateau Pierre.
	1. The Rangers continued on to Au Gay **– point out.**
	2. When the main body of the Relief Force arrived at the chateau a heavy artillery barrage fell along the road fire and the majority of the Relief Column withdrew back to St. Pierre-du-Mont.
6. **VSR: Return to the edge of St. Pierre-du-Mont and look west toward the Chateau.** The column reformed at St-Pierre, but the second attempt push up to Au Gay was again defeated by German artillery fire. Well-directed artillery fire blanketed the highway killing and wounding 30 or 40 men.
7. Throughout the Relief Column’s advance, many of their calls for fire were denied by the Navy.
	1. The relief force believed Rudder’s force had been destroyed. However, the Navy was well aware that Rudder was continuing to fight and would not endanger the Rangers at the Pointe.
	2. However, the information that the Rudder’s men were still fighting never made its way to the relief force.
8. The afternoon ended with the relieving force still in St-Pierre-du-Mont.
9. **VSR: Rise up and look at the Pointe. Also that afternoon**, an Army officer, a former Ranger, serving on Admiral Hall’s staff organized a relief effort for the Rangers. He loaded two LCVP's with food, water, ammunition, and about 30 reinforcements picked up at Omaha Beach. (The reinforcements were a collection of 29th Infantry soldiers and 5th Rangers that had been separated from their unit and milling about on the beach and commandeered by the staff officer).[[52]](#endnote-50)

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| **VISUAL 6B: The Relief – 8 June** [**CMH Pub 100**-11, Omaha Beachhead, 126] Other details as noted.  |

1. **VSR: Continue with the look toward the Pointe. Late night 7 to 8 June,** Ranger patrols from St. Pierre-du-Mont made contact with Rudders beleaguered force. However, this information was not fully disseminated to the entire relief force that Rudder’s Rangers still held the Pointe.
2. **On the morning of 8th June**, the other BNs of the 116th RCT joined the relief force.
3. **VSR: Fly to the access road then up then north up the access road to the vicinity of Farm #2. The go to the ground and drive into the strong point area. About 1015,** the relief force resumed its advance. Again there was significant coordination problems between the Relief Column, Rangers at the Pointe and the Navy. Unfortunately this resulted in at least four friendly fire casualties among Rudder’s men.[[53]](#endnote-51)
4. Naval observation planes had relayed to the BS Texas that the Rangers at the Pointe were being attacked by tanks.
	1. The tanks belong to the relief force which were attacking north along the access road. One group from the relief forces swung NW toward the enemy western flak bunker and another swung NE toward the center of Rudder’s defensive line
	2. Rudder’s men were using a significant number of German weapons. The distinctive sound of the German weapons caused the relief force to fire upon them.

* 1. The Navy asked Rudder if he needed support. Rudder replied **“No”** and the Navy asked **“Are you being hit by friendly fire,”** and Rudder replied **“Yes.”** The Navy acknowledge and stood by for further instructions.
1. **About 1135,** Rudder was able to call-off the U.S tanks and infantry attacking his line and the 116th RCT notified division that they had relieved Rudder’s Rangers at the Pointe. The Battle for Pointe du Hoc was over.

**Analysis:**

1. Joint Publication 3-18, Joint Forcible Entry Operations (May 2017/June 2018) states that the complexity of forcible entry operations increases the potential for friendly fire incidents and demands efforts by all elements of the joint force to deliberately reduce the risk of friendly fire incidents.
	1. **Evaluate LTC Rudder’s decision to take direct command of Ranger Force A despite the concerns of his senior commander that no one was now overlooking the activities of the Ranger Group. Elaborate if that decision contributed to the friendly fire incidents during the relief.**
	2. **Evaluate how and why the naval forces providing Naval Surface Fire Support to both the Rangers at the Pointe and the relief force did not contribute to the friendly fire incidents during the relief.**
2. Some historical studies have stated that the mission at Pointe du Hoc was unnecessary in that Allied planners significantly overestimated the threat the German 155mm guns. **Cornelius** **Ryan** in his highly acclaimed book, The Longest Day – June 6, 1944, stated, **“…it had been a heroic and futile effort –to silence guns which were not there.”[[54]](#endnote-52)** **Evaluate whether the mission was necessary.**
1. **Badsey, Stephen**. Battle Zone Normandy, Omaha Beach, 34-35. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. **Zaloga, Steven,** Rangers Lead the Way, 17-18 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion, 69-70. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.battleorder.org/usa-ranger-bn-ww2>. **U.S. Army Ranger Battalion (1942-4** [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. **CMH Pub 100**-11, CMH Omaha Beachhead, 88 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion,, Map, 82. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.battleorder.org/usa-ranger-bn-ww2>. **U.S. Army Ranger Battalion (1942-45)**

 The Ranger Battalions consisted of a Headquarters and six Ranger Companies. 27 Officers (including 1 attached medical) and 489 Enlisted (including 11 attached medical). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. **Zaloga, Steven,** Ranges Lead the Way, 25-26. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. #####  **CITATION:**

(Citation Needed) - SYNOPSIS: The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Major (Infantry) Cleveland A. Lytle, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving as Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 358th Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry Division, in action against enemy forces on 20 September 1944, in France. Major Lytle rescued two soldiers marooned on the ice breaker of a demolished bridge in the Moselle River while under heavy fire from enemy mortars, small arms, flares, and a fixed machine-gun firing from the bridge. His intrepid actions, personal bravery and zealous devotion to duty exemplify the highest traditions of the military forces of the United States and reflect great credit upon himself, the 90th Infantry Division, and the United States Army. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. **Ryan, Cornelius.** The Longest Day – June 6, 1944, 68 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. **Badsey, Stephen**. Battle Zone Normandy, Omaha Beach, 115. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. **Ambrose, Stephen**. *D-Day*, 406. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. **Zaloga, Steven,** Rangers Lead the Way, 27-29. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. **Ambrose, Stephen**. *D-Day,* 405 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. **O’Donnell, Patrick.** Dog Company, 59. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. **Zaloga, Steven,** Rangers Lead the Way, 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion, Map, 94. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion, 95. **Amborse, Stephen**, D-Day, 406 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion, Map, 97. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. **Ambrose, Stephen**. *D-Day* (Ilustrated edition), 469. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion, Map, 102. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion,110. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion,112 [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. **O’Donnell, Patrick.** Dog Company, 68 & **Black, Robert,** The Battalion,108. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion,104. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion, 109. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. **Ambrose, Stephen**. *D-Day,* 410. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. **O’Donnell, Patrick.** Dog Company, 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. **Zaloga, Steven,** Rangers Lead the Way, 35. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. **O’Donnell, Patrick.** Dog Company, 75; **Ambrose, Stephen**. *D-Day*, 411; & **Harrison, Gordon.** CMH Pub 7-4-1,Cross Channel Attack, 322. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. **Zaloga, Steven,** Rangers Lead the Way, 39. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. **O’Donnell, Patrick.** Dog Company, 80. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. **O’Donnell, Patrick.** Dog Company, 84. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. **O’Donnell, Patrick.** Dog Company, 87 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. **Black, Robert,** The Battalion, Map, 132. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. **Ambrose, Stephen**. *D-Day,*, 412. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. **Zaloga, Steven,** Ranges Lead the Way, 41-42 [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. **Zaloga, Steven.** D-Day 1944, 75. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. **Gawne, Jonathan.** Spearheading D-Day, 210 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. **Ambrose, Stephen**. *D-Day,* 415-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. **Gawne, Jonathan.** Spearheading D-Day, 220 [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. **Zaloga, Steven,** Rangers Lead the Way, 42-43 and **Black, Robert,** The Battalion, 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. **Zaloga, Steven.** D-Day 1944, 79 [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. **Zaloga, Steven,** Ranges Lead the Way, 51. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. **Ibid.** [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. The *Satterlee*, in its report, placed special emphasis on the excellence of its communication with the shore party, and the effectiveness of the system of fire control. The NSFCP had been on board the destroyer and worked with it in several drills and an exercise, before D Day. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
48. The 4th Company is the battalion’s heavy weapons company. See Appendix A of the readings for further detail. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
49. **Zaloga, Steven,** Rangers Lead the Way, 51.33. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
50. Ibid. 55 [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
51. **Zaloga, Steven,** Rangers Lead the Way, 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
52. **CMH Pub 100**-11, CMH Omaha Beachhead, 126 [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
53. **Zaloga, Steven,** Ranges Lead the Way, [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
54. **Ryan,** The Longest Day, 239. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)