

272. While this fighting was going on, the D.D. tanks of "A" Squadron, which were "deflated", remained to seaward of the obstacles and fired from this position. (Supra, para 269) The squadron commander told of one enemy group surrendering in their fortifications because of their dismay at seeing tanks already in action. Unfortunately it is not possible to discover the exact location of this incident. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, June 1944: Appx 5, Report on D.D. Tks by "A" Sqn)

273. On NAN Green Beach, the two assaulting companies of Regina Rif, (Lt-Col F.M. Matheson, O.C.), made their run-in without enemy interference. The code word "Brandy", reported by "A" Coy at 0809 hrs, signified that that company had made its touchdown. (W.D. Regina Rif, June 1944: Appx 3, Message Log, 6 Jun) "B" Company landed a few minutes later. "A" Company's task, the clearance of the strongpoints at the northwest corner of Courseulles, soon developed into a fierce infantry battle. The unit's regimental historian writes of this incident:

Able company ... found the bombardment had not cracked the huge casemate on their sector. This fortress had reinforced concrete walls four feet thick and housed an 88-millimetre gun as well as machine-guns. In addition there were concrete trenches outside the fort liberally sprinkled with small arms posts. It was grim going but eventually they executed a left flanking attack and with the support of tanks succeeded in breaking through the defences.

(Captain Eric Luxton (Editor), 1st Battalion, The Regina Rifle Regiment, 1939-1946 (Regina, 1946), p. 34; see also Interview with Lt-Col F.M. Matheson)

"B" Company, meanwhile, managed "to get through the wire obstacles and closed in on the beach defences in their sector and over-powered them" (Luxton, op cit, p. 34).

274. The first A.V.R.Es. had touched down at 0815 and 0821 hrs on MIKE Sector and NAN Green Beach, respectively (Message Log, H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun 44); this ~~meant~~ added close support for the infantry and the commencement of obstacle clearance. Shortly afterwards a succession of reports told of the arrival of reserve companies. "C" Company of Regina Rif was ashore at 0835 hrs, and companies of R. Wpg Rif slightly later. Battalion headquarters of the latter unit found the beaches and dunes under heavy fire and was pinned there for two hours. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun 44) Leaving the still active beach defences to the assault companies, the remainder of the battalion scrambled over the banks and set out for their objectives inland -- Ste. Croix-sur-Mer and Banville.

By 1030 hrs they had arrived in these villages, overcoming scattered resistance en route. The tanks of 6 Cdn Armd Regt, (Lt-Col F.E. White, O.C.), were skilfully employed to assist in the capture of Ste. Croix. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, June 1944: Appx "Q", Message Log, Serial 122; W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun 44)

275. The attack by Regina Rif against Courseulles was now taking shape. The town had been sub-divided into twelve blocks, to be cleared in order by designated companies, assisted by a squadron of armour. In the words of the commanding officer, "nearly every foot of the town was known long before it was ever entered" (Interview with Lt-Col Matheson, op cit). Block 1 contained the formidable strongpoint engaged by "A" Company. While this clearance was in progress, "D" Company was to be passed through to capture Reviere, some two miles inland. But on the run-in several of that Company's L.C.A. struck and detonated mines 250 yards off shore. Only 49 survivors managed to reach shore, but these few nonetheless assembled and pressed on through the waist-high grain-fields towards Reviere as planned. The leading elements reached the town at about 1100 hrs; by 1215 hrs it was reported by "C" Company, which had followed "D" from Courseulles, that the bridges in Reviere were secured. (Interview with Lt-Col Matheson, op cit; W.D., Regina Rif, 6 Jun 44)

276. The balance of the reserve battalion, 1 C. Scot R., (Lt-Col F.N. Cabeldu, E.D., O.C.), found opposition still alive as its three companies approached the shore. Men from this regiment were in the assaulting waves described below:

At 0827 the three flotillas comprising the flight of LCA's with which Prince Henry's LCA's beached deployed from line ahead and commenced to run in forming up roughly in line abreast. Ahead of them they could see the obstacles coming up through the surf. Beyond were the sandy beaches of Normandy already the scene of a remarkable amount of activity considering that the beach was still under heavy mortar fire from inshore mortar positions and machine gun posts that had escaped the attentions of our bombardment. The awful quiet which had fallen along the beaches just after the bombardment had ended and before the first landing craft touched down was now broken and the noise and smoke added to the apparent confusion. Riding a moderately heavy swell, the LCA's surged in among the obstacles wherever they could find an opening, but, since they had to charge in at full speed, there was very little chance of manoeuvring to avoid obstacles which could only be seen a few feet ahead, and many of the craft were brought to a stop on the prongs of the obstacles.

(R.C.N.'s Part in the Invasion)

"A" and "B" Companies, under mortar fire* on the beach, had to remain there until exits could be prepared through R. Wpg Rif's area. Just beyond the dunes, an A.V.R.E. had sunk far into a crater and troops were clambering over it. Later, protected by the D.D. tanks, assault engineers of 26 Aslt Sqn threw a bridge and then chespaling over it to form a "primitive but usable exit" ((HS)265C7.011(D1): Memorandum of Interview with Brigadier Foster; (HS)693.3013(D1): Royal Engineers Battlefield Tour-Normandy to the Seine (B.A.O.R., 1946), p. 107). Assembling in La Valette, 1 C. Scot R. then followed the leading companies of R. Wpg Rif through Ste. Croix and Banville, dealing with by-passed pockets of enemy resistance and collecting a considerable number of prisoners as they advanced (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 6 Jun 44).

277. Although a false conception of the battle may result, it is perhaps advisable to pause and consider now the general progress of events in the western part of the Canadian sector. Reduction of the beach defences took fully two hours (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun 44), and the beachhead objective "YEW" was secured only by about H plus 4 hrs (Interview with Brigadier Foster). But it must not be forgotten that by this time infantry and armoured groups were already far inland and that substantial progress had been made towards the next objective. More serious even than enemy resistance was the difficulty of clearing obstacles and breaching exits. Owing to rough seas and the lateness of A.V.R.E. and sapper teams generally, the rising tide soon cancelled further removal of offshore obstructions. On land, the preparation of exits was found unexpectedly slow and arduous, especially on MIKE Sector; everywhere snipers harried the sappers striving desperately to clear routes to link with the first lateral. Until that work was done, the beach was "crowded with milling men, tks and recce cars of the Inns of Court Sqn, unable to proceed further inland" (Ibid). By 0900 hrs no exit had as yet been opened on MIKE beaches or on NAN Green.** Armoured support was thus for a time denied to the leading infantry beyond the beaches. Only at 1112 hrs was it reported that one exit was working with difficulty on MIKE Sector; this was later developed into a satisfactory route. (Report by Naval Commander, Force "J")

*Major A.E. Younger, O.C. 26 Aslt Sqn (R.E.) on D Day writes: "...it is worth noting that it was later found that the Germans had set up a battery of eighty 32-cm rockets aimed at the COURSEULLES beaches. The wires to these were cut by the RAF bombing and they were never fired" (Royal Engineers Battlefield Tour-Normandy to the Seine, p. 107).

**Six D.D. Tanks managed to get across the improvised exit mentioned above (supra, para 276) before it gave way. The turret of the A.V.R.E. which had foundered was used as a pier to support a tank-carried bridge. The sunken tank's fascine plus chespaling provided a crossing over the landward side of calvert (Royal Engineers Battlefield Tour-Normandy to the Seine, op cit, p. 107)

278. Everywhere, it was clear, progress was considerably slower than planned. But the situation was not unfavourable and normal conditions of command were quickly being established. The Main Beach Signal Station was reported in operation at 0935 hrs. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 5 Jun 44, Serial 78) The brigade commander therefore landed, and by 1215 hrs brigade headquarters was independently set up in a farmyard near Graye-sur-Mer. It was now purely a land battle for 7 Cdn Inf Bde.

279. (ii) The Assault by 8 Cdn Inf Bde In many ways the experiences of the left assaulting brigade duplicated those of its right-hand neighbor. Shortly before H Hour (now set at 0755 hrs) Group J.2 was ready to go into action. The L.C.T. bearing 19 Cdn Fd Regt (Lt-Col L.G. Clarke, O.C.) had earlier been carried off their proper course, but had made to their appointed station on time. (Interview with Brigadier K.G. Blackader) The A.V.R.E. craft were also present. In the unavoidable confusion of launching, one reserve company of Q.O.R. of C. did not receive word of the postponement until almost too late, "when they were beginning to think they would be assaulting the beach." Luckily, the company was recalled in time. (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 6 Jun 44)

280. At 0725 hrs the L.C.G.(L.) opened fire on the beach defences. They were joined by the S.P. artillery, after a slight delay in transmission of orders, at 0730 hrs. Bernières and St. Aubin were seen to be receiving a terrific pounding although the main points of impact appeared to be somewhat beyond the immediate coast defences. At 0749 hrs the rocket craft fired their salvos, the effect by this time being quite invisible. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun 44) The L.C.A. of the leading infantry were now approaching landfall without opposition; to one observer they looked "like schools of water bugs" (W.D., 19 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun 44). The first A.V.R.E. touched down at 0805 hrs (Report by Naval Commander, Force "J"). The D.D. tanks of 10 Cdn Armd Regt, (Lt-Col R.E.A. Morton, O.C.), which landed 'dryshod', as earlier agreed, were in consequence put ashore behind the leading infantry. (Supra, para 269)

281. The forward companies of Q.O.R. of C., (Lt-Col J.G. Spragge, O.B.E., E.D., O.C.), disembarked on NAN White Beach in front of Bernières, about 15 minutes behind schedule. Mines blew up certain craft on the approach but fortunately caused only a few casualties. "A" Company, landing on the right on the open beaches between Courseulles and Bernières soon made its way to the railway line; "B" Company, charged with the reduction of the strongpoint of Bernières, found it untouched (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 6 Jun). After suffering heavy casualties, the company outflanked the strongpoint, whose occupants surrendered; the reserve companies were soon ashore and consolidating on the southern edge of Bernières, which had

been quickly cleared ((HS)26508.011: Interview with Major J.N. Gordon, Q.O.R. of C.).

282. To the east, the assault companies of N. Shore R., (Lt-Col D.B. Buell, O.C.), were similarly engaged, having landed on NAN Red somewhat earlier (0810 hrs). **This battalion's "B" Company engaged the St. Aubin strongpoint.** The action, as related by the company commander to the division's Historical Officer, is typical of such fighting along the "Juno" beaches, although it continued somewhat longer here than elsewhere. ((HS)145.2N3011(D4): Memorandum of Interview with Major R.B. Forbes, N. Shore R.) The first tanks to arrive were shortly knocked out by the anti-tank gun in the emplacement. Later, a "dustbin" fired by an A.V.R.E. was successful in cracking the concrete and after 45 minutes the strongpoint was contained and its fire against the beach stopped. But not until evening did its last defenders finally give in. "From this troublesome blockhouse 49 prisoners were taken. A search revealed that approximately the same number of enemy had been killed" ((HS) 145.2N3013(D1): Regimental History of the North Shore (NB) Regiment). Meanwhile, the reserve companies had landed, cleared the remainder of St. Aubin and reached Tailleville (Ibid).

283. The reserve battalion, R. de Chaud, (commanded by Lt-Col P. Mathieu, E.D.), came ashore about 0850 hrs. At that time, to quote their regimental history, "L'artillerie et le mortier ennemis tombaient sans arrêt lorsque nos troupes atteignirent la terre" (Major Armand Ross and Major Michel Gauvin, Le Geste du Régiment de la Chaudière (Rotterdam, 1945), p. 28). The unit waited on the beach until word was received of the success of the Q.O.R. of C. in Bernières, whereupon the R. de Chaud proceeded through the village to its assembly area in the woods south of Bernières. From here, the advance towards Beny-sur-Mer was begun. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, Jun 44)

284. A survey of the assault by 8 Cdn Inf Bde (commanded by Brigadier K.G. Blackader) shows that this formation overcame its first difficulties rather more quickly. The immediate beachhead was considered to have been secured about H plus 2 hrs, considerably earlier than was the case on the western sector. (Interview with Brigadier K.G. Blackader, op cit) Shellfire was undoubtedly less severe but mortars proved troublesome. Exits were more readily established: the sea-wall on NAN White (Bernières) had been bridged at 0850 hrs. By 1040 hrs two exits had been opened on NAN Red and three on NAN White, a decidedly more favourable situation than that obtaining on the beaches to the West, where flooded ground proved a serious hindrance. (Report by Naval Commander, Force "J") There were other contributing factors to this success: the A.V.R.Es. had arrived in better time and had been able to lend their support to the infantry; the D.D. tanks, although late, had landed almost intact

and without confusion, and had thus given more coordinated aid. Even before gaps were prepared, a squadron of tanks had crossed a mined area so as to enter St. Aubin and assist in its clearance. (2 Cdn Arm'd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD")

285. An especially unlucky landing was experienced on this sector by 48 R.M. Commando. Even before touching down on NAN Red beach in six L.C.I.(S.) at H Hour plus 45 minutes, these troops were engaged by machine-gun and mortar fire from the beach defenders, who chose at this moment to return to life. Previously they had been subdued by the neutralizing fire from sea. The Commando suffered heavy casualties before reaching its objective, Langrune-sur-Mer. ((HS) 285SS4.008(D2): W.D., 4 S.S. Bde, June 1944: Appx "H", Royal Marine Commandos in Normandy; see also H. St G. Saunders, The Green Beret (London, 1949), pp 272-73)

286. Despite setbacks and delays, the divisional beachheads by 1300 hrs on 6 Jun had taken shape as visualized and, except for timing, satisfaction could be felt that the assault had been executed substantially as written. The G.O.C. left H.M.S. Hilary with some of his staff to go ashore on NAN Sector at 1145 hrs; the remainder, under the G.S.O.1, followed about two hours later. The first divisional headquarters ashore was set up in an orchard in Bernières. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Jun 44)

(c) The Intermediate Objective

287. Perhaps the most striking demonstration that the operation had become a land battle was the arrival of the ubiquitous field artillery. The eagerness of the artillery to be landed was earlier thwarted by the congested state of the beaches. On MIKE Red, 12 Cdn Fd Regt, (Lt-Col R.H. Webb, O.C.), disembarking from six L.C.T. about 0900 hrs, was unable for the time being to proceed further; with commendable resourcefulness the regiment promptly prepared for action on the beach itself, in some instances engaging the enemy over open sights. "Our beach", writes the regimental historian, "strewn with dead and wounded, rocked to the sound of our fire and the answering enemy guns. The two exits from the beach were blocked and to prevent overcrowding our guns were deployed side by side" (History of the 12th Canadian Field Regiment, op cit; see also W.D., 12 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun; and (HS) 142.4Fl2013(1): Memorandum of Interview with Lt-Col R.H. Webb). 13 Cdn Fd Regt, (Lt-Col F. Le P.T. Clifford, O.C.), landing somewhat later, established a battery position south of Courseulles. About 1800 hrs both field regiments, supporting 7 Cdn Inf Bde, occupied their designated gun positions between Ste. Croix and Banville (Gun Area "MARY"). (W.Ds., 12 and 13 Cdn Fd Regts, 6 Jun)

288. In 8 Cdn Inf Bde's sector, 19 Cdn Fd Regt commenced its disembarkation at 0910 hrs and had a battery in action between Bernières and St. Aubin some 20 minutes later. One troop lost three S.P. equipments in a fire which spread when one gun was hit; another was delayed in landing until 1500 hrs, its L.C.T. being damaged. By 2050 hrs the regiment was deployed south of Bernières (Gun Area "JANE"). (W.D., 19 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun) 14 Cdn Fd Regt (Lt-Col H.S. Griffin, O.C.) likewise suffered loss

in the early stage of its career ashore. Its first guns were being landed at 0925 hrs, but the regiment was not clear of the beach until an hour later. By 1130 hrs, when it took up its first position in the fields west of Bernières, only 18 of its 24 guns were in action: three were entangled in a traffic jam and three more had been destroyed by direct hits from an 88-millimetre gun on emerging from the cover of the town. (W.D., 14 Cdn Fd Regt, 6 Jun 44) During Phase II, the regiment moved forward by batteries, giving continuous support and sorting its guns into their respective troops, until at 2030 hrs Gun Area "JANE" was occupied (Ibid).

289. The misfortunes experienced by the two last-named regiments will serve to illustrate the relative character of the battle in Phase II. If 8 Cdn Inf Bde had been more fortunate in the assault phase, it was now to encounter serious delay in advancing to its objective "EIM". This circumstance was to have far-reaching consequences affecting both the success of 9 Cdn Inf Bde and, by extension, the division's attainment of the final covering position. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, on the other hand, pressed forward quickly during Phase II. The enemy's rear areas were overwhelmed by our infantry, and the tanks of 6 Cdn Arm'd Regt, once clear of the coastal inundation, found his staff cars and light vehicles easy targets.

290. (1) 7 Cdn Inf Bde Beyond Banville, R. Wpg Rif discovered resistance to be lighter, especially after "A" Company, with the assistance of portions of "A" and "C" Sqdns, 6 Cdn Arm'd Regt, captured enemy machine-gun positions south of Ste. Croix. The bridge at Tierceville (915808) was captured intact. A half mile to the west, 7 Green Howards, advancing abreast of the Canadians (as part of 69 (Brit) Inf Bde, (50 (N) Div)), captured another bridge over the Seulles River (Clay, op cit, p. 243). By 1700 hrs R. Wpg Rif was consolidating southwest of Creully (9179-9279). The first reinforcements arrived during the evening and were posted to "B" Company which had been so badly depleted on the beach. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 6 Jun 44)

291. Having followed R. Wpg Rif to Ste. Croix and Banville, 1 C. Scot R. moved on swiftly to seize the bridges at Colombiers-sur-Seulles and Reviere, finding much evidence of the enemy's disorderly withdrawal. By 1830 hrs the unit had positioned itself in the area south of Les Planches, beyond the river. Later that evening a new battalion area was occupied in the vicinity of Pierrepont, Cainet and Le Fresne-Camilly. It will be seen from this that 1 C. Scot R. was actually in advance of the area planned for it. (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 6 Jun 44)

292. Regina Rif, pressing on from Reviere, were no less successful. During the afternoon, while street-fighting was still in progress in Courseulles, Le Fresne-Camilly and Fontaine-Héary were cleared. At 2100 hrs the unit was directed to move to a new position on the high ground northwest of Le Fresne. This was carried out in darkness, not without some confusion, and was completed by

0300 hrs, 7 Jun. "A" Company, previously left to guard the Reviere bridge, was reinforced and withdrawn into the battalion area during the night. (Interview with Lt-Col Matheson, op cit; W.D., Regina Rif, 6 Jun 44)

293. In Phase II, armoured support by 6 Cdn Armd Regt had been of great value, one squadron having been placed in support of each battalion. But this support was not given without cost, for mines and 88-millimetre guns had exacted a heavy toll. By evening it was found that only four tanks of "B" Squadron were still operational; "A" Squadron was better off with nine. The C.O. therefore decided to form these thirteen remaining tanks into a composite squadron. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 6 Jun 44) But on the other hand the collapse of co-ordinated enemy resistance beyond the immediate beachhead was indicated by the fact that during D Day two troops of tanks had actually penetrated as far south as Bretteville-l'Orgueilleuse before withdrawing, thus reaching the final objective, if only briefly. (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, 6 Jun 44) The regimental historian writes of one of these troops:

The troop commanded by Lieut. W.F. McCormick failed to contact the infantry and kept going returning an hour and half later after a ten mile ramble inland through Bretteville and almost into Carpiquet. The incident was the cause of humorous accusations that the troops had planned a dash to Paris, but the lucky venture raised the morale of the men considerably. The fact that no opposition had been encountered ensured that there was ample time for consolidation of all gains before the heavy counter-attack which all invaders on enemy soil must hourly expect.

(Stark, op cit, p. 64)

294. The intermediate objective "ELM" was firmly held by 7 Cdn Inf Bde by the evening of D Day. Brigade headquarters moved forward to Colombiers-sur-Seulles. There was an added source of satisfaction in the fact that the vital bridges over the River Seulles were all intact and safely in Allied hands.

295. (ii) 8 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes On the Eastern sector, 8 Cdn Inf Bde, endeavouring to break out of its beachhead, met a serious check to its right flank. By 1025 hrs R. de Chaud was assembled with its squadron of tanks in support, and the S.P. artillery was now ashore. But to move out from the cover of Bernières to the open plain to the south meant coming under machine-gun and 88-millimetre fire; the latter had already demolished several S.P. equipments (Cf para 288). Armour and infantry were held up for nearly two hours until artillery and medium machine-gun fire could silence the opposition. Then the infantry was gradually infiltrated up the road from Bernières towards Beny-sur-Mer, subduing pockets of enemy resistance

and taking prisoners as it advanced. On the left flank progress had been at first much swifter, and a company of N. Shore R. had approached **Tailleville** during Phase I. It was first entered at 1352 hrs. The regimental historian writes of the enemy position at Tailleville as follows:

The enemy was more strongly entrenched here than had been anticipated.* Numerous tunnels led from one gun pit to another; in addition his weapons were so disposed that all approaches were completely covered by fire.

(Regimental History of the North Shore (NB) Regiment, op cit, p. 6)

By mid-afternoon the strongpoint had still not been cleared, and its early capture was becoming increasingly problematical. (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 1, Message Log, 6 Jun 44)

296. In order to clarify the situation in this sector of the divisional beachhead, it will be expedient to consider here the introduction of the reserve Brigade Group (commanded by Brigadier D.G. Cunningham) which had been circling about the anchorage since early morning. The course of events during Phase I did not warrant a decision to alter the original intention to land the reserve formation through NAN Sector (Plan "A"). Accordingly, at 1051 hrs H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde (aboard Royal Ulsterman) received the signal, "Katnip now", which was the executive order to land (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, June 1944: Appx 3, Message Log, 6 Jun 44). But even on 8 Cdn Inf Bde's sector congestion was such as to make it impossible to spread the brigade group over both NAN Red and NAN White Beaches as planned, and all units had to land over the latter alone. This very naturally created a delay and meant that only one route (from Bernières to Beny) could be taken forward to the assembly area. At 1140 hrs the L.C.I.(L) carrying the rifle companies touched down, but in some cases troops were not disembarked at once because of the confusion on the beach. Offshore obstacles were still in position and landings were made even more difficult by the presence of so many wrecked landing craft. But with very few casualties the entire brigade group (including its armoured regiment) moved across the beach into Bernières, which was found to be still occupied by the troops of 8 Cdn Inf Bde. Just south of the town the battalions formed up and waited until the advance of R. de Chaud should make it possible for them to occupy their assembly area around Beny-sur-Mer. (W.Ds., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, and infantry battalions, 6 Jun 44)

*The Tailleville strongpoint was the headquarters of the 2nd Battalion, 736 Grenadier Regiment. See Appendix "J".

297. At 1435 hours the G.O.C. held the first Orders Group at his headquarters in Bernières. It was attended by the commanders of 8 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes and 2 Cdn Armd Bde and dealt exclusively with the confused situation in the left sector. It was confirmed that N. Shore R. was experiencing difficulty in clearing Tailleville. No change of plan was ordered: 8 Cdn Inf Bde was still to capture Beny-sur-Mer, after which 9 Cdn Inf Bde could be passed through on its axis towards Carpiquet. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Jun 44)

298. The time at which Beny was captured is not recorded, neither the battalion nor brigade diaries offering precise information. Communications between brigade headquarters and R. de Chaud were faulty, but it appears that the latter cleared the town about 1530 hrs. (Message Log and W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun 44) Forward companies reported themselves in Basly at 1710 hrs (Ibid). A squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt by-passed Basly in order to converge on the high ground at Colomby-sur-Thaon (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD") Q.O.R. of C. at the same time was striking forward toward Anguerny; after overcoming resistance in the town they established themselves on the high ground between Anguerny and Anisy, where their position was quite isolated until their rear and right were secured by the arrival of R. de Chaud in La Mare and Colomby-sur-Thaon. The two units remained in their respective areas for the night. (W.Ds., Q.O.R. of C. and R. de Chaud, 6 Jun 44)

299. By evening it was apparent that the difficulties met by N. Shore R. would prevent consolidation of the brigade on the objective "ELM". Two troops of tanks had already been despatched to assist this unit (2 Cdn Armd Bde Report on Operation "OVERLORD"). The defenders of Tailleville were well dug in and provided with an extensive system of tunnels which gave excellent opportunities to snipers. It was not until 2010 hrs, "after the sixth painstaking search of the grounds and buildings" that the town was finally reported clear (Regimental History, N. Shore R. op cit, p. 6) Four officers and 57 other ranks were taken prisoner from this strongpoint. The battalion was ordered to remain and reorganize there. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, Serial 242; W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 6 Jun 44)

300 The capture of Beny, in addition to opening the way for 8 Cdn Inf Bde, had made it possible for 9 Cdn Inf Bde to commence its assembly. At 1605 hrs, therefore, Nth N.S. Highrs (Lt-Col C. Petch, O.C.) led off from Bernières, arriving at Beny at 1645 hrs. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 6 Jun 44) By 1915 hrs, S.D. & G. Highrs (Lt-Col G.H. Christiansen, O.C.) and H.L.I. of C. (Lt-Col F.M. Griffiths, O.C.) were also in position. The village and its vicinity were crowded with troops of two brigades, including their headquarters, and enemy mortar fire did not make the enforced halt there more pleasant. At 1820 hrs Nth N.S. Highrs commenced their southward advance, leading 9 Cdn Inf Bde towards the final objective. (W.Ds., Nth N.S. Highrs, S.D. & G. Highrs, and H.L.I. of C., 6 Jun 44)

301. The entire brigade group had been specially equipped and trained for rapid movement. Three companies of Nth N.S. Highrs (the advanced guard) were carried on the tanks of 27 Cdn Armd Regt, (Lt-Col M.B.K. Gordon, O.C.) with the fourth travelling in unit transport. In each of the other two battalions, three companies rode on bicycles (airborne pattern), the fourth again being borne in other vehicles. ((HS) 265C9.011(3): Memorandum of Interview with Brigadier D.G. Cunningham, D.S.O.) The vanguard of Nth N.S. Highrs was grouped as follows. In front, the reconnaissance troop of 27 Cdn Armd Regt provided a screen of Stuart tanks. This was followed by the infantry carrier platoon, each section carrying one platoon of "C" Company. Next came a platoon of medium machine guns ("C" Company, C.H. of O.), a troop of M.10s (3 Cdn A tk Regt), two assault sections of pioneers and four battalion 6-pounders. Behind the vanguard rode the main advanced guard mounted on Sherman tanks: "A" Company on the right, "B" Company on the left and "D" Company bringing up the rear. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 6 Jun 44) Behind the advanced guard again were S.D. & G. Highrs and H.L.I. of C.

302. The vanguard passed the start point (Basly) and met no serious opposition until it reached Villons-les-Buissons. By nightfall, however, it was still engaged in clearing three machine-gun positions there. Inasmuch as the main advanced guard had likewise become involved in fighting in Colomby-sur-Thaon (by-passed by the leading elements), it was decided that no further advance should be made on D Day. Nth N.S. Highrs were therefore ordered to consolidate for the night astride the main road to Caen, around the crossroads 007757 (Ibid). S.D. & G. Highrs and H.L.I. of C. were also directed to remain in Beny, from which they had not yet set forth. (W.Ds., S.D. & G. Highrs and H.L.I. of C., 6 Jun 44)

303. At last light on 6 Jun the divisional situation was as follows: the line "ELM" (the intermediate objective) had been reached, though it was not yet fully consolidated on the left. There, however, the reserve brigade had already made some progress towards the final objective. If the next day did not bring a counter-attack in force the division could still be expected to press forward to secure its ultimate covering position.

304. Delays on the beaches, attributable chiefly to weather conditions, very naturally slowed the whole tempo of the advance inland. One brigade commander believed that "the timing as planned had been too fast" (Brigadier Foster, op cit). But the insistence on speed was made necessary by the possibility that mobile reserves might be thrown against the division either before it had secured a beachhead in sufficient depth, or while it was on the move and unprepared to ward off attack. The latter eventuality occurred on 7 Jun; fortunately only one brigade group was affected by it. By the evening of D Day the operation

could be reckoned five to six hours behind schedule (i.e., the approximate time required by the main body of 7 Cdn Inf Bde to advance from "ELM" to "OAK"). It therefore seems hardly possible that the division could have arrived in strength on the final objective by nightfall of D Day unless an earlier start had been made. From every point of view, it would have been infinitely more desirable if the times of touchdown had not had to be deferred. (In this connection it may be noted that the need to postpone H Hour for Group J.2 on account of offshore rocks on NAN Sector has been called in question by the Commander of Force "J". (Report by Naval Commander, Force "J"))

SURVEY OF D DAY

(a) Air Force

305. The aerial bombardment of German coastal batteries and defences in the assault area, together with the pre-H Hour airborne operations which "constituted the greatest air lift of assault forces" ever attempted, were but the beginning of the Air Forces' operations on D Day (Leigh-Mallory, op cit, p. 58). Excluding sorties flown by Coastal Command and A.E.A.F. Airborne operations; the A.E.A.F., R.A.F. Bomber Command, U.S. Eighth Air Force and the Fleet Air Arm flew a total of 10,743 sorties on D Day (Ibid, p. 59). After the "heavies" had left, medium, light and fighter bombers carried out a multitude of tasks throughout the day. Fifteen squadrons of fighters were allotted the task of protecting the shipping lanes (Ibid, p. 56). Nine squadrons of fighters continuously patrolled the British and American beaches flying, 1,547 sorties on beachhead cover (Ibid, p. 57). Almost 400 sorties were flown in answer to the heavy calls for spotting naval gunfire. A large number of sorties were also flown on long and short reconnaissance duties, strafing missions, offensive patrols, and so on. (A breakdown of numbers and types of sorties flown by the Air Forces is given in ibid, p. 59) Altogether, the air effort over the "NEPTUNE" front "surpassed in strength any air operations that had ever before been mounted" (Ibid, p. 58).

306. The entire air effort was by no means confined to the assault area. At either end of the English Channel and beyond, R.A.F. Coastal Command was implementing its plans to combat German U-boat attacks against "NEPTUNE" convoys. During the preceding months, Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz had concentrated large numbers of his U-boats in the Bay of Biscay. His plan* evidently, "was to deploy

*For a brief summary of German naval anti-invasion measures-see Rear-Admiral H.G. Thursfield (Editor), Brassey's Naval Annual-1948 (London, 1948), pp 378-79.

his Biscay U-boats up Channel as soon as the landings brought to light the exact position of the Second Front. The U-boats were to sever the first assault force from contact with England and to prevent any build-up" ((HS) 692.013(D2): "An Account of Coastal Command in the Invasion," prepared by R.C.A.F. Operations Record Officer, Coastal Command).

307. On D Day the enemy reacted swiftly. U-boats made for the assault area "with the utmost speed -- that is, on the surface whenever possible" (Douglas, op cit, p. 5127). The first U-boats sighted were approaching from the western entrance to the Channel on the night of D Day. Six of these U-boats were attacked* (Leigh-Mallory, op cit, p. 77). "During the next day and night, a further ten sightings were made and seven were attacked. Some of these attacks resulted in kills" (Ibid). It is not possible here to give a full account of the anti-submarine battle waged by Coastal Command, of which the above was the opening phase. It should be remembered, however, that the land battle was dependent upon the security of the 'bridge to France,' and so upon the success of the anti-submarine campaign.

308. German air opposition to the assault was, much to the disgust of the German army, on an extremely restricted scale. Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory writes of it as follows:

On D Day the first enemy air reaction to the assault was a reconnaissance of the Channel areas. At approximately 1500 hours, the first enemy fighters and fighter-bombers appeared. This was nine hours after the assault began and fifteen hours after the first of very large formations of airborne transports and of the air bombardment squadrons had arrived over enemy territory. The enemy formations consisted of some FW 190s and one formation of 12 Ju 88s; four of this latter were destroyed.

On the night D/D plus 1, approximately 85 enemy aircraft were active over the beaches and shipping lanes. Some of the units operating were known to be specialized anti-shipping units. Activity on this scale was maintained on most nights during June.

(Ibid, p. 72)

309. Fortunately for the Allies, the invasion was not the signal for the enemy to launch his campaign of rockets or pilotless aircraft against England or the beachhead. (Supra, paras 72-77) Although it was feared

* Active in Coastal Command's operations were five R.C.A.F. squadrons. (Battle Order of R.C.A.F. on 6 Jun 44, op cit)

for some time that this campaign would coincide with the invasion (Hill, op cit, p. 5588), the success of Operation "CROSSBOW" against the enemy "ski-sites" seemed to lessen the danger that "pilotless aircraft might be used against assembly areas on the south coast, and particularly round the Solent" (Ibid, p. 5589). Even when the enemy began to build a large number of 'modified', well-camouflaged sites in April -- sites whose launching platforms were aligned on London and the southern coast -- the threat from these was "not felt as keenly as the original threat from the 'ski-sites' six months earlier" (Ibid, p. 5591). Nevertheless, defensive measures against these 'secret weapons' were in readiness on D Day as they were a week later when the first pilotless aircraft made their appearance over England. (Pile, op cit, pp 323 ff)

310. The lack of German air resistance on D Day, despite increased enemy fighter production,* has been explained quite simply by Göring: "... due to the immense numerical superiority of Allied air forces, the GAF simply lacked sufficient strength to cope with the invaders" ((HS)295AF.023 (D1): "Göring Interrogated," U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, Air Intelligence Summary No. 82, p. 15). More detailed information regarding the reasons for the defeat of the G.A.F. is contained in "The Normandy Invasion -- June 1944", op cit; (HS) 981.009(D21): German Air Forces, "Interrogation of Generalleutnant Adolf Galland re Fighter Arm of German Air Force"; (HS) 981.013 (D15): Air Ministry (Trans), "Survey of Anglo-American Air Operations Against the Reich and Western Europe, 1942-1944"; (HS) 981.013 (D28); "Some Aspects of the German Fighter Effort During the Initial Stages of the Invasion of North-West Europe"; and (HS) 981.013 (D58): "Some Aspects of the Allied Air Offensive on German Economic Life"; to quote but a few of the more pertinent primary documents. Broadly speaking, aside from the direct consequences of Allied air superiority over the beaches on D Day, the failure of the German Air Force during the assault was due to the pre-D Day havoc wrought on G.A.F. bases, depots and airfields; the lack of trained and experienced German pilots; the inability of the G.A.F. to employ 'decisive forces at decisive times' because of the need to protect the Reich and other fronts; the impossibility of rapid movement of fuel, supplies, etc. over the wrecked transportation system; the poor German

*See Tedder, op cit, p. 43, for a chart showing the comparative strengths of Allied and German operational aircraft on the Western Front. See also Air Vice Marshal Sir Thomas W. Elmhirst, "The German Air Force and its Failure," R.U.S.I. Journal, November 1946; and Lee, op cit, Ch 12.

system of aircraft reporting and ground control in France; and miscalculation by G.A.F. officials. As a result, the tempting targets of massed ships and craft together with vast, concentrated numbers of men and supplies in Southern England and Normandy were comparatively unharmed by German air attacks.

(b) The Fire Plan

311. In endeavouring to estimate the success of the combined fire plan, it must be realized that the morale factor played almost as great a role as the actual destruction caused. This being so, it is more difficult to arrive at a true evaluation. But it is safe to assume that the massed invasion force, moving in relentlessly on the beaches and loosing so great a volume of fire-power, must have seemed irresistible to the defenders huddled in their concrete enclosures, waiting until the nearest troops should be within range of their mortars and guns. With the din of the bombardment ringing in their ears, the confident advice of their superiors -- 'Keep them at bay until our Panzers break through to relieve you' -- must have appeared a vain hope indeed. Interrogation of prisoners produced adequate testimony of the power of the fire plan, as the following passage shows:

The results of our preliminary aerial and naval bombardment were most impressive. PW were unanimous in describing its overwhelming and demoralizing effects. In several strongpoints comms were completely severed and the occupants, who had gone to ground, were totally unaware of what was happening until they emerged to find themselves prisoners. PW used such phrases as 'it was absolute hell' and 'we had no chance'. The naval bombardment seems to have been especially terrifying.

((HS) 215C1.023: First Cdn
Army Int Summary No. 7)

312. In the Canadian sector, there are isolated incidents which show that enemy morale was seriously affected. A company commander of Q.O.R. of C. told how a German machine-gun crew ran away when our troops began to scale the sea-wall before their position. Such enemy soldiers he described as "mere boys" and "very frightened" (Interview with Major J.N. Gordon, op cit). Others, locked in concrete emplacements, had no such opportunity for flight and in most cases fought it out till the end. It seems probable, however, that the intense initial bombardment momentarily stunned them, for the battle generally took shape when these positions were closely invested and our leading troops had crossed the intervening open stretch of beach. This conclusion is borne out by the experience of 48 R.M. Commando, which was fired on even before landing by the defenders of the St. Aubin strongpoints, who had previously allowed N. Shore R. to

approach with much less show of resistance (Supra, para 285).

313. The physical damage wrought by aerial and naval bombardment has already been mentioned (Supra, paras 227-63). A summary of the bombardment generally has been given by General Montgomery as follows:

Despite the massive air and naval bombardment, the coastal defences in general were not as effectively destroyed as had been hoped, but the enemy opposition was effectively neutralized for the vital period of the assault; field works behind the beaches were largely eliminated, wire entanglements were broken down and some of the mine fields set off, and the defenders were thoroughly shaken by the weight of our fire. The enemy's communication network was paralysed and his radar system thrown into confusion, with the result that during the period of the landings the enemy High Command remained in ignorance of the true extent, strength and objectives of the assault.

(Montgomery, Normandy to the Baltic, pp 43-44)

(c) Force "J"

314. Because of choppy seas and crowded beaches the L.S.T. could not begin to beach their unwieldy Rhino ferries until 1500 hrs, and in some cases these ships had not completely discharged their cargo until the early morning of 7 Jun (Report by Naval Commander, Force "J"). Throughout D Day the anchorage was shelled sporadically and ineffectively, and at night there was a most brilliant display as gunners enthusiastically (if not entirely accurately) opened fire on enemy aircraft.

315. Despite active opposition and the danger of obstacles, casualties to landing craft in Force "J" were not excessively high. These were listed as follows:

Sunk	3 L.C.T. (A.)
Badly damaged	2 L.C.T. (3)
	7 L.C.T. (4)
	7 L.C.T. (5)
	5 L.C.I. (S.)
	2 L.C.S. (M.)
	14 L.C.A.
Damaged or Disabled	18 L.C.T. (4)
	8 L.C.T. (5)
	2 L.C.I. (S.)
	22 L.C.A.

(Ibid)

Judging from these figures, almost 75% of the L.C.A. escaped damage. (A total of 142 was to be employed.)

(d) Engineers

316. Clearance of gaps through offshore obstacles, which was to have been completed by H plus 75 minutes, was set back many hours by the unexpectedly high tide. The engineers of 5 Cdn Fd Coy, with one platoon of 18 Cdn Fd Coy under command, experienced severe difficulty on landing close to H Hour, but succeeded in putting most of their bulldozers ashore. After a brief period of work, further attempts at mass removal of the dense obstacles had to be abandoned until the tide commenced to recede. Gaps totalling 1600 yards in width were cleared on NAN Sector between the first and second tides on D Day; on MIKE Sector two sections continued to work until D plus 1, by which time they had cleared 1700 yards. Casualties to these teams had been relatively light. (W.Ds., 5 and 18 Cdn Fd Coys, 6-7 Jun 44) The sapper assault teams landing in company with the leading infantry of 7 Cdn Inf Bde sustained heavy casualties both in their craft and on the beach, and were unable to perform their allotted tasks. In view of this, the company commander considered that their inclusion in the assault phase had not been justified (W.D., 6 Cdn Fd Coy, June 1944: Appx 4). A similar experience was met on 8 Cdn Inf Bde's sector, where the sapper teams found that little call was made on them in their proper role (W.D., 16 Cdn Fd Coy, 6 Jun 44). The principal task of 18 Cdn Fd Coy on D Day was to have been the construction of Class 40 crossings at Pont de Reviere and Colombiers-sur-Seulles. To this end, reconnaissance parties went forward with the leading infantry, only to find the existing bridges intact. These were at once checked and classified. 1622 Bridging Platoon, which had landed safely, "felt rather lost and simply sat in the Assembly Area" (W.D., 18 Cdn Fd Coy, 6 Jun 44).

317. The difficulty of opening potential exits (which in any event were few) considerably delayed the employment of heavy weapons in support of the infantry: many tanks were compelled to remain on the beach for some hours, while badly needed guns and other equipment could not be landed until the beaches were cleared. This fact makes particularly cogent Admiral Ramsay's conclusion "that the rate of landing will always be governed by the availability of exits," which had not perhaps been fully appreciated by military planners (Report by the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief...).

(e) Armour

318. The experiences of the armoured regiments in the operation have been included with those of the infantry to whom they gave support. Here it is appropriate to consider how valuable was that support.

319. Despite a measure of confusion in their launching and beaching, the D.D. tanks were able to arrive ashore as a fighting entity, where their early arrival unquestionably contributed to the enemy's discouragement and downfall. The performance of the tanks crews generally was described as "gallant rather than brilliant," improving as the battle developed (Interview with Brigadier Foster, op cit). It was the opinion of Lt-Col J.M. Meldram, O.C., R. Wpg Rif, that "A" Squadron, 6 Cdn Armd Regt, "literally made possible the overwhelming of the defences" of MIKE Sector (W.D., 6 Cdn Armd Regt, June 1944: Appx 4, Letter from O.C., R. Wpg Rif, to O.C., 6 Cdn Armd Regt). To this expression of appreciation the Commander of 7 Cdn Inf Bde added the minute, "I heartily agree with these sentiments" (Ibid). The tanks proved no less valuable farther inland in the villages and open fields, according to infantry commanders. One may conclude that the landing of tanks in the initial stages was entirely justified. (It may be noted that this conclusion seems to conflict with the Dieppe lessons, which had recommended that tanks be not landed during the beach fighting. ((HS) 594.013(D4): The Dieppe Raid (Combined Report) 1942, p. 35) The explanation of this apparent rejection of earlier experience lies in the fact that D.D. tanks, requiring no craft to bring them ashore, formed a series of mobile forts which could contribute to close support at H Hour.)

320. It is hardly necessary to say that 2 Cdn Armd Bde's plan to advance to Evrecy on D Day was not realized. Nor did the special force supplied by "C" Squadron, Inns of Court Regiment, which was entrusted with the blowing of the bridges over the Orne beyond Caen, meet with success. Landing near Courseulles from two L.C.T. (4) at 0830 hrs, 6 Jun, the detachment lost seven vehicles on the beach itself from mines and anti-tank weapons. Owing to difficulty with exits, release from the beach was not given until about 1045 hrs. (Message Log, G.S., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, 6 Jun 44, Serial 129) At 1500 hrs, the force crossed the River Seulles, but must have worked well to the right, for it harboured during the night of 6/7 Jun at Vienne-en-Bessin, about four miles east of Bayeux. Setting forth again the next morning, the squadron suffered thirteen casualties -- 7 killed and 6 wounded -- when bombed by Thunderbolts; the farthest points reached on D plus 1 were Norrey-en-Bessin, Bronay and Ducy-Ste. Marguerite, all near the Bayeux-Caen railway. ((HS)693.018(D11): W.D., Inns of Court, 6-7 Jun 44).

(f) Intercommunication

321. Wireless communication functioned extremely well from the moment wireless silence was broken on D Day. Some difficulties were encountered on the beach, for snipers took a heavy toll of those carrying wireless sets in the first wave, and the wireless sets in handcarts were found awkward to manhandle. (W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs, June 1944: Appx 17, Report on Operation "OVERLORD". Other

assaulting divisions made the same complaint.) Artillery wireless communications were highly satisfactory, both on sea and land. The special problems entailed and the means adopted to solve them are treated in two reports: Memo of Interview with Major H.S. Patterson, op cit; and Report on 3 Cdn Div Arty Comms, Operation "OVERLORD", W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs, June 1944: Appx 17.

322. Cable sections, whose work was very hazardous in the first days ashore, used jeeps with 10-cwt trailers and found them admirable. Lines had constantly to be repaired, owing to their being cut by tracked vehicles and gunfire. (Signals Report on Operation "OVERLORD", op cit) The commander of 8 Cdn Inf Bde reported that lines were laid to all battalions by the night of D Day (Interview with Brigadier Blackader, op cit).

323. Very good work was done by the Contact Detachments supplied by the divisional reconnaissance regiment (7 Cdn Recce Regt). A Contact Detachment, usually consisting of an officer, an N.C.O. and two operators, was attached to divisional and brigades headquarters, to each assault battalion, and to each battalion in the reserve brigade (W.D., 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs, May 1944: Appx 10, 3 Cdn Inf Div Sigs O.O. No. 1). Each Detachment was "equipped with a jeep, a No. 22 crystal-controlled wireless set, a No. 68R [portable] crystal-controlled set, batteries, and a chore-horse*" (Capt W.D. Pavey, 7th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment in World War II (Montreal, 1948), p. 41). The main role of the Contact Detachment was to keep General Keller informed of events on a battalion level.** Owing to the nature of their employment, they were also able to keep battalion commanders informed of events on their flanks -- "The Contact Det is doing a good job keeping us informed," writes one unit diarist. (W.D., S.D. & G. Highrs, 6 Jun 44). For further information on these Detachments see (HS) 141.4A7011(D2): Memorandum of Interview with Captain G.V. Newsam, 7 Cdn Recce Regt: "The Role and Org of Contact Dets".

(g) Machine Gun Battalion

324. The three machine-gun companies of C.H. of

*A chore-horse was a machine used to re-charge the wireless set's batteries.

**Similarly, 'Phantom' patrols kept the Corps, Army and Army Group Commanders informed on the progress of operations. Each division had one 'Phantom' patrol attached to it. For further information on these small British wireless detachments, see R.J.T. Hills, Phantom Was There (London, 1951), pp 144 ff.

O. (M.G.) were prevented from landing from their L.C.T. on the morning of D Day owing to the congestion on the beaches. By 1430 hrs, however, all three companies were ashore and their platoons made off to join the battalions they were to support. (W.D., C.H. of O. (M.G.), 6 Jun 44) "A" Company supported 7 Cdn Inf Bde on to the brigade's intermediate objective. "B" Company gave considerable assistance to the battalions of 8 Cdn Inf Bde by silencing a number of snipers in the area and laying its fire on stronger pockets of resistance. "C" Company's platoons joined their respective units somewhat later in the day and performed similar tasks. The heavy mortar company, ("D" Company), had been divided into two parts for its role in the assault. Two platoons of this company reached 7 Cdn Inf Bde when the brigade was on "ELM". The other two platoons, owing to the congestion on the beaches, were unable to start unloading until the following day. As it happened, there was no call for 4.2-inch mortar fire on D Day (W.D., C.H. of O., 6 Jun 44: Appx 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

(h) Anti-Aircraft

325. The only L.A.A. Battery to land with 3 Cdn Inf Div on D Day was the 32nd Battery (Major J.M. Cousins, O.C.) of 4 Cdn L.A.A. Regt. Two troops of this battery, after experiencing some difficulty with the "Rhino" ferries, landed on the afternoon of D Day. "A" Troop went to protect the bridge at Reviere, while "C" Troops took up a position near the bridge at Colombiers-sur-Seulles (W.D., 4 Cdn L.A.A. Regt., July 1944: Appx 10, "Activities of 32 Bty, D Day to D plus 6"). 32 Bty, while taking up positions hastily overrun by the infantry, captured 196 prisoners! "B" Troop was unable to land on D Day, and what was more galling, was unable to fire its guns when enemy aircraft strafed and bombed the landing craft during the night 6/7 Jun. On D plus 2 this troop landed and took up positions guarding divisional headquarters. By that time the battery's 40-millimetre S.P. guns had already shot down two FW 190s and one JU 88 (Ibid).

(i) Anti-Tank

326. War Diaries give little indication of what anti-tank batteries landed on D Day. "In 62 A tk Regt it seems certain that only 248 Bty came ashore, the time being 1700 hours. Three guns were not able to disembark, and another is reported to have been drowned. The equivalent of two troops then supported 7 Cdn Inf Bde, one being with R. Wpg R. and the other with Regina Rif in their final positions south-east of Creully" ((HS)952.013(D96): Historical Section of the Cabinet, OVERLORD: D Day, 6 June 1944, Book II, p. 285). On the left sector 105 (Composite) A tk Bty (of 3 Cdn A tk Regt) experienced considerable difficulty when unloading. Some portion of the battery was landed, however, for one troop gave assistance to the Nth N.S. Highrs when it moved forward from Beny-sur-Mer at 1820 hrs (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 6 Jun 44). It was a day or so later, however, before the regiment was able to gather its forces together.

(j) Casualties

327. Complete evidence is not available regarding the number of casualties expected among the Canadian forces landing in Normandy on D Day. It seems probable, however, that the method used by the Canadians to estimate casualties was the same as that employed by the British. (The Administrative History of 21 Army Group, 6 June 1944 - 8 May 1945 (Germany, 1945) states on p. 7: "The estimates of casualties for the BRITISH and CANADIAN forces were based on the Official War Office Casualty Rates known as the Evetts Rates."; see also (HS) 133.065 (D579): "Forecasting Rates of Wastage" for further information regarding the Evetts Rates. The theory upon which the British, and presumably the Canadian, estimate of casualties was based is contained in the following source: (SHO 133.065 (D580): War Office Estimate of Casualties, dated 6 Jan 44. This document contains precisely the same information given in W.D., G.S. Branch, 3 Cdn Inf Div, March-May 1944: Appx "I" to Appx "T", which is part of the Joint Outline Maintenance Project/Administrative Plan (issued in conjunction with the Initial Joint Plan (NJC 1004) dated 1 Feb 44). The material and tables in the following paragraphs are taken from this source.

328. In estimating the casualties likely to be sustained during the early stages of Operation "NEPTUNE", consideration had to be given to casualties by drowning during the run-in as well as the normal land battle casualties. It was anticipated that of the craft which became lost or damaged*, 60% would be lost or damaged on the outward journey, i.e., when loaded. In craft which were total losses 70% of the passengers would become casualties. Thus 42% (70% of 60%) of the personnel carried by lost craft would be casualties. In craft which were damaged 20% of passengers would become casualties, i.e., 12% (20% of 60%) of the personnel carried in damaged craft would be casualties.

329. It was assumed also that 0.17% of the total force ashore would be sick or hospitalized.

330. The battle casualty rate was to depend upon the strength, composition and organization of the forces

*Naval estimates of the losses likely to occur on D Day are not available. Admiral Ramsay states, however: "In the Assault the damage to ships including L.S.T. was less than expected. In the case of L.C.T. and craft generally the losses were less than anticipated, but the numbers suffering damage from beach obstruction ... were considerable and above expectation" (Report by the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief ..., p. 78).

involved and the type and severity of the action anticipated. The following table indicates the battle casualty rate (in percentage) based on the nature of the operation and expected opposition to be encountered. The operations staff was to determine the severity of the losses to be expected in terms of "light", "severe" or "maximum" for each of the formations or units involved.

BATTLE CASUALTY RATE

<u>Type of Formation</u>	<u>Light Battle</u> Day %	<u>Severe</u> Day %	<u>Maximum</u> Day %
Brigade or Regiment	2.5	15	25
Division	1.0	8	15
Corps	.5	3	5
Army	.35	1	2.5
L of C troops, SOS, and service units not included in other estimates		25	0.6

The totals of these estimates were subdivided as follows:

(a) D Day and D plus 1

Killed, captured and missing 30%
Wounded 70%

(b) D plus 2 and thereafter

Killed, captured and missing 25%
Wounded 75%

The number of wounded was further sub-divided as follows:

Litter cases 50%
Walking cases 50%

331. It had been planned to land on D Day about 14,460 Canadian troops (3 Cdn Div O.O. No. 1, Appx "G"). The number actually landed was somewhat less. Had this planned number been landed, however, presumably the anticipated casualties, based on a "Maximum Day" in the theory, would number well over 2,000 exclusive of those casualties sustained on the run-in.

332. Whatever the final figures the Canadian operations staff arrived at, it can be safely assumed that casualties in the assault were lighter in practice than in theory. The total losses of the Canadian assaulting troops on D Day were 946 all ranks. A breakdown of the type of casualty suffered by Canadians in Normandy on D Day is attached at Appx "D" to this Report.

333. An attempt has been made by the Army Operational Research Group to tabulate the casualties actually sustained on the beach itself, as distinct from

those occurring inland. It is thus concluded that each infantry assault battalion incurred between 60 to 80 casualties within the immediate coastal area. This estimate is perhaps too low, for in some cases battalions are known to have been more seriously depleted on the beach than these figures would indicate. (Opposition Encountered on the British Beach in Normandy on D Day, op cit, Part III)

334. It seems to be well established that casualties on each sector varied in direct ratio to the number of enemy mortars in action. His machine-guns, on the other hand, although more effective in causing delay, probably did not inflict proportionately as many casualties. (Ibid, Part IV) This can be accounted for by the fact that machine-gun fire, with its wide sweeping arc of fire, causes troops to go to ground, where they are largely immune from flat-trajectory weapons.

(k) Progress by Other Allied Divisions in the Assault

335. (i) 6th Airborne Division Brief mention has been made regarding the role to be played by 6 Airborne Div on D Day (Supra, para 26). More particularly, the division had primary and secondary tasks. The former involved the capture of the bridges over the River Orne and Canal de Caen at Benouville and Ranville respectively and the establishment of bridgeheads each side of this water obstacle. ((HS) 255B6.013(D1): 6 Airborne Division--- Report on Operations in Normandy, 5 Jun-3 Sep 44) While 5 Para Bde Gp was employed in these operations, 3 Para Bde Gp (which included 1 Cdn Para Bn*) was to silence the enemy's Merville battery which commanded the beaches where 3 Brit Div was to land. This group was also to demolish a series of bridges over the Rivers Dives and Divette from Troarn to Varaville. (Ibid) When these primary tasks had been completed, 6 Airborne Div was to develop the operation east of the Orne in order to

- (i) Mop up and secure the area between Rs Orne and Dives, north of the rd Troarn 1667 - Sannerville 3368 - Colombelles 0770.
- (ii) Having secured a firm base East of the R Orne, operate offensively to delay any res attempting to move towards the covering posn from the East and SE.

(Ibid)

*Since a report has been written covering the activities of this unit (Hist Sec, A.H.Q. Report No. 26, The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion in France, 6 June-6 September 1944), no elaboration on the part it played during D Day will be given here.

336. In order to carry out these latter tasks, 1 S.S. Bde was to be placed under command after it had landed from the sea at Ouistreham. It was to pass through 5 Para Bde and mop up the coastal area as far as possible between Franceville Plage and Cabourg. In the evening (at 2100 hrs) 6 Airdlg Bde Gp was to arrive by glider and would take over the southern portion of the divisional area.

337. By 0030 hrs 6 Jun, the advance parties of the parachute brigades, together with a 'coup de main' glider force which was to seize the vital Benouville and Ranville bridges, had landed in France. Between 0100 and 0130 hrs the main body of 3 and 5 Para Bde Gps landed. The drop was scattered*which resulted in the units having to perform their tasks well under strength. On the other hand, the wide dispersal of the parachutists misled the enemy as to the area and extent of the airborne landings. (Ibid)

338. The division as a whole was very successful in carrying out its D Day plans. The bridges over the Orne and Canal de Caen were quickly taken by the glider force and bridgeheads were formed on either side of the water obstacle by 5 Para Bde Gp. Enemy counter action to the small western bridgehead began to develop at 0550 hrs but the men defending this area, although greatly outnumbered, held their ground until relieved by the advancing seaborne forces later that day. (Ibid) The larger eastern bridgehead was also held, although at high cost, against repeated armour-supported attacks by the enemy. In the early afternoon of D Day a Commando of 1 S.S. Bde, which had fought its way inland from the beaches, was diverted to reinforce the defenders. The diversion of this Commando, although it was released in the evening, resulted in the curtailment of the offensive activities of 1 S.S. Bde in the coastal area.

339. Although widely dispersed, 3 Para Bde Gp's operations on D Day met with equal success. So widely was this brigade scattered, however, that 9 Para Bn, whose task was to silence the Merville battery, moved off to accomplish its mission "only 150 strong and having only 1 MG" (Ibid). Special engineer and other supporting detachments were also missing. This unit completed its task despite these handicaps, but at the end of this action its strength had been reduced to 80. (Ibid) The

*General Eisenhower states in his Report (p. 22) that "... the 6 Airborne Division troops were dropped precisely in the appointed areas east of the Orne River." The 'coup de main' glider force did achieve a remarkably accurate landing, but the parachutists' drop was widely scattered.

remainder of 3 Para Bde destroyed the bridges over the Dives and Divette as planned. By the end of D Day the brigade took up pre-arranged defensive positions along the Sallenelles-Troarn ridge, a feature which formed the easternmost 'shield' of the "NEPTUNE" area.

340. At 2100 hrs the glider landing of 6 Airlgd Bde (less 1 Bn) took place. With it came the division's Armd Recce Gp. 6 Airlgd Bde set out to help 5 Para Bde contain continuous enemy attacks from the south and to extend the Ranville bridgehead to include Longueval and Hercouvillette. 1 Airlgd Recce Regt, meanwhile, prepared to reconnoitre southeastwards using the area occupied by 8 Para Bn as a base. To the north, 1 S.S. Bde was held up by stiff enemy resistance on the line Bréville-Le Plein. (Ibid; see also By Air to Battle, The Official Account of the British First and Sixth Airborne Divisions (London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1945))

341. By the end of D Day the eastern flank of the "NEPTUNE" area was well secured by 6 Airborne Div. All its primary, and most of its secondary, tasks had been carried out with dispatch despite the wide dispersion of the parachutists. The division's casualties had been heavy, many men having been taken prisoner owing to the scattered drop. Surprise, essential especially to an airborne operation, had been achieved and, coupled with individual initiative and dash, helped to make up for the division's lack of heavy support weapons. The enemy had been hit hard and the westward movement of reinforcements from the Seine area had been denied him. The divisional commander, Major-General R.N. Gale, O.B.E., M.C., summed up the feeling of his command at the end of the day as follows:

... we felt we could face the morrow with confidence. The division had passed a critical phase. Although the morrow would certainly bring heavier German attacks, we would be in so much better state to deal with them.

(Lieutenant-General R.N. Gale,
With the 6th Airborne Division in Normandy (London, 1948), p. 88)

342. (ii) 3rd British Infantry Division The task of 3 Brit Inf Div was "to land on QUEEN White and Red beaches in conjunction with Naval Force "S" and to capture Caen and a bridgehead south of the R. Orne at that place" (Overlord, D Day, 6 Jun 1944, op cit, Book II, p. 295). The division was to assault on a front of one brigade with 8 Brit Inf Bde Gp. Aided by two Commandos and supported by an armoured regiment, 8 Brit Inf Bde Gp's task was to secure a beachhead from the high ground at Periers-sur-le Dan to St. Aubin-d'Arquenay, both inclusive, after which it was to assist 6 Airborne Div at the Benouville-Ranville bridgeheads. 4 Commando (of 1 S.S. Bde) was to clear Ouistreham, while 41 R.M. Commando (of 4 S.S. Bde) was to clear the

coastal area westwards to Luc-sur-Mer. 1 S.S. Bde, landing under command 8 Brit Inf Bde in the second wave, was to go immediately to the relief of 6 Airborne Div.

343. 185 Brit Inf Bde Gp, landing at approximately H plus 2½ hrs, was "to capture Caen and secure a bridgehead south of the R. Orne at Caen" (Ibid). 9 Brit Inf Bde Gp, the reserve brigade, was to land at about H plus 5½ hrs. This was a mobile brigade and after it had assembled at Plumetot, its employment would depend upon the tactical situation. Should 27 Armd Bde become available from its initial tasks with the brigade groups, it would concentrate in the area of Cazelle and be used by the divisional commander, Maj-Gen T.G. Rennie, D.S.O., M.B.E., as the situation warranted.

344. H Hour for 3 Brit Inf Div was fixed at 0725 hrs, but the actual touchdown of the assaulting craft was a few minutes late. Heavy seas, beach obstacles and enemy fire created problems similar to those encountered by 3 Cdn Inf Div. Beach exits, however, were established with somewhat less trouble, but the lack of good routes leading inland caused some delay.

345. The assault by 8 Brit Inf Bde met with stubborn resistance on the beaches and especially inland. The beach strongpoint at La Brèche was overcome by 1000 hrs. A mile inland, however, a series of strongpoints from the Canal de Caen to Colleville sur Orne* prevented the brigade from reaching its objective. It was not until the evening of D Day that the last of these strongpoints was cleared. While the brigade's advance was being slowed up, other forces were fanning out along the coast. 4 Commando, together with supporting infantry and armoured detachments, set out to clear Ouistreham. This was almost completed by the end of the day. 41 R.M. Cdo, after suffering severe casualties on the beaches, struck westwards along the coast toward Luc-sur-Mer. Even with the aid of additional support later in the day, the Commando was unable to advance beyond the Hermanville - Lion-sur-Mer line, leaving a 2½ mile gap between it and 48 R.M. Cdo. (See supra, paras 154 and 285)

346. 1 S.S. Bde's route to 6 Airborne Div ran through the line of inland strongpoints. The brigade avoided combat with these where possible and, after overcoming scattered enemy resistance, reached the Benouville bridgehead early in the afternoon.

347. 185 Brit Inf Gp was divided into two parts for its dash to Caen and beyond. One was a mobile group (infantry riding on tanks) called 2 K.S.L.I. Gp;

*In July 1946 this village rechristened itself Colleville-de-Montgomery (Scarfe, op cit, p. 75).

the main body (composed of 2 Warwick, 1 Norfolk and supporting detachments) was to mop up as it followed in the wake of the mobile column. This brigade was landing at 1000 hrs. Owing to their armoured vehicles being held up on the beaches, it was not until some two hours later that 2 K.S.L.I. Gp began its advance southward along the main road from Hermanville to Caen. By 1400 hrs this group, "the hope of the whole division" (Scarfe, op cit, p. 80), was on the outskirts of Beuville. Three hours later, tanks and infantry of the mobile column were engaging the enemy along the line Periers-Bieville. The main body, advancing slowly east of the main axis, had been divided, 2 Warwick going to the Benouville area from whence it would advance on Caen, while 1 Norfolk came closer westward to the mobile column. Scarcely had 1 Norfolk reached a position protecting the flanks of the mobile column (at about 1700 hrs) when the latter was counter-attacked by tanks of the 21st Panzer Division which had advanced northward from the Caen area in the gap between 3 Brit Inf Div and 3 Cdn Inf Div. Anticipating such a move, the brigade group's tanks, S.P. and 6-pdr guns beat off these attacks with heavy loss to the enemy. Fear of further attacks, plus increased enemy resistance as the group approached Caen, led the brigade commander to consolidate his position for the evening. One company, which had reached the Lebissey woods (only a few miles from the centre of Caen) was recalled to the brigade fortress area. 2 Warwick, moving toward Caen along the canal from the Benouville bridgehead, was also halted by superior forces on the outskirts of Blainville. The Blainville-Bieville line formed the southernmost line of 3 Brit Inf Div at the end of D Day. (Overlord...., Book II).

348. 9 Brit Inf Bde (the reserve brigade) landed in the early afternoon of D Day. It was engaged in comparatively little fighting during the day, but suffered the loss of its commander after it had landed.

349. The dispositions of 3 Brit Inf Div at the end of D Day are shown at Appx "L". The operations which had been planned for it on D Day were ambitious, a fact which stands out even without the benefit of hindsight. It was realized beforehand that the enemy would be sensitive to any drive on Caen, and that stubborn resistance could be expected (Scarfe, op cit, p. 66). Thus although the division was heavily supported to accomplish its role, its success would depend a great deal upon good fortune and speed. As the former disappeared during the day, the latter became a walk rather than the hoped-for race.

350. (iii) 50th (Northumbrian) Division The intention of 50 (N) Div was "to penetrate the beach defs between Le Hamel and La Riviere" and to secure by last light on D Day a line which ran along the high ground immediately east of the Drome River southward to the Monunirel feature, crossed the Aure River south of Bayeux

at Guéron, then went along the high ground east of this river as far south as La Vallerie, thence almost directly east until it cut the Caen-Bayeux road southeast of St. Leger (Overlord, D Day, 6 June 1944, op cit, Book I).

"The divisional commander also intended to exploit, with a mobile force including armour, to Villers Bocage..." an important communications centre some 20 miles inland (Ibid). The division was to land on a two brigade front with two infantry brigades in reserve.

351. During Phase I, the two assault brigades (231 Inf Bde Gp right, 69 Inf Bde Gp left) would assault through JIG and KING Sectors respectively, and would establish a beachhead between Le Hamel and La Rivière (inclusive) some two miles in depth. During Phase II, 69 Inf Bde Gp would advance southward flanking 3 Cdn Inf Div to the Creully-Le Manoir line along the River Seulles, while 231 Inf Bde Gp would drive west to a line running from the coast through Longues to Ryes. Coastal defences in the area would be taken from the rear. During this phase, 47 R.M. Commando, after landing and assembling in 231 Inf Bde's firm base, would strike out westward to capture Port-en-Bessin. Also, the two reserve brigades (56 Inf Bde and 151 Inf Bde) would land and assemble in the areas of Buhot and Meuvaines - Ver-sur-Mer respectively. During Phase III, the reserve brigades would move southwestward against Bayeux with 56 Inf Bde right and 151 Inf Bde left. 69 Inf Bde would continue its advance south to a position along the Caen-Bayeux road. During Phase IV, 231 Inf Bde was to exploit towards Escures where, it was hoped, contact would be made with 16 RCT of 1 U.S. Inf Div. 56 Inf Bde would capture Bayeux, secure the high ground beyond the city, and make contact with 1 U.S. Div along the Drome River. 151 Inf Bde was to advance and secure a line running southeastward along the eastern bank of the Aure River from the Guéron bridge to Ellon, thence east to Condé sur Seulles. 69 Inf Bde, continuing south, would reach the Caen-Bayeux railway line between the River Seulles and Putot-en-Bessin. The thrust to Villers-Bocage was to be accomplished by 8 Armd Bde Exploitation Force which, after assembling in the Martragny-Brécy area, would drive south to its objective on the St. Leger - Fontenay-le Pesnel - Monts axis. It was believed this force would be ready to carry out its task on D plus 1.

352. H Hour for 50 (N) Div was at 0725 hrs. The assault brigades' landings were carried out under circumstances similar to 3 Cdn and 3 Brit Inf Divs, with the exception that in 50 (N) Div, all D.D. tanks were landed dryshod after the infantry were ashore. On the right 231 Inf Bde Gp met with unexpectedly strong resistance (Ibid, p. 135). In general, as the brigade swung westward, those forces charged with clearing the area nearest the coast made slower progress owing to the need to overcome the more numerous and well defended coastal strongpoints. Thus the Le Hamel strongpoint was not reported clear until 1600 hrs, although Ryes, several miles south and west of this point, was captured by 1625 hrs. The advance of this brigade went forward slowly during the remainder of the day.

At last light, the Arromanches-La Rosiere line formed the brigade's westernmost boundary, a position approximately half way to its D Day objective at Longues.

353. 47 R.M. Commando, after landing $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Le Hamel at H plus 1 hour, set out across country to capture Port-en-Bessin, the small coastal town on the British-American army boundary. By the end of D Day the Commando had reached a position a few miles south of their objective, where it remained undetected during the night. On D plus 2 it had secured its objective at heavy cost.

354. 69 Inf Bde Gp succeeded in overcoming the beach defences in its sector and pushing inland without undue difficulty. The Mont Fleury and Ver-sur-Mer positions were quickly overrun, but the La Riviere defences held out longer and caused many casualties. Early in the afternoon the leading elements of the brigade had crossed the River Seulles at Creully. By the end of D Day, the whole brigade was well across the water obstacle and had firmly established itself on a line a short distance north of Rucqueville-Coulombs. For his valour during these operations, C.S.M. S.E. Hollis, (Green Howards) won the Victoria Cross (Clay, op cit, p. 244).

355. 56 Inf Bde landed about noon and, after assembling southwest of Buhot, moved off to seize Bayeux. The leading battalions reached the line Rosiere-Ryes about 1930 hrs. The two leading mobile columns, followed by the main body, made good progress and met only light opposition. By the end of D Day, the right-hand column had consolidated at Vaux sur Aure -- about 2500 yards short of its objective. No contact with American forces was made. The left-hand column, meanwhile, reached St. Sulpice about 2130 hrs and consolidated on the St. Sulpice feature for the night. The main body established itself at Magny, midway between and to the rear of the advance battalions.

356. The second reserve brigade, 151 Inf Bde, landed late in the morning and was assembled on the Meuvaines ridge by 1331 hrs. Its axis of advance lay between 56 Inf Bde on the right and 69 Inf Bde on the left. At 1530 hrs the advance mobile columns of the brigade, each followed by a battalion group, started off. The reserve battalion followed close behind. The advance was rapid and resistance was scattered. By 2000 hrs the right-hand column was on the Caen-Bayeux road and had tanks probing into the outskirts of Bayeux. The left-hand column reached Esquay-sur-Seulles at approximately the same time. After consolidating its position for the night, the brigade's southernmost line ran about three miles to the west through Esquay-sur-Seulles from the River Seulles.

357. The disposition of 50 (N) Div at the end of D Day is shown at Appx 'L'. Although it had not gained all its D Day objectives, the division had made rapid progress on a wide front. Bayeux stood almost within its grasp, and there was nothing to indicate that on the morrow the city and the high ground beyond would not fall into its hands. The threatening thrust of 50 (N) Div towards Bayeux caused the enemy to react in such a way as to favor the hard pressed American forces on OMAHA Beach. By drawing an enemy regiment toward itself, and away from a position where it could counter-attack the weak American position on OMAHA Beach, 50 (N) Div was instrumental

in relieving the greatest crisis in the "NEPTUNE" area on D Day. (Harrison, op cit, pp 320 ff)

358. (iv) First United States Army* Some indication of the operations planned by the First United States Army has been given above (paras 25-39). In brief

The general plan of attack called for a simultaneous landing on two main beaches. The VII Corps, with 4th Infantry Division making the assault by sea and assisted by the 82d Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division landing in the rear of the German coastal defences, was to establish a beachhead in the neighborhood of Varreville near the southern portion of the east coast of the Cotentin Peninsula.** The V Corps, with one combat team of the 29th Infantry Division on the right and one combat team of the 1st Infantry Division on the left, all under the command of the 1st Division, was to establish a beachhead on the northern coast of the Calvados near St. Laurent-sur-Mer.***

(First United States Army Report of Operations, 20 October 1943 - 1 August 1944, Book I, p. 26)

359. Before outlining the divisional plans and operations, the geographical problems facing First US Army should be noted. UTAH and OMAHA Beaches were some 18 miles apart, and between them were two main water obstacles, the Vire and Douve Rivers and their numerous tributaries. Behind each beach were areas inundated by the enemy. The flooded sector behind OMAHA stretched along the Aure River (roughly parallel to the coast) from Isigny to Trévières, some five miles inland from the coast. This left the eastern sector of OMAHA unaffected. The situation behind the UTAH Beach was more serious. Immediately inland from the beach the enemy had flooded an area from one to two miles wide stretching from Pouppeville to Quinéville. Four narrow causeways over this inundation provided the only exits from UTAH beach.

*American military abbreviations will be used where applicable when referring to United States military formations.

**This was "UTAH" Beach, between Varreville 4299 and the Carentan Estuary 4590. (Initial Joint Plan)

***This was "OMAHA" Beach, between Vierville-sur-Mer (6491) and Colleville-sur-Mer (6888). (Initial Joint Plan)