

The Normandy Campaign

THE ADVANCE INLAND

BACKGROUND

The Allies fighting in Normandy were a team of teams – from squads and crews through armies, navies and air forces of many thousands. Click below for maps and summaries of critical periods during their campaign, and for the opportunity to explore unit contributions in greater detail.

6 JUNE ~ **D-Day**

7-13 JUNE ~ **Linkup**

14-20 JUNE ~ **Struggle In The Hedgerows**

21-30 JUNE ~ **The Fall Of Cherbourg**

1-18 JULY ~ **To Caen And Saint-Lô**

19-25 JULY ~ **Caen Falls**

26-31 JULY ~ **The Operation Cobra Breakout**

1-13 AUGUST ~ **Exploitation And Counterattack**

14-19 AUGUST ~ **Falaise And Orleans**

20-25 AUGUST ~ **The Liberation Of Paris**

6 June

Shortly after midnight the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions jumped into Normandy to secure bridgeheads and beach exits in advance of the main amphibious attack. Beginning at 0630 the 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions stormed ashore at Omaha Beach against fierce resistance. Beginning at 0700 the 4th Infantry Division overwhelmed less effective opposition securing Utah Beach, in part because of disruption the airborne landings had caused. By day's end the Americans were securely ashore at Utah and Commonwealth Forces at Gold, Juno and Sword Beaches. The hold on Omaha Beach was less secure, as fighting continued on through the night of 6-7 June.

7-13 June

The 1st, 2nd and 29th Infantry Divisions attacked out of Omaha Beach to expand the beachhead and link up with their allies. The 1st linked up with the British and pushed forward to Caumont-l'Éventé against weakening resistance. The 29th fought its way south and west and linked up with forces from Utah Beach, while the 2nd attacked alongside both and secured the interval between them. The 101st Airborne Division seized Carentan after fierce fighting, and the 82nd Airborne Division, subsequently reinforced by the 90th Infantry Division, faced similarly tough opposition expanding bridgeheads across the Merderet River. The 4th Infantry Division battled its way along the coastline towards Montebourg, while Commonwealth Forces beat off fierce counterattacks around Caen. Behind the expanding beachhead an unrelenting buildup of troops and supplies continued.

14-20 June

Emphasis shifted to over-running the Cotentin Peninsula and isolating the port of Cherbourg. The 9th, 79th and 90th Infantry Divisions and the 82nd Airborne Division attacked west from the Utah beachhead to cut the peninsula in two. Then the 90th and 82nd swung south to block potential counterattacks while the 9th and 79th Divisions swung north towards Cherbourg. The 4th Infantry Division continued its attacks along the east coast to close on Cherbourg as well. The 101st Airborne Division and 30th Infantry conducted limited attacks and sustained an active defense securing Carentan and the vital link between forces operating in the Cotentin Peninsula and the rest of the expanding beachhead. The 29th and 2nd Infantry Divisions pushed through tough resistance towards Saint-Lô, while the 1st Infantry Division secured the right flank of Commonwealth Forces engaged in heavy fighting around Caen. The 2nd Armored Division served as a mobile reserve and dispatched subordinate elements to reinforce the attacks of sister units.

21-30 June

Allied offensives focused on Cherbourg and Caen. The 9th, 79th and 4th Infantry Divisions battled their way through formidable fortifications and fierce resistance to seize Cherbourg. The port itself fell on the 27th, and residual resistance had been mopped up by the end of the month. Meanwhile the 1st, 2nd, 29th, 30th and 90th Infantry Divisions and the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions sustained aggressive defenses in their sectors, protecting the rear of the attack on Cherbourg, furthering the attrition of the Germans, and covering the build-up for the breakout offensive. The 2nd Armored Division continued as a mobile reserve, dispatching reinforcements to divisions in the line as necessary. The 3rd Armored Division and 83rd Infantry Divisions arrived and deployed, with the 83rd replacing the 101st at Carentan. Commonwealth attacks near Caen drew off the lion's share of German armored forces, and forced them to deploy piecemeal rather than make concerted counter-attacks.

1-18 July

Breakout from Normandy required infantrymen fighting through a dense and difficult perimeter of marshes and bocage to reach ground suitable for mechanized warfare. In the American sector, such ground ran roughly from Coutances through Saint-Lô to Caumont-l'Éventé. The 79th and 90th Infantry Divisions, supported for a time by the 82nd Airborne Division and then by the 8th Infantry Division, battled down the west coast to seize La Haye-du-Puits and approach Coutances. The 83rd and 4th Infantry Divisions battered their way forward from Carentan to the outskirts of Périers. The 9th and 30th Infantry Divisions opened a route from Carentan to Saint-Lô, while the 2nd Infantry Division seized Hill 192 overlooking Saint-Lô from the east. The 35th and 29th Infantry Divisions fought to the outskirts of Saint-Lô, and the 29th forced its way into the city itself. The 2nd, 3rd and the newly arrived 4th Armored Divisions supported these offensives with detachments and the 1st and then the 5th Infantry Divisions conducted aggressive defenses around Caumont-l'Éventé. By 18 July the American Army was clear of the worst of the marshes and bocage, and suitably positioned for mechanized warfare. To their east Commonwealth Forces fought their way into Caen. The 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions withdrew to England to prepare for further airborne operations.

19-25 July

Commonwealth Forces launched a major offensive that seized the rest of Caen and drew off the last of the much depleted German mobile reserves. Meanwhile the Americans positioned themselves for a major breakthrough attack, code-named COBRA. 2,500 planes would drop 5,000 tons of bombs within a six-mile-sector of the German front west of Saint-Lô. Following this "carpet bombing" the 9th, 30th and 4th Infantry Divisions would attack through the breach and secure a rupture in the German front, after which the 1st Infantry and the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions would pass through them to exploit deep into the German rear. To the west of the rupture the 79th, 8th, 90th and 83rd and newly arriving 28th Infantry Divisions would force the attack against the now outflanked Germans, and the 4th, 6th and newly arriving 5th Armored Divisions would exploit through them into Brittany and beyond. To the east of the rupture the 29th, 35th, 2nd and 5th Infantry Divisions would wheel east on line with the developing envelopment as it gathered momentum. At 1100 on 25 July the carpet bombing commenced. The Battle for Normandy had ended; the Battle for France had begun.

26-31 July

A Canadian diversionary attack southeast from Caen on July 25th had drawn German reserves into a major counterattack, while carpet bombing south of Saint-Lô with more than 4,200 tons of munitions stunned the Germans in that sector. After a day of hard fighting the German line crumpled, and American armored columns pushed through the wreckage at an ever accelerating pace. Coutances fell on the 28th and Avranches on the 30th.

1-13 August

An American corps led by two armored divisions sped past Avranches and quickly overran Brittany, forcing the few German units there not already committed to Normandy into fortified coastal enclaves. Further mobile columns pushed through the Avranches gap and swung south and east, some hooking towards Argentan to entrap Germans remaining in Normandy while others pushed towards Le Mans for a deeper penetration. A desperate German counterattack at Mortain attempted to break through to the sea and split the Allies in two, but was turned back after fierce fighting.

14-19 August

The Polish armored division serving with General Bernard Montgomery's Army Group linked up with the Americans near Chambois on 19 August, closing the Falaise pocket and trapping over 50,000 Germans within it. Tens of thousands more had been killed in the fighting or lost their equipment in the pursuit. In Brittany, Saint-Malo fell on the 17th and Brest, Lorient and Saint-Nazaire went under siege. General George S. Patton's Third Army pushed on towards Paris, seizing Orleans on the 16th and forcing the Seine River at Mantes on the 19th. The Allies poised for yet another encirclement of German forces and destroyed many others in the course of the pursuit.

20-25 August

The Allied advance encircled yet another group of fleeing Germans southeast of Rouen, and then closed to the Seine, seizing additional river crossings as they did so. Free French uprisings contested Paris with the occupying forces. Allied forces pushed on into Paris, liberating the city on 25 August. The French 2nd Armored Division made a triumphal entry into Paris that day, in the midst of wildly ecstatic crowds. Meanwhile other Allied columns pushed on past Paris, hoping to entrap or overrun further German forces in a general pursuit to the German border. Allied forces had landed in southern France on 15 August, and pushed rapidly northwards to join those who had come ashore through Normandy.

1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

The 1st Infantry Division – the “Big Red One” – assault landed onto Omaha Beach on 6 June, 1944. Seas were choppy and cross currents strong. Many landing craft came ashore some distance from where they had intended. German resistance, supported by significant obstacles, was well organized and determined. American units found themselves intermingled, exposed and under heavy fire. Amidst this confusion seasoned junior and intermediate leaders asserted themselves and restored momentum to the attack. Soldiers in small groups clawed their way onto the bluffs overlooking the beaches, and turned aside to outflank German defenders blocking the few draws capable of passing vehicles from the beaches to higher ground. Attacking through the night, by the next morning the division was astride Route 814 along the bluffs above the beach, and positioned to bring further vehicles and reinforcements ashore. The courage under adversity of Omaha Beach has become iconic in the lore of the American soldier.

7-13 June

The 1st Infantry Division broke through the crust of enemy coastal defenses and pushed inland. On 9 June, after tough fighting, just outside of Bayeux the division linked up with the British 50th Infantry Division fighting its way inland from Gold Beach. Meanwhile, reinforcements were pouring ashore into the perimeter secured by the 1st Infantry Division, and the American 2nd Infantry Division came alongside it on its right flank. The attack pressed forward into difficult Norman bocage. Here troops encountered fields separated by thick hedgerows that divided the terrain into small compartments. Ground had to be seized one field at a time, and the defenders enjoyed numerous tactical advantages. The division nevertheless battled its way forward, forcing crossings of the Aure and Drome Rivers and advancing over 20 miles in the first week. On 13 June it seized the strategic high ground around Caumont, and cleared that town the same day.

14-20 June

Having seized Caumont, the 1st Infantry Division was appreciably in advance of other Allied divisions, forming a salient into German lines. German efforts to reinforce their lines in Normandy had been greatly hindered by air strikes and an Allied deception plan that fixated their attention on the Pas de Calais, but they had managed to accumulate significant armored forces near Caen, and sufficient forces to effectively defend elsewhere. Anticipating German counterattacks and focusing resources on seizing the port of Cherbourg, First Army Commander General Omar N. Bradley went over to the defensive in the 1st Infantry Division's sector. The division was ordered to dig in, hold what it had seized, and conduct aggressive patrolling “so as to deny the enemy any opportunity to abandon this front with impunity.” The division secured the shoulder of Commonwealth forces heavily engaged around Caen, and diverted and attrited its immediate adversaries with skirmishing, limited objective attacks, and counterattacks.

21-30 June

The 1st Infantry Division continued to defend in its sector, securing ground between major Commonwealth efforts to seize Caen and major American efforts to seize Cherbourg. The division's defense was an active one; regiments routinely sent out 60 patrols a night to probe enemy lines, keep the enemy off balance, secure tactical intelligence, and identify worthy targets for air and artillery strikes. Stung by this rough treatment, the Germans responded with patrols and counterattacks of their own, but generally got the worst of it. When their locations became known, they found themselves subject to deadly American artillery fire. Indeed, artillery and snipers were dominant sources of casualties for both sides in this sector during this period. The 1st ID perfected techniques for eradicating snipers, and many of its combat patrols were dispatched for this purpose. The attrition and diversion of German forces continued.

1-18 July

After two more weeks of active defense and aggressive patrolling, the 1st Infantry Division was relieved in its sector by the newly arrived 5th Infantry Division. With Cherbourg secured, the Allies turned their attention to a major breakout operation, which came to be codenamed COBRA. While grinding attacks by units on line west of the Vire River clawed towards ground suitable for mechanized operations, First Army Commander General Omar N. Bradley accumulated a mobile reserve to serve as his breakout force. When COBRA commenced, he wanted "to make certain the blitz would get off to a fast start" and "called on the Big Red One to pace it." The division withdrew to the vicinity of Bricqueville-sur-Mer to rest, refit, and fully motorize itself. The Big Red One, along with the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions, would serve as the breakout force.

19-25 July

The 1st Infantry Division poised to serve in the breakout force for Operation COBRA. COBRA had been set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. The plan envisioned "carpet bombing" by 2,500 planes dropping 5,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector of the German front west of Saint-Lô. Successful carpet bombing depended upon sufficient visibility for pilots and bombardiers. During the delay the 1st Infantry Division refined its preparations for the attack, in particular the incorporation of Combat Command B of the 3rd Armored Division as an attachment. The tanks of this armored reinforcement were fitted out with the improvised "Culin Device", steel prongs welded to their hulls that enabled them to plow through hedgerows rather than expose underbellies or tip over trying to crest them. By 25 July the weather had cleared and the carpet bombing commenced. By midnight on the 25th the 1st Infantry Division had closed to the Pérrier - Saint-Lô highway within its sector.

26-31 July

The 1st Infantry Division rolled through the wreckage left by the carpet bombing of 25 July and attacked towards Marigny. Organized resistance had by and large been shat-

tered, but small groups of Germans kept up the fight. Confused fighting swirled around Marigny itself before the town was finally secured. The division's attached Combat Command B pushed on towards Coutances, but that attack was overcome by events. A general withdrawal of German forces west of Marigny was followed up on by American divisions in that sector, who seized Coutances themselves. The division redirected its attack from southwest to due south. Effectively supported by wide ranging fighter-bombers and encountering increasingly incoherent hasty battle positions, the division's attached armor barreled past Brecey on 31 July. Infantrymen mopped up scattered resistance in the wake of the mounted advance. The breakthrough into a war of open maneuver had at last occurred.

1-13 August

Having outflanked what remained of a continuous German line, the 1st Infantry Division pushed on to seize high ground in the vicinity of Mortain, securing the flank of General George S. Patton's newly activated Third Army as it broke out into Brittany and also swung eastwards towards Le Mans. The 1st Infantry Division turned its positions around Mortain over to the 30th Infantry Division on 6 August, and pushed on to Ambrieres-le-Grand and Mayenne as Patton's penetration deepened. On 7 August the Germans attempted a desperate counterattack through Mortain with an armored reserve they had accumulated for that purpose. They hoped to reach the sea at Avranches, cutting off Patton's Third Army. The weight of the attack hit the 30th Infantry Division, but portions of it were repulsed by the 1st Infantry Division, which thereafter held the southern shoulder until reinforcements arrived. The Mortain offensive, handled locally, turned into a disaster for the Germans while Patton's offensive continued unchecked.

14-19 August

General George S. Patton's Third Army's attack to the east encircled numerous German forces when it hooked northwards towards Argentan and Falaise. The 1st Infantry Division had been securing the shoulder of this offensive, but now received orders to join in the attack as Allied forces squeezed the entrapped Germans into an ever smaller and smaller "Falaise Pocket". The division advanced from Mayenne to eight miles northeast of Domfront by 16 August, after which it was pinched out by British forces crossing its front as the pocket disappeared. This proved yet another disaster for the Germans, who lost 50,000 prisoners in addition to the tens of thousands already killed or wounded in the fighting. Perhaps equally damaging, the Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or in the pursuit. The 1st Infantry Division was now free for another mission.

20-25 August

Having been pinched out of the line by the closure of the Falaise Pocket, the 1st Infantry Division continued mopping up and enjoyed some welcome rest and recuperation, but not for long. The Allied advance across France continued at a breakneck pace. A further encirclement entrapped even more Germans just short of the Seine River, and on 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division made a triumphal entry into Paris in the midst of wildly ecstatic crowds. Meanwhile, Allied commanders

envisioned even deeper penetrations and pursuit beyond the Seine. The Big Red One was part of these plans, and was trucked over 100 miles to the east beyond Chartres, there to reassemble and prepare to continue the attack.

2ND INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

The 2nd Infantry Division – the “Indian Head Division” – was on board ships and en route to Omaha Beach. It was scheduled to offload beginning 7 June.

7-13 June

The 2nd Infantry Division began offloading across Omaha Beach on the evening of 7 June, and by 9 June assumed responsibility for a 5,000-yard front. Its initial objective was the town of Trevieres, which it secured early on 10 June after difficult fighting. The division's next objective was the Foret de Cerisy, occupying high ground six miles south of the beaches and dominating the beachhead with its observation and fields of fire. The forest also provided concealment for potential German counterattacks. The division's attack progressed quickly past and through the forest, until it encountered stiff residual resistance at the crossroads of Haute Littee. This too fell within a day, and the following day the division went on to force a crossing of the Elle River. In five days of fighting the 2nd Infantry Division had pushed the Germans off of arguably the most defensible terrain facing the eastern half of the Omaha beachhead, and had deprived them of an opportunity for placing observed fire on the beaches.

14-20 June

The 2nd Infantry Division attacked to seize Hill 192, key terrain dominating the critical road junction of Saint-Lô from the northeast. The attack progressed slowly against determined resistance from German paratroopers making skillful use of heavily compartmented bocage terrain. It took several days for the division to gain a firm foothold on Hill 192, securing a salient within 700 meters of the crest. Meanwhile the Germans accumulated significant armored forces near Caen. Anticipating German counterattacks and focusing resources on seizing the port of Cherbourg, First Army Commander General Omar N. Bradley went over to the defensive in the 2nd Infantry Division's sector. The division was ordered to dig in, hold what it had seized, and conduct aggressive patrolling “so as to deny the enemy any opportunity to abandon this front with impunity.” The division diverted and attrited its immediate adversaries with skirmishing, limited objective attacks, and counterattacks.

21-30 June

The 2nd Infantry Division continued to defend in its sector, enlarging its hold on Hill 192 and the surrounding terrain as circumstances permitted. The division's defense was an active one; all three of its infantry regiments sent out numerous patrols to probe enemy lines, secure tactical intelligence, identify worthy targets for air and artillery strikes, and keep the enemy off balance. Stung by this rough treatment, the Germans responded with patrols and counterattacks of their own. When their locations became known, they found themselves subject to deadly American artillery fire. Indeed, artillery and snipers were dominant sources of casualties for both sides in this sector during this period. The 2nd

Infantry Division paid considerable attention to eradicating snipers, and many of its combat patrols were dispatched for this purpose. The village of Saint-George-d'Elle was particularly contested, and the scene of repeated fire fights and artillery strikes. The attrition and diversion of German forces continued.

1-18 July

On 11 July the 2nd Infantry Division attacked to secure the entirety of Hill 192. Soldiers and leaders had trained carefully for the assault, drilling teams of tanks, engineers and infantry to fight together in the close terrain of the bocage while husbanding a mass of artillery munitions to support them. In preparation for the attack the division fired 20,000 rounds of artillery, and dropped 45 tons of ordnance all told during the course of the attack. One regiment advanced with two battalions abreast across the west slope of the hill while another rushed forward in a column of battalions along the east slope. By the following day all of Hill 192 was in American hands, although the cost of success had been over 400 American casualties. Saint-George-d'Elle was now untenable for the Germans, who withdrew from that hotly contested village as well.

19-25 July

The 2nd Infantry Division defended in its sector, pinning down units to its front and anticipating the major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned a massive "carpet bombing" followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines, and then two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division exploiting through the hole thus made. The 2nd Infantry Division would number among the additional divisions broadening the attack, keeping pressure on German forces to its front while the penetration deepened in their rear. COBRA was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector of the German front just west of Saint-Lô. The Battle for Normandy was ending as the Battle for France began.

26-31 July

The 2nd Infantry Division attacked to seize the ridge and town of Saint-Jean-des-Baisants. Tanks equipped with hedge cutters and supported by time-fuzed artillery tore holes in one hedgerow after another, opening breaches through which tanks and infantry poured behind curtains of artillery fire. Progress was difficult initially, but a coordinated attack in the late afternoon gained 1700 yards by nightfall. The 2nd Infantry Division forced its way into Saint-Jean-des-Baisants on 28 July. German resistance was crumbling, although the terrain itself in the division's sector continued to be an impediment to rapid advance. Small irregular hills, winding roads and a patchwork of hedge-rowed fields forced a battle at every turn even if the enemy defense was losing cohesion. By 31 July the 2nd Infantry Division had advanced yet another eight miles south of Saint-Jean-des-Baisants, forcing back the enemy lines even as armored columns raced through more open terrain into their rear areas.

1-13 August

The 2nd Infantry Division attacked to seize the high ground north of Vire, yet another important river crossing and crossroads. The Germans were continuing to withdraw behind determined rear guard actions, making optimal use of difficult terrain. The 2nd Infantry Division nevertheless battered its way forward, establishing positions overlooking Vire on 5 August. Supported by the 2nd Infantry Division, the 29th Infantry Division then attacked and seized the town of Vire itself on 7 August. The 2nd and 29th Infantry Divisions followed up on this success by attacking abreast southeast in the direction of Tinchebray. By this time General George S. Patton's Third Army was encircling the retreating Germans, forming a major pocket in the vicinity of Falaise. The advance towards Tinchebray increased the pressure on this ever-shrinking pocket, forcing the Germans in front of the 2nd Infantry Division to fight in one direction while fearing encirclement from another.

14-19 August

The 2nd Infantry Division joined in the destruction of German forces within the newly formed Falaise Pocket. It pivoted its attack from south to east as Allied forces squeezed the entrapped Germans into a smaller and smaller area. The division seized the strategic crossroads of Tinchebray and the high ground surrounding on 15 August before being pinched out by British forces crossing its front as the pocket disappeared. The Falaise Pocket proved to be yet another disaster for the Germans, who lost 50,000 prisoners in addition to the tens of thousands already killed or wounded in the fighting. Perhaps equally damaging, the Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or in the pursuit. The 2nd Infantry Division was now free for another mission. General Omar N. Bradley decided to send it to Brittany to participate in the siege and capture of Brest. The division departed en route to Brest on 18 August.

20-25 August

Pinched out of the line by the closure of the Falaise Pocket the 2nd Infantry Division reoriented into the Brittany Campaign and siege of Brest. Brest was one of the most important ports in France, and had served as a base for German U-Boats that had long wreaked havoc on Allied shipping. It was heavily fortified and stoutly defended by paratroopers, infantry and naval personnel, and required prolonged and deliberate attack to secure. The Americans mustered three divisions for this arduous task, the 2nd, 8th and 29th Infantry Divisions, in addition to artillery, naval and air support. On 21 August elements of the 2nd Infantry Division attacked to seize Hill 154, heavily entrenched key terrain over watching the southern approaches into the city and harbor. After savage fighting using flamethrowers, demolitions, and direct and indirect fires, the division carried Hill 154 on 23 August, and one of its infantry battalions earned the Distinguished Unit Citation in the process. Brest itself finally fell on 19 September.

4th Infantry Division

6 June

The 4th Infantry Division – the “Ivy Division” – assault landed onto Utah Beach on 6 June 1944. The enemy had already been disrupted the night before by airborne landings to secure egress off the beaches, and naval and air bombardment seems to have been effective as well. The first wave came ashore 2,000 yards south of the point intended due to the obscuration of landmarks and a strong coastal current, but quickly made its way inland against minimal opposition. Twenty-eight of 32 DD tanks supporting the attack made it ashore, and provided invaluable armor support to the push inland. Within three hours engineers had cleared the principal beach areas of significant obstacles, and the further landing of reinforcements proceeded smoothly. By nightfall the division was ashore intact, organized and equipped for further offensive action. It had suffered 200 casualties during the course of the day, most to intermittent artillery fire.

7-13 June

The 4th Infantry Division attacked northwards to secure the Quineville—Montebourg Ridge. Possession of this terrain feature would push German artillery out of range of the beaches and compromise their best defensive positions in the approach to Cherbourg. Much of the ground en route was swampy, and the rest featured strong points built into the formidable Norman bocage. The Germans had an unusually large concentration of artillery in the Cotentin Peninsula, and attacks proved difficult and costly. The division nevertheless pushed on, a little at a time. Private Ralph G. Riley, for example, earned the Distinguished Service Cross for crawling up to a blockhouse engineers had dynamited several times without effect, working his flamethrower into an aperture proximate to enemy ammunition, and setting off explosions that forced the surrender of the entire position. By 13 July the division had outflanked both Quineville and Montebourg and was astride the ridge between them.

14-20 June

While the 4th Infantry Division secured their flank and fixed the Germans on the Quineville—Montebourg Ridge, the 9th and 90th Infantry Divisions and 82nd Airborne Division attacked across the Cotentin Peninsula to cut it in two. This so disrupted the German defenses that General Omar N. Bradley ordered an immediate advance on Cherbourg. The 4th Infantry Division encountered significant resistance initially but, with the help of attached tanks and intelligence it had built up during four days of active patrolling, broke through the German lines along the Quineville - Montebourg Ridge within 24 hours. The division advanced rapidly thereafter, seizing the important transportation hub of Valognes the following day. By the evening of 20 June the division had pushed to the outskirts of Cherbourg, encountering the heavily fortified positions around its perimeter from which the Germans intended to defend.

21-30 June

The 4th Infantry Division, in concert with the 9th and 79th Infantry Divisions, at-

tacked to seize Cherbourg. The enemy was well fortified and put up fierce resistance. At times maneuver units found themselves involved in 360-degree battles as Germans they had bypassed or overrun fired into their rear while they were continuing to attack to the front. Supply trains and reinforcements required armored escorts until follow-on forces mopped up this residual resistance. Artillery, air strikes, tanks, engineers and infantry were tightly integrated into attacks on one strong point after another. By 25 June the division fought its way into Cherbourg itself, and cleared its sector in house-to-house fighting. Here mines and booby traps proved as great a threat as enemy firepower. When Cherbourg itself fell, the division turned its attention to reducing strong points around the perimeter bypassed during the advance. The last of these surrendered on 29 June.

1-18 July

Breakout from Normandy required fighting through a dense and difficult perimeter of marshes and bocage to reach ground suitable for mechanized warfare. Redeploying from the grueling battle for Cherbourg, the 4th Infantry Division was directed to attack alongside the 83rd Infantry Division down the narrow strip of land separating the marshy Prairies Marecageuses de Gorges from the flooded Taute River. This offensive was to push German artillery out of range of the vital coastal highway through Carentan and achieve more open ground near Périers for further offensives. The attack progressed slowly against determined resistance in the soggy terrain. Intermittent foul weather diminished visibility and air support. The division did get one break when it hammered an exposed enemy counterattack with artillery, and then quickly followed up to seize the ground they had been on. On 15 July, after having suffered 2,300 casualties in 10 days, the division was pulled out of the line to prepare for another mission.

19-25 July

The 4th Infantry Division rested and refitted for the major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned a massive "carpet bombing" followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines, and then two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division exploiting through the hole thus made. As the gap widened and resistance crumpled, further forces would pour through or follow up in pursuit. The three infantry divisions to make the initial attack were the 9th, 4th and 30th from right to left. COBRA was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector of the German front just west of Saint-Lô. The 4th Infantry Division attacked at 1100 and by nightfall had reached the outskirts of Chapelle-en-Juger. En route it encountered and overwhelmed a few pockets of resistance that still had some fight left in them.

26-31 July

The 4th Infantry Division continued to advance against collapsing German resis-

tance. By 27 July it was more than a dozen miles from its starting position, and in the next few days added several miles more. It also cleared routes for the passage of armored divisions through it, and began mopping up residual enemy resistance in the breakthrough area as the armored divisions assumed the lead. Some of its elements were temporarily attached to the exploiting armored columns and saw further significant action with them. 4th Infantry Division units assisted the 2nd Armored Division in beating back concerted German efforts to escape the closing trap in the Cotentin Peninsula, for example, and others weighted armored spearheads penetrating deep into enemy lines. By 31 July the division was once again back together and prepared for further offensive operations, this time in the vicinity of Villedieu-les-Poêles.

1-13 August

The 4th Infantry Division attacked to seize Saint-Pois, a town strongly held by the Germans on the north flank of General George S. Patton's Third Army breakout. The division's attached armor encircled the town from the south, after which its three infantry regiments attacked abreast to secure the dominating terrain to its north. Hastily evacuating Germans were pulverized by the division's direct and indirect fires. On 7 August the Germans attempted a desperate counterattack through Mortain with an armored reserve they had accumulated for that purpose. They hoped to reach the sea at Avranches, cutting off Patton's Third Army. The weight of the attack hit the 30th Infantry Division. The 4th Infantry Division moved quickly to secure the 30th Infantry Division's northern shoulder, pummeling the Germans with artillery fire as it did so. The Mortain offensive, handled locally, turned into a disaster for the Germans while Patton's offensive continued unchecked.

14-19 August

General George S. Patton's Third Army attack encircled numerous German forces when it sped east and then hooked north towards Argentan and Falaise. The 4th Infantry Division had been securing the northern shoulder of this offensive, but now received orders to backstop VII Corps as the corps reserve while Allied forces squeezed the entrapped Germans into an ever smaller "Falaise Pocket". The VII Corps attack progressed quickly, advancing to the outskirts of Briouze before being pinched out by advancing British forces as the pocket disappeared. The Falaise Pocket proved yet another disaster for the Germans, who lost 50,000 prisoners in addition to the tens of thousands already killed or wounded in the fighting. Perhaps equally damaging, the Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or the pursuit.

19-25 August

The Allied advance across France continued at a breakneck pace, and the French Forces of the Interior (FFI) rose to contest German control of Paris. Fearing the potential destruction and loss of life should fighting break out in the city, and eager to secure bridges across the Seine, the Allies pressed forward towards Paris. The French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division were selected to liberate the national capitol. German resistance along the approaches to the city was stiffer than expected, but the Germans

did not seriously contest the city itself – and proved mindful of preserving its historical and cultural legacy. Indeed, the jubilant crowds pouring into the streets proved as great an impediment to the advance of French and American units as anything the Germans did. The French 2nd Armored Division had secured most of the city and the 4th Infantry Division much of its eastern half by nightfall on 25 August.

5TH INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Bryansford, Northern Ireland, the 5th Infantry Division – the “Red Diamond Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

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21-30 June

Headquartered in Bryansford, Northern Ireland, the 5th Infantry Division – the “Red Diamond Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

The 5th Infantry Division embarked from Northern Ireland and debarked across Utah Beach beginning 9 July. It assumed control of the 1st Infantry Division's sector in the vicinity of Caumont-l'Éventé, securing ground between major Commonwealth efforts to seize Caen and major American efforts to seize Saint-Lô. The division's defense was an active one; regiments sent out frequent patrols to probe enemy lines, keep the enemy off balance, secure tactical intelligence, and identify worthy targets for air and artillery strikes. Stung by this rough treatment, the Germans responded with patrols and counterattacks of their own. Artillery and snipers were dominant sources of casualties for both sides in this sector during this period. The 5th Infantry Division improved upon its techniques for eradicating snipers, and many of its combat patrols were dispatched for this purpose. This attrition and diversion of German forces facilitated preparations for an eventual breakthrough offensive.

19-25 July

The 5th Infantry Division conducted an active defense in the vicinity of Caumont-l'Éventé, fixing the German units to its front. It also rotated subordinate units to rest and refit for the major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned a massive “carpet bombing” followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines, and then two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division exploiting through the hole thus made. As enemy frontline resistance crumpled, forces on the flanks

of the breakthrough would widen the gap. The 5th Infantry Division was to the east of the breakthrough sector, and was to attack to fix and then hopefully overwhelm the forces to its immediate front as divisions coming through the gap threatened their rear. COBRA was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector of the German front west of Saint-Lô.

26-31 July

The 5th Infantry Division attacked to seize Vidouville, keeping pressure on the Germans to their front even as the COBRA breakthrough threatened their rear. By the end of the first day the infantrymen were across the Saint-Lô to Caumont-l'Éventé Highway, and into Vidouville as well. The attack continued south to keep pressure on the Germans, and to prevent them from reestablishing an effective defense in the difficult bocage country in the division's path of advance. The Germans retreated, but rear guards fought back in the rough terrain with ambushes, mortars and artillery. The 5th Infantry Division fought through all this for seven miles, and pushed a battalion as far as the Souloevre River before it found itself intermingled with British units attacking southwest from Caumont-l'Éventé. The boundaries between the two allied forces were redrawn, and the 5th Infantry was pinched out of its sector – and thus available for another mission.

1-13 August

Having been relieved of its frontline duties near Caumont-l'Éventé, the 5th Infantry Division marched for three days to join General George S. Patton's Third Army at Vitre on 7 August. The division was directed to attack another 55 miles southeast to seize Angers while dispatching a battalion 65 miles southwest to outpost Nantes. Moving quickly through collapsing resistance, the division captured a railroad bridge that provided access to Angers. It rushed a regiment across the bridge, and then positioned for an attack the following day. In a little over a day of fighting the division secured Angers on 11 August, capturing over 2,000 prisoners in the process. Meanwhile the battalion dispatched to Nantes had reached the outskirts, destroyed communications facilities, and established blocking positions to preclude interference from that sector. The situation was developing rapidly, and the 5th Infantry Division drove on to the northeast as Patton's encirclement of the Falaise pocket matured.

14-19 August

The 5th Infantry Division again shifted the axis of its advance, this time from northeast to east, as General George S. Patton's Third Army sought both to close the Falaise Pocket and also to drive deep into France. In concert with the newly arrived 7th Armored Division, the next objective for the 5th Infantry Division was Chartres, considered by many to be the gateway to Paris. The Germans had designated Chartres as an "absorption point" where retreating units would rendezvous and reorganize, so defenders were numerous and resistance was fierce. The American armor arrived first and had difficulty in the narrow streets, but the 5th Infantry Division's infantrymen soon caught up to assist. Combined

arms teams of tanks and infantry cleared Chartres block by block. More than 2,000 prisoners were captured, in addition to the airport, warehouses, depots, a bomb assembly plant, and 50 planes.

20-25 August

The 5th Infantry Division attacked to seize Fontainebleau and force a crossing of the Seine River. En route it encountered and destroyed strong garrisons left behind at Etampes and Malesherbes. Even as these battles were raging, other columns bypassed the resistance and pushed on to the Seine. Here an enterprising battalion commander swam the river, policed up five small boats on the far bank, and brought them back for the use of his men. The battalion began crossing, and scavenged further boats as the operation progressed, beating back German counterattacks as it did so. By 24 August engineers had installed a tread-way bridge, and an entire regiment was across the river at that point. Meanwhile, another regiment, assisted by the French Forces of the Interior (FFI), had forced a crossing at Montereau. The division's third regiment swung to the south of both of these crossings, and crossed the Yonne River to come on line with its sister regiments. German prospects for defending the line of the Seine had been hopelessly compromised.

8TH INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Omagh, Northern Ireland, the 8th Infantry Division – the “Pathfinder Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

Headquartered in Omagh, Northern Ireland, the 8th Infantry Division – the “Pathfinder Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

Headquartered in Omagh, Northern Ireland, the 8th Infantry Division – the “Pathfinder Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

Headquartered in Omagh, Northern Ireland, the 8th Infantry Division – the “Pathfinder Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

The 8th Infantry Division embarked from Northern Ireland beginning 30 June, and debarked across Utah Beach beginning 4 July. It assumed control of the town of La Haye-du-Puits from the 79th Infantry Division on 9 July, and then attacked south to secure high ground overlooking the Ay River and potential crossing sites. The attack progressed slowly and with great difficulty through the tough bocage terrain, ably defended by determined German soldiers in mutually supporting positions. The Germans counterattacked fiercely, hoping to force the American infantrymen off recently captured ground before they could properly organize it. The Americans beat back these counterattacks and continued their own advance, maintaining their momentum and by-passing the most difficult or isolated strong points initially, intending to mop them up later. By 14 July the 8th Infantry Division fought its way onto the ridge overlooking the Ay River, occupied it, and began reconnoitering potential crossing sites. .

19-25 July

The 8th Infantry Division conducted an active defense along the Ay River, fixing the Germans to its front. It also rotated subordinate units to rest and refit for the major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned a massive “carpet bombing”

followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines, and then two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division exploiting through the hole thus made. As the gap widened and resistance crumpled, further forces would pour through or follow up in pursuit. The 8th Infantry Division was to the west of the breakthrough sector, and was to attack to fix and then hopefully overwhelm the forces to its immediate front as divisions coming through the gap penetrated deep into their rear. COBRA was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs within six-square-mile sector of the German front west of Saint-Lô.

26-31 July

On 26 July the 8th Infantry Division attacked through the thick hedgerow country separating the Ay and Seves Rivers. German resistance was stiff at first, but eroded quickly. By the evening of 28 July the division had pushed over seven miles to the outskirts of Coutances. As the Germans attempted to withdraw, the numerous minefields and booby traps they left behind became a greater danger to the Americans than direct fire itself. The division cleared routes for the passage of armored divisions exploiting the breakthrough, and mopped up residual enemy resistance in the area it had fought its way across. The division motorized one of its regiments on borrowed Quartermaster trucks so that it could accompany and assist the swiftly moving tankers. The German retreat turned into a rout as armored spearheads raced ahead. Avranches fell during the night of 30 July. The 8th Infantry Division pressed forward, mopping up German units bypassed by the armored spearheads and securing the terrain they had passed through.

1-13 August

The 8th Infantry Division continued to advance in the wake of 4th Armored Division spearheads, mopping up enemy positions the tankers had bypassed. This pairing of an armored division in the lead with a semi-motorized infantry division following in support became a preferred technique during the exploitation. Armored columns sustained the momentum of the advance, while the infantry subdued residual resistance and opened supply lines quickly enough to replenish the armor for further thrusts. The 4th Armored Division virtually encircled the critical transportation node of Rennes, and then the 8th Infantry Division pushed into the town and secured it on 4 August. Logistical routes through Rennes, once clear simultaneously supported major thrusts west towards Brest, south towards Lorient and Nantes, and east towards Le Mans and Paris. While occupying Rennes, the 8th Infantry Division sent a regiment to reinforce the 83rd Infantry Division in tough fighting to secure Dinard, a preliminary to seizing the port of Saint-Malo.

14-19 August

The 8th Infantry Division was selected to participate in the seizure of Brest. Brest was one of the most important ports in France, and served as a base for the German U-Boats that had wreaked havoc on Allied shipping throughout much of the war. It was heavily fortified and stoutly defended, and would require a prolonged and deliberate siege to se-

cure. The Americans would muster three divisions for this arduous task, the 2nd, 8th and 29th Infantry Divisions, in addition to artillery, and naval and air support. The 8th Infantry Division was relieved of its responsibilities securing Rennes, recovered the detachments it had deployed for special missions, and moved towards Brest. It reached Plabennec on 18 August, and was joined in the vicinity of Brest by the 2nd Infantry Division the following day.

20-25 August

The 8th Infantry Division, in concert with the 2nd and 29th Infantry Divisions, closed up on the defenses of Brest. Brest was heavily fortified and stoutly defended by 30,000 Germans, including the tough and capable 2nd Paratroop Division. Recognizing that the reduction of Brest would require an arduous siege, the Americans mustered 18 corps artillery battalions in addition to 16 division artillery and tank destroyer battalions accompanying the divisions. Preliminary operations isolated Brest and pushed the defenders into a restricted area. The first major attack kicked off on 25 August. After savage fighting, the city would finally fall on 19 September. Meanwhile French and American troops entered Paris on 25 August, liberating the national capital amidst the jubilation of wildly exuberant crowds.

9TH INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Southampton, England, the 9th Infantry Division – the “Old Reli-ables” – trained and prepared for deployment to France. It had transferred from the Medi-terranean Theater of Operations, and was one of the most combat experienced divisions in the United States Army at that point in the war.

7-13 June

The 9th Infantry Division embarked from England and debarked across Utah Beach during the period 10-12 June.

14-20 June

The 9th Infantry Division, in concert with the 82nd Airborne Division, spearheaded a drive to cut the Cotentin Peninsula in two. This isolated elements of three divisions and other German units in the vicinity of Cherbourg, and led to the eventual capture of that im-portant port city. Despite formidable Norman bocage terrain in the path of its advance, the division forced the Douve River and seized a crossing site at Sainte-Colombe on 16 June. One regiment attacked from this position while another passed through the 82nd Airborne Division at Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, and then both regiments sped on towards the Atlantic Ocean. By 18 June the division had fought its way through collapsing resistance to reach the coast, and then turned its orientation northwards towards Cherbourg. A German column attempting to escape the closing trap collided with the division in confused close quarters fighting, but was defeated with heavy losses. By 20 June the division had closed to the outer defenses of Cherbourg.

21-30 June

The 9th Infantry Division, in concert with the 4th and 79th Infantry Divisions, at-tacked to seize Cherbourg. The enemy was well fortified and put up fierce resistance. The 9th Infantry Division oriented on the village of Octeville and several nearby forts on high ground west of the city. It tightly integrated artillery, air strikes, tanks, engineers and in-fantry into attacks on one strong point after another as its advance progressed. By 26 June infantrymen from the division fought their way into the underground command post of the German commander in Cherbourg, Generalleutnant Karl-Wilhelm von Schlieben, and cap-tured him with 800 others. The division then cleared its sector in house-to-house fighting wherein mines and booby traps proved as great a threat as enemy firepower. When Cher-bourg itself fell, the division turned its attention to reducing strong points around the perim-eter bypassed during the advance. Six thousand holdouts in the Cap de la Hague required

a tough three-day battle before they were finally subdued.

1-18 July

Breakout from Normandy required tough fighting through a dense and difficult perimeter of marshes and bocage to reach ground suitable for mechanized warfare. Redeploying from the grueling battle for Cherbourg, the 9th Infantry Division attacked along the east side of the flooded Taute River to secure the Périers - Saint-Lô Highway, push German artillery out of range of the coastal highway through Carentan, and achieve more open ground for further offensive operations. On 11 July this offensive collided with a German counterattack by the Panzer Lehr Division. In a confused day of fighting the 9th Infantry Division contained the German attack, and then stalked the newly scattered German armor with tank destroyers and bazooka teams. Returning to the attack, the division progressed slowly against determined resistance in the difficult bocage terrain. Intermittent foul weather diminished visibility and air support. It cost the division 2,500 casualties to advance eight miles to the Périers - Saint-Lô Highway.

19-25 July

The 9th Infantry Division rested and refitted for the major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned a massive "carpet bombing" followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines, and then two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division exploiting through the hole thus made. As the gap widened and resistance crumpled, further forces would pour through or follow up in pursuit. The three infantry divisions to make the initial attack were, from right to left, the 9th, 4th and 30th. COBRA was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs within six-square-mile sector of the German front west of Saint-Lô. The 9th Infantry Division attacked at 1100, and by nightfall forced its way across the Périers - Saint-Lô Highway. The bombing and infantry attacks totally disrupted the defenders along 7,000 yards of the enemy front.

26-31 July

The 9th Infantry Division continued to advance against stiff but eroding German resistance. By 27 July it was abreast of Marigny, and shifted right to allow the passage of mechanized and motorized sister units moving forward to exploit the penetration. Some 200 Germans supported by tanks and anti-tank guns attempted a desperate last stand, but were swept away by the division's advance. The division cleared routes for the passage of armored divisions through it, and began mopping up residual enemy resistance in the breakthrough area as the armored divisions assumed the lead. The German retreat turned into a rout as armored spearheads raced ahead. Avranches fell during the night of 30 July, and Brecey on the 31st. Having fulfilled its Cobra assignment, the 9th Infantry Division passed into reserve for rest and reconstitution.

1-13 August

The 9th Infantry Division attacked to seize Gathemo, a town on the north flank of General George S. Patton's Third Army breakout. The division's attack progressed quickly for 10 miles, and then slowed in the face of determined resistance around the Foret de St. Sever, a wooded area concealing German troops and supply installations. The division coordinated a wide flanking attack to encircle this obstacle, sending a regimental combat team hooking through the 4th Infantry Division's sector on its right flank. On 7 August the Germans attempted a desperate counterattack through Mortain, hoping to reach the sea at Avranches, and cut off Patton's Third Army. The weight of this attack hit the 30th Infantry Division, but the northernmost column collided with the regiment of the 9th Infantry Division attempting the encircling attack on the Foret de St. Sever. The Americans, reinforced by nearby units, had the better of a confused melee. Meanwhile, the rest of the division cleared the Foret de St. Sever and continued its advance.

14-19 August

General George S. Patton's Third Army attack encircled numerous German forces when it sped east and then hooked north towards Argentan and Falaise. The 9th Infantry Division had been attacking into the northern perimeter of this developing "Falaise Pocket", but now received orders to move around the pocket's perimeter and attack into it from the south. By doing so it reinforced the southern jaw of the closing trap and guaranteed that there would be no gaps along it. Allied forces squeezed the entrapped Germans into an ever smaller area. The 9th Infantry Division's attack progressed quickly, capturing many prisoners and advancing to the Orne River before being pinched out by advancing British forces as the pocket disappeared. The Falaise Pocket proved yet another disaster for the Germans, who lost 50,000 prisoners in addition to the tens of thousands already killed or wounded in the fighting. Perhaps equally damaging, the Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or in the pursuit.

20-25 August

Having been pinched out of the line by the closure of the Falaise Pocket, the 9th Infantry Division continued mopping up and enjoyed some welcome rest and recuperation, but not for long. The Allied advance across France continued at a breakneck pace. A further encirclement entrapped even more Germans just short of the Seine River, and the French 2nd Armored Division made a triumphal entry into Paris on 25 August in the midst of wildly ecstatic crowds. Meanwhile Allied commanders envisioned even deeper penetrations and pursuit beyond the Seine. The 9th Infantry Division was part of these plans, and was trucked over 100 miles to the east to the Seine River south of Paris, there to reassemble and continue the attack.

28TH INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Chiseldon, Wiltshire, England, the 28th Infantry Division – the “Keystone Division” --trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

Headquartered in Chiseldon, Wiltshire, England, the 28th Infantry Division – the “Keystone Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

Headquartered in Chiseldon, Wiltshire, England, the 28th Infantry Division – the “Keystone Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

Headquartered in Chiseldon, Wiltshire, England, the 28th Infantry Division – the “Keystone Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

Headquartered in Chiseldon, Wiltshire, England, the 28th Infantry Division – the “Keystone Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

19-25 July

The 28th Infantry Division deployed from England to France through Omaha Beach, establishing its headquarters on Omaha Beach on 24 July.

26-31 July

In the aftermath of the Operation COBRA breakout, American forces were advancing rapidly into France. The 28th Infantry Division moved out to catch up with and support this advance. On 30 July it assisted Combat Command A of the 2nd Armored Division and the 29th Infantry Division in their successful defense of Villebaudon against German counterattacks. The following day it assumed responsibility for its own sector of the front just north of Percy.

1-13 August

The 28th Infantry Division attacked to seize Percy, and secured the town on 1 August. From this point it continued its attack southeast, advancing through difficult terrain and stubborn resistance. By 4 August the division had pushed another eight miles further into Saint-Sever-Calvados. This put the 28th Infantry Division and the 9th Infantry Division on its right flank in effective control of the Forêt de St. Sever. American possession of this forest denied the German defenders excellent cover and concealment, and numerous points of observation they had come to depend upon. It also positioned the Americans to control an extensive road network. From Saint-Sever-Calvados the division pushed on to Gathemo, seizing it on 10 August and driving on. The division paid a high price in casualties – to include the life of its commander, Brigadier General James E. Wharton. Meanwhile General George S. Patton's Third Army had swung in a wide arc from Avranches through Le Mans, encircling much of the German army in the process.

14-19 August

The 28th Infantry Division continued its attack to destroy German forces in the newly forming Falaise Pocket. General George S. Patton's Third Army had encircled numerous enemy troops when it sped east from Avranches and then hooked northwards towards Falaise. The 28th Infantry Division pivoted through the town of Ger, and then continued its attack northeast as Allied forces squeezed the entrapped Germans into a steadily shrinking perimeter. Not far from Ger the division was pinched out by British forces crossing its front as the pocket disappeared. The Falaise Pocket proved to be a disaster for the Germans, who lost more than 50,000 prisoners, in addition to the tens of thousands already killed or wounded in the fighting. The Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or in the course of the pursuit. The 28th Infantry Division pulled out of the line and prepared to displace over 100 miles to Mortagne, to position for another mission.

20-25 August

The 28th Infantry Division became part of another encirclement, intended to trap German forces west of the Seine River. From Mortagne, the division advanced in concert with the 2nd Armored Division, overcoming resistance the tankers bypassed. Despite rain, mud and poor visibility, the advance progressed quickly. The 28th Infantry Division attacked and seized the city of Verneuil, thus securing important crossings of the Aure River. The division then reduced Breteuil, and drove on towards Elbeuf. The Germans assembled the remnants of several panzer divisions to defend Elbeuf, hoping to keep the Seine crossings open long enough to facilitate further escapes. On 25 August combined arms teams from the 28th Infantry Division and the 2nd Armored Division forced their way into Elbeuf, securing the town the following day. Meanwhile Paris fell to the French 2nd Armored Division and the American 4th Infantry Division, and the allies seized multiple crossings along the Seine River. The Battle for France was becoming a rout.

29th Infantry Division

6 June

The 29th Infantry Division – the “Blue and Gray Division” – assault landed onto

Omaha Beach on 6 June, 1944. Seas were choppy and cross currents strong. Many landing craft came ashore some distance from where they had intended. German resistance, supported by significant obstacles, was well organized and determined. American units found themselves intermingled, exposed and under heavy fire. Amidst this confusion seasoned leaders asserted themselves, and restored momentum to the attack. The Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Norman D. Cota, was particularly inspirational and omni-present, earning the Distinguished Service Cross for his up-front leadership that day. Soldiers clawed their way onto the bluffs overlooking the beaches, and outflanked German defenders blocking the draw at Vierville capable of passing vehicles from the beaches to higher ground. By nightfall the division had captured Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer and was astride Route N514 along the bluffs above the beaches.

7-13 June

The 29th Infantry Division continued its attack, breaking through the crust of enemy coastal defenses to relieve the embattled Rangers clinging on to Pointe du Hoc. After further tough fighting it captured the village of Isigny and forced the Vire River; corps engineers built a bridge behind it. It linked up with the 101st Airborne Division near Carentan on 10 June, and by 12 June Omaha Beach and Utah Beach united into a continuous front behind which the buildup of troops and supplies could continue. The 2nd Infantry Division soon came ashore and joined the attack on the division's left flank, and further reinforcements continued to flow. The attack pressed forward into difficult Norman bocage. Here troops encountered fields separated by hedgerows that divided the terrain into small compartments. Ground had to be seized a field at a time, and the defenders enjoyed numerous tactical advantages. The division nevertheless pressed the attack, forcing the Elle River and seizing the town of Couvains.

14-20 June

The 29th Infantry Division continued to attack in the direction of Saint-Lô, beginning 16 June. German efforts to reinforce their lines in Normandy had been greatly hindered by air strikes and an Allied deception plan that fixated their attention on the Pas de Calais, but they had managed to accumulate significant armored forces near Caen, and sufficient forces to effectively defend elsewhere. Anticipating German counterattacks and focusing resources on seizing the port of Cherbourg, First Army Commander General Omar N. Bradley directed limited attacks in the 29th Infantry Division's sector. These were intended to fix and attrite enemy forces, and to position the Allied front lines onto ground suitable for mechanized warfare when an eventual breakout occurred. The 29th Infantry Division pushed forward through the difficult bocage and thickening German opposition to secure positions within five miles of the strategic town of Saint-Lô.

21-30 June

The 29th Infantry Division secured ground between major Commonwealth efforts to seize Caen and major American efforts to seize Cherbourg. Although in an economy of force role, it pinned the Germans down with frequent aggressive patrols and with further limited

attacks. The Germans responded with patrols and counterattacks of their own. On balance, the Germans could less well afford the losses of manpower and equipment resulting from this continuing attrition as the fighting progressed. The 29th Infantry Division in particular improved upon its integration of infantry maneuver and artillery fire power during this period. As American patrols identified German positions, they subjected them to well-aimed American artillery fire. The active patrolling afforded the division the opportunity to effectively integrate replacements as well.

1-18 July

The 29th Infantry Division continued attacking towards Saint-Lô, assisted by the 2nd Infantry Division on its left and, beginning 11 July, the 35th Infantry Division on its right. Saint-Lô was a strategic transportation hub clear of the marshes and waterways around Normandy and opening onto terrain suitable for mechanized warfare. Its capture would enable a general breakout offensive. The division scored a major breakthrough on 11 July, and by 13 July had secured Martinville Ridge, a key terrain feature overlooking the town. During further difficult and confused fighting a battalion pushed within 1,000 meters of Saint-Lô, but became cut off. A relieving battalion commanded by Major Thomas D. Howie broke through to them, but Howie was killed when the combined units continued the advance. When the division finally seized Saint-Lô on 18 July, it laid Howie's flag-draped coffin on the rubble-buried pediment of the Sainte-Croix Church, a poignant and enduring symbol of the courage and sacrifice that the campaign had required.

19-25 July

The 29th Infantry Division cycled out of the front line to rest and refit in anticipation of a major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. The plan envisioned "carpet bombing" by 2,500 planes dropping 5,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector of the German front west of Saint-Lô. Following this massive bombardment a corps consisting two armored divisions and four infantry divisions would attack the shattered remnants of the enemy within the sector and open a breach through them. Should breakthrough occur, capable reserves of uncommitted American units would be necessary to exploit the opportunities presented. The 29th Infantry Division, now considered hardened and veteran, was positioned for such a role.

26-31 July

As the COBRA offensive sped towards Avranches and points beyond, beginning 29 July the 29th Infantry Division attacked along the left shoulder of the breakthrough to broaden the offensive and secure its flank. In the vicinities of Tessy-sur-Vire, Villebaudon and Percy the division, accompanied by Combat Command A of the 2nd Armored Division, encountered the German 2nd Panzer Division and the 116th Panzer Division. These were the only significant German armored forces proximate to the breakthrough, and were rolling west in a desperate effort to plug the emerging hole in the German defenses. Instead they ended up in a roiling mobile battle with the 29th Infantry Division, Combat Command A, and friendly flanking units. The 2nd Panzer Division and 116th Panzer Division never made

it far enough west to interfere with the COBRA breakout. The Battle for Normandy had ended and the Battle for France had begun.

1-13 August

The 29th Infantry Division attacked to seize Vire, a town overlooking converging roads now vital to the offensive. The Germans defended with roadblocks covered by anti-tank guns, and had good positions on dominating ground. The division switched from leading with tanks to leading with infantry as the terrain thickened. These secured high ground west of Vire, and then swept into the town relying upon underbrush, outcroppings and ravines to cover their approach. After house-to-house fighting, they secured Vire on 7 August. Other American divisions had sped past Avranches and pushed deep into Brittany, and still others had hooked eastwards towards Argentan and Le Mans. Fearing encirclement, the Germans attempted a desperate counterattack through Mortain to recapture Avranches and cut off the advancing American spearheads. This failed. Meanwhile the 29th Infantry Division pushed on for some distance southeast of Vire, and on 13 August shifted its axis northeast towards Tinchebray.

14-19 August

The 29th Infantry Division joined in the destruction of German forces within the newly forming "Falaise Pocket". General George S. Patton's Third Army had encircled numerous German forces when it sped eastwards from Avranches and then hooked northwards towards Argentan and Falaise. The 29th Infantry Division pivoted to attack eastwards as Allied forces squeezed the entrapped Germans into a smaller and smaller area. The division advanced as far as Tinchebray and the high ground surrounding it before being pinched out by British forces crossing its front as the pocket disappeared. The Falaise Pocket proved to be yet another disaster for the Germans, who lost 50,000 prisoners in addition to the tens of thousands already killed or wounded in the fighting. Perhaps equally damaging, the Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or in the pursuit. The 29th Infantry Division was now free for another mission.

20-25 August

Having been pinched out of the line by the closure of the Falaise Pocket, the 29th Infantry Division redirected into the Brittany Campaign and the siege of Brest. Brest was one of the most important ports in France, and also served as a base for the German U-Boats that had wreaked so much havoc on Allied shipping for so long. It was heavily fortified and stoutly defended, requiring a prolonged and deliberate attack to secure. The Americans mustered three divisions for this arduous task, the 2nd, 8th and 29th Infantry Divisions, in addition to artillery, naval and air support. The 29th Infantry Division began moving towards Brest on 21 August and arrived two days later. The division closed up on the enemy defenses within its sector and participated in a major attack on 25 August. After savage fighting, the city finally fell on 18 September.

30TH INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Chesham, Buckinghamshire, England, the 30th Infantry Division – the “Old Hickory Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

Headquartered in Chesham, Buckinghamshire, England, the 30th Infantry Division – the “Old Hickory Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 30th Infantry Division embarked from England and debarked across Omaha Beach on 15 June. Even though most of its units were still en route and not yet closed, the 30th Infantry Division launched an attack to seize Montmartin-en-Graignes and close to the Vire-Taute Canal. The narrow corridor between the Vire and Taute Rivers separated American First Army efforts to secure Saint-Lô from Americans battling in the Cotentin Peninsula to seize Cherbourg. Allied planners feared the Germans, reinforced by arriving armor, would drive north down the corridor with each flank protected by a river, and split the American First Army in two. The surest defense against such a possibility was to force the Germans off the northern banks of the Vire - Taute Canal, and then defend that formidable obstacle against counterattack. The 30th Infantry Division assumed this mission, closed to the canal, and held that line while the attacks on Cherbourg and Saint-Lô moved forward.

21-30 June

The 30th Infantry Division continued to defend in its sector. The terrain it held along the Vire - Taute Canal secured ground between major Commonwealth efforts to seize Caen and major American efforts to seize Cherbourg. It also covered the flank of American divisions making a more limited attack towards Saint-Lô. The division's defense was an active one; regiments routinely sent out numerous patrols to probe enemy lines, keep the enemy off balance, secure tactical intelligence, and identify worthy targets for air and artillery strikes. The Germans responded with patrols and counterattacks of their own. Artillery fire and snipers were dominant sources of casualties for both sides in this sector during this period. The 30th Infantry Division worked on techniques for eradicating snipers, and many of its combat patrols were dispatched for this purpose. This attrition and diversion of German forces continued to drain the enemy, even as more heavily resourced attacks were progressing elsewhere.

1-18 July

The 30th Infantry Division attacked to force the Vire River and Vire – Taute Canal and seize the village of Saint-Jean-de-Daye. Covered by darkness and a drizzling rain, the first several waves of infantry crossed in rubber boats and scrambled up the far side. Soon engineers constructed pontoon bridges and repaired destroyed bridges, enabling the rest of the division and part of the 3rd Armored Division to cross. On 11 July a German armored division counterattacked to preclude further American advances in the bocage between the Vire and Taute Rivers. The 30th Infantry Division turned back this attack within its sector, destroying numerous enemy tanks. Fighting was at close quarters and confused in the heavily vegetated terrain, allowing the Americans to make optimal use of antitank rifles and bazookas. Pressing on in the aftermath of its successful defense, the 30th Infantry Division seized the ridgeline at Hauts-Vents and the bridge at Pont-Hebert. Here they overwatched the Périers - Saint-Lô highway, threatening Saint-Lô from the west.

19-25 July

The 30th Infantry Division repositioned and prepared for the major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned a massive “carpet bombing” followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines, and then two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division exploiting through the hole thus made. As the gap widened and resistance crumpled, further forces would pile on. The three infantry divisions to make the initial attack were, from right to left, the 9th, 4th and 30th. COBRA was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector west of Saint-Lô. Despite losses to bombs fallen short, the 30th Infantry Division forced its way across the Périers - Saint-Lô Highway and into the village of Hebecrevon. The bombing and subsequent infantry attacks totally disrupted the defenders along thousands of yards of front.

26-31 July

The 30th Infantry Division continued to advance against collapsing German resistance. By 27 July it had pushed a dozen miles from its starting positions and secured bridges along the Vire River, outflanking German forces to their east. It also cleared routes for the passage of armored combat commands through it, and began mopping up residual enemy resistance in the breakthrough area as these armored formations pressed ahead. Arriving German reinforcements attempted to contain the American advance, and took up strong defensive positions near the village of Troisgots. This precipitated a fierce four-day battle as further reinforcements arrived on both sides. Ultimately the 30th Infantry Division battered its way into the village, dispatching enemy tanks with bazookas at close ranges. The fall of Troisgots unhinged the German line in this sector, precipitating yet another German withdrawal.

1-13 August

After assisting in the seizure of Tessy-sur-Vire, the 30th Infantry Division was pinched out by friendly units. The division redeployed to secure newly seized Mortain. It

had barely arrived when the Germans launched a desperate counterattack on 7 August, hoping to reach the sea at Avranches and cut off General George S. Patton's Third Army. The weight of this three-armored-division attack hit squarely on the 30th Infantry Division. The Germans pushed quickly into Mortain, but the Americans doggedly held on to nearby Hill 317 and other key terrain features. Reinforcing artillery fires and air strikes helped the defenders, but the greatest honors went to determined infantrymen defending their positions against long odds. Nearby units reinforced quickly, and the Germans got the worst of a confused meleé. They left over 100 destroyed tanks on the Mortain battlefield, and their participating divisions were severely mauled. The attack had been contained by local forces, and had no significant effect on Patton's advance.

14-19 August

The 30th Infantry Division mopped up around Mortain, and then continued the attack to destroy German forces in the newly forming "Falaise Pocket". General George S. Patton's Third Army had encircled numerous enemy troops – including survivors of the attack on Mortain – when it sped east from Avranches and hooked northwards towards Falaise. The 30th Infantry Division pivoted through Barenton, and with the help of French civilians captured Domfort as Allied forces squeezed the entrapped Germans into a smaller and smaller area. Near Domfort the division was pinched out by British forces crossing its front as the pocket disappeared. The Falaise Pocket proved to be a disaster for the Germans, who lost 50,000 prisoners, in addition to tens of thousands already killed or wounded in the fighting. The Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or in the pursuit. The 30th Infantry Division pulled out of the line and displaced over 100 miles to Brezolle, positioned for another mission.

20-25 August

The 30th Infantry Division now became part of another encirclement, this one intended to trap German forces just west of the Seine River. Launching from Brezolle, the division advanced quickly to Nonancourt against sporadic resistance. Here it secured crossings of the Aure River and drove on to Evreux. It occupied Evreux without opposition, so weakened had the German resistance become. Regimental combat teams raced ahead to the high ground west and south of Louviers, trapping units that might have intended to flee through that town. Patrols worked their way into Louviers, and found that the Germans had abandoned the town. On 25 August Paris fell to the French 2nd Armored Division and the American 4th Infantry Division. By this time the Americans had seized multiple crossings across the Seine River. The Battle for France was becoming a rout.

35TH INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Tavistock, Devon, England, the 35th Infantry Division – the “Santa Fe Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

Headquartered in Tavistock, Devon, England, the 35th Infantry Division – the “Santa Fe Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

Headquartered in Tavistock, Devon, England, the 35th Infantry Division – the “Santa Fe Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

Headquartered in Tavistock, Devon, England, the 35th Infantry Division – the “Santa Fe Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

The 35th Infantry Division embarked from England and debarked across Omaha Beach during the period 5-7 July. It entered combat on 11 July in the tough hedgerow country just north of Saint-Lô. The division's objective was to close to the Vire River west of Saint-Lô, and it had to seize the dominant terrain feature of Hill 122 to do so. The enemy resisted fiercely from concealed and well-positioned strong points in the heavily vegetated terrain. American artillery proved particularly crucial, pounding one strong point after another and hammering the enemy's artillery with devastating effect. By noon on 15 July infantrymen had forced their way over the lip of Hill 122, and brought up tanks to support them. Kicking off with a combined arms attack at dusk, they swept the Germans off the rest of the hill by midnight. In the course of the fighting the 35th Infantry Division beat back a dozen German counterattacks. The capture of Hill 122 proved to be the key to capturing Saint-Lô, which fell shortly thereafter.

19-25 July

The 35th Infantry Division repositioned and prepared for its role in the major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned a massive “carpet bombing” followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines, and then

two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division exploiting through the hole thus made. As the gap widened and resistance crumpled, further forces were to pile on. The 35th Infantry Division's initial role was to hold the eastern shoulder of the breakthrough sector, securing the flank of the attack. It assumed responsibility for the defense of Saint-Lô itself, and extended its sector about four miles east and west of the town. COBRA was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs. The bombing and subsequent infantry attacks totally disrupted the defenders along thousands of yards of front.

26-31 July

The 35th Infantry Division attacked to seize Hill 101, a ridgeline just south of Saint-Lô. The attack progressed quickly against disorganized resistance, and the ridgeline fell within a day. The division continued its attack and advanced rapidly at first, but slowed as the Germans reorganized in difficult terrain eminently suitable for the defense. The 35th Infantry Division pressed on nevertheless, and by 28 July had seized Sainte-Suzanne-sur-Vire. German resistance was crumbling, although the terrain itself in the division's sector continued to be an impediment to rapid advance. Small irregular hills, winding roads and a patchwork of hedge-rowed fields forced a battle at every turn, even if the enemy was falling apart. By 31 July the division had advanced another five miles to seize the town of Torigni. Enemy mines and artillery fire were the principal hazards in the final stages of this advance. The advance to Torigni forced back German lines even as armored columns from the breakthrough were racing through open terrain into their rear.

1-13 August

The 35th Infantry Division continued its attack and forced the Vire River, but was pinched out by friendly units. It then redeployed, intending to join General George S. Patton's Third Army near Fougères. While the division was on the road, the Germans launched a counterattack through Mortain, hoping to reach the sea and cut off the Third Army. The 35th Infantry Division changed course and marched to the relief of the 30th Infantry Division, defending Mortain and under attack by three armored divisions. One of the 30th's battalions, surrounded and isolated, doggedly held on to Hill 317, key terrain over watching the city. The 35th Infantry Division hammered its way towards Mortain, overcoming fierce resistance and difficult terrain in the process. Suffering 700 casualties to advance eight miles, the division made contact with the isolated battalion on 12 August. Mortain proved a severe setback for the Germans; they left over 100 destroyed tanks on the battlefield and their participating divisions were severely mauled.

14-19 August

With its mission complete at Mortain, the 35th Infantry Division sped east to catch up with the advance of General George S. Patton's Third Army. The pace of the advance dictated the integration of infantry and armor, and flying columns from the 35th Infantry Division soon paired up with 4th Armored Division counterparts. The two divisions raced

towards Orleans, historically regarded as a gateway to Paris. The Germans had already destroyed the bridges en route, but energetic reconnaissance revealed alternative crossing sites. Converging attacks forced their way into Orleans on 16 August, and overwhelmed the disorganized opposition within a few hours time. After an all-night march, another regimental combat team from the 35th Infantry Division forced its way into Chateaudun on the following day. After a brief but fierce fight, this town fell to the Americans as well. Meanwhile Patton's Third Army was closing the Falaise Pocket, capturing over 50,000 German prisoners in the process. The Battle of France was becoming a rout.

20-25 August

Operating in concert with the 4th Armored Division, the 35th Infantry Division continued its attack. A combined arms column sped past a concentration of German defenders at Montargis and raced 30 miles further to Sens, arriving unexpectedly and securing a crossing of the Yonne River. Shortly thereafter the 35th Infantry Division and Combat Command B of the 4th Armored Division coordinated converging attacks that crushed the bypassed defenders of Montargis. The 35th Infantry Division pushed on to secure the cities of Joigny and Saint-Florentin. The division was the extreme right flank of General George S. Patton's Third Army, and as it advanced oriented both south and east to secure it, stretching across extreme frontages as it did so. On 25 August a combined arms column pushed into Troyes, and forced a crossing of the Seine River. That same day Paris fell to the French 2nd Armored Division and the American 4th Infantry Division. The Americans now held multiple crossings of the Seine River.

79th INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered at Tiverton in Devon, England, the 79th Infantry Division – the “Cross of Lorraine Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 79th Infantry Division embarked from England and debarked across Utah Beach during the period 12-14 June.

14-20 June

The 79th Infantry Division joined the 4th and 9th Infantry Divisions in an attack towards Cherbourg. Cherbourg was a vital strategic objective important as a port, as a fortified enclave, and as a base for German submarines. The Americans had secured a line across the Cotentin Peninsula from Carteret to Quineville by 18 June, and attacked north from this line with the 9th Infantry Division on the left, the 79th Infantry Division in the center, and the 4th Infantry Division on the right. German resistance outside of the fortifications of Cherbourg was collapsing, and the American attack progressed quickly. On the first day the 79th Infantry Division advanced more than five miles to secure the Bois de la Brique, and on the second again exceeded five miles to clear the road running from Saint-Martin-le-Greard through Delasse. Shortly beyond this point the division encountered the main German defensive perimeter around Cherbourg, and began probing it in the anticipation of further attacks.

21-30 June

The 79th Infantry Division, in concert with the 4th and 9th Infantry Divisions, attacked to seize Cherbourg. Cherbourg was heavily fortified, and the Germans well positioned and determined to resist. The 79th fought first for the high ground overlooking Cherbourg, dominated by la Mare a Canards. As American infantrymen advanced in the difficult terrain, bypassed enemy and infiltrators attacked them in the rear, forcing an all around battle. From la Mare a Canards the division pushed on to the Fort du Roule, overlooking the harbor itself. The Fort du Roule was built into a rocky promontory in layers, with coastal guns on the lower levels firing directly into the harbor while mortars and machine guns on the upper levels dominated the land approaches. Such fortifications had to be picked apart piece by piece, a concrete pillbox at a time. Soldiers pressed in close with demolitions, grenades and rifles to finish the job. On 27 June Cherbourg fell, and within a few days more residual resistance had been mopped up.

1-18 July

The 79th Infantry Division attacked along the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula to seize the Montgardon Ridge, dominating the critical crossroads of La Haye-du-Puits, and then to push on to the Ay River. Breakout from Normandy required pushing through a perimeter of marshes and bocage to reach more open ground suitable for mechanized warfare, and the division's advance took it in that direction. Overcoming stiff resistance in confused night fighting, the division outflanked and seized Hill 121, which provided the artillery a superb observation point to support the rest of the attack. After several days more of savage fighting in the difficult terrain, the infantrymen of the 79th finally forced their way to the top of Moutgardon Ridge, beating back determined counterattacks to secure it. Having outflanked La-Haye-du-Puits, the 79th Infantry Division seized it during 8-9 July in fierce house-to-house fighting that left much of the town in flames. The division then pushed on to the Ay River, closing on it by 14 July.

19-25 July

The 79th Infantry Division secured its positions along the Ay River while preparing for its role in a major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned massive "carpet bombing" just west of Saint-Lô, followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines. Two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division would then exploit through the hole thus made. As the breach widened and resistance crumpled, further forces would pour through the gap or push forward in pursuit. COBRA's date was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs within six-square-mile sector of the German front. The 79th Infantry Division was to attack the following day keep the pressure on the Germans to their front as the breakthrough matured.

26-31 July

Early on 27 July, two battalions of the 79th Infantry Division infiltrated in single file across the Ay River, each man stepping into the footsteps of the soldier in front of him to avoid mines. Once across the river, they swiftly seized the town of Lessay. Division engineers threw a bridge across the river behind the advancing infantrymen, and the rest of the division poured across. German resistance was crumbling and the division progressed quickly, passing elements of the 6th Armored Division through it to accelerate the momentum of the attack. The 79th Infantry Division motorized a regimental combat team on borrowed Quartermaster trucks to race after the advancing tanks. Coutances fell on 28 July and Avranches, after a turbulent overnight battle, on 31 July. Abandoned German equipment and supplies littered the Cotentin countryside as their soldiers surrendered or attempted to flee the relentless American advance.

1-13 August

The 79th Infantry Division attacked to seize Fougères, securing the town on 3 August. This rapid advance exposed a gap in the German dispositions which General George S. Patton, the Third Army Commander, determined to exploit. Driving east, the division crossed the Mayenne River and captured Laval on 6 August. The Germans had destroyed the Mayenne River bridges, but the Americans hastily threw a floating Bailey bridge across the river and opened it to traffic the following day. Meanwhile the division's regimental combat teams had sped on towards Le Mans, overrunning scattered resistance en route and forcing their way into the town by the evening of 8 August. With the seizure of Le Mans the Americans had virtually encircled the Germans still defending in Normandy. Patton now redirected the attack from east to north, and the 79th Infantry Division attacked in support of the 5th Armored Division as the tankers pushed past Alençon en route to Argentan – and the closure of a pocket around Falaise.

14-19 August

The 79th Infantry Division again shifted the direction of its attack, this time from north towards Argentan to east towards Paris and the Seine River. Even as the Falaise Pocket was closing, General George S. Patton envisioned deeper hooks, further entrapments, and a hot pursuit across the German border. The 79th Infantry Division raced ahead against ineffective resistance, seizing Nogent-le-Roi and a bridgehead across the Eure River on 16 August. The Seine River was next. The 79th Infantry Division had reached Mantes-Gassicourt by the evening of 19 August. Here the river varied in width from 500 to 800 feet. In the midst of a torrential rainfall an infantry regiment inched across the top of a dam in single file, each man touching the man ahead to maintain contact and avoid missteps. This daring approach worked. By the following day the division was solidly established on the far side of the Seine, and the Allies had their first bridgehead across that critical river.

19-25 August

The 79th Infantry Division expanded and reinforced its bridgehead across the Seine River. Another infantry regiment rowed across the Seine to join the one already across, while division engineers installed a tread-way and then a Bailey bridge. Soon tanks, artillery and trucks were rolling across in large numbers. The Germans launched fierce counterattacks to re-establish the Seine as a defensive barrier, but the 79th Infantry Division beat these back and continued the build-up. The division then advanced on La Roche-Guyon and captured the command post of German Army Group B. Meanwhile yet another encirclement of retreating German forces had taken place west of the Seine River, and Allied columns advanced on Paris. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division liberated Paris in the midst of wildly exuberant crowds. More bridgeheads across the Seine went in, and plans for pursuit beyond the Seine began to take effect.

80TH INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

The 80th Infantry Division – the “Blue Ridge Division” – was en route to England.

7-13 June

The 80th Infantry Division – the “Blue Ridge Division” – was en route to England.

14-20 June

Headquartered in Sandiway, Cheshire, England, the 80th Infantry Division – the “Blue Ridge Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

Headquartered in Sandiway, Cheshire, England, the 80th Infantry Division – the “Blue Ridge Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

Headquartered in Sandiway, Cheshire, England, the 80th Infantry Division – the “Blue Ridge Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

19-25 July

Headquartered in Sandiway, Cheshire, England, the 80th Infantry Division – the “Blue Ridge Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

26-31 July

Headquartered in Sandiway, Cheshire, England, the 80th Infantry Division – the “Blue Ridge Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-13 August

The 80th Infantry Division debarked across Utah Beach, formed up, and deployed forward to assist in repelling the German Mortain Offensive. When this became no longer necessary the division moved further forward into the vicinity of Laval. Here it was given the mission of clearing the Evron, where residual German resistance bypassed by General George S. Patton's Third Army's drive to Le Mans had accumulated. The 80th Infantry Division extinguished the resistance in a few days of sporadic fighting, and then pushed on to secure the village of Saint-Suzanne as well. The 80th Infantry Division then received orders

to secure a line running from Argentan to Sees, and attacked in that direction on 13 August. This attack was soon pinched out by the successful advance of friendly flanking units, and the 80th Infantry Division once again concentrated in the Laval-Evron area to prepare for further missions.

14-19 August

The 80th Infantry Division moved north from the Laval-Evron to reinforce the southern jaw of the emerging Falaise Pocket. Beating back desperate German efforts at escape, it attacked to seize ground northeast of Argentan, positioning to break through into the city from that direction. This attack severed the critical Argentan-Trun road, a potential German escape route. On 19 August the 90th Division, to the 80th's right flank, linked up with the southward attacking 1st Polish Armored Division near the town of Chambois, thus closing the Falaise pocket. The trapped Germans were at a terrible disadvantage, outnumbered by converging forces and relentlessly hammered by Allied artillery fire. In the Falaise pocket as a whole the Allies took over 50,000 prisoners. Tens of thousands more of the enemy were killed in the fighting or lost their equipment in the pursuit. The fragments of six German armored divisions that escaped reported having only 2,000 men and 62 tanks left amongst them.

20-25 August

The 80th Infantry Division mopped up in the Falaise Pocket, securing Argentan on 20 August and hunting down remnants of the enemy who had not escaped the closing trap while processing the prisoners it had captured. As the fighting in the pocket tapered off, the division had a brief opportunity to rest and refit. Meanwhile another Allied thrust liberated Paris on 25 August. The French 2nd Armored Division made a triumphal entry into Paris that day, in the midst of wildly ecstatic crowds. The Allied high command was determined to maintain the pace of the pursuit, pushing past Paris in efforts to entrap or overrun further German forces. The 80th Infantry Division received orders to march from Argentan, swing south of Paris and assemble in the vicinity of Orleans. From here it would join the advance towards the German border and points beyond.

82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION

6 June

The 82nd Airborne Division – the “All American Division”— jumped into Normandy shortly after midnight. Its objectives were to capture the village of Sainte-Mère-Eglise, secure crossings of the Merderet River, and block German counterattacks into Utah beach through its sector. Antiaircraft fire, cloud patches, the confusion of combat and German units present at some of the drop zones caused several dropped units to be widely dispersed. Energetic leaders nevertheless gathered sufficient forces to seize Sainte-Mère-Eglise in the early morning hours, and then to hold it against two counterattacks. Other leaders consolidated scattered paratroopers into battle positions across the Merderet River and at crossing sites, although further fighting proved necessary to secure these passages for ground traffic. The widely dispersed paratroopers sought out each other and the Germans aggressively. The havoc they caused, in addition to that caused by the French Resistance, left the Germans unable to much interfere with Utah Beach.

7-13 June

The 82nd Airborne Division faced further savage fighting to clear its sector, secure the Merderet River crossings, and expand the beachhead and linkup with friendly units. The Merderet River proved particularly challenging. The causeway at La Fiere, for example, was open and exposed for over 500 yards. Fortunately the airdrop had placed a substantial number of paratroopers across the river, and these consolidated into three strategically located battle positions. On 8 June soldiers from one of these positions discovered a submerged but passable road through the swamp, and the division pushed a battalion across it. The division then forced the La Fiere causeway in difficult fighting and consolidated its several holdings on the far bank. In concert with the 4th Infantry Division, the Division's 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment attacked to seize the Quineville - Montebourg Ridge, and the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment crossed the Douve River to link up with the 101st Airborne Division at Baupré.

14-20 June

The 82nd Airborne Division, in concert with the newly arrived and committed 9th Infantry Division, spearheaded a drive to cut the Cotentin Peninsula in two. This isolated German units in the vicinity of Cherbourg, and led to the eventual capture of that important port city. Despite formidable bocage terrain divided into small compartments by thick hedgerows, the division's attack progressed quickly. It forced the Douve River and seized the transportation hub of Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte on 16 June. This breached the last major obstacle to the Allied drive across the Cotentin. Elements of the 9th Infantry Division passed through the 82nd Airborne Division and sped on to the Atlantic Ocean. The 82nd Airborne Division then shifted its orientation south, and spread out to defend a line parallel to the Douve while other divisions moved on Cherbourg itself. The 82nd secured the rear of the forces attacking Cherbourg and blocked German efforts to relieve the city or interfere

with the campaign to seize it.

21-30 June

Allied offensives focused upon Cherbourg and Caen. The 82nd Airborne Division faced south, protecting the rear of the divisions attacking Cherbourg and preventing German interference with their operations. The division conducted an active defense, sending out frequent patrols to probe enemy lines, keep the enemy off balance, secure tactical intelligence, and identify worthy targets for air and artillery strikes. Artillery and snipers proved to be the dominant sources of casualties in this sector during this period. While the 82nd Airborne Division fixed the units to its front and inflicted attrition upon them, the attack on Cherbourg ground on. The port itself fell on June 27, and residual resistance was mopped up by the end of the month.

1-18 July

As part of a larger offensive, the 82nd Airborne Division attacked to seize the Poterie Ridge, high ground overlooking La Haye-du-Puits. Breakout from Normandy required fighting through a dense and difficult perimeter of marshes and bocage to reach ground suitable for mechanized operations. Poterie Ridge was a first step in that direction. On the morning of the division's attack a young Frenchman led a company of paratroopers on a route through a swamp that outflanked Hill 131. Within a few hours the better part of two regiments had gained the high ground. The German line extending east proved more challenging, and required several days of confused see-saw fighting to clear. On one occasion American troops digging in after a night-time advance found themselves in the midst of a German bivouac at first light, resulting in fierce close-quarters fighting. With Poterie Ridge secure, the 82nd Airborne Division was replaced by the newly arrived 8th Infantry Division, and returned to England to prepare for further airborne operations.

19-25 July

The 82nd Airborne Division, headquartered in Braunstone Park, Leicester, England, prepared for further airborne operations. The rapid pace of the Allied advance in France made further airborne operations unnecessary until Operation MARKET GARDEN in September 1944.

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83rd INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, England, the 83rd Infantry Division – the “Thunderbolt Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

Headquartered in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, England, the 83rd Infantry Division – the “Thunderbolt Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 83rd Infantry Division embarked from England and debarked across Omaha Beach beginning 18 June. It prepared to relieve the 101st Airborne Division of its sector in the vicinity of Carentan.

21-30 June

The 83rd Infantry Division relieved the 101st Airborne Division in the hedgerows south of Carentan. At the time, the sector it took responsibility for was relatively quiet, securing ground between major Commonwealth efforts to seize Caen and major American efforts to seize Cherbourg. The division's defense was an active one; regiments routinely sent out numerous patrols to probe enemy lines, keep the enemy off balance, secure tactical intelligence, and identify worthy targets for air and artillery strikes. The Germans responded with patrols and counterattacks of their own. Artillery fire and snipers were dominant sources of casualties for both sides in this sector during this period. This attrition and diversion proved to be a drain on thinly stretched German forces, even as more heavily resourced Allied attacks were progressing elsewhere.

1-18 July

The 83rd Infantry Division attacked to seize the town of Sainteny. Breakout from Normandy required fighting through a dense and difficult perimeter of marshes and bocage to reach ground suitable for mechanized warfare. The 83rd Infantry Division's attack took it down a narrow strip of land separating the marshy Prairies Marecageuses de Gorges from the flooded Taute River. They were to push German artillery out of range of the vital coastal highway through Carentan, and to reach the more open ground near Périers. The attack progressed slowly in the soggy terrain against determined, well positioned resistance. The division's persistence drew off German armor intended to reinforce Caen. Intermittent foul weather diminished visibility and air support, but the attack progressed. The division forced its way into Sainteny on 9 July, and continued on towards the Taute River crossings. Bazooka teams fought well forward to deal with enemy tanks emplaced in ambush, and advances were a hedgerow at a time.

19-25 July

The 83rd Infantry Division prepared for its part in the major breakthrough offensive, codenamed COBRA. COBRA envisioned a massive “carpet bombing” followed by three infantry divisions attacking to punch a hole in enemy lines, and then two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division exploiting through the hole thus made. As the gap widened and resistance crumpled, further forces would pile on. As a preliminary, the 83rd Infantry Division attacked to secure the causeway across the Taute River at La Varde, and one of the division’s regiments reinforced the main COBRA attack force. COBRA’s date was set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. On the morning of 25 July more than 2,400 Allied planes dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector west of Saint-Lô. The bombing and subsequent infantry attacks destroyed the cohesion of the defense along thousands of yards of front.

26-31 July

The 83rd Infantry Division attacked to maintain pressure while the American breakthrough was progressing elsewhere. The German defenders in its sector had been untouched by the COBRA bombing, so going was slow and resistance fierce initially. By 27 July the division had forced its way across the Taute River and seized the high ground on the far side. When the Germans began to recognize the extent of the breakthrough and the trap that was forming behind them, resistance crumbled and the advance accelerated. The new principal hazard came to be thousands of mines and booby traps left behind by the retreating enemy. The division pushed eight miles through these obstacles and scattered resistance to the vicinity of the Coutances - Saint-Lô Highway. Here it was pinched out by other American forces advancing across its front. The 83rd Infantry Division collected itself, repositioned, and prepared for another mission.

1-13 August

The 83rd Infantry Division, reinforced with a regiment from the 8th Infantry Division, attacked to seize the port of Saint-Malo. More than 12,000 Germans manned Saint-Lô’s formidable defenses, well supported with stockpiles of weapons and ammunition. Their commander expressed a determination to defend the medieval city “to the last stone.” On 5 August the division fought its way into Chateauneuf, penetrating Saint-Malo’s outer defenses. Next came a two-day fight to secure Saint-Joseph’s Hill, a granite precipice laced with firing positions and troop shelters hewn into the rock itself. Advancing infantrymen supported by hurricanes of artillery clawed their way forward a pillbox at a time. While fighting raged at Saint-Malo, the division attacked nearby Dinard, a fortified town just across the Rance estuary that had been pouring artillery fire into Saint-Malo’s defense. By 13 August the 83rd Infantry Division battered its way into the final layer of forts surrounding Saint-Malo proper, and poised to continue the fight into the city itself.

14-19 August

The 83rd Infantry Division continued its attack to seize Saint-Malo. On 14 August an infantry battalion heavily supported by artillery and smoke rushed across a causeway into the old town. After fierce street fighting amidst burning buildings the old town fell. Next came an attack on the Citadel, an extremely strong position with casemates dug deep into the ground and walls reinforced with concrete, stone and steel. The site had large stockpiles of food, water and ammunition, and even an underground railroad to move supplies around. Days of shelling and bombing had little physical effect on the determined defenders. Finally the 83rd Infantry Division worked 8-inch guns close enough to fire directly through the apertures, destroying defending artillery and machine gun emplacements one at a time. The Citadel surrendered on 17 August, leaving only the offshore island of Cezembre in German hands. On 2 September Cezembre would finally surrender after naval and air bombardment and in the face of amphibious assault.

20-25 August

The 83rd Infantry Division mopped up around Saint-Malo, and then moved through Rennes to occupy positions along the Loire River. As General George S. Patton's Third Army raced eastwards across France, it exposed an ever-extending southern flank to whatever the Germans might be able to concentrate south of the Loire. The 83rd Infantry Division stretched out to secure this flank, sweeping up residual resistance as it did so. By 25 August the 83rd Infantry Division extended more than 160 miles from Redon through Tours, actively patrolling its area in both a mounted and a dismounted mode. On 25 August Paris fell to the French 2nd Armored Division and the American 4th Infantry Division, and other American forces had seized multiple crossings over the Seine River as well. The Battle for France was becoming a rout.

90TH INFANTRY DIVISION

6 June

Two infantry battalions and an artillery battalion of the 90th Infantry Division – the “Tough ‘Ombres Division” – accompanied the 4th Infantry Division ashore on Utah Beach. The landing craft infantry (LCIs) carrying them threaded their way through mines, obstacles and artillery fire to reach hip-deep water close to the beach. Here the infantrymen debarked and rushed through the water and across the open beach to reach the shelter of a seawall some 400 yards away. They took a few casualties to artillery and inflicted a few casualties on enemy patrols while securing their portion of the beachhead and preparing for the arrival of the rest of the division over the next several days.

7-13 June

The 90th Infantry Division assembled after having come ashore on Utah beach, and then attacked 10 June to secure the crossings of the Merderet River. Securing these crossings would expand the usable beachhead, and also would position American forces for a drive across the Cotentin Peninsula to isolate the port of Cherbourg. The division experienced the difficulties of fighting in the bocage. Small fields bordered by thick hedgerows provided the Germans strong defensive positions organized in depth one after another. American artillery could produce hurricanes of fire, but it was often difficult to identify suitable targets in the heavily-compartmented terrain. American infantrymen had to claw their way forward under heavy fire, one hedgerow at a time. Despite these difficulties the 90th Infantry Division pushed forward, capturing a line running from the outskirts of Gourbesville through the town of Pont l' Abbe by 13 June.

14-20 June

The 90th Division attacked to secure the northern flank of the drive across the Cotentin Peninsula. The 9th Infantry and the 82nd Airborne Divisions attacked due west, while the 90th Division was to make short hooks west and north to secure key terrain running roughly from Terre-de-Beauval on the Douve River to le Ham on the Merderet River. The German defenses on this direct approach towards Cherbourg remained tough and determined, and the 90th Infantry Division inched forward in the difficult terrain. After two days of tough fighting it cleared Gourbesville, and then pushed on to the northwest. Meanwhile the 9th Infantry Division and 82nd Airborne Division drove west against weakening opposition, reaching the Atlantic coast on 17 June. With Cherbourg isolated First Army commander General Omar N. Bradley shuffled his divisions, directing the 90th Infantry Division and the 82nd Airborne Division to face south and defend the rear of the 4th, 9th and 79th Infantry Divisions' attacks toward Cherbourg.

21-30 June

American offensive action focused upon seizing the port of Cherbourg. The 90th

Infantry Division faced south, roughly on line with the Douve River, and extended its positions to the Atlantic Ocean. It sat astride the coastal road running from La Haye-du-Puits through Carteret to Cherbourg – the route the Germans were most likely to use should they attempt a counterattack to relieve Cherbourg. The 90th Infantry Division's mission was to preclude such a counterattack into the rear of the divisions attacking Cherbourg, while mopping up German remnants in its sector. The division cleared along the line of the Douve without much difficulty, and then went over to an active defense in its sector. Frequent aggressive patrolling fixed the enemy and kept him off balance while identifying suitable targets for air and artillery strikes. Meanwhile the division rotated its constituent units through rest, refurbishment and retraining, with a particular emphasis on absorbing newly-arrived individual replacements.

1-18 July

Breakout from Normandy required fighting through a dense and difficult perimeter of marshes and bocage to reach ground suitable for mechanized warfare. The 90th Infantry Division was given the mission of seizing Mont Castre, a dominating terrain feature that allowed the Germans observation deep into the Cotentin and throughout much of the American sector. The approaches to Mont Castre were narrow and difficult, compartmented by bocage and bounded by the extensive marshes of the Prairies Marecageuses de Gorges. As the 90th Division's attack kicked off a heavy rain precluded effective air support or observed fire. The division persevered in the face of heavy losses and close-quarters fighting, and eventually worked several battalions onto the northern slopes of Mont Castre. A see-saw battle for the village of Beaucoudray bloodied both sides as well. In the face of this punishment, the Germans began to withdraw on 12 July and the division pushed on to the Seves River.

19-25 July

The 90th Infantry Division now received the mission of seizing the “island” of Saint-Germain-sur-Seves, a two-mile by half-mile strip of dry ground surrounded by marsh. Beyond the marsh was the Périer - Saint-Lô Highway, on higher ground suitable for mechanized warfare. The division's enlisted replacements now numbered more than 100 percent of its authorized strength and its officer replacements almost 150 percent, so considerable inexperience existed at all levels. Bad weather precluded effective air support or observed artillery, and the exposed and thus unsupported assault companies took 50 percent casualties reaching the “island”. They nevertheless pushed forward, established a bridgehead and repelled an initial German counterattack. Unfortunately, heavy rains had swollen the surrounding streams and combat engineers proved unable to bring forward armored support or vehicles. The bridgehead was evacuated, having at least distracted the Germans from the main offensive, to occur shortly elsewhere.

26-31 July

Operation COBRA, the major American breakout offensive, had begun with 4,200

tons of munitions dropped just west of Saint-Lô. In the wake of this massive carpet bombing three infantry divisions attacked abreast, closely followed by two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division for exploitation and pursuit. As the Germans reeled from this knockout blow, the 90th Infantry Division pushed forward in its sector – eight miles to the northeast of the breakthrough – to maintain the pressure and accelerate the collapse. In its first attack the division crossed the Seves River and overran an entrenched German position, then beat back a fierce counterattack. Soon the division seized the crossroads of Périers and continued its advance against faltering resistance. Indeed, the greatest impediment came from mines and booby traps left behind by the retreating Germans. The grinding battle of the hedgerows ended as a war of sweeping maneuver began.

1-13 August

The 90th Infantry Division sped forward to capture Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouet, brushing aside enemy rear guards as they did so. When they reached the town they came on line quickly under an umbrella of artillery fire and rushed the bridge, seizing it and the town as well. This broadened the Avranches corridor, and Third Army Commander General George S. Patton decided to exploit by turning east. The 90th Infantry Division rushed on to Mayenne, covering over 30 miles in half a day and again securing a vital bridge before the enemy could destroy it. The momentum of the advance continued as the division raced on to Le Mans, overcoming enemy blocking positions with a few sharp engagements in route. Time and again they were welcomed as liberators in towns and villages, cheered on by frenzied crowds and showered with flowers and kisses. With Le Mans secure, Patton shifted his spearheads north, determined to trap the retreating Germans in a pocket forming around Falaise.

14-19 August

The 90th Infantry Division attacked north to close the Falaise Pocket. On 19 August it linked up with the southward attacking 1st Polish Armored Division near the town of Chambois. The Germans made desperate and daring efforts to escape, forcing the 90th Infantry Division to defend its positions against fierce attacks. The trapped Germans were at a terrible disadvantage, outnumbered by converging forces and relentlessly hammered by Allied artillery fire. In four days time the 90th Infantry Division captured more than 13,000 prisoners and 1,000 horses. In the Falaise pocket as a whole the Allies took over 50,000 prisoners. Tens of thousands more were killed in the fighting or lost their equipment in the pursuit. The fragments of six German armored divisions that escaped reported having only 2,000 men and 62 tanks amongst them. The 90th Infantry Division's lightning thrust through Mayenne and Le Mans and then north had become part of a dramatic operational maneuver with enormous strategic consequences.

20-25 August

The 90th Infantry Division continued mopping up in the Falaise Pocket, hunting down remnants of the enemy who had not escaped the closing trap and processing the

prisoners it had captured. As the fighting in the pocket tapered off, the division had a brief opportunity to rest and refit. Meanwhile another Allied thrust liberated Paris on 25 August. The French 2nd Armored Division made a triumphal entry into Paris that day, in the midst of wildly ecstatic crowds. The Allied high command was determined to maintain the pace of the pursuit, pushing past Paris in efforts to entrap or overrun further German forces. The 90th Infantry Division received orders to swing south of Paris through Fontainebleau en route to the German border and points beyond.

101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

6 June

The 101st Airborne Division – the “Screaming Eagle Division” – jumped into Normandy shortly after midnight. Its principle mission was to assist the landing of the 4th Infantry Division and its passage inland. Its key tasks were to capture exits through the flooded terrain surrounding Utah Beach, secure the southern flank of the landings on that beach, and block German counterattacks into Utah beach through its sector. Antiaircraft fire, cloud patches, fog, the confusion of combat and German presence in some of the drop zones caused several units to land widely dispersed. Energetic leaders nevertheless gathered sufficient forces to secure the beach exits, and then to hold them against counterattacks and efforts to escape. The paratroopers also seized the locks at la Barquette, which could have been used to disastrously flood critical terrain. The dispersed paratroopers sought out each other and the Germans aggressively, creating such havoc the Germans were unable to much interfere with the amphibious landings.

7-13 June

The 101st Airborne Division attacked to seize Carentan. This town dominated vital crossings of the Douve River, and was critical to linking forces coming through Utah Beach with those from Omaha Beach. The division launched two converging attacks, one across river flats to the east of the town and one along a six-foot causeway over the marshes into the town from the north. The defenders enjoyed significant terrain advantages, but the paratroopers ultimately pushed their way through heavy fire to the outskirts of the town. At this point they swung wide to seize a dominating hill mass to the south of the town, and then forced their way into the town itself. Meanwhile elements of the division made contact with the 29th Infantry Division advancing across the Vire River after having captured Isigny-sur-Mer, thus linking the two beachheads together. On the morning of 13 June a German panzer grenadier division counterattacked in an effort to once again split the two beaches. This was repulsed with heavy losses after fierce fighting.

14-20 June

General Omar N. Bradley turned his attention to cutting off the Cotentin Peninsula and seizing the port of Cherbourg. The 101st Airborne Division's positions around Carentan were critical to this effort. They secured the shoulder of this offensive, defended what trafficable ground there was between the marshes associated with the Douve River and the Vire River, and held open ground communications between Utah and Omaha Beaches. The 101st Airborne Division conducted an active defense, aggressively patrolling to probe enemy lines, keep the enemy off balance, secure tactical intelligence, and identify worthy targets for artillery and air strikes. This fixed the German units in front of them, and subjected those units to continuing attrition as well. By 20 June American units had slashed across the Cotentin Peninsula, isolated the port of Cherbourg, and pushed up to the defenses of Cherbourg itself.

21-30 June

The American attack on Cherbourg continued, grinding its way into the city fortification by fortification and block by block. The 101st Airborne Division's positions around Carentan now defended the rear of this offensive, securing what trafficable ground there was between the marshes associated with the Douve River and the Vire River, and holding open the ground communications between Utah and Omaha Beaches. The 101st Airborne Division continued with an active defense, aggressively patrolling to secure tactical intelligence, keep the enemy off balance, and identify worthy targets for air and artillery strikes. This fixed and furthered the attrition of German units in front of Carentan. The port of Cherbourg fell on 27 June, and residual resistance was mopped up by the end of the month.

1-18 July

The 101st Airborne Division was relieved by the newly arrived 83rd Infantry Division, which assumed responsibility for its sector securing Carentan. The 101st Airborne Division moved into army reserve, and then on 13 July redeployed to England to rest, train, and prepare for further airborne operations. The rapid pace of the Allied advance in France made further airborne operations unnecessary until Operation MARKET GARDEN in September 1944.

19-25 July

The 101st Airborne Division, headquartered in Greenham Lodge, Newbury, Berkshire, England, prepared for further airborne operations. The rapid pace of the Allied advance in France made further airborne operations unnecessary until Operation MARKET GARDEN in September 1944.

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2ND ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Tidworth, Wiltshire, England, the 2nd Armored Division – “Hell on Wheels” – unloaded and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 2nd Armored Division organized itself into flexible combat commands. These were capable of operating together as a single mailed fist, but also capable of detaching smaller units to reinforce infantry with the mobility, protected firepower, and shock action of armor. The division began offloading across Omaha Beach on 9 June, and had its combat commands ashore by 14 June. Even before this time, however, constituent units became involved in significant combat. Armored infantrymen reinforced the bridgehead at Auville-sur-le-Vey to secure it against enemy counterattacks. On 13 June a German panzer grenadier division counterattacked the 101st Airborne Division, which had just seized Carentan. A task force from 2nd Armored Division rode to the rescue, colliding head on with the Germans as both sides pressed forward their attacks. The Americans had more tanks amply supported by hurricanes of artillery, and forced the enemy to retreat with heavy losses.

14-20 June

Task forces and combat commands from the 2nd Armored Division continued to support infantry divisions in combat, while the division as a whole served as a counterattack reserve. One such task force conducted a vigorous reconnaissance towards Périers, determining that the enemy was defending in force and ascertaining the strength of their dispositions. As American infantrymen adapted to fighting in densely compartmented hedgerow country, their armored brethren provided invaluable assistance. Bulldozer tanks breached hedges and opened passages for infantry and follow-on vehicles. Tanks firing machine guns and canister rounds at point-blank range suppressed enemy hedgerow positions long enough for infantry to close with and secure them. Armored vehicles that had penetrated into anti-personnel mines offered safe pathways for infantry with their tracks. Over time the tankers and infantrymen developed a mutual battle rhythm, slugging their way painfully forward through bocage country one hedgerow at a time.

21-30 June

The 2nd Armored Division's primary role during this period was to serve as a reserve, back stopping American units deployed in a wide arc extending from Caumont-l'Éventé through Carentan. The armored division's firepower and mobility made it ideal for such a role. It could rush heavily-armed and armored task forces quickly to forces under duress, and then recover them as quickly for maintenance and refurbishment. At this time the American primary effort was to isolate and seize Cherbourg, and the Commonwealth primary effort was the attack on Caen. Between these two major offensives allied forces served in

an economy of force role, tying down enemy units with limited attacks or active defenses. The risk existed that the Germans would counterattack in this more thinly manned sector, and an armored division in reserve was the best insurance against such a risk. On 30 June the 2nd Armored Division received orders to relieve the British 7th Armored Division east of Caumont-l'Éventé.

1-18 July

The 2nd Armored Division continued to defend in sector east of Caumont-l'Éventé, while also sustaining armored counterattack reserves. The division patrolled actively in its sector, keeping the enemy off balance and tying up forces to its front while major allied offensives were under way elsewhere to seize Caen and Saint-Lô. The division artillery in particular rehearsed tactics it would find useful later, perfecting its techniques for time on target fires. Time on target calculates the flight time of munitions from various locations in such a manner that all land at the same instant, creating devastating effects before the enemy can react or take shelter. The division broke up one enemy build-up with such artillery fire before these concentrating forces could even begin an anticipated counter-attack. The 2nd Armored Division was relieved in sector by the British 50th Infantry Division in order to prepare for its next mission, the major American breakout offensive code-named COBRA.

19-25 July

The 2nd Armored Division prepared to serve in the exploitation force for COBRA. COBRA's date had been set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. The plan envisioned "carpet bombing" by 2,500 planes and 5,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector of the German front west of Saint-Lô. Three infantry divisions would attack in the aftermath of the bombing, opening up gaps through which two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division would exploit. Successful bombing depended upon adequate visibility for pilots and bombardiers. During the delay the 2nd Armored Division refined its preparations for the attack, rehearsing the integration of tanks, infantry and artillery into combined arms teams. Many tanks were fitted out with an improvised "Culin Device", steel prongs welded to the hulls that enabled them to plow through hedgerows rather than expose underbellies or tip over trying to crest them. On 25 July the weather cleared, and the carpet bombing commenced.

26-31 July

The 2nd Armored Division rolled through the wreckage left by the carpet bombing and attacked towards Saint-Gilles. Organized resistance had been shattered, but small groups of Germans kept up the fight. Air Corps officers mounted in tanks coordinated air support to the rapidly moving columns, helping them quickly suppress blocking positions encountered en route. The division pushed on through Saint-Gilles to Canisy, where it split. One combat command rolled on to the southeast toward Tessy-sur-Vire, while another sped southwest towards Saint-Denis-le-Gast and the Atlantic coast. Penetrated and outmaneuvered, German contingents were caught wrong-footed as they sought to reinforce shattered

lines or escape encirclement. Their losses accumulated rapidly in the aftermath of one hasty engagement after another. One of 2nd Armored Division's combat commands killed 1,500 and captured 5,200 while suffering less than 400 losses itself. The transition to maneuver warfare favored the highly mechanized Americans.

1-13 August

Combat Command A of the 2nd Armored Division continued its attack towards Tessy-sur-Vire, seizing the dominant terrain of Hill 219 on 5 August. Meanwhile, the rest of the division redeployed to participate in an attack on Alençon. While the division was on the road, the Germans launched a counterattack with three armored divisions through Mortain, hoping to reach the sea and cut off General George S. Patton's rapidly advancing Third Army. The 2nd Armored Division changed course and marched to the relief of the 30th Infantry Division, then doggedly defending Mortain. The 2nd Armored Division attacked deep into the German southern flank towards Barenton, threatening advancing enemy spearheads with encirclement as it did so. In four days of savage fighting it advanced three miles, fighting one hasty engagement after another in difficult terrain. Mortain proved a severe setback for the Germans; they left behind over 100 destroyed tanks and their participating divisions were severely mauled.

14-19 August

The 2nd Armored Division mopped up around Barenton, and then reinforced the XIXth Corps as it attacked to destroy German forces in the newly-forming Falaise Pocket. General George S. Patton's Third Army had encircled numerous enemy troops, including survivors of the attack on Mortain, when it sped east from Avranches and hooked northwards towards Falaise. The 2nd Armored Division provided armored reinforcements and served as a contingency reserve as Allied forces squeezed the entrapped Germans into a smaller and smaller area. Near Flers XIXth Corps was pinched out by British forces crossing its front as the pocket disappeared. The Falaise Pocket was a disaster for the Germans, who lost 50,000 prisoners in addition to tens of thousands killed or wounded in the fighting. The Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or in the pursuit. The 2nd Armored Division pulled out and displaced over 100 miles to Mortagne, positioned for another mission.

20-25 August

The 2nd Armored Division attacked northwards from Mortagne to seize Elbeuf. This attack produced yet another encirclement of the retreating Germans, trapping their forces before they could retire across the Seine River. The 2nd Armored Division advanced quickly, bypassing Verneuil and Breteuil, leaving the seizure of these towns to follow on infantry. Rain, mud and poor visibility plagued the attacking soldiers, but enemy resistance was sporadic and disorganized. The division advanced almost 100 miles in a week, sweeping through bits and pieces from four enemy divisions as it did so. Recognizing the danger of encirclement, the Germans cobbled remnants of eight panzer divisions into a line just south of Elbeuf, hoping to defend the town long enough for others to escape. The 2nd Armored

Division smashed into this makeshift line on 25 August, overwhelmed it quickly and pushed on to secure Elbeuf. On this same day Paris fell to the French 2nd Armored Division and the American 4th Infantry Division.

3RD ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Bruton, Somerset, England, the 3rd Armored Division – the “Spearhead Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

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21-30 June

The 3rd Armored Division moved from Somerset through Southampton and Weymouth and debarked across Omaha Beach. After collecting itself and organizing into combat commands, it attacked to seize Villiers-Fossard. Villiers-Fossard, strongly defended by the Germans in thick hedgerow terrain, formed a salient into American lines threatening progress towards Saint-Lô. On 29 June Combat Command A of the 3rd Armored Division, reinforced by elements of the 29th Infantry Division, attacked to reduce this salient. The enemy had zeroed artillery in on road intersections and covered gaps in the hedgerows with machine-guns and anti-tank weapons. The Americans did not yet have many dozer tanks, and had not yet fully integrated infantry and armor. They did have infantry and artillery tightly integrated, however, and improvised squad tactics to move forward in the compartmented terrain. By 30 June Villiers-Fossard had fallen, and the American tankers hurriedly absorbed lessons learned.

1-18 July

The 3rd Armored Division crossed the Vire River and attacked to seize Haut Vents, a prominent feature on the approach to Saint-Lô. It also reinforced the 9th and 30th Infantry Divisions, struggling through dense hedgerows between the Vire and Taute Rivers. Bad weather complicated the advance, reducing visibility, converting much of the ground into seas of mud – particularly difficult for tanks – and forcing mounted units to intermingle under persistent artillery fire on what usable ground remained. The 3rd Armored Division nevertheless pressed forward, securing Haut Vents on 11 July. Meanwhile, the Germans launched a major counterattack on 11 July, hoping to penetrate American units disorganized by the rigors of their advance. This counterattack, heavily reinforced with armor and driving along multiple axes, was ultimately defeated in confused small unit melees in the heavily compartmented terrain. On 16 June the division pulled off line to prepare for another

mission.

19-25 July

The 3rd Armored Division prepared to serve in the exploitation force for Operation COBRA, a major breakout offensive. COBRA had been set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. The plan envisioned “carpet bombing” by 2,500 planes and 5,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector west of Saint-Lô. Three infantry divisions would attack in the aftermath of the bombing, opening up gaps through which two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division would exploit. During the delay the 3rd Armored Division refined its preparations for the attack, in particular rehearsing the integration of tanks, infantry and artillery into combined arms teams. Many tanks were fitted out with improvised steel prongs welded to their hulls that enabled them to plow through hedgerows rather than expose underbellies or tip over trying to crest them. On 25 July the weather finally cleared, and the carpet bombing began.

26-31 July

The 3rd Armored Division pushed through the wreckage left by the COBRA carpet bombing and attacked southwest towards Coutances. Resistance was stiff at first, but unraveled as enemy losses mounted. Army Air Corps officers mounted in tanks coordinated air support to the attacking columns, helping them quickly suppress blocking positions encountered en route. The division pushed beyond Montpinchon and Roncey before crossing the path of the 4th Armored Division attacking due south. The 3rd Armored Division then pivoted 90 degrees, and one combat command attacked towards Villedieu-les-Poêles while another raced towards Brecey. When the Brecey column found the bridge south of the town had been destroyed, they improvised a ford across the See River by hand carrying rocks and laying them along the riverbed. Infantry forced a crossing in the face of scattered small arms fire, and were quickly reinforced by tanks. The tankers sped on to secure Hill 242, the dominant terrain feature in the area.

1-13 August

Combat Command A of the 3rd Armored Division, attached to and in the lead of the 1st Infantry Division, attacked through Mortain and pressed on to Barenton and Ambrières-le-Grand. Combat Command B, similarly attached to the 4th Infantry Division, led attacks to isolate and seize Saint-Pois. On 7 August the Germans launched a counterattack with three armored divisions through Mortain, hoping to reach the sea and cut off General George S. Patton’s rapidly advancing Third Army. Combat Command B backstopped the embattled 30th Infantry Division, most directly in the path of the German attack, and then led a counterattack that restored the northern shoulder. Combat Command A joined the 2nd Armored Division in an attack deep into the Germans’ southern flank towards Barenton, threatening advancing enemy spearheads with encirclement as it did so. Mortain proved a costly setback for the Germans; they left behind over 100 destroyed tanks, and their participating divisions were mauled.

14-19 August

The 3rd Armored Division reconsolidated near Mayenne, and then attacked to destroy German forces in the newly forming Falaise Pocket. General George S. Patton's Third Army had encircled numerous enemy troops – including survivors of the attack on Mortain – when it sped east from Avranches and hooked northwards towards Falaise. The 3rd Armored Division attacked to seize Ranen and then Fromental as the Allies squeezed the entrapped Germans into a smaller and smaller area. Fighting was fierce as the Germans became more desperate, and the Allies pummeled their fleeing columns with air strikes and artillery fire. On 18 August the 3rd Armored Division linked up with British forces near Putanges as the pocket disappeared. The Falaise Pocket proved to be a disaster for the Germans, who lost 50,000 prisoners in addition to tens of thousands killed or wounded in the fighting. The Germans who did escape lost most of their equipment in the pocket or in the pursuit.

20-25 August

Having been pinched out of the line by the closure of the Falaise Pocket, the 3rd Armored Division continued mopping up and enjoyed some welcome rest and recuperation, but not for long. The Allied advance across France continued at a breakneck pace. A further encirclement entrapped even more Germans just short of the Seine River, and the French 2nd Armored Division made a triumphal entry into Paris on 25 August in the midst of wildly ecstatic crowds. Allied commanders envisioned even deeper penetrations, and a pursuit beyond the Seine. The 3rd Armored Division was part of these plans, and redeployed over 100 miles to the banks of the Seine River south of Paris, there to reassemble and continue the attack. On the night of 25 August division units began pouring across a bridge built by XXth Corps engineers near Tilly, and the division's engineers threw across another 540-foot span to support the advance.

4TH ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Chippenham, Wiltshire, England, the 4th Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

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14-20 June

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21-30 June

Headquartered in Chippenham, Wiltshire, England, the 4th Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

The 4th Armored Division headquartered briefly in Dorchester, Dorset, England en route to ports of embarkation. It debarked across Utah Beach beginning 11 July, and assembled as an armored counterattack reserve initially. Contingents of the 4th Armored Division reinforced units in contact beginning 17 July, and the division oriented itself to take over a sector of the front between Carentan and Périers.

19-25 July

The 4th Armored Division prepared to serve in the “direct pressure force” for Operation COBRA, a major breakout offensive. COBRA had been set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. The plan envisioned “carpet bombing” by 2,500 planes and 5,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector west of Saint-Lô. Three infantry divisions would attack in the aftermath of the bombing, opening up gaps through which two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division would exploit. Meanwhile a direct pressure force of four infantry divisions, the 4th Armored Division and a cavalry group would attack on a line running from the carpet bombed area to the Atlantic Ocean. This direct pressure force would fix the Germans in front of them initially, and then overwhelm them as the breakthrough force plunged into the German rear and isolated them from reinforcements and support. By 25 July the weather had cleared, and the carpet bombing began.

26-31 July

The 4th Armored Division attacked to seize Coutances, which it secured after a brief but savage fight. Enemy resistance unraveled as losses mounted and armored columns pushed through them along multiple axes. Air Corps officers mounted in tanks coordinated air support to the attacking columns, helping them quickly suppress blocking positions encountered en route. The division pushed on towards Avranches, seizing Cerences and La Haye-Pesnel as it did so. Avranches controlled a network of roads and bridges critical to breaking out of the Cotentin Peninsula and into Brittany. Bypassing some pockets of resistance and overwhelming other roadblocks in brief, sharp actions, a column from the 4th Armored Division fought its way into Avranches on 30 July. Here it engaged in a confused melee with the city's defenders and with columns of Germans retreating through the city. As the rest of the division arrived the Americans prevailed, took hundreds of prisoners, and pushed on to secure critical bridges and dams nearby.

1-13 August

The 4th Armored Division attacked towards Nantes to isolate the Brittany Peninsula from the rest of France. Encountering stiff opposition on the outskirts of Rennes, the division by-passed that city, cut it off, and continued to advance through otherwise collapsing resistance. A regimental combat team from the follow-on 8th Infantry Division took Rennes while the tankers sped on to seize Chateaubriant and Vannes, isolate Lorient and Saint-Nazaire, and close up on the Atlantic Ocean near Quiberon Bay. On 12 August the 4th Armored Division, assisted by French Forces of the Interior (FFI) leading them through minefields, stormed into Nantes. German forces in Brittany were cut off and isolated in a few coastal strongholds, subject to being picked off one by one. The campaign was a masterpiece of surprise, speed, and fluid maneuver. During this period the 4th Armored Division captured 5,000 prisoners and destroyed or captured 250 vehicles at a cost of 471 killed, missing or wounded.

14-19 August

The 4th Armored Division turned east after having seized Nantes, and attacked to seize Orleans. One of the 4th Armored Division's combat commands covered over 100 miles in a single day, pushing from Nantes to Saint-Calais before a short halt to refuel. Although the bridges between Saint-Calais and Orleans had been destroyed, aggressive reconnaissance elements discovered usable crossings of the intervening rivers. By the night of 15 August, combined arms teams of armor and infantry had overrun the Orleans airport and were on the outskirts of the city. Resistance stiffened, so a deliberate coordinated attack was made. Two armor columns maneuvered into open terrain to the north of the city, while an infantry regimental combat team attacked from the west. These converging attacks overwhelmed the defenders, and Orleans fell. Meanwhile another 4th Armored Division combat command swept the north bank of the Loire River, thus securing the American offensive's southern flank.

20-25 August

The 4th Armored Division attacked to seize Sens and secure crossings of the Yonne River. En route it found Montargis defended and its bridge across the Loing River destroyed. Combat Command A bypassed Montargis, found yet another crossing of the Loing, and sped on towards Sens. Combat Command B crossed the Loing at the same place, then turned back to envelop Montargis while the follow on 35th Infantry Division attacked it from the front. The converging columns crushed enemy resistance in Montargis on 24 August. Meanwhile Combat Command A raced on through Sens, arriving so unexpectedly it captured the city without a fight. The division then drove another 40 miles to Troyes, forcing a crossing of the Seine River a few miles to the north of the city. Fierce fighting broke out in the streets of Troyes, but resistance collapsed when the column already across the Seine enveloped the defenders from the rear while the original attackers kept up their pressure from the front.

5TH ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Ogbourne St. George, Wiltshire, England, the 5th Armored Division – the “Victory Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

Headquartered in Ogbourne St. George, Wiltshire, England, the 5th Armored Division – the “Victory Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

Headquartered in Ogbourne St. George, Wiltshire, England, the 5th Armored Division – the “Victory Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

Headquartered in Ogbourne St. George, Wiltshire, England, the 5th Armored Division – the “Victory Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

Headquartered in Ogbourne St. George, Wiltshire, England, the 5th Armored Division – the “Victory Division” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

19-25 July

The 5th Armored Division headquartered briefly in Southampton, Hampshire, England en route to ports of embarkation. It began debarking across Utah Beach on 24 July.

26-31 July

The 5th Armored Division completed debarking and assembled in the vicinity of Saint-Sauver-le-Vicompte. Here it served as an armored reserve for General George S. Patton's soon to be activated Third Army

1-13 August

The 5th Armored Division advanced through Avranches, Fougères and Vitre, and then swung east to attack towards Le Mans. It advanced in the wake of the 79th Infantry Division initially, and then forced a crossing south of the Sarthe and enveloped Le Mans from the south and east. The converging attacks of armor and infantry divisions trapped the

defenders of Le Mans and swept on into the city on 8 August. The 5th Armored Division re-oriented north, attacking across lines of communication supporting Germans still fighting in Normandy and around Mortain. Enemy resistance was disorganized and confused at first, but hardened as the advancing American columns threatened to cut off these German forces altogether. The 5th Armored Division pushed through Mamers on 11 August, captured Sees on 12 August, and then pushed on to the outskirts of Argentan. Meanwhile the French 2nd Armored Division, to its immediate left, had attacked abreast and seized Alencon.

14-19 August

The 5th Armored Division pivoted 90 degrees and attacked east to seize Dreux. Resistance was minor, consisting of but a few scattered road blocks. The division brushed quickly through these and pushed on to the Eure River. On the morning of 16 August the division forced several crossings of the Eure River and encircled Dreux. It swept into the town that afternoon, capturing 200 prisoners and securing five usable bridges across the Eure River. In crossing the Eure River the 5th Armored Division breached the last major terrain obstacle between the Allied forces and Paris, now only 37 miles away. Perhaps even more important, it positioned the Americans to encircle more Germans as they fled the Falaise Pocket and attempted to retreat across the Seine River north of Paris. Accompanied by the 79th Infantry Division, the 5th Armored Division pushed on to the vicinity of Mantes-Gassicourt, policing up German stragglers en route and placing interditory artillery fire on the Seine crossings.

20-25 August

The 5th Armored Division attacked to seize Louviers and trap German forces attempting to escape across the Seine River. South of Rouen the Seine averages 500 feet across and has numerous ferry slips and crossing sites. North of Rouen it averages 1,200 feet across, is complicated by tides, and is much more hazardous to cross. The division's advance greatly reduced German escape prospects. Mindful of the closing trap, the Germans cobbled surviving fragments of panzer and panzer grenadier units into a significant blocking force. These put up a determined defense, considerably assisted by numerous woods and ravines and by several days of fog and rain. The 5th Armored Division nevertheless ground its way forward. During five days of hard fighting the division advanced 20 miles and accomplished its missions. Meanwhile, Paris fell to French and American columns and Commonwealth forces linked up with the 5th Armored Division to complete the Seine encirclement.

6TH ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

Headquartered in Batsford, Oxford, England, the 6th Armored Division – the “Super Sixth” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

Headquartered in Batsford, Oxford, England, the 6th Armored Division – the “Super Sixth” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

Headquartered in Batsford, Oxford, England, the 6th Armored Division – the “Super Sixth” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

Headquartered in Batsford, Oxford, England, the 6th Armored Division – the “Super Sixth” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

Headquartered in Batsford, Oxford, England, the 6th Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France. It moved to ports of embarkation and debarked across Utah Beach beginning 18 July, assembling as an armored counterattack reserve initially.

19-25 July

The 6th Armored Division continued debarkation across Utah Beach. By 24 July it had completed debarkation and was assembled in the vicinity of Le Mesnil. Here it positioned to reinforce the “direct pressure force” for Operation COBRA, the major breakout offensive. COBRA had been set for 21 July, but was postponed to 22, 24 and then 25 July because of weather. The plan envisioned “carpet bombing” by 2,500 planes and 5,000 tons of bombs within a six-square-mile sector west of Saint-Lô. Three infantry divisions would attack in the aftermath of the bombing, opening up gaps through which two armored divisions and a motorized infantry division would exploit. Meanwhile a “direct pressure force” of five divisions and a cavalry group would attack on a line running from the carpet bombed area to the Atlantic Ocean. This force would fix the Germans in front of them initially, and then overwhelm them as the breakthrough force plunged into the German rear and isolated them from reinforcements and support.

26-31 July

The 6th Armored Division, oriented on Coutances, received orders to lunge for Granville instead. En route it encountered determined resistance at the destroyed bridge of Point-de-la Roque over the Sienne River. It overwhelmed this blocking position with a deliberate assault heavily supported by artillery. Enemy resistance unraveled as losses mounted and armored columns pushed through them along multiple axes. Air Corps officers mounted in tanks coordinated air support to the attacking columns, helping them quickly suppress blocking positions encountered along the way. The division pushed on through Brehal, which it secured after a brief fight. At one point it encountered log obstacles which it bulldozed through with its leading tanks. Destroyed and abandoned German equipment littered the roadways as collapsing enemy forces fled before the American juggernaut. The division sped through Granville on 31 July and continued on towards Avranches, securing Sartilly and Bacilly en route.

1-13 August

Now a part of General George S. Patton's newly operational Third Army, the 6th Armored Division attacked towards Brest, over 200 miles from its starting point near Avranches. Speed was essential if the Germans were to be denied the opportunity to construct a coherent defense of Brittany. The division sped along multiple routes, overwhelming minor resistance and bypassing positions the Germans strongly defended. Encountering an ambush near Bree, the front of the ambushed column sped on to flank its attackers and continued their advance, while follow-on forces attacked to destroy the ambush. By 7 August the division had swept through the central spine of Brittany and was on the outskirts of Brest. Its advance had been so rapid a German division retreating into Brest marched into the 6th Armored Division's positions unaware, and was destroyed in two days of fierce fighting. The Germans in Brittany were now isolated in coastal enclaves which could be picked off one by one – 37,000 were trapped in Brest alone.

14-19 August

General George S. Patton's Third Army focused on hooking to the east and encircling retreating Germans in the Falaise pocket and along the Seine River. German troops trapped in the fortified coastal enclaves of Brittany needed to be contained until sufficient forces were available to reduce them one by one. The 6th Armored Division, highly mobile and positioned around Brest, drew the task of containing the Germans in Brittany and relieving the 4th Armored Division and other units to join the drive to the east. Containing the 37,000 Germans trapped in Brest with a single combat command, the 6th Armored Division redeployed to Vannes to contain Lorient and Quiberon Bay as well. The division's firepower and mobility made it ideal for this economy of force mission, as did its familiarity with central Brittany and the assistance of several thousand French Forces of the Interior (FFI). Capable of speeding from one threatened point to another, it kept far more numerous German forces trapped for several weeks.

20-25 August

The 6th Armored Division, assisted by French Forces of the Interior (FFI) continued to pin German units in the fortified coastal enclaves of Brittany: Brest, Lorient and Quiberon Bay. They also picked off isolated waterfront garrisons and policed up enemy stragglers. The division conducted active operations to further the enemy's attrition and state of siege mentality, while waiting for sufficient forces to muster to seize the fortified enclaves outright. Heavy combat patrols penetrated deep into enemy perimeters, overrunning isolated outposts and calling in artillery on lucrative targets. The division began to "mouse-trap" enemy patrols, allowing them to penetrate deep within American lines before overwhelming them with ambushes, artillery or maneuvering forces. Land mines and booby traps were extensively used by both sides, with each trying to deny the use of critical routes to the other. Meanwhile, Paris was liberated by rapidly advancing French and American forces.

7TH ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

The Seventh Armored Division – the “Lucky Seventh” – was en route from the United States to England.

7-13 June

The Seventh Armored Division – the “Lucky Seventh” – was en route from the United States to England.

14-20 June

Headquartered in Tidworth, Wiltshire, England, the 7th Armored Division – the “Lucky Seventh” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

Headquartered in Tidworth, Wiltshire, England, the 7th Armored Division – the “Lucky Seventh” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

Headquartered in Tidworth, Wiltshire, England, the 7th Armored Division – the “Lucky Seventh” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

19-25 July

Headquartered in Tidworth, Wiltshire, England, the 7th Armored Division – the “Lucky Seventh” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

26-31 July

Headquartered in Tidworth, Wiltshire, England, the 7th Armored Division – the “Lucky Seventh” – trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-13 August

The 7th Armored Division debarked across both Omaha and Utah beaches beginning 13 August.

14-19 August

The 7th Armored Division sped forward from the beaches, subordinated itself to XX

Corps, and attacked to seize Chartres, considered by many to be the gateway to Paris. The Germans had designated Chartres as an “absorption point” wherein retreating units were to rendezvous and reorganize, so defenders were numerous and resistance was fierce. The American armor swept into the outskirts of the city quickly, but encountered determined resistance in the narrow streets of the city proper – where unaccompanied tanks were at a disadvantage. Reinforced by infantrymen from the 5th Infantry Division, the attacking columns again pushed forward into the difficult urban terrain. Combined teams of tanks and infantry cleared Chartres block by block. More than 2,000 prisoners were captured, in addition to an airport, warehouses, depots, a bomb assembly plant, and 50 planes. At this point German resistance in the area collapsed, and Paris was only 50 miles away.

20-25 August

The 7th Armored Division secured the town of Dreux, and then drove on through Rambouillet with orders to secure a bridgehead across the Seine River in the vicinity of Melun. The attack pushed through difficult wooded terrain to the outskirts of Melun, only to have the Germans destroy the bridge before the Americans could seize it. The division then identified a potential crossing site near the village of Ponthierry, seven miles downstream. Armored infantrymen crossed the river in assault boats and established a precarious bridgehead. Division engineers worked around the clock to push a floating bridge across the Seine and by the morning of 24 August tankers and artillerymen were rolling across it to relieve the beleaguered infantrymen. Soon the division pushed down the east bank of the Seine to seize Melun itself, consolidating their bridgehead in strength. Meanwhile the 2nd French Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division had pushed into Paris, liberating the city amidst wildly exuberant crowds.

2ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Designated as the Bombardment Group (Heavy) in 1939 and equipped with B-17 Flying Fortresses, the 2nd served on antisubmarine duty for several months after the United States entered World War II. It deployed to North Africa beginning in March 1943, and remained in the theater until after V-E Day. Constituent units included the 20th, 49th, 96th and 429th Bombardment Squadrons. It was assigned to the Twelfth Air Force initially, and then in December 1943 to the Fifteenth Air Force. The group flew support and interdiction missions, bombing marshalling yards, airdromes, troop concentrations, bridges, docks, and shipping. The 2nd played a key role in the defeat of Axis forces in Tunisia, the reduction of the island of Pantelleria, the invasion of Sicily, the invasion of Italy, the drive into Rome, the invasion of Southern France, and campaigns against German forces in northern Italy. The group engaged primarily in the long-range bombardment of strategic targets after October 1943, attacking oil refineries, aircraft factories, steel plants, and other objectives in Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Greece. En route to bomb a vital aircraft factory at Steyr on 24 February 1944, the group was greatly outnumbered by enemy interceptors, but maintained its formation and bombed the target. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for this performance. On the following day, while on a mission to attack aircraft factories at Regensburg, it fought its way through similarly fierce opposition and earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation.

34TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 15 January 1941, the 34th trained and participated in maneuvers employing the B-17 Flying Fortress until December 1941. It flew patrol missions along the east coast after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and then was reassigned to the defense of the west coast. It served as a replacement training unit from mid-1942 until the end of 1943, and then re-equipped with B-24 Liberators and deployed to England in April 1944. With its constituent squadrons, the 4th, 7th, 18th, and 391st Bombardment Squadrons, it joined the Eighth Air Force. The 34th entered combat in May 1944, and prepared for the invasion of Normandy by bombing airfields in France and Germany. It supported the landings on 6 June 1944 by attacking coastal defenses and communications, and then supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô and struck V-weapon sites, gun emplacements, and supply lines throughout the summer of 1944. It converted back to B-17s and bombed strategic objectives from October 1944 through February 1945. Targets included marshalling yards in Ludwigshafen, Hamm, Osnabruck, and Darmstadt, oil centers in Bielefeld, Merseburg, Hamburg, and Misburg, factories in Berlin, Dalteln, and Hannover, and airfields in Munster, Neumunster, and Frankfurt. The 34th directly supported ground forces during the Battle of the Bulge, December 1944-January 1945. From March 1945 the group focused on interdicting communications and support to ground forces. After V-E Day the 34th carried food to flooded areas of Holland and transported prisoners of war from German camps to Allied bases.

44TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 15 January 1941 and equipped with B-24 Liberators, the 44th initially served as an operational training unit and on antisubmarine duty. The group moved to England in August 1942 with its constituent 66th, 67th, and 68th Bombardment Squadrons. Combat operations with the Eighth Air Force included attacks against strategic targets in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, Rumania, Austria, Poland, and Sicily. The 44th attacked submarine installations, industrial facilities, airfields, harbors, shipyards, and other objectives. The 506th Bombardment Squadron joined the group in March 1943. The 44th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for an extremely hazardous mission against naval installations at Kiel on 14 May 1943. On this occasion the group carried incendiary bombs to be dropped after three B-17 Flying Fortress groups had released high explosives, and flew in the wake of the main formation. This made its B-24s more vulnerable to enemy interceptors because they flew outside the consolidated firepower of the main force, and their vulnerability increased when they opened their own formation for the attack. Despite these hazards, the 44th successfully blanketed the target with incendiaries. In June 1943 a detachment from the group moved to North Africa to support the invasion of Sicily, bombing airfields and marshalling yards in Italy. This detachment flew in the famous low-level raid on the Ploesti oil fields, 1 August 1943. The 44th was awarded a second Distinguished Unit Citation for its part in this raid, and its commander, Colonel Leon Johnson, received the Medal of Honor for his daring leadership during it. In September the group struck airfields in Holland and France, and sent another detachment to North Africa to support the Salerno landings. From November 1943 through April 1945 the 44th bombed airfields, oil installations, and marshalling yards in northern Europe. It participated in the intensive "Big Week" bombing campaign against the German aircraft industry (20-25 February, 1944). In preparation for the Normandy invasion the 44th bombed airfields, railroads, and V-weapon sites. During the invasion it attacked strong points in the beachhead area and transportation targets behind enemy lines. The group supported the Caen offensive and the Saint-Lô breakthrough in July, and dropped food, ammunition, and other supplies during the airborne assault into Holland in September. During the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945) the 44th struck bridges, tunnels, choke points, rail and road junctions, and communications in the battle area. It attacked airfields and transportation assets during the advance into Germany, and flew re-supply missions during the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945.

91ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 15 April 1942, the 91st and its four B-17 Flying Fortress equipped squadrons, the 322nd, 323rd, 324th, and 401st Bombardment Squadrons, moved to England in August 1942. It was assigned to the Eighth Air Force and attacked submarine pens, shipyards, harbors, dock facilities, airdromes, factories, and communications targets. On 27 January 1943, the 91st attacked the German navy yard at Wilhelmshaven, the first attack by Eighth Air Force heavy bombers on a target in Germany. The group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for a daring raid on marshalling yards at Hamm on 4 March 1943 in

the face of adverse weather and heavy opposition. Other targets included airfields at Villacoublay and Oldenburg, aircraft factories in Orientburg and Brussels, chemical industries in Leverkusen and Peenemunde, ball bearing plants in Schweinfurt, and industrial facilities in Ludwigshafen, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Wilhelmshaven. On 11 January 1944, the 91st earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation for successfully bombing targets in spite of bad weather, overstretched fighter cover, and severe enemy attacks. The group flew interdiction missions prior to the Normandy invasion, and bombed gun emplacements and troop concentrations during it. It supported the Saint-Lô breakthrough and the fighting for Caen, attacked communications into the battle area during the Battle of the Bulge, and struck airfields, bridges, and railroads during the fighting for Germany. The 91st evacuated prisoners from German camps after the war ended.

92ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 March 1942, the 92nd flew antisubmarine patrols with B-17 Flying Fortresses before moving to England in July with its constituent 325th, 326th, 327th, and 407th Bombardment Squadrons. Assigned to the Eighth Air Force, the group flew combat missions in September and October 1942, and then assumed the mission of training replacement air crews. It resumed bombing strategic objectives in May 1943. Targets included shipyards at Kiel, ball-bearing plants at Schweinfurt, submarine installations at Wilhelmshaven, a tire plant at Hanover, airfields near Paris, an aircraft factory at Nantes, and a magnesium mine in Norway. Flight Officer John C. Morgan, a B-17 co-pilot, received the Medal of Honor for heroism on 26 July 1943. When his aircraft was attacked by enemy fighters the pilot suffered a brain injury which left him crazed, and for two hours Morgan flew in formation with one hand on the controls and the other restraining the struggling pilot, who was attempting to fly the plane. On 11 January 1944, the 92nd earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for bombing aircraft factories in Central Germany despite severe weather, heavy enemy fire, and overstretched fighter protection. The group flew in the intensive "Big Week" campaign against the German aircraft industry (20-25 February 1944), and also attacked V-weapon sites in France, airfields in France, Germany, and the Low Countries, industrial targets in France, Germany, and Belgium, and oil and transportation facilities throughout German controlled territory. The group flew interdiction missions in preparation for the Normandy invasion, and struck gun emplacements, road junctions, and marshalling yards during it. The 92nd supported the Saint-Lô breakthrough in July 1944, and bombed gun positions and bridges in support of airborne assaults into Holland in September. It participated in the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945) by attacking bridges and marshalling yards in the battle area, and covered the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945 by bombing airfields near the landing zones. It moved to France in June 1945, and transported troops from Marseilles to Casablanca for their return to the United States.

93RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 March 1942 and equipped with B-24 Liberators, the constituent 328th,

329th, 330th, and 409th Bombardment Squadrons of the 93rd Bombardment Group (Heavy) flew antisubmarine missions over the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea before moving to England in August. Assigned to the Eighth Air Force, the group entered combat on 9 October 1942, attacking steel and engineering works near Lille on its first mission. Until December 1942, the group operated primarily against submarine pens in the Bay of Biscay. It sent a large detachment to North Africa, and earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for operations in that theater between December 1942 and February 1943. Despite overstretched supplies and difficult desert conditions, the detachment repeatedly struck heavy blows against enemy shipping and communications. The detachment returned to England in February 1943, and until the end of June the group bombed engine repair works, harbors, power plants, and other targets in France, the Low Countries, and Germany. Another detachment deployed to the Mediterranean in June 1943 to support the invasion of Sicily. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for daring persistence during the famous low-level attack on oil installations near Ploesti, Romania. Lieutenant Colonel Addison E. Baker, the group commander, and Major John L. Jerstad, received the Medal of Honor posthumously for Ploesti. Pilot and co-pilot of the lead plane, they refused to force land their damaged B-24, and instead led the group into the oil facilities before crashing in the target area. The detachment returned to England in August 1943, the group flew two major missions, and the detachment returned to the Mediterranean to support the invasion of Italy in September. The detachment rejoined the group in October, and the 93rd bombed marshalling yards, aircraft factories, oil refineries, chemical plants, and cities in Germany. During the Normandy invasion the group bombed gun emplacements, choke points, and bridges near Cherbourg. It attacked troop concentrations during the Saint-Lô breakthrough in July 1944, and transported food, gasoline, water, and other supplies to the Allies advancing across France during August and September. The 93rd struck transportation targets during the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945) and supported the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945.

94TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 15 June 1942, and equipped with the B-17 Flying Fortress, the constituent 311th, 312th, 313th, and 410th Bombardment Squadrons of the 94th Bombardment Group moved to England in April 1943. Assigned to the Eighth Air Force, the group flew its first mission on 13 June 1943, bombing an airdrome at Saint-Omer. The group then attacked such strategic objectives as the port of Saint-Nazaire, shipyards at Kiel, an aircraft component parts factory at Kassel, a synthetic rubber plant at Hanover, a chemical factory at Ludwigshafen, marshalling yards at Frankfurt, oil facilities at Merseburg, and ball-bearing works at Eberhausen. The 94th withstood repeated assaults by enemy interceptors while bombing an aircraft factory near Regensburg on 17 August 1943, and received a Distinguished Unit Citation for this mission. Braving adverse weather, heavy flak, and attacks from interceptors, the group forced home an attack against an aircraft parts factory in Brunswick on 11 January 1944, and received a second Distinguished Unit Citation. The 94th flew in the "Big Week" bombing campaign against the enemy aircraft industry (20-25 February, 1944). Prior to D-Day the 94th neutralized V-weapon sites, airdromes, and other installations along the coast of France, and on D-Day bombed enemy positions in the battle

area. It bombed troops and gun batteries to support the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July and the siege of Brest in August. The 94th supported the airborne attacks into Holland in September and attacked marshalling yards, airfields, and strong points during the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945). The group bombed transportation, communications, and oil targets during the final push across Germany, and after V-E Day dropped leaflets to displaced persons and German civilians.

95TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 15 June 1942 and equipped with the B-17 Flying Fortress, the constituent 334th, 335th, 336th, and 412th Bombardment Squadrons of the 95th Bombardment Group moved to England in March 1943. Assigned to the Eighth Air Force, the group flew its first mission on 13 May 1943, bombing an airfield at Saint-Omer. During the next two months the group attacked V-weapon sites and airfields in France, and it began bombing strategic objectives in Germany in July 1943. Targets included harbors, marshalling yards and industrial facilities. The 95th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for fighting its way through fierce resistance from enemy fighters to bomb an aircraft assembly plant at Regensburg on 17 August 1943. It earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation on 10 October 1943, again withstanding concentrated fighter attacks and intense anti-aircraft fire when bombing marshalling yards at Munster. The 95th participated in the "Big Week" bombing campaign against the German aircraft industry (20-25 February 1944), and earned a third Distinguished Unit Citation during an attack on Berlin on 4 March 1944. In this attack the 95th fought its way through dense clouds and severe fighter resistance to strike its target. The group struck coastal defenses and communications during the invasion of Normandy in June, and hit troop concentrations during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July. The 95th dropped ammunition, food, and medical supplies to Polish troops in Warsaw on 18 September 1944, attacked enemy transportation targets during the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945), and bombed airdromes in support of the Allied assault across the Rhine in March 1945. The 95th flew its last combat mission, an attack on marshalling yards at Orenburg, on 20 April 1945, and dropped food to the Dutch during the first week in May. After V-E Day, the group transported liberated prisoners and displaced persons from Austria to France and England.

96TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

The 96th Bombardment Group activated on 15 July 1942, and served as a B-17 Flying Fortress training unit initially. The 96th deployed to England with its constituent squadrons, the 337th, 338th, 339th, and 413th Bombardment Squadrons, in April 1943. Assigned to the Eighth Air Force, the group entered combat in May 1943. It attacked shipyards, harbors, railroad yards, airdromes, oil refineries, aircraft factories, and other industrial targets in Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. The 96th earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for fighting its way through fierce resistance from

enemy fighters to bomb vital aircraft factories at Regensburg on 17 August 1943. It received another Distinguished Unit Citation for leading the 45th Bombardment Wing (Heavy) through thick clouds and intense anti-aircraft fire to raid critical aircraft component factories in

Poland on 9 April 1944. Other targets included airdromes in Bordeaux and Augsburg, marshalling yards in Kiel, Hamm, Brunswick, and Gdansk, aircraft factories in Chemnitz, Hannover, and Diosgyor, oil refineries in Merseburg and Brux, and chemical works in Weisbaden, Ludwigshafen, and Neunkirchen. The 96th bombed coastal defenses, railway bridges, gun emplacements, and field batteries during the Normandy invasion of June 1944. It attacked enemy positions in support of the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July, reinforced the Allied drive across France in August, and dropped critical supplies to the Maquis during the same period. During the early months of 1945 the 96th attacked German communications along their western front. After V-E Day it flew food to Holland and hauled redeploying personnel to French Morocco, Ireland, France, and Germany.

100TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 June 1942 and equipped with B-17 Flying Fortresses, the 100th Bombardment Group and its constituent squadrons, the 349th, 350th, 351st, and 418th Bombardment Squadrons, deployed to England in May 1943, and were assigned to the Eighth Air Force. From June 1943 through January 1944 it bombed airfields in France and naval and industrial facilities in France and Germany. The 100th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for seriously disrupting German fighter plane production with an attack on a critical aircraft factory at Regensburg on 17 August 1943. The 100th bombed airfields, industries, marshalling yards, and missile sites in Western Europe from January through May 1944, including participation in the "Big Week" campaign against enemy aircraft factories (20-25 February 1944). The 100th received another Distinguished Unit Citation for daring attacks on Berlin in March 1944. During the summer of 1944 oil installations became major targets for the 100th and other strategic bombing groups. The 100th flew interdiction missions hitting bridges and gun positions in support of the Normandy invasion, and bombed enemy positions during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July and the siege of Brest in August and September. It attacked transportation assets and ground defenses during the drive through the Siegfried Line in the fall of 1944, bombed marshalling yards and communications in the Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and supported airborne assaults across the Rhine in March 1945. The 100th received the French Croix de Guerre with Palm for attacking heavily defended installations in Germany and for dropping critical supplies to French Forces of the Interior.

303RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 3 February 1942, the B-17 equipped 303rd deployed to England in August 1942 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 358th, 359th,

360th, and 427th Bombardment Squadrons. The group entered combat in November 1942, and bombed airfields, railroads, submarine pens, industrial facilities, marshalling yards, and other strategic objectives. It participated in the first American heavy bomber penetration into Germany when it struck submarine pens at Wilhelmshaven on 27 January 1943. Further targets included ball-bearing plants in Schweinfurt, shipbuilding yards in Bremen, a synthetic rubber plant in Huls, an aircraft engine factory in Hamburg, industrial areas of Frankfurt, an airfield at Villacoublay, and a marshalling yard at Le Mans. Flying through intense antiaircraft fire during an attack on Vegesack on 18 March 1943, First Lieutenant Jack W. Mathis, the leading bombardier of his squadron, was knocked from his bombsight by enemy fire. Although mortally wounded, he returned to his position and released the bombs. For this action, which ensured an accurate attack against a critical target, Lieutenant Mathis posthumously received the Medal of Honor. Technical Sergeant Forrest L. Vosler, radio operator and gunner, received the Medal of Honor on a mission to Bremen on 20 December 1943. After bombing the target, Sergeant Vosler's plane was hit by antiaircraft fire that knocked out two engines, damaged the radio equipment, seriously injured the tail gunner, and wounded Sergeant Vosler in the legs and thighs. Another 20-mm shell nearly blinded the sergeant. He nevertheless maintained a steady stream of fire to protect the tail of the aircraft. When the pilot announced that the plane would ditch, Sergeant Vosler, working entirely by touch, repaired the radio and sent out distress signals. When the plane went down in the English Channel, the sergeant secured the tail gunner and himself on the wing. Sergeant Vosler's radio signals brought help, and the entire crew was rescued. The 303rd earned a Distinguished Unit Citation on 11 January 1944 when, in the face of fierce attacks by enemy fighters in weather that prevented effective fighter cover from staying with the group, it successfully struck an aircraft assembly plant at Oschersleben. During the Normandy campaign the 303rd attacked gun emplacements and bridges in the Pas de Calais, and bombed enemy troops in support of the breakthrough at Saint-Lô. The group struck airfields, oil depots, and other targets during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and bombed military installations near Wesel to aid the Allied assault across the Rhine in March 1945. The 303rd flew its last combat mission, an attack on armament works in Pilsen, on 25 April 1945.

305TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 March 1942, the B-17 Flying Fortress equipped 305th deployed to England in August 1942, for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 364th, 365th, 366th and 422nd Bombardment Squadrons. The group began combat operations on 17 November 1942, and bombed submarine pens, docks, harbors, shipyards, motor works, and marshalling yards in France, Germany, and the Low Countries. The group bombed the navy yards at Wilhelmshaven on 27 January 1943, marking the first penetration into Germany by heavy bombers of the Eighth Air Force. The 305th earned a Distinguished Unit Citation on 4 April 1943, when it bombed an industrial facility in Paris with great precision despite intense enemy fighter attacks and heavy flak. The 305th struck deeper into enemy territory to hit aluminum, magnesium, and nitrate works in Norway, industrial facilities in Berlin, oil plants in Merseburg, aircraft factories in Anklam, shipping in Gdynia,

and ball-bearing works in Schweinfurt. The group received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for fighting through fierce opposition to bomb aircraft factories in central Germany on 11 January 1944. The 305th participated in the intensive "Big Week" campaign against the German aircraft industry (20 to 25 February 1944). First Lieutenants William R. Lawley Jr and Edward S. Michael, both pilots, received the Medal of Honor for similar exploits on 20 February and 11 April 1944 respectively. In both cases their B-17 was severely damaged by fighters after bombing targets in Germany, crew members were wounded, and the pilot was critically injured. Recovering in time to pull their aircraft out of steep dives and realizing that wounded men would be unable to bail out, each pilot nursed his plane back to England and made a successful crash landing. Prior to the Normandy invasion the 305th flew interdiction and neutralized V-weapon sites, airfields, and repair shops, and on D-Day it bombed strongholds near the beaches. The 305th supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944, and struck antiaircraft batteries to cover the airborne invasion of Holland in September. The group bombed enemy installations during the Battle of the Bulge, and supported airborne assaults across the Rhine thereafter. The 305th flew its last combat mission on 25 April 1945.

306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 March 1942, the B-17 Flying Fortress equipped 306th deployed to England in August 1942 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 367th, 368th, 369th, and 423rd Bombardment Squadrons. The group bombed such strategic targets as the locomotive factory at Lille, railroad yards at Rouen, submarine pens at Bordeaux, ship yards at Vegesack, ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt, oil plants at Merseburg, marshalling yards at Stuttgart, a foundry at Hannover, a chemical plant at Ludwigshafen, and aircraft factories in Leipzig. The 306th flew in the first penetration into Germany by heavy bombers of the Eighth Air Force on 27 January 1943, attacking submarine pens at Wilhelmshaven. Sergeant Maynard H. Smith earned the Medal of Honor on 1 May 1943, when the aircraft on which he was a gunner was hit and fires ignited in the radio compartment and waist sections. Smith threw exploding ammunition overboard, manned a gun until the German fighters were driven off, administered first aid to the wounded tail gunner, and extinguished the fire. Without fighter escort in the face of powerful opposition, the 306th forced home an assault against central German aircraft factories on 11 January 1944, and earned the Distinguished Unit Citation for this mission. The group received another Distinguished Unit Citation for its actions during "Big Week", the intensive campaign against the German aircraft industry from 20 to 25 February 1944. The 306th prepared for the invasion of Normandy by striking airfields and marshalling yards in France, Belgium, and Germany, and on D-Day attacked railroad bridges and coastal guns. It assisted ground forces during the Saint-Lô breakthrough in July 1944, supported the airborne invasion of Holland in September, and attacked airfields and marshalling yards during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The 306th supported airborne assaults across the Rhine in March 1945, and flew its last missions in April.

319TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (MEDIUM)

Activated on 26 June 1942, the B-26 Marauder equipped 319th deployed to England in August 1942, and then to North Africa in November. Constituent units included the 437th, 438th, 439th and 440th Bombardment Squadrons. Part of the group landed at Arzeu beach during Operation Torch. The 319th operated with the Twelfth Air Force until January 1945, except for a brief assignment to the Fifteenth Air Force from November 1943 to January 1944. The 319th entered combat in November 1942, attacking airfields, harbors, rail facilities, and other targets in Tunisia. It also struck enemy shipping to prevent supplies and reinforcements from reaching North Africa. After reorganization and training from February through June 1943, the 319th participated in the reduction of Pantelleria and the campaign for Sicily. It then attacked bridges, airfields, marshalling yards, artillery sites, and other objectives in Italy. The group supported the landings at Salerno in September 1943 and the fighting for Anzio and Cassino from January through March 1944. It then flew interdiction missions in central Italy in support of the advance on Rome. On 3 March 1944 the 319th earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for bombing critical facilities around Rome while carefully avoiding religious and cultural monuments. It earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation for striking marshalling yards in Florence on 11 March 1944, and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm for support to Allied offensives in Italy from April through June 1944. From July through December 1944 the 319th bombed bridges in the Po Valley, supported the invasion of Southern France, attacked targets in northern Italy, and flew missions into Yugoslavia. The 319th converted to the B-25 Mitchell, and returned to the United States in January 1945. The group was redesignated the 319th Bombardment Group (Light) in February 1945, and converted to the A-26 Invader. It deployed to Okinawa for service with the Seventh Air Force, attacking airfields, shipping, marshalling yards, and industrial targets in Japan and China.

322ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (MEDIUM)

Activated on 17 July 1942, the B-26 Marauder equipped 322nd deployed to England beginning in November 1942. It served with the Eighth Air Force initially before being assigned to the Ninth Air Force in October 1943. Constituent units included the 449th, 450th, 451st and 452nd Bombardment Squadrons. The group flew its first combat mission 14 May 1943, a low-level attack on a power plant in Holland. The 322nd received a Distinguished Unit Citation for the period from 14 May 1943 through 24 July 1944, during which time it demonstrated the effectiveness of medium bombers. It bombed airfields, power stations, shipyards, construction works, marshalling yards, railroad and highway bridges, oil tanks, and V-weapon sites. On D-Day the group hit coastal defenses and gun batteries, and then attacked fuel and ammunition dumps, bridges, and road junctions. The 322nd supported Allied offensives near Caen and the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July, and supported Third Army's drive across France in August and September. The group bombed bridges, road junctions, villages, and ordnance depots during the assault on the Siegfried Line from October through December 1944, and flew missions against railroad bridges during the Battle of

the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The 322nd bombed communications, marshalling yards, bridges, and fuel dumps during the battle for Germany, and flew its last mission on 24 April 1945.

323RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (MEDIUM)

Activated on 4 August 1942, the B-26 Marauder equipped 323rd deployed to England in April 1943. It served with the Eighth Air Force until October 1943, and then with the Ninth Air Force. Constituent units included the 453rd, 454th, 455th and 456th Bombardment Squadrons. The 323rd began combat operations in July 1943, attacking marshalling yards, airfields, industrial facilities, V-weapon sites and other targets in France, Belgium, and Holland. It attacked airfields at Leeuwarden and Venlo during the Allied "Big Week" campaign against the German Air Force and aircraft industry from 20 through 25 February 1944. The 323rd prepared for the invasion of Normandy by bombing coastal defenses, marshalling yards, and airfields in France, and struck roads and coastal batteries on D-Day itself. The group supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July, and moved to Europe in August. Here it began night missions against fuel and ammunition dumps. The 323rd eliminated strong points at Brest in September, and then shifted operations to eastern France to support the assault on the Siegfried Line. During the Battle of the Bulge the group hit transportation installations reinforcing the German Ardennes offensive, and received a Distinguished Unit Citation for missions flown from 24 through 27 December 1944. The 323rd flew interdiction in the Ruhr Valley to support of the final Allied drive into Germany.

344TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (MEDIUM)

Activated on 8 September 1942 and equipped with B-26 Marauders, the 344th served as a replacement training unit before deploying to England in January 1944. Constituent units included the 494th, 495th, 496th and 497th Bombardment Squadrons. The 344th began operations with the Ninth Air Force in March 1944, attacking airfields, missile sites, marshalling yards, submarine shelters, coastal defenses, and other targets in France, Belgium, and Holland. Beginning in May, the group prepared for the Normandy invasion by striking bridges in France. On D-Day it attacked coastal batteries at Cherbourg, and then supported drives that resulted in the seizures of the Cotentin Peninsula and Caen. The 344th earned a Distinguished Unit Citation during the period 24 through 26 July 1944, when it struck troop concentrations, supply dumps, a bridge, and a railroad viaduct in support of the breakthrough at Saint-Lô. The group attacked bridges to hinder enemy withdrawal from the Falaise Gap, and bombed ships and strong points in and around Brest from August through September 1944. The 344th attacked bridges, rail lines, fortifications, supply dumps, and ordnance depots in Germany, supported Allied forces during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and struck supply points, communications, bridges, marshalling yards, roads, and oil storage through April 1945.

351ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 October 1942, the B-17 Flying Fortress equipped 351st deployed to England in April 1943 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 508th, 509th, 510th and 511th Bombardment Squadrons. The 351st bombed ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt, communications facilities at Mayen, marshalling yards at Koblenz, a locomotive and tank factory at Hannover, industrial targets in Berlin, bridges at Cologne, an armaments factory at Mannheim, and oil refineries in Hamburg. It also struck harbor facilities, submarine installations, airfields, V-weapon sites, and power plants in France, Belgium, Holland, and Norway. The 351st earned a Distinguished Unit Citation on 9 October 1943 during a daring mission against an aircraft factory in Germany. The group received another Distinguished Unit Citation for successful attacks on 11 January 1944 against aircraft factories in central Germany. The 351st participated in the intensive "Big Week" air campaign against the German aircraft industry from 20 through 25 February 1944. Navigator 2nd Lieutenant Walter E Truemper and Flight Engineer Sergeant Archibald Mathies earned the Medal of Honor on 20 February 1944, when their aircraft received a direct hit that killed the co-pilot and wounded the pilot. Truemper and Mathies flew the plane until their fellow crew members could bail out. On their third attempt to land the plane in an effort to save the pilot, the B-17 crashed and all three men were killed. In addition to strategic bombing, the 351st supported the Normandy campaign in June 1944 and the Saint-Lô breakthrough in July. It covered the airborne attack on Holland in September, and struck front-line positions, communications, and airfields to stop the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The group's final missions supported airborne assaults across the Rhine in March 1945.

379TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 3 November 1942, the B-17 Flying Fortress equipped 379th deployed to England in April 1943 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 524th, 525th, 526th and 527th Bombardment Squadrons. The 379th began operations on 19 May 1943, and received a Distinguished Unit Citation for operations over Europe from May 1943 through July 1944. It bombed industrial facilities, oil refineries, storage plants, submarine pens, airfields, and communications centers in Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, and Poland. Specific targets included a chemical plant in Ludwigshafen, an aircraft assembly plant in Brunswick, ball-bearing plants at Schweinfurt and Leipzig, synthetic oil refineries at Merseburg and Gelsenkirchen, marshalling yards at Hamm and Reims, and airfields around Mesnil au Val and Berlin. The 379th earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation flying without fighter protection into central Germany to attack vital aircraft factories on 11 January 1944. The 379th flew interdiction missions and bombed V-weapon sites, airfields, radar stations, railways, and gun emplacements before the Normandy invasion on 6 June 1944. It supported the Saint-Lô breakout in July 1944, and attacked German communications and fortifications during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. It bombed bridges and viaducts in France and Germany in support of the Allied assault across the Rhine from February through March 1945.

381ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 3 November 1942, the B-17 Flying Fortress equipped 381st deployed to England in May 1943 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 532nd, 533rd, 534th and 535th Bombardment Squadrons. The 381st bombed an aircraft assembly plant at Villacoublay, an airfield at Amiens, locks at Saint-Nazaire, an aircraft engine factory at Le Mans, nitrate works in Norway, aircraft factories in Brussels, industrial targets around Munster, the submarine construction yard at Kiel, marshalling yards at Offenberg, aircraft factories at Kassel, aircraft assembly plants at Leipzig, oil refineries at Gelsenkirchen, and ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt. It earned a Distinguished Unit Citation on 8 October 1943 for successfully bombing shipyards at Bremen in spite of persistent fighter attacks and heavy flak. It earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation on 11 January 1944 during a daring raid on aircraft factories in central Germany. The 381st participated in the intensive "Big Week" campaign against the German aircraft industry from 20 through 25 February 1944. The group supported the Normandy campaign in June 1944 by bombing bridges and airfields near the beachhead. It supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July and the airborne assault into Holland in September. During the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945 the 381st struck enemy communications, and then it supported the Allied crossings of the Rhine and the final assaults into Germany.

384TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 December 1942, the B-17 Flying Fortress equipped 384th deployed to England in May 1943 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 544th, 545th, 546th and 547th Bombardment Squadrons. The 384th bombed airfields and industrial facilities in France and Germany. Targets included airfields at Orleans, Bricy, and Nancy; motor works at Cologne; a coking plant at Gelsenkirchen; an aircraft component factory at Halberstadt; steel works at Magdeburg; and ball-bearing plants at Schweinfurt. The group made a daring raid on aircraft factories in central Germany on 11 January 1944, and received a Distinguished Unit Citation for this action. The 384th took part in the "Big Week" campaign against the German aircraft industry from 20 through 25 February 1944. It earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation on 24 April 1944 when, although crippled by heavy losses of men and aircraft, it led the 41st Wing through fierce opposition to bomb aircraft factories and airfields at Oberpfaffenhofen. The 384th attacked oil storage plants in Leipzig and Berlin, ports at Hamburg and Emden, and marshalling yards in Duren and Mannheim. Prior to the Normandy invasion it bombed coastal installations, and during the Normandy Campaign bombed airfields and communications beyond the beachhead. The 384th supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944, and attacked tanks and artillery north of Eindhoven to support airborne assaults into Holland in September. The group struck enemy communications and fortifications during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and supported the Allied assault across the Rhine in March 1945 by attacking marshalling yards, railroad junctions, and bridges.

385TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 December 1942, the B-17 equipped 385th deployed to England in June 1943 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 548th, 549th, 550th and 551st Bombardment Squadrons. The 385th bombed industrial facilities, air bases, oil refineries, and communications centers in Germany, France, Poland, Belgium, Holland, and Norway. It earned a Distinguished Unit Citation on 17 August 1943 for bombing an aircraft factory in Regensburg after a long hazardous flight over enemy territory. It led the 4th Bombardment Wing through heavy opposition into the successful bombardment of an aircraft repair plant at Zwickau on 12 May 1944, and thus earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation. Other targets bombed by the 385th included aircraft factories in Oschersleben and Marienburg, battery works in Stuttgart, airfields in Beauvais and Chartres, oil refineries in Ludwigshafen and Merseburg, and marshalling yards in Munich and Oranienburg. The group attacked coastal defenses in preparation for the Normandy invasion, and bombed marshalling yards and transportation choke points on D-Day itself. The 385th supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944, and attacked German communications and fortifications during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The 385th bombed troop concentrations and communications centers in Germany and France from March to April 1945 in support of the final thrust into Germany. After V-E Day, the 385th transported prisoners of war from Germany and flew food into Holland.

386TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (MEDIUM)

Activated on 1 December 1942, the B-26 Marauder equipped 386th deployed to England in June 1943. It served with the Eighth Air Force until October 1943, and then with the Ninth Air Force. Constituent units included the 552nd, 553rd, 554th and 555th Bombardment Squadrons. The 386th flew its first combat mission in July 1943, and attacked airfields, marshalling yards, and gun positions during its first several months. It sustained an extensive campaign against V-weapon sites along the coast of France during the winter of 1943-1944, and bombed airfields in Holland and Belgium during the "Big Week" campaign against German air forces from 20 through 25 February 1944. In preparation for the Normandy invasion the 386th attacked marshalling yards, gun positions, airfields and bridges across the Seine River. During the Normandy campaign it attacked coastal batteries, bridges, supplies, fuel storage sites, artillery positions, and troop concentrations. The 386th supported Allied attacks on Caen, participated in the breakthrough at Saint-Lô, bombed targets in the Falaise Pocket and neutralized strong points during the siege of Brest. After moving to Europe in October 1944, the group attacked strong points near Metz, enemy targets in Holland, and storage depots and communications facilities in Germany. It focused on bridges during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 to January 1945, thus cutting off supplies and reinforcements. The 386th then converted to the A-26 Invader, and continued to strike German communications, transportation, and storage facilities until end of the war.

387TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (MEDIUM)

Activated on 1 December 1942 and equipped with B-26 Marauders, the 387th deployed to England in June 1943. It served with the Eighth Air Force initially, and then with the Ninth Air Force beginning in October 1943. Constituent units included the 556th, 557th, 558th and 559th Bomber Squadrons. The 387th entered combat in August 1943, concentrating on enemy airdromes during its first several months. It bombed V-weapon sites in France during the winter of 1943-1944, and hit airfields at Leeuwarden and Venlo during the "Big Week" intensive campaign against the German Air Force and aircraft industry, 20-25 February 1944. The 387th prepared for the invasion of Normandy by attacking coastal batteries and bridges in France, and during the Normandy campaign supported ground forces by attacking railroads, bridges, road junctions and fuel dumps. The group moved to France in July 1944, and participated in the breakthrough at Saint-Lô and the reduction of Brest. The 387th earned a Distinguished Unit Citation during the Battle of the Bulge, when it struck strongly defended transportation and communications targets at Mayen and Prüm. The 387th supported the final Allied drive into Germany by attacking bridges, communications centers, marshalling yards, and storage installations. It flew its last missions in April 1945.

388TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 24 December 1942, the B-17 Flying Fortress equipped 388th deployed to England in June 1943 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 560th, 561st, 562nd, and 563rd Bombardment Squadrons. The 388th began combat operations on 17 July 1943 with an attack on an aircraft factory in Amsterdam. Its subsequent targets included industrial facilities, naval installations, oil storage plants, refineries, and communications centers in Germany, France, Poland, Belgium, Norway, Rumania, and Holland. The group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for fighting its way through fierce opposition to bomb a vital aircraft factory at Regensburg on 1 August 1943. It received another Distinguished Unit Citation for three further outstanding missions: an attack against a tire and rubber factory in Hannover on 26 July 1943, the bombardment of a synthetic oil refinery in Brux on 12 May 1944, and a strike against a synthetic oil refinery at Ruhland on 21 June 1944 requiring a shuttle raid from England to Russia. The 388th attacked aircraft factories in Kassel, Reims, and Brunswick; airfields in Bordeaux, Paris, and Berlin; naval facilities at La Pallice, Emden, and Kiel; chemical industries in Ludwigshafen; ball-bearing plants in Schweinfurt; and marshalling yards in Brussels, Osnabruck, and Bielefeld. It flew interdiction missions and attacked coastal guns, field batteries, and transportation facilities in preparation for the Normandy invasion. During the Normandy campaign it struck supply depots and troop concentrations, and supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô and attacks on Caen. The 388th covered the airborne assault on Holland in September 1944 by attacking military installations and airfields at Arnhem. During the final drive into Germany the 388th bombed marshalling yards, rail bridges, and road junctions. After V-E Day, it flew food into Holland to relieve flood-stricken areas.

389TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 24 December 1942, the B-24 Liberator equipped 389th deployed to England in June 1943 to serve with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 564th, 565th, 566th and 567th Bombardment Squadrons. The 389th dispatched a detachment to Libya that flew missions into Crete, Sicily, Italy, Austria, and Romania. The 389th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for this detachment's participation in the famed low-level attack against oil refineries at Ploesti, Romania, on 1 August 1943. During this operation 2nd Lieutenant Lloyd H. Hughes earned the Medal of Honor. Despite gasoline streaming from his flak-damaged aircraft, Lieutenant Hughes flew at low altitude over the blazing target area and successfully struck his targets. Afterwards, his aircraft crashed before Hughes could make a forced landing. The detachment returned to England in August 1943, and the group flew several missions against airfields in France and Holland. The 389th deployed to Tunisia from September through October 1943 and supported Allied operations around Salerno and attacked targets in Corsica, Italy, and Austria. The 389th resumed operations from England in October 1943, and bombed ship yards at Vegesack, industrial facilities around Berlin, oil facilities at Merseburg, factories near Munster, rail yards at Sangerhausen, and V-weapon sites near the Pas de Calais. The group participated in the intensive "Big Week" air campaign against the German aircraft industry from 20 through 25 February 1944, and bombed gun batteries and airfields to support the Normandy invasion in June 1944. The 389th supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944, attacked storage depots and communications centers during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and dropped food, ammunition, gasoline, and other supplies to support airborne assaults across the Rhine in March 1945.

390TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 26 January 1943 and equipped with the B-17 Flying Fortress, the 390th deployed to England in July 1943 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 568th, 569th, 570th and 571st Bombardment Squadrons. The 390th entered combat on 12 August 1943, and earned a Distinguished Unit Citation five days later in a daring attack on the Messerschmitt aircraft complex at Regensburg. The 390th earned another Distinguished Unit Citation on 14 October 1943 when it braved unrelenting attacks by enemy fighters to bomb ball bearing plants at Schweinfurt. Participating in the intensive "Big Week" Allied assault on the German aircraft industry from 20 through 25 February 1944, the group bombed aircraft factories, instrument plants, and air parks. Other strategic missions included attacks on marshalling yards at Frankfurt, bridges at Cologne, oil facilities at Zeitz, factories at Mannheim, naval installations in Bremen, and synthetic oil refineries at Merseburg. The 390th flew interdiction and support missions and bombed the coast near Caen shortly before the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944. The 390th attacked enemy artillery during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July, and interdicted German supply lines during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. It attacked airfields in support of the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945, and dropped food

supplies to flood stricken Dutch civilians during the week prior to V-E Day.

391ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (MEDIUM)

Activated on 21 January 1943 and equipped with B-26 Marauders, the 391st deployed to England with the Ninth Air Force in January 1944. Constituent units included the 572nd, 573rd, 574th and 575th Bombardment Squadrons. The group entered combat on 15 February 1944, and bombed airfields, marshalling yards, bridges, and V-weapon sites in France and the Low Countries to prepare for the invasion of Normandy. The 391st attacked enemy defenses along the invasion beaches on 6 and 7 June 1944, attacked fuel dumps and troop concentrations during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô, and struck transportation targets and communications nodes to block the enemy's retreat thereafter. The group began flying missions from bases in France in September 1944, extending its area of operations into Germany and continuing attacks against railroads, highways, troops, bridges, ammunition dumps, and other targets. The group provided vital support to ground forces during the Battle of the Bulge, attacking heavily defended positions such as bridges and logistical facilities. The 391st earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for fighting its way through intense enemy fighter opposition to strike targets without fighter escort from 23 through 26 December 1944. From January through May 1945 the 391st concentrated on transportation and communications targets, and it reequipped with the A-26 Invader in April 1945.

392ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 26 January 1943, the B-24 Liberator equipped 392nd deployed to England in July for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 576th, 577th, 578th and 579th Bombardment Squadrons. The group entered combat on 9 September 1943, and subsequently bombed such targets as an oil refinery at Gelsenkirchen, a marshalling yard at Osnabruck, a railroad viaduct at Bielefeld, steel plants at Brunswick, a tank factory at Kassel, and gas works in Berlin. The 392nd took part in the intensive "Big Week" bombing campaign against the German aircraft industry from 20 through 25 February 1944, and earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for bombing an aircraft and component parts factory at Gotha on 24 February. The group flew interdiction missions and bombed airfields, coastal defenses, and V-weapon sites in France prior to the Normandy invasion in June 1944. It supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô and bombed railroads, bridges, and highways to interdict German supply lines during the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944 - January 1945). The 392nd dropped supplies during the airborne attack into Holland in September 1944 and during the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945.

394TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (MEDIUM)

Activated on 5 March 1943, the B-26 Marauder equipped 394th deployed to England in February 1944 for service with the Ninth Air Force. Constituent units included the 584th, 585th, 586th and 587th Bombardment Squadrons. The group entered combat in March 1944, and prepared for the invasion of Normandy by attacking V-weapon sites, marshalling yards, bridges, airfields, and gun emplacements. On D-Day it bombed gun positions at Cherbourg,

and then struck communications, fuel supplies, and strong points in support of the Normandy campaign. The 394th supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô on 25 July 1944, and received a Distinguished Unit Citation for operations from 7 to 9 August 1944. During this period it made five attacks against strongly fortified targets in northern France, knocking out an ammunition dump and four railroad bridges. Captain Darrell R Lindsey earned the Medal of Honor while leading a formation of B-26s over one of these bridges on 9 August. Lindsey's plane was hit and its right engine burst into flames. Knowing the gasoline tanks could explode at any moment, he continued to lead the formation until the bomb run was complete, then ordered his crew to bail out. The bombardier, the last man to leave the plane, offered to lower the wheels so that Lindsey might escape through the nose of the aircraft. Knowing that this could throw the plane into a spin and hinder the bombardier's chances to escape, Lindsey refused the offer and remained with his B-26 until it crashed. After moving to Europe in August 1944, the 394th hit strong points at Brest and targets in Germany. It participated in the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 to January 1945, bombing enemy supplies and reinforcements. The 394th bombed transportation targets, storage facilities, and other objectives until the end of the war.

398TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 March 1943 and equipped with B-17 Flying Fortresses, the 398th deployed to England in April 1944 to serve with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 600th, 601st, 602nd and 603rd Bombardment Squadrons. The 398th entered combat in May 1944, and bombed factories in Berlin, warehouses in Munich, marshalling yards in Saarbrücken, shipping facilities in Kiel, oil refineries in Merseburg, and aircraft plants in Münster. The group temporarily suspended strategic missions to attack coastal defenses and enemy troops on the Cherbourg peninsula during the Normandy campaign in June 1944, and bombed gun positions near Eindhoven in support of the airborne assault into Holland in September 1944. During the Battle of the Bulge, from December 1944 through January 1945, the 398th bombed power stations, railroads, and bridges, and then it attacked airfields to support Allied assaults across the Rhine in March 1945. The group flew its last combat mission against an airfield in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, on 25 April 1945.

401ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 April 1943, the 401st trained with B-17 Flying Fortresses and deployed to England in October for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 612th, 613th, 614th and 615th Bombardment Squadrons. The 401st bombed factories, submarine facilities, shipyards, missile sites, marshalling yards, airfields and oil reserves. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for striking particularly telling blows against German aircraft production on 11 January and 20 February 1944. In addition to strategic missions, the 401st attacked transportation assets, airfields, and fortifications prior to and during the Normandy invasion, and directly supported ground operations during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944. It supported the siege of Brest in August and the airborne assault into Holland in September. The group attacked transportation assets and

communications centers during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and supported the airborne attack across the Rhine in March 1945.

409TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (LIGHT)

Activated on 1 June 1943 and equipped with the A-20 Havoc, the 409th deployed to England in February 1944 for service with the Ninth Air Force. Constituent units included the 640th, 641st, 642nd and 643rd Bombardment Squadrons. The 409th bombed coastal defenses, V-weapon sites, airdromes, and other targets in France from April through June 1944 in preparation for the invasion of Normandy. During the Normandy campaign the group struck gun batteries, rail lines, bridges, communications, and other targets. In July the 409th supported Allied offensives against Caen and the breakthrough at Saint-Lô by attacking troops, flak positions, fortified villages, and supply dumps. The group supported Third Army's advance toward Germany from August through November 1944, and operated from bases in France beginning in September. The 409th converted to the A-26 Invader in December 1944, and attacked enemy lines of communication during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. It bombed targets in Germany until May 1945, and flew its last combat mission on 3 May, an attack on an ammunition dump in Czechoslovakia.

410TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (LIGHT)

Activated on 1 July 1943, the A-20 Havoc equipped 410th deployed to England in March 1944 for service with the Ninth Air Force. Constituent units included the 644th, 645th, 646th and 647th Bombardment Squadrons. The 410th entered combat in May 1944, and prepared for the invasion of Normandy by bombing coastal defenses, airfields, and V-weapon sites in France, and marshalling yards in France and Belgium. It supported the Normandy campaign by bombing gun positions and railway choke points, and assisted in assaults on Caen and the breakthrough at Saint-Lô. It attacked bridges, vehicles, fuel nodes, ammunition dumps, and rail lines during the siege of Brest. The group moved to France in September, and bombed defended villages, railroad bridges, overpasses, marshalling yards, military camps, and communications centers to support Allied assaults on the Siegfried Line. The 410th participated in the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, bombing marshalling yards, railheads, bridges, and vehicles. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for particularly effective attacks on enemy lines of communications from 23 through 25 December 1944. The 410th flew night missions in February 1945, using B-26 Marauders to drop flares, A-26 Invaders to mark targets, and A-20 Havocs to bomb the targets themselves. The 410th flew support and interdiction missions during the final drives across the Rhine into Germany, and had converted completely to the A-26 Invader by the end of the war.

416TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (LIGHT)

Activated on 5 February 1943, the A-20 Havoc equipped 416th deployed to England in January 1944 to serve with the Ninth Air Force. Constituent units included the 668th, 669th, 670th and 671st Bombardment Squadrons. The group entered combat in March 1944, and during the next several weeks focused its attacks against V-weapon sites in France. It bombed airfields and coastal defenses to prepare for the Normandy invasion, and struck road junctions, marshalling yards, bridges, and railway overpasses during the invasion itself. The 416th supported ground forces at Caen and Saint-Lô in July 1944 and at Brest in August, hitting transportation facilities, supply dumps, radar installations, and other targets. It earned a Distinguished Unit Citation from 6-9 August 1944 for fighting its way through intense resistance to bomb bridges, railways, rolling stock, and a radar station to disrupt the enemy's retreat from the Falaise pocket. The 416th supported the airborne attacks into Holland in September 1944, and the assault on the Siegfried Line later that fall. It converted to the A-26 Invader in November 1944, and attacked transportation facilities, strong points, communications centers, and troop concentrations during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The 416th supported the final Allied thrusts into Germany, striking transportation targets, communications, airfields, storage depots, and other objectives, and bombing flak positions opposing airborne assaults across the Rhine.

445TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 April 1943, the B-24 Liberator equipped 445th deployed to England in October 1943 to serve with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 700th, 701st, 702nd and 703rd Bomber Squadrons. The 445th entered combat on 13 December 1943, attacking U-boat installations at Kiel. It then struck industrial facilities in Osnabruck, synthetic oil plants in Lutzendorf, chemical works in Ludwigshafen, marshalling yards at Hamm, an airfield at Munich, an ammunition plant at Duneberg, underground oil storage facilities at Ehmen, and factories in Munster. The 445th participated in the "Big Week" Allied campaign against the German aircraft industry from 20-25 February 1944, and on 24 February earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for a daring attack on an aircraft assembly plant near Gotha. In preparation for the Normandy Invasion the group flew interdiction missions and bombed airfields, V-weapon sites, and shore installations. It supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July and bombed German communications during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. In March 1945 the 445th dropped food, medical supplies, and ammunition to troops landing near Wesel during the airborne assault across the Rhine, and flew bombing missions into the same area. The 445th received the French Croix de Guerre with Palm for its operations from December 1943 through February 1945.

447TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 May 1943, the B-17 equipped 447th deployed to England in November

for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 708th, 709th, 710th and 711th Bombardment Squadrons. The 447th entered combat in December 1943, and bombed submarine pens and naval installations in Germany, ports and missile sites in France, and airfields and marshalling yards in France, Belgium, and Germany. During "Big Week" from 20-25 February 1944, the group flew in an intensive bombing campaign against the German aircraft industry. The 447th prepared for the invasion of Normandy by bombing airfields and other targets near the beachhead, and supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July and the assault against Brest in September 1944. The group participated in the airborne invasion of Holland and dropped supplies to Free French forces as well. In October 1944 the 447th began targeting German oil production. 2nd Lt. Robert E. Femoyer, a navigator, earned the Medal of Honor on 2 November 1944. While on a mission over Germany his B-17 was damaged by flak, and he was severely wounded by shell fragments. Determined to navigate the plane out of danger and save the crew, he refused a sedative and, for more than two hours, directed the bomber so effectively it returned to base without further damage. Femoyer died shortly thereafter. During the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945 the 447th bombed marshalling yards, railroad bridges, and communications centers in the combat zone, and then resumed strikes against oil, transportation, communications, and other targets in Germany.

448TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 May 1943, the B-24 Liberator equipped 448th deployed to England in November for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 712th, 713th, 714th and 715th Bombardment Squadrons. The group entered combat on 22 December 1943, and bombed such targets as factories in Gotha, ball-bearing plants in Berlin, an airfield at Hanau, U-boat facilities at Kiel, a chemical plant in Ludwigshafen, synthetic oil refineries in Politz, aircraft engine plants at Rostock, marshalling yards at Cologne, and a V-1 assembly plant at Fallersleben. The 448th took part in the intensive "Big Week" bomber campaign against the German aircraft industry from 20-25 February 1944, and flew numerous interdiction missions as well. The 448th bombed V-weapon sites, airfields, and transportation facilities prior to the Normandy invasion and on D-Day attacked coastal defenses and transportation choke points. The group supported Allied offensives at Caen and the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944, and dropped supplies to airborne troops near Nijmegen during the airborne attack into Holland in September. The 448th bombed transportation and communications during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and dropped supplies to troops at Wesel during the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945. The 448th flew its last combat mission on 25 April 1945, a marshalling yard in Salzburg.

458TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 July 1943, the B-24 Liberator equipped 458th deployed to England in January 1944 to serve with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 752nd, 753rd, 754th and 755th Bombardment Squadrons. The group flew diversionary missions on

24 and 25 February to draw enemy fighters from targets being attacked by other bombers. The 458th then bombed such targets as the industrial areas of Saarbrücken, oil refineries at Hamburg, an airfield at Brunswick, aircraft factories at Oschersleben, a fuel depot at Dulmen, a canal at Minden, aircraft works at Brandenburg, marshalling yards at Hamm, and an aircraft engine plant at Magdeburg. It flew interdiction missions in preparation for the invasion of Normandy, and struck gun batteries, V-weapon sites, coastal defenses, and airfields in France. As the campaign progressed the 458th bombed bridges and highways to prevent the movement of enemy materiel to the beachhead. The 458th supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944 and transported gasoline to airfields in France during September. During the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 to January 1945 the group attacked transportation targets, and then attacked airfields in support of Allied assaults across the Rhine.

459TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 July 1943 and equipped with B-24 Liberators, the 459th deployed to Italy in January 1944 to serve with the Fifteenth Air Force. Constituent units included the 756th, 757th, 758th and 759th Bombardment Squadrons. The 459th bombed such targets as oil refineries, munitions and aircraft factories, industrial facilities, airfields, and communications centers in Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Greece. The group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for leading the 304th Wing through enemy interceptors and intense flak to successfully bomb an airfield and aircraft assembly plant at Bad Vöslau on 23 April 1944. The 459th flew support and interdiction missions against railroads to cut enemy supply lines into the Anzio beachhead during March 1944. It participated in the pre-invasion bombing of southern France in August, and attacked railroad bridges, depots, and marshalling yards in April 1945 to support Allied forces in northern Italy.

460TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 July 1943 and equipped with B-24 Liberators, the 460th deployed to Italy in January 1944 for service with the Fifteenth Air Force. Constituent units included the 760th, 761st, 762nd and 763rd Bombardment Squadrons. The 460th entered combat in March 1944, and bombed oil refineries, oil storage facilities, aircraft factories, railroad centers, industrial areas, and other objectives in Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Greece. The group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for leading the wing formation through adverse weather and heavy enemy fire to attack an airdrome and aircraft facilities in Zwolfaxing on 16 July 1944. The 460th participated in the invasion of Southern France in August 1944, striking submarine pens, marshalling yards, and gun positions in the assault area. The group also hit bridges, ammunition dumps, railroads, and other targets to support the advance of Allied forces in northern Italy.

467TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 August 1943 and equipped with B-24 Liberators, the 467th deployed to England in February 1944 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 788th, 789th, 790th and 791st Bombardment Squadrons. The group began combat operations on 10 April 1944 with an attack on an airfield at Bourges, and thereafter bombed the harbor at Kiel, chemical plants in Bonn, textile factories in Stuttgart, power plants in Hamm, steel works at Osnabruck, aircraft factories at Brunswick, and other critical targets. The 467th also flew interdiction missions to prepare for the Normandy invasion, bombed shore installations and bridges near Cherbourg on D-Day, and struck enemy troops and supplies near Montreuil in support of the Allied drive across France. The group hauled gasoline to support mechanized forces in September 1944, and attacked German communications and fortifications during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The 467th attacked transportation targets in support of the Allied assault across the Rhine in March 1945, and flew its last combat mission on 25 April 1945.

487TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 20 September 1943 and equipped with B-24 Liberators, the 487th deployed to England in March 1944 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 836th, 837th, 838th and 839th Bombardment Squadrons. The 487th bombed airfields in France in preparation for the invasion of Normandy, and attacked coastal defenses, road junctions, bridges and locomotives during the invasion itself. The group attacked German troops and artillery positions in support of British forces near Caen in July 1944, struck gun emplacements to support the Allied siege of Brest in August, and covered the airborne attack into Holland in September. The group also flew missions against German industries, refineries, and communications during the period from May through August 1944. The 487th converted to B-17 Flying Fortresses in August 1944, and then attacked oil refineries in Merseburg, Mannheim, and Dulmen, factories in Nurnberg, Hannover, and Berlin and marshalling yards in Cologne, Munster, Hamm, and Neumunster. The group supported ground forces during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and again supported ground operations in March 1945 as the Allies crossed the Rhine and made their final thrusts into Germany.

489TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 October 1943, the B-24 Liberator equipped 489th deployed to England in April 1944 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 844th, 845th, 846th and 847th Bombardment Squadrons. The group entered combat on 30 May 1944, concentrating on targets in France to prepare for the Normandy invasion. During an attack against coastal defenses near Wimereaux on 5 June 1944, the group's lead plane was severely damaged by enemy fire and its pilot killed. The deputy group commander, Lt Col Leon R. Vance, was commanding the formation and severely wounded. Although his

right foot was practically severed, Vance took control of the plane, led the group through a successful bombing run, and flew the damaged aircraft to the coast of England. Here he ordered the crew to bail out. Believing a wounded man had been unable to escape, he ditched the plane in the English Channel and was rescued. Vance was awarded the Medal of Honor for his courage and perseverance during this mission. The 489th supported the landings at Normandy on 6 June 1944, and then bombed coastal defenses, airfields, bridges, railroads, and V-weapon sites in the campaign for France. The group bombed strategic targets such as factories, oil refineries, storage plants, marshalling yards, and airfields in Ludwigshafen, Magdeburg, Brunswick, Saarbrücken, and other cities from July through November 1944. It participated in the saturation bombing of German lines just before the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944, dropped food to French civilians and Allied forces during August and September, and carried food and ammunition into Holland in September. The 489th returned to the United States in November 1944 to redeploy to the Pacific Theater, but the war with Japan ended before it again left the United States.

490TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 October 1943, the 490th trained for combat with B-24 Liberators and deployed to England in April 1944, for operations with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 848th, 849th, 850th, and 851st Bombardment Squadrons. The group entered combat in June 1944, bombing airfields and coastal defenses in France prior to and during the invasion of Normandy. The 490th then struck bridges, rail lines, vehicles, road junctions, and troop concentrations in France, and supported ground forces fighting for Caen in July and for Brest in September. The group converted to B-17 Flying Fortresses and bombed such strategic targets as oil plants, tank factories, marshalling yards, aircraft plants, and airfields in Berlin, Hamburg, Merseburg, Münster, Kassel, Hanover, Cologne and elsewhere. The 490th attacked supply lines and military installations during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and then attacked further targets in support of ground forces advancing into Germany. After V-E Day, the 490th carried food to flood-stricken areas of Holland, and transported French, Spanish, and Belgian prisoners of war out of Austria.

491ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 October 1943, the B-24 Liberator equipped 491st deployed to England in January 1944 for service with the Eighth Air Force. Constituent units included the 852nd, 853rd, 854th and 855th Bombardment Squadrons. The group began operations in June 1944, attacking airfields, bridges, and coastal defenses prior to and during the invasion of Normandy. The group then bombed communications centers, oil refineries, storage depots, industrial areas, shipyards, and other targets in Berlin, Hamburg, Kassel, Cologne, Gelsenkirchen, Bielefeld, Hannover, and Magdeburg. Its targets included the headquarters of the German General Staff at Zossen, Germany. While on a mission to bomb an oil refinery at Misburg on 26 November 1944, the group was attacked by large numbers of enemy fighters. Although about one-half of its planes were destroyed, the remainder fought off the

interceptors, successfully bombed the target, and earned the Distinguished Unit Citation. The 491st supported ground forces at Saint-Lô during July 1944, and bombed V-weapon sites and communications lines in France throughout that summer. It dropped supplies to paratroopers during the airborne assault into Holland, and bombed German supply lines and fortifications during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The 491st supported Allied forces in the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945 and interdicted enemy communications during the final drive across Germany.

493RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

Activated on 1 November 1943, the 493rd deployed to England and served in combat with the Eighth Air Force from May 1944 through April 1945. Constituent units included the 860th, 861st, 862nd, and 863rd Bombardment Squadrons. The 493rd flew B-24 Liberators initially, and then transitioned to B-17 Flying Fortresses in September 1944. The group bombed such industrial and military facilities in Germany as an ordnance depot in Magdeburg, marshalling yards at Cologne, synthetic oil plants at Merseburg, a railroad tunnel at Ahrweiler, bridges at Irlich, and factories in Frankfurt. The 493rd struck airfields, bridges, and gun batteries prior to and during the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, and supported ground forces south of Caen and around Saint-Lô in July. The group bombed German fortifications to cover the airborne assault into Holland in September, and attacked enemy communications during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The 493rd supported the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945, and flew its last combat mission, an attack on marshalling yards at Nauen, on 20 April 1945.

4TH FIGHTER GROUP

Members of the Eagle Squadrons, U.S. pilots flying for the Royal Air Force, formed the nucleus of the 4th Fighter Group. It served in combat from October 1942 until April 1945, and destroyed more enemy planes than any other fighter group in the Eighth Air Force. Comprised of the 335th, 336th, and 337th Fighter Squadrons, the 4th Fighter Group first operated with reverse Lend-Lease Supermarine Spitfires, but changed to P-47 Thunderbolts in March 1943 and to P-51 Mustangs in April 1944. The 4th Fighter Group escorted bombers that attacked factories, submarine pens, V-weapons sites, and other targets in France, the Low Countries, and Germany. Aircraft from the 4th also hit troops, supply depots, roads, bridges, rail lines, and trains themselves, and from 20 to 25 February 1944, participated in the intensive campaign against the German Air Force and aircraft industry called "Big Week". The 4th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for aggressiveness in seeking out and destroying enemy aircraft and attacking enemy air bases from 5 March through 24 April 1944. It flew interdiction and counter-air missions during the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, supported the airborne invasion of Holland in September 1944, participated in the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and covered the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945.

20TH FIGHTER GROUP

Initially authorized as a Balloon Group in 1927, the 20th was re-designated as a Pursuit Group in 1929, and flew P-12, P-26, and P-36 fighters prior to World War II. Early in the war the 20th provided continental air defense with P-39 Aircobras and P-40 Warhawks, and served as a training unit. It re-equipped with P-38 Lightnings and moved to England in August 1943 as part of the Eighth Air Force. Comprised of the 55th, 77th, and 79th Fighter Squadrons, the 20th Fighter Group first saw combat in December 1943, escorting heavy and medium bombers to targets in Europe and strafing targets of opportunity en route. The 20th retained escort as its primary function until the end of the war, but in March 1944 also began flying fighter-bomber missions strafing and dive-bombing airfields, trains, vehicles, barges, tugs, bridges, flak positions, gun emplacements, barracks, radio stations, and other targets in France, Belgium, and Germany. It became known as the "Loco Group" because of its numerous and successful attacks on locomotives. The 20th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for performance on 8 April 1944, when the group struck airfields in central Germany, broke up an attack by enemy interceptors, and then followed up on railroad equipment, oil facilities, power plants, factories, and other targets. The 20th flew patrols over the English Channel during the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, providing air cover for the invasion fleet. It also supported the invasion force by escorting bombers that struck interdiction targets in France, Belgium, and Holland, and by attacking troops, transportation targets, and airfields. The 20th converted to P-51 Mustangs in July 1944, and continued to fly escort and fighter-bomber missions as the enemy retreated across France to the Siegfried Line. It participated in the airborne attack on Holland in September 1944, and for several months thereafter escorted bombers to Germany while also attacking rail lines, trains, vehicles, barges, power stations, and other targets in and beyond the Siegfried Line. The 4th took part in the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, escorting bombers into the battle area, and later flew patrols to support the airborne attack across the Rhine in March 1945. It continued with escort and fighter-bomber missions as enemy resistance collapsed during April 1945.

36TH FIGHTER GROUP

The 36th Fighter Group served in the Caribbean early in the war, providing air defense and anti-submarine patrols with P-39 Aircobras and P-40 Warhawks. It returned to the United States in mid-1943 to re-equip with the P-47 Thunderbolt. During March and April 1944, the 36th and its three squadrons, the 22nd, 23rd, and 53rd, moved to England and joined the Ninth Air Force. The 36th operated primarily as fighter-bombers, strafing and dive-bombing armored vehicles, trains, bridges, buildings, factories, troop concentrations, gun emplacements, airfields, and other targets. The 36th flew some escort missions, and starting in May 1944 flew armed reconnaissance, escort, and interdiction missions in preparation for the Normandy Invasion. In June 1944 the 36th provided air cover over the Normandy landing zones and flew close-support and interdiction missions. It moved to France in July 1944, and flew missions in support of the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July and the thrust of Third Army toward Germany in August and September. The 36th

received a Distinguished Unit Citation for operations in September 1944 when it attacked German columns south of the Loire and disrupted the enemy's retreat across France. The 36th moved to Belgium in October 1944, and supported Ninth Army. It participated in the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, flying armed reconnaissance and close-support missions. The 36th supported First Army's push across the Rhine River in February 1945, and supported operations at the Remagen bridgehead and during the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945. It received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for its performance on 12 April 1945 when the group, operating in the face of intense antiaircraft fire, relentlessly attacked airfields in southern Germany, and destroyed a large hangar and numerous aircraft.

48TH FIGHTER GROUP

Originally constituted as the 48th Bombardment Group (Light) on 20 November 1940, and re-designated the 48th Bombardment Group (Dive) in September 1942, the unit reorganized as the 48th Fighter-Bomber Group in August 1943. The 48th employed a variety of fighter and attack aircraft between 1942 and 1944, serving as a training unit and in coastal patrol work. In March 1944, the 48th and three of its four squadrons, the 492nd, 493rd, and 494th, moved to England and joined the Ninth Air Force, re-equipping with P-47 Thunderbolts to do so. Combat operations began on 20 April 1944 with fighter sweeps over the coast of France. Re-designated as the 48th Fighter Group in May 1944, the 48th flew escort and dive-bombing missions in preparation for the invasion of Normandy. The 48th bombed bridges and gun positions, rail lines and trains, motor transports, bridges, fuel dumps, and gun positions during the remainder of the Normandy campaign. It moved to France to support the Allied breakout at Saint-Lô in July 1944. The 48th supported the Allied drive across France in August and September 1944, and assisted the airborne attack on Holland in September 1944. It was cited by the Belgian Government for its close cooperation with Allied armies during June through September 1944, operated from Belgium during the fall and winter of 1944-1945, and was awarded a second Belgian citation for operations during that period. The 48th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for action on 6 December 1944, when it braved intense enemy fire while flying below a heavy overcast to strike buildings, entrenchments, and troop concentrations in support of a ground attack against an enemy stronghold north of Julich. It supported ground operations during the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944 through January 1945) and received a third Belgian citation for relentless assaults against the enemy during that battle. The 48th continued tactical air operations from bases in Western Europe, supporting ground forces until the end of the war. The 48th flew patrol, escort, weather reconnaissance, and leaflet missions, and on one occasion dropped blood plasma in belly tanks to ground troops.

50TH FIGHTER GROUP

The 50th Fighter Group initially served as part of the Fighter Command School, testing equipment, conducting training in air defense operations, training pilots and furnishing cadre to night fighter units. It later operated with the Army Air Force School of Applied Tac-

tics, training personnel in fighter tactics under simulated combat conditions. In these activities it primarily employed P-40 Warhawks and P-47 Thunderbolts, but it also used some A-20 Havocs, P-51 Mustangs, and P-70 Nighthawks, a night fighter variant of the A-20. The 50th moved to England with the 10th, 81st, and 313th Fighter Squadrons during March and April 1944. Assigned to the Ninth Air Force, the 50th began operations by making a fighter sweep over France with P-47 Thunderbolts on 1 May 1944. It engaged primarily in escort and dive-bombing missions during the next month, and flew air cover over the Normandy beaches on 6 and 7 June 1944. It moved to Europe later that month, and attacked bridges, roads, vehicles, railways, trains, gun emplacements, and marshalling yards. In July 1944 it bombed targets near Saint-Lô to support the breakout and then supported the subsequent drive across France. It assisted in stemming the German offensive in the Saar Hardt area early in January 1945, engaged in the offensive that reduced the Colmar bridgehead in January and February 1945, and supported the drive that breached the Siegfried Line and carried Allied forces into southern Germany in March and April 1945. The 50th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for its close cooperation with the Seventh Army in March 1945, during the assault on the Siegfried Line. In spite of severe enemy opposition and difficult weather conditions, the group persevered in demolishing enemy defenses and isolating battle areas by destroying bridges, communications, supply areas, and ammunition dumps. The 50th received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for 25 April 1945 when, despite intense antiaircraft fire, the group destroyed or damaged numerous enemy aircraft on an airfield southeast of Munich. The 50th Fighter Group ended operations in May 1945.

55TH FIGHTER GROUP

The 55th Fighter Group initially trained with the P-43 Lancer before converting to the P-38 Lighting. The 55th moved to England during August and September 1943 with the 38th, 338th, and 343rd Fighter Squadrons, and began operations with the 8th Air Force on 15 October 1943. The 55th engaged primarily in escorting bombers that attacked industries and marshalling yards in Germany, and airfields and V-weapon sites in France. It provided cover for the B-17s and the B-24s that bombed aircraft production facilities during "Big Week" in February 1944. During the invasion of Normandy the 55th provided air cover over the English Channel for the invasion fleet, and bombed bridges in the Tours area. After re-equipping with P-51 Mustangs, the 55th attacked gun emplacements during the Saint-Lô breakthrough in July 1944, transportation facilities during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and trucks, locomotives, and oil depots near Wesel when the Allies crossed the Rhine in March 1945. The 55th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for eight missions to Germany between 3 and 13 September 1944, when the group not only destroyed enemy fighters in the air to protect the bombers it was escorting, but also descended to low levels in the face of intense antiaircraft fire to strafe airdromes and to destroy enemy aircraft on the ground. The 55th received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for operations on 19 February 1945, when it flew a sweep over Germany to hit railway tracks, locomotives, oil cars, troop cars, buildings, and military vehicles. The 55th flew its last combat mission on 21 April 1945.

56TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated as the 56th Pursuit Group (Interceptor) on 15 January 1941 equipped with P-39 Aircobras and P-40 Warhawks, the 56th participated in maneuvers, provided continental air defense, and functioned as an operational training unit. Re-designated the 56th Fighter Group in May 1942, the 56th and its three squadrons, the 61st, 62nd, and 63rd, re-equipped with P-47 Thunderbolts and moved to England in December 1942 and January 1943. Assigned to Eighth Air Force, the group trained for several weeks and then entered combat with a fighter sweep over Saint-Omer on 13 April 1943. During the next two years the 56th destroyed more enemy aircraft in aerial combat than any other fighter group in the Eighth Air Force. The 56th flew numerous missions over France, the Low Countries, and Germany escorting bombers that attacked industrial facilities, V-weapons sites, submarine pens, and other targets. The group also strafed and dive-bombed airfields, troops, supply points, and enemy communications, and flew combat air patrols. During the Normandy Campaign, under the command of the legendary fighter ace Colonel Hubert "Hub" Zemke, the 56th flew counter-air and interdiction missions. Known by then as "Zemke's Wolfpack", it supported Allied forces during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944, and participated in the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945. The 56th defended the Remagen bridgehead against air attacks in March 1945, and received a Distinguished Unit Citation for aggressiveness seeking out and destroying enemy aircraft and attacking enemy air bases from 20 February through 9 March 1944. It received another Distinguished Unit Citation for strikes against anti-aircraft positions while supporting the airborne attack on Holland in September 1944, and flew its last combat mission on 21 April 1945.

78TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated as the 78th Pursuit Group on 9 February 1942 and re-designated the 78th Fighter Group in May 1942, the 78th equipped with P-38 Lightnings, trained for combat and served in continental air defense. It moved to England during November and December 1942, and was assigned to the Eighth Air Force. The group's P-38s and most of its pilots transferred to the 12th Air Force in February 1943 for operations in North Africa. The 78th and its three squadrons, the 82nd, 83rd, and 84th, re-equipped with P-47 Thunderbolts and began operations from England in April 1943, and converted to P-51 Mustangs in December 1944. The 78th escorted bombers attacking German industry, submarine pens, V-weapons sites, and other targets, and also strafed and dive bombed airfields, trains, vehicles, barges, tugs, canals, and troop concentrations. In 1944, the 78th flew bomber escort missions against the German Air Force and aircraft industry during "Big Week" from 20-25 February. It supported the Normandy invasion in June, the Saint-Lô breakout in July, and the airborne invasion of Holland in September. In Holland the 78th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for providing air cover to the landings and conducting ground attack operations. The 78th also participated in the Battle of the Bulge and the March 1945 airborne assault across the Rhine, and received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for destroying aircraft on five airfields near Prague and Pilsen on 16 April 1945.

339TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated as the 339th Bombardment Group (Dive) equipped with A-24 Banshee (Dauntless) and A-25 Helldiver dive-bombers on 10 August 1942, the 339th converted to P-39 Aircobras in July 1943. Re-designated the 339th Fighter-Bomber Group in August 1943, the 339th and its three squadrons, the 503rd, 504th, and 505th, moved to England during March and April 1944. In England it was assigned to the Eighth Air Force and re-equipped with P-51 Mustangs. The 339th began combat operations with a fighter sweep on 30 April 1944. It was re-designated the 339th Fighter Group in May. It engaged primarily in escort duties during its first five weeks of operations, and flew missions to cover medium and heavy bombers striking strategic targets, enemy communications, and combat formations. The 339th frequently strafed airdromes and other targets of opportunity while on escort missions. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for operations on 10 and 11 September 1944 when the group, while escorting bombers to targets in Germany, attacked airdromes near Erding and Karlsruhe and destroyed or damaged numerous enemy aircraft despite intense anti-aircraft fire. The group also shot down or drove off enemy interceptors attacking the bombers under its charge. The 339th provided fighter cover over the English Channel and the coast of Normandy during the invasion of June 1944, and strafed or dive-bombed vehicles, locomotives, marshalling yards, anti-aircraft batteries, and troops. It attacked transportation targets as Allied armies drove across France after the Saint-Lô breakthrough in July, and flew area patrols during the airborne attack on Holland in September. The 339th escorted bombers during the German counterattack in the Ardennes from December 1944 through January 1945, and provided area patrols during the assault across the Rhine in March 1945.

352ND FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 1 October 1942, the 352nd provided air defense in the United States while training with P-47 Thunderbolts for combat duty. The 352nd and its three fighter squadrons, the 328th, 486th, and 487th, moved to England during June and July 1943. Assigned to Eighth Air Force, the group engaged in air combat over Europe from September 1943 through May 1944 using P-47s before converting to P-51 Mustangs in April 1944. The 352nd flew numerous escort missions covering bombers attacking factories, V-weapon sites, submarine pens, and other targets. It escorted strikes on German aircraft factories during "Big Week", 20-25 February 1944. The group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for performance in Germany on 8 May 1944, while escorting bombers to targets in Brunswick, when it routed an attack by a numerically superior force of German interceptors. The 352nd also flew counter-air patrols, and on many occasions strafed and dive-bombed airfields, locomotives, vehicles, troops, gun positions, and other targets. It supported the invasion of Normandy in June 1944 by strafing and dive-bombing enemy communications, assisted the Allies in breaking through the German line at Saint-Lô in July, and participated in the airborne attack on Holland in September. When the Germans launched a counteroffensive in the Ardennes in December 1944, the group's planes and pilots were sent to Belgium and placed under the control of Ninth Air Force for operations in the Battle of the Bulge

(December 1944 through January 1945). On 1 January 1945 the group earned the French Croix de Guerre with Palm when 12 of its aircraft were attacked by approximately 50 German fighters. In the aerial battle that followed, it shot down 25 enemy aircraft with no losses of its own.

353RD FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 1 October 1942 and equipped with P-40 Warhawks, the 350th, 351st, and 352nd Fighter Squadrons of the 353rd Fighter Group served as continental air defense before moving to England during May and June of 1943. Re-equipped with P-47 Thunderbolts and assigned to the Eighth Air Force, the 353rd began combat operations in August 1943. It regularly escorted bombers that attacked industrial establishments, marshalling yards, submarine installations, V-weapon sites, and other targets while itself frequently strafing and dive-bombing buildings, troops, flak batteries, barges and tug boats, locomotives and rail lines, vehicles, bridges, and airfields. The group participated in the intensive campaign against the German Air Force and aircraft industry during the "Big Week" of 20-25 February 1944. From this point it increased ground attack sorties in preparation for the invasion of Normandy. During this invasion the 353rd provided cover over the beachhead and close air support. The group also supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July, and received a Distinguished Unit Citation for supporting the airborne attack on Holland in September. During this operation the group protected bombers and troop carriers and strafed and dive-bombed ground targets. In October 1944 the 353rd converted to the P-51 Mustang and continued fighter-bomber, escort, and counter-air missions. The group participated in the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945), and in the airborne attack across the Rhine in March 1945.

354TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 15 November 1942 and initially equipped with P-39 Aircobras, the 354th Fighter Group and its three squadrons, the 353rd, 355th, and 356th, moved to England in October and November 1943. Assigned to the Ninth Air Force, the group flew P-51 Mustangs except during the period from November 1944 to February 1945, when it operated P-47 Thunderbolts. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for its role in the development and execution of long-range missions to escort heavy bombers on raids deep into enemy territory. On 11 January 1944, Major James H. Howard won the Medal of Honor for his single-handed defense of a bomber formation attacked by a large force of enemy planes. The group also conducted fighter-bomber operations, strafing and dive-bombing enemy airfields, gun positions, marshalling yards, and vehicles in France, Belgium, and Holland. In support of the Normandy invasion the 354th escorted gliders and dive-bombed and strafed bridges and railways near the front lines. The 354th moved to France in June 1944, and supported the Allied drive across France with close-support, armed-reconnaissance, fighter-sweep, dive-bombing, strafing, and escort missions. It received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for fighter sweeps which destroyed a large number of enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground on 25 August 1944. The group flew missions to support the airborne attack

on Holland in September 1944, and attacked and destroyed enemy barges, locomotives, vehicles, buildings, and troops in support of the Allied assault on the Siegfried Line. During the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 and January 1945, the 354th supported ground forces and conducted armed reconnaissance operations against enemy troops, tanks, artillery, and rail lines.

355TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 12 November 1942, the 355th Fighter Group and its three P-47 Thunderbolt equipped squadrons, the 354th, 357th, and 358th moved to England in July 1943. Assigned to the Eighth Air Force, the group flew its first combat mission, a fighter sweep over Belgium, on 14 September 1943. It served primarily as escort for bombers attacking industrial areas of Berlin, marshalling yards at Karlsruhe, an airfield at Neuberg, oil refineries at Misburg, synthetic oil plants at Gelsenkirchen, locks at Minden, and other objectives. The 355th also flew fighter sweeps, area patrols, and ground attack missions, striking such targets as airfields, locomotives, bridges, radio stations, and armored cars. On 5 April 1944, shortly after converting to P-51 Mustangs, the group successfully bombed and strafed German airdromes during a serious snow squall. It was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation for this daring mission. The group provided fighter cover for Allied forces landing in Normandy on 6 June 1944, and afterwards hit transportation facilities and cut enemy supply lines. It attacked fuel dumps, locomotives, and other targets in support of ground forces during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July. The 355th continued operations until 25 April 1945.

356TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 12 December 1942, the 356th moved to England with its three P-47 Thunderbolt equipped squadrons, the 359th, 360th, and 361st, in August and September 1943. Assigned to the Eighth Air Force, the group served in combat from October 1943 through May 1945. It participated in operations preparing for the invasion of Europe, and supported landings in Normandy and the Allied drive across France into Germany. The group converted from P-47s to P-51 Mustangs in November 1944. From October 1943 until January 1944 it escorted bombers attacking industrial areas, V-weapon sites, airfields, and communications. After January 1944, it engaged primarily in bombing and strafing missions. Targets included U-boat installations, barges, shipyards, airdromes, hangars, marshalling yards, locomotives, trucks, oil facilities, flak towers, and radar stations. The 356th received the Distinguished Unit Citation for effective bombing and strafing that neutralized enemy gun emplacements in support of the airborne attack on Holland during September 1944. It flew its last combat mission, escorting B-17s dropping information operations leaflets, on 7 May 1945.

357TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 1 December 1942, the 357th Fighter Group trained with P-39 Aircobras in preparation for duty overseas. With its three squadrons, the 362nd, 363rd, and 364th, the group moved to England in November 1943. It re-equipped with P-51 Mustangs, and served briefly with the Ninth Air Force before transferring to the Eighth Air Force. Combat operations with the Eighth Air Force began on 11 February 1944, with a fighter sweep over Rouen. The 357th served primarily in a fighter escort role, providing penetration, target, and withdrawal support for bombers attacking strategic objectives in Europe. It participated in the "Big Week" assault against the German Air Force and aircraft industry 20-25 February 1944. The group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for two escort missions in the face of heavy opposition; on 6 March 1944 the 357th provided target and withdrawal support during the first Eighth Air Force heavy bomber attack on Berlin, and on 29 June the group protected bombers attacking Leipzig. The group earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation when it broke up a large force of interceptors while covering a January 1945 bomber raid on Derben. The group also conducted counter-air patrols, made fighter sweeps, and flew strafing and dive-bombing missions attacking airdromes, marshalling yards, locomotives, bridges, barges, tugboats, highways, vehicles, fuel dumps, and other targets. The 357th participated in the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, the break out at Saint-Lô in July, the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 and January 1945, and the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945.

358TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 1 January 1943, the P-47 Thunderbolt equipped 358th Fighter Group and its three squadrons, the 356th, 366th, and 367th, moved to England in September and October of 1943. Combat operations with the Eighth Air Force began on 20 December 1943, and the group was reassigned to the Ninth Air Force on 31 January 1944. The 358th served as bomber escort until April 1944. At that point it switched to ground attack, dive-bombing marshalling yards and airfields in preparation for the invasion of Normandy. During the invasion, the group escorted troop carriers over the Cotentin Peninsula and attacked bridges, rail lines and trains, vehicles, and troop concentrations. Moving to France in July, the group supported the breakthrough at Saint-Lô and flew escort, interdiction, and close-support missions during the drive across France into Germany. It earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for operations from 24 December 1944 to 2 January 1945 attacking rail lines and rolling stock, vehicles, buildings, and artillery, and destroying numerous enemy fighter planes during a major assault against Allied airfields. The 358th earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation 19-20 March 1945 for destroying or damaging large numbers of motor transports and thus hampering German forces withdrawing from west of the Rhine. The group earned a third Distinguished Unit Citation between 8 and 25 April 1945 attacking enemy airfields near Munich and Ingolstadt, engaging in aerial combat, and supporting advancing ground forces by attacking motor transports, tanks, locomotives, guns, and buildings. The 358th also earned the French Croix de Guerre with Palm for assisting in the liberation of France.

359TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 15 January 1943 and equipped with P-47 Thunderbolts in March 1943, the 368th, 369th, and 370th Fighter Squadrons of the 359th Fighter Group moved to England in October 1943 and were assigned to the Eighth Air Force. The group first saw combat in December 1943, flying, patrol, strafing, dive-bombing, and weather-reconnaissance missions and escorting bombers attacking airfields in France. The 359th re-equipped with P-51 Mustangs in April 1944 and began escorting bombers striking rail centers in Germany and oil targets in Poland. The group supported the invasion of Normandy by patrolling the English Channel, escorting bombers to the French coast, and dive-bombing and strafing bridges, locomotives, and rail lines near the battle area. From July 1944 through February 1945, the group escorted bombers to oil refineries, marshalling yards, and other targets in such cities as Ludwigshafen, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Berlin, Merseburg, and Brux. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for protecting a formation of heavy bombers against large numbers of fighters over Germany on 11 September, 1944. The group supported campaigns in France during July and August 1944, bombed enemy positions to support the airborne invasion of Holland in September, and participated in the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945). The 359th also flew missions to support the assault across the Rhine in March 1945, and escorted medium bombers attacking communications targets from February through April 1945.

362ND FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 1 March 1943 and equipped with P-47 Thunderbolts, the 377th, 378th, and 379th Fighter Squadrons of the 362nd Fighter Group moved to England in November 1943. Assigned to Ninth Air Force, the group's first combat mission was to escort B-24 bombers attacking V-weapon sites near the Pas de Calais. Until April 1944 the group escorted bombers striking factories, railroads, airfields, and other targets. Repeated attacks on communications in northern France and in Belgium during April and May prepared for the invasion of Normandy. The 362nd escorted C-47s that dropped paratroopers into Normandy on 6 and 7 June, and then flew strafing and dive-bombing missions in close support of ground forces. The group moved to France in July 1944 and supported the Allied breakthrough at Saint-Lô. It then supported the advance of ground forces towards the Rhine by attacking railroads, trucks, bridges, power stations, fuel dumps, and other facilities. The 362nd received a Distinguished Unit Citation when, despite heavy overcast and intense enemy fire, the group attacked at low altitude into Brest on 25 August, hitting naval installations, cruisers, troop transports, merchant vessels, and other targets. During the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945) it bombed and strafed flak positions, armored vehicles, and troop concentrations. The group received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for actions over the Moselle-Rhine River triangle on 16 March 1945. Despite intense anti-aircraft fire encountered while flying armed reconnaissance in support of ground forces, the group hit enemy forces, equipment, facilities, motor transports, armored vehicles, railroads, railway cars, and gun emplacements.

363RD FIGHTER GROUP / 363RD TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE GROUP

Activated on 1 March 1943, the 363rd Fighter Group was initially equipped with P-39 Aircobras and served as continental air defense. The group and its three squadrons, the 380th, 381st, and 382nd, moved to England in December 1943 for duty with the Ninth Air Force. Re-equipped with P-51 Mustangs in January 1944, the group began escorting bombers and fighter-bombers to targets in France, Germany, and the Low Countries, and strafing and dive-bombing trains, marshalling yards, bridges, vehicles, airfields, troops, gun positions, and other targets. The group supported the invasion of Normandy in June 1944 by escorting troop carriers and gliders and by attacking enemy positions near the front lines. It moved to France at the end of June and took part in the Allied drive to the German border. In September 1944 the group was re-designated as the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group and its squadrons changed designations to the 160th, 161st, and 162nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadrons. The group re-equipped with F-5 (P-38 Lightning) and F-6 (P-51 Mustang) tactical reconnaissance aircraft and flew photographic missions in support of air and ground operations. The photos directed fighter-bombers to railway, highway, and waterway traffic, bridges, gun positions, troop concentrations, and other targets of opportunity. They also adjusted artillery fire and assisted in bomb damage assessment. The group received two Belgian citations for reconnaissance activities, including support to the assault on the Siegfried Line and participation in the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945). The 363rd supported Ninth Army's drive into Germany from February through May 1945.

364TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 1 June 1943 and equipped with P-38 Lightnings, the 383rd, 384th, and 385th Fighter Squadrons of the 364th Fighter Group moved to England in January and February 1944. The group began operations with the Eighth Air Force in March, flying escort, dive-bombing, strafing, and patrol missions in France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. It escorted heavy bombers and patrolled the English Channel during the June 1944 Normandy invasion. After the invasion, the 364th continued escort operations and supported ground forces in France by strafing and bombing locomotives, marshalling yards, bridges, barges, and other targets. In the summer of 1944 the group re-equipped with P-51 Mustangs and from flew long-range escort missions for B-17s attacking oil refineries, industrial facilities, and other strategic objectives at Berlin, Regensburg, Merseburg, Stuttgart, Brussels, and elsewhere. The 364th earned a Distinguished Unit Citation on 27 December 1944 for dispersing a large force of German fighters attacking bombers the group was escorting on a raid to Frankfurt. The 364th also flew air-sea rescue missions, engaged in patrol activities, and continued to support ground forces as the battle moved from France into Germany. It participated in the airborne invasion of Holland in September 1944, the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, and the assault across the Rhine in March 1945.

365TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 15 May 1943 and equipped with P-47 Thunderbolts, the 386th, 387th, and 388th Fighter Squadrons of the 365th Fighter Group moved to England in December, 1943. Combat operations with the Ninth Air Force began in February 1944. The 365th escorted bombers and dive-bombed bridges, airdromes, rail facilities, gun positions and V-weapon sites prior to the invasion of Normandy. During the invasion the group attacked rail targets and gun emplacements in France. It moved to France late in June, and continued dive-bombing, to include targets near Saint-Lô to assist the American breakout. It supported the subsequent drive across France during August and September. In September the 365th flew patrols to support airborne operations in Holland. The Belgian government cited the group for outstanding support from the invasion of Normandy through the liberation of Belgium. During the fall of 1944 the 365th supported the seizure of Aachen and the advance to the Rhine. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for destroying numerous enemy fighters over the Bonn—Dusseldorf area on 21 October, and received a second Belgian award during the Battle of the Bulge for daring attacks on rolling stock, marshalling yards, gun positions, and industrial facilities. The 365th covered airborne operations across the Rhine in March, 1945, and supported the subsequent drive into Germany. On 20 April 1945, it earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation when attacking airfields, motor transport, and ammunition dumps in support of the Allied advance through southern Germany.

366TH FIGHTER GROUP

Activated on 1 June 1943, the P-47 Thunderbolt equipped 389th, 390th, and 391st Fighter Squadrons of the 366th Fighter Group moved to England in December 1943. Assigned to the Ninth Air Force, the group entered combat on 14 March 1944 with a fighter sweep along the French coast, and then participated in operations preparing for the invasion of Normandy. The 366th flew fighter sweeps over Normandy on D-Day, attacking such targets as motor convoys and gun emplacements. The group moved to France shortly thereafter, and dive-bombed enemy communications and fortifications until May 1945. It earned a Distinguished Unit Citation on 11 July 1944. When attacking pillboxes near Saint-Lô, the 366th discovered an enemy tank column unknown to the ground forces. Despite driving rain and intense antiaircraft fire, the group mauled the enemy armored force while destroying its original targets as well. The 366th supported Allied armored columns during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July, and attacked flak positions near Eindhoven in support of airborne landings in Holland in September. It flew armed reconnaissance during the Battle of the Bulge, December 1944 through January 1945, and escorted bombers during the airborne assault across the Rhine in March 1945. The 366th attacked railroads, highways, bridges, motor transports, gun emplacements, supply depots, and troops, and escorted bombers attacking airfields, factories, and marshalling yards and dropping leaflets. The group flew its last combat mission against Kiel and Flensburg on 3 May 1945.

31ST AIR TRANSPORT GROUP

The 31st Air Transport Group of the 302nd Air Transport Wing was the air transport component of the Ninth Air Force's IX Service Command. The 31st was comprised of the 313th, 314th, 315th, 316th, 317th, 318th, and 319th Air Transport Squadrons and the 310th, 325th, and 326th Ferry Squadrons. Based in Grove, England, the 31st Air Transport Group played a critical role in the logistics system of the 9th Air Force, flying cargo and personnel in support of combat operations. After the invasion of Normandy, the 31st Air Transport Group was assigned the task of operating a mail carrier service between England and the continent in addition to transporting materiel and personnel.

61ST TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated as the 61st Transport Group on 1 December 1940, the 61st was redesignated the 61st Troop Carrier Group in July 1942. The 14th, 15th, 53rd, and 59th Troop Carrier Squadrons of the 61st Troop Carrier Group moved to North Africa in May 1943 with the Twelfth Air Force and, after a period of special training, on the night of 9 July dropped paratroopers near Gela during the invasion of Sicily. The 61st received a Distinguished Unit Citation for a daring reinforcement mission two nights later during a major attack by ground and naval forces. The group moved to Sicily in August to participate in the invasion of Italy. It dropped paratroopers north of Agropoli on 13 September, and flew in further reinforcements later. The group transported cargo and evacuated patients throughout its service in the Mediterranean Theater. In February 1944 the 61st joined the Ninth Air Force in England to prepare for the Normandy invasion. It received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for dropping paratroopers and supplies near Cherbourg on 6 and 7 June 1944. It dropped British paratroopers at Arnhem on 17 September 1944 during the airborne assault into Holland, and towed gliders carrying reinforcements into the same area on succeeding days. The 61st moved to France in March 1945 and flew in the airborne assault across the Rhine, dropping British paratroopers near Wesel on the 24th. It also provided transport services in the European theater, hauling gasoline, ammunition, food, medicine, and other supplies, and evacuating wounded personnel.

313TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 2 March 1942 as the 313th Transport Group, the 313th was redesignated the 313th Troop Carrier Group in July 1942. The 29th, 47th, 48th, and 490th Troop Carrier Squadrons of the 313th trained for overseas duty with C-47s and C-53s. The group moved to North Africa in April 1943 and was assigned to the Twelfth Air Force. During the invasion of Sicily the 313th dropped paratroopers near Gela. Although fiercely attacked by ground and naval forces two nights later while carrying reinforcements into Sicily on 11 July, the 313th completed its daring mission and received a Distinguished Unit Citation for it. The group transported supplies and evacuated wounded in the Mediterranean area until August, then moved to Sicily for the invasion of Italy. It dropped paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division south of Salerno on the night of 13 September 1943, and flew reinforce-

ments in the following night. It resumed transportation missions in the theater until February 1944, and then joined the Ninth Air Force in England to prepare for the invasion of France. The 313th dropped paratroopers near Picaucville on 6 June 1944 and flew reinforcements into the same area on 7 June, receiving a second Distinguished Unit Citation for its role in D-Day. On 17 September the group dropped paratroopers near Arnheim and Nijmegen during the airborne attack into Holland, and released gliders carrying reinforcements into the same area on 18 and 23 September. The 313th moved to France in February 1945, and re-equipped with C-46s. During the airborne assault across the Rhine on 24 March 1945 the 313th dropped paratroopers from the 17th Airborne Division near Wesel. The group also evacuated wounded personnel and ex-prisoners of war, and transported ammunition, gasoline, medical supplies, and food until after V-E Day.

314TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated as the 314th Transport Group on 2 March 1942, the unit was redesignated the 314th Troop Carrier Group in July 1942. The group's 32nd, 50th, 61st, and 62nd Troop Carrier Squadrons trained with C-47s and C-53s in preparation for duty overseas. The group moved to the Mediterranean Theater in May 1943, and was assigned to the Twelfth Air Force. The 314th flew two night missions during the invasion of Sicily in July 1943, dropping paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division near Gela on 9 July and reinforcements into the same area on 11 July. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for carrying out this second mission in the face of foul weather and fierce attack by enemy ground and naval forces. The group dropped paratroopers and supplies near Salerno on 14 and 15 September 1943 during the invasion of Italy. It moved to England in February 1944 and was reassigned to the Ninth Air Force. The 314th dropped paratroopers into Normandy on 6 June 1944, and flew in supplies and reinforcements the following day. It received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for these Normandy operations. The group dropped paratroopers into Holland in September and followed up with reinforcements and supplies. Moving to France in February 1945, the 314th released gliders carrying troops and equipment near Wesel during the airborne assault across the Rhine in March. It continued hauling freight in the Mediterranean and European theaters, including food, clothing, gasoline, aircraft parts, and ammunition. The 314th carried wounded personnel to rear-zone hospitals, and after V-E Day evacuated Allied prisoners from Germany.

316TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 14 February 1942 as the 316th Transport Group, the unit was redesignated the 316th Troop Carrier Group in July 1942. The group's 36th, 37th, 39th, 44th, and 45th Troop Carrier Squadrons trained with C-47 and C-53 aircraft in preparation for deployment overseas. The 316th moved to the Mediterranean theater in November 1942, and was assigned to the Ninth Air Force. It transported supplies and evacuated casualties in support of the Allied drive across North Africa. On the night of 9 July 1943 the 316th dropped paratroopers into Sicily during the Allied assault on that island, and it carried reinforcements to them two days later. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for these daring actions.

The 316th received a second Distinguished Unit Citation for its outstanding transportation support to aerial and ground operations in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Sicily from 25 November 1942 through 25 August 1943. Assigned to the Twelfth Air Force and redeployed to Sicily to support the invasion of Italy, the 316th dropped paratroopers south of the Sele River on the night of 14 September 1943. The group transported cargo in the theater until February 1944, when it redeployed to join the Ninth Air Force in England. During the invasion of Normandy the 316th dropped paratroopers near Sainte-Mère-Eglise on D-Day, and then flew in reinforcements on 7 June 1944. It received a third Distinguished Unit Citation for these operations. During the airborne invasion of Holland in September 1944 the 316th dropped paratroopers and released gliders carrying reinforcements. The 316th dropped paratroopers near Wesel on 24 March 1945 during the airborne assault across the Rhine. The group provided transportation services in Europe, hauling ammunition, gasoline, water, and rations and evacuating wounded personnel to hospitals.

434TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated in February 1943, the 434th Troop Carrier Group and its C-47 equipped 71st, 72nd, 73rd, and 74th Troop Carrier Squadrons deployed to England in October 1943. They were assigned to the Ninth Air Force, and trained with the 101st Airborne Division. The group towed gliders carrying troops into Normandy on 6 June 1944, and then flew follow-up missions reinforcing troops, vehicles, and ammunition supplies. The 434th received a Distinguished Unit Citation and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm for its actions during the invasion of Normandy. It dropped paratroopers and towed gliders with reinforcements during the airborne invasion into Holland, 17-25 September 1944. The group moved to France in February 1945, and flew in the airborne assault across the Rhine, dropping paratroopers onto the east bank on 24 March. In addition to airborne operations, the group supported ground troops during the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July 1944, supplied the Third Army during its drive across France in August, and replenished troops at Bastogne in December during the German Ardennes Offensive. The 434th hauled mail, rations, clothing, and other supplies from England to bases in France and Germany, and evacuated wounded. After V-E Day, the group transported gasoline to Allied forces in Germany and evacuated prisoners of war to France and Holland.

435TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 25 February 1943, the 435th Troop Carrier Group and its 75th, 76th, 77th, and 78th Troop Carrier Squadrons trained with C-47s and C-53s in preparation for duty overseas with the Ninth Air Force. The group deployed to England in October 1943. On 6 June 1944 the 435th dropped paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division near Cherbourg, and then towed Waco and Horsa gliders carrying reinforcements to them. The 435th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for its part in the Normandy invasion. It provided transportation services following the landings in France, hauling serum, blood plasma, radar sets, clothing, rations and ammunition, and evacuating wounded personnel to Allied hospitals. The 435th sent a detachment to Italy in July 1944 to support the invasion of

Southern France, dropping paratroopers on 15 August and releasing gliders carrying troops, jeeps, guns, and ammunition. The detachment flew a supply mission into France on 16 August, and transported supplies to bases in Italy before returning to England at the end of the month. In September 1944 the 435th dropped paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and released gliders carrying reinforcements during the airborne invasion into Holland. The group moved to France in February 1945, and supported the airborne assault across the Rhine in March. During that mission each aircraft towed two gliders transporting troops and equipment to the east bank of the Rhine, and then flew supply missions into Germany. After V-E Day the 435th transported supplies to occupation forces in Germany and evacuated Allied prisoners of war.

436TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 1 April 1943, the 436th Troop Carrier Group and its C-47 equipped 79th, 80th, 81st, and 82nd Troop Carrier Squadrons deployed to England in December 1943 to serve with the Ninth Air Force. The 436th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for dropping paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division into Normandy early on 6 June, and then releasing gliders with reinforcements that afternoon and the following morning. In July a detachment deployed to Italy to fly in the invasion of Southern France, releasing gliders carrying troops and dropping paratroopers on 15 August, and flying resupply missions in Southern France and in Italy. The detachment returned to England, and in September the 436th dropped paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division and released gliders with reinforcements during the airborne invasion of Holland. The 436th towed gliders to Wesel on 24 March 1945 during the airborne assault across the Rhine, and then carried gasoline to the front lines and evacuated patients. The group hauled fuel, ammunition, medical supplies, rations and clothing, and evacuated wounded soldiers to hospitals in England and France. After V-E Day the 436th evacuated patients and prisoners of war and flew practice missions with French paratroopers.

437TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 1 May 1943, the 437th Troop Carrier Group's C-47 equipped 83rd, 84th, 85th, and 86th Troop Carrier Squadrons deployed to England in January 1944 to serve with the Ninth Air Force. The 437th released gliders near Cherbourg early on 6 June, and then carried reinforcing troops, anti-aircraft guns, ammunition, rations, and other supplies to the 82nd Airborne Division. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for these D-Day missions. A detachment from the 437th flew to Italy in July to support the invasion of Southern France. This detachment dropped paratroopers into the assault area on 15 August, flew in supplies the following day, and then flew supply missions in Italy before returning to England on 24 August. During the airborne invasion of Holland from 17 through 25 September 1944, the 437th released gliders carrying troops and equipment, and then flew in reinforcements as well. The 437th deployed to France in February 1945. During the air assault across the Rhine each of its aircraft towed two gliders over the east bank and released them near Wesel. The group flew ammunition, clothing, gasoline, medicine, rations and

other supplies to ground forces pushing across Germany, and evacuated wounded personnel to rear-zone hospitals. After V-E Day the 437th evacuated prisoners of war and displaced persons to relocation centers.

438TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 1 June 1943, the group's C-47 equipped 87th, 88th, 89th, and 90th Troop Carrier Squadrons deployed to England in February 1944 to serve with the Ninth Air Force. The 438th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for dropping paratroopers and then towing in gliders with reinforcements during the June 1944 invasion of France. A detachment from the 438th went to Italy in July and participated in the invasion of Southern France in August. It dropped paratroopers and towed gliders carrying reinforcements. This detachment also hauled freight in Italy before returning to England in late August. The 438th flew supplies to General George S. Patton's Third Army during its push across France, and transported troops and supplies during the airborne invasion of Holland in September. It flew in supplies during the Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 through January 1945, including flights into Bastogne to supply the beleaguered 101st Airborne Division. The group moved to France in February 1945, and dropped paratroopers during the airborne attack across the Rhine in March. After V-E Day it evacuated Allied prisoners of war.

439TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 1 June 1943, the 439th Troop Carrier Group's C-47 equipped 91st, 92nd, 93rd, and 94th Troop Carrier Squadrons deployed to England in February 1944 for assignment with the Ninth Air Force. The 439th dropped paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division into Normandy on 6 June 1944, and then released gliders with reinforcements on the following day. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for these missions. The group ferried supplies in the United Kingdom, and deployed its air echelon to Italy in July to transport cargo to Rome and evacuate wounded personnel. On 15 August the group dropped paratroopers from the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment along the Riviera in support of the invasion of Southern France, and then towed in gliders with reinforcements. The air echelon returned to England on 25 August, and the group resumed cargo missions. In September the 439th moved to France. It dropped paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division near Nijmegen, and then towed gliders carrying reinforcements during the airborne invasion of Holland in September 1944. The 439th participated in the Battle of the Bulge, releasing gliders with supplies for the beleaguered 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne. Each aircraft in the group towed two gliders with troops from the 17th Airborne Division during the air assault across the Rhine on 24 March 1945. The 439th hauled food, clothing, medicine, gasoline, ordnance equipment, and other supplies to the front lines, and evacuated patients to hospitals. The group converted from C-47s to C-46s, and transported displaced persons from Germany to France and Belgium after V-E Day.

440TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 1 July 1943, the 440th Troop Carrier Group's C-47 equipped 95th, 96th, 97th, and 98th Troop Carrier Squadrons deployed to England in February 1944 for assignment to the Ninth Air Force. The 440th dropped paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division near Carentan on 6 June 1944, and then transported gasoline, ammunition, food, and other supplies to them the following day. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for these daring missions. In July a detachment flew to Italy, transported supplies into Rome and participated in the invasion of Southern France, dropping paratroopers from the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment near Le Muy on 15 August 1944 and towing in gliders carrying reinforcements later that day. The group remaining in England hauled cargo, and on 10 August 1944 dropped supplies to embattled infantrymen encircled at Mortain. The detachment returned to England on 25 August, and the group moved to France in September. During the airborne invasion of Holland in September the 440th dropped paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division near Groesbeek, and then flew in gliders with reinforcements on subsequent days. During the Battle of the Bulge the 440th hauled gliders filled with supplies to the 101st Airborne Division encircled in Bastogne, and in March 1945 it towed gliders bearing the 17th Airborne Division during the airborne assault across the Rhine. The 440th transported food, clothing, medical supplies, gasoline, ammunition, and other cargo to the front lines, and evacuated casualties to hospitals. After V-E Day the group transported liberated prisoners and displaced persons.

441ST TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 1 August 1943, the 441st Troop Carrier Group's C-47 equipped 99th, 100th, 301st, and 302nd Troop Carrier Squadrons deployed to England in February 1944 for service with the Ninth Air Force. The group transported cargo in the United Kingdom until June 1944. The 441st dropped paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division near Cherbourg on D-Day, and flew in gliders bearing reinforcements the following day. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for these daring missions. The group transported cargo in France and the United Kingdom, and sent a detachment to Italy in July 1944. This detachment transported supplies and evacuated patients within Italy, and dropped troops from the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment along the Riviera during the invasion of southern France on 15 August. It towed in gliders with reinforcements later that day. The detachment returned to England on 25 August, and the group moved onto the Continent in September. The 441st dropped paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions during the airborne assault into Holland, and towed in gliders with reinforcements on subsequent days. In December, the group transported ammunition, rations, medicine, and other supplies to the 101st Airborne Division encircled in Bastogne. On 24 March 1945 the 441st towed gliders carrying troops of 17th Airborne Division during the airborne assault across the Rhine. The group then hauled gasoline to armored columns pushing into Germany and transported freight and personnel within the theater.

442ND TROOP CARRIER GROUP

Activated on 1 September 1943, the 442nd Troop Carrier Group's C-47 and C-53 equipped 303rd, 304th, 305th, and 306th Troop Carrier Squadrons deployed to England in March 1944 for service with the Ninth Air Force. The 442nd dropped paratroopers near Sainte-Mère-Eglise on 6 June 1944, and then flew supplies in to replenish them. It received a Distinguished Unit Citation for these daring D-Day missions. The group hauled freight, evacuated casualties and sent a detachment to Italy in July. This detachment transported cargo and evacuated casualties, and dropped paratroopers and released gliders during the invasion of southern France. The detachment returned to England in late August, and in September the 442nd transported paratroopers and towed gliders during the airborne invasion of Holland. The 442nd moved to France in October, and hauled freight and evacuated casualties during Allied efforts to breach the Siegfried Line. The group released gliders bearing troops during the airborne assault across the Rhine, flew supplies to ground forces advancing into Germany, and evacuated prisoners of war who had been liberated.

NAVAL FORCES IN THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN

British Admiral Bertram H. Ramsay commanded the naval forces for Operation NEPTUNE—the naval component of the Normandy invasion. Under Ramsay in the direct chain of command were American Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk, commanding the Western Task Force designated to undertake the amphibious landings on the American beaches Omaha and Utah, and British Rear Admiral Philip L. Vian, the commander of the Eastern Task Force ordered to carry out the assaults on the British and Canadian beaches Juno, Gold, and Sword. Vessels committed to the operation included 1,213 warships, 4,126 landing ships and craft, 736 auxiliary ships and craft, and 864 merchant ships.

Learn More About:

The Western Task Force (Us Led)
The Eastern Task Force (Uk Led)
The United States Coast Guard

The Western Task Force

Of the 1,213 Allied warships scheduled to take part in NEPTUNE, some 16.5 percent were American, including three battleships, three heavy cruisers, and 30 destroyers. Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk's Western Task Force consisted of three component parts—Task Force 124, commanded by Rear Admiral John L. Hall, USN in the amphibious command ship USS Ancon, which was to take on the landings at Omaha Beach; Task Force 125, commanded by Rear Admiral Don P. Moon, USN in the attack transport USS Bayfield, assigned to carry out the assault on Utah Beach; and Task Force 126, the follow-up force, commanded by Commodore Campbell D. Edgar, USN in the destroyer escort USS Maloy, that was slated to bring in reinforcing troops for Omaha Beach.

The hundreds of ships taking part in the Normandy invasion sortied from their assembly ports in England and Northern Ireland on 5 June 1944. The separately sailed convoys headed first toward Area Z, a rendezvous point located southeast of the Isle of Wight. Once there, they headed into one of the series of 10 swept channels through the German-laid mine fields off the French coast. Far to the east and west of them were arrayed naval covering forces consisting of antisubmarine escort carrier groups and destroyer squadrons. All of the assault convoys reached their allotted sectors off the Normandy beaches before dawn on 6 June, despite experiencing squalls and high seas along their routes.

Learn More About:

**Utah Beach
Omaha Beach
U.S. Naval Forces Ashore
Post D-Day Operations**

Utah Beach

The amphibious landings on the various beaches were staggered in time in order to take into account tidal variations. H-hour for the assault on Utah Beach was set for 0630, an hour earlier than the scheduled landings on the British beaches. After receiving fire from German shore batteries for some minutes, however, at 0536 Rear Admiral Morton L. Deyo, USN, the commander of the bombardment group off Utah, ordered his ships to return fire. The American battleship Nevada, a survivor of Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the two American heavy cruisers Tuscaloosa and Quincy and several British warships began firing their pre-landing bombardment. Throughout the day the big warships and the smaller destroyers fired on targets of opportunity and supplied on-call fire for the troops of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division. At one point during the initial fighting on 6 June, Nevada's 14-inch guns destroyed a concentration of German tanks and artillery that was hindering the advance by paratroops of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Bombarding Force A, supporting Utah Beach, consisted of:

USS Nevada (Battleship)
HMS Erebus (Monitor)
USS Tuscaloosa (Cruiser)
USS Quincy (Cruiser)
HMS Hawkins (Cruiser)
HMS Enterprise (Cruiser)
HMS Black Prince (Cruiser)
HNMS Soemba (Dutch) (Gunboat)
USS Fitch (Destroyer)
USS Corry (Destroyer)
USS Hobson (Destroyer)
USS Shubrick (Destroyer)
USS Herndon (Destroyer)
USS Forrest (Destroyer)
USS Butler (Destroyer)
USS Gherardi (Destroyer)

Omaha Beach

The landings on Omaha Beach were scheduled to begin at 0635. German guns began firing at the American battleship Arkansas, the oldest battleship in the U.S. Navy, at 0530 and started targeting the American destroyers off Omaha five minutes later. Soon the American warships were returning fire. At 0550 the battleship USS Texas, the flagship of Rear Admiral Carleton F. Bryant, USN, the commander of the Omaha bombardment group, began her pre-landing naval gunfire schedule. Aiming her 14-inch guns at the expected German coastal artillery position on Pointe du Hoc, she quickly started sending huge chunks of rock from the cliff sailing into the air. Unfortunately, the German guns were no longer emplaced there to be destroyed. Throughout that first day of fighting, the big ships and the accompanying destroyers provided vital on-call gunfire support for the American troops struggling to obtain a foothold on Omaha Beach. Indeed, the destroyers operating close in to the beach provided the soldiers of the U.S. 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions with the only artillery support they received during most of D-Day. Bombarding Force C, supporting Omaha Beach, consisted of:

- USS Texas (Battleship)
- USS Arkansas (Battleship)
- HMS Glasgow (Cruiser)
- FFS Montcalm (French) (Cruiser)
- FFS Georges Leygues (French) (Cruiser)
- USS McCook (Destroyer)
- USS Carmick (Destroyer)
- USS Doyle (Destroyer)
- USS Baldwin (Destroyer)
- USS Harding (Destroyer)
- USS Frankford (Destroyer)
- USS Thompson (Destroyer)
- USS Emmons (Destroyer)
- HMS Melbreak (Destroyer)
- HMS Tanatside (Destroyer)
- HMS Talybont (Destroyer)

United States Naval Forces Ashore

United States naval personnel were among the first ashore at Normandy. Most notably, Naval Combat Demolition Units cleared gaps through the beach obstacles so that reinforcements and logistics could quickly come forward. A Gap Assault Team consisted of an officer, 13 combat demolition trained sailors, and 26 soldiers for security and support.

Sixteen such teams came ashore on Omaha Beach at 0633, and a similar number on Utah Beach at 0635 – within minutes of the first troops ashore. Obstacles were initially blown with Hagensen C2 Packs, each holding two pounds of explosives. A team member typically carried 20 such charges. On Omaha Beach the Naval Combat Demolition Units suffered 41 percent casualties, but successfully blew eight 50-meter wide lanes initially and saw the beach fully opened by D-Day plus 2. On Utah Beach resistance was less intense, and the teams cleared a frontage of 700 yards within the first two hours with few casualties. As the landings progressed more and more naval personnel arrived: fire support parties, communications teams, engineers, beach liaison parties, debarkation control teams, and others.

Post D-Day Operations

Throughout the two weeks following D-Day American and Allied naval forces carried out their myriad responsibilities, including minesweeping, convoy escort, and gunfire support with great skill. On 15 June, Admiral Kirk combined the naval gunfire ships of both bombardment groups under Admiral Deyo's command. That same day saw the final long-range gunfire support by the big warships, since the fighting front had moved beyond the range of even the 14-inch gun-armed Texas. Kirk finally suspended all naval gunfire support on 19 June.

The Eastern Task Force

Commanded by Rear Admiral Sir Philip Vian, RN, on board the cruiser HMS Scylla, the Eastern Task Force supported the landings on beaches Gold, Juno and Sword. Force G under Commodore C. E. Douglas-Pennant on board the HMS Bulolo was responsible for Gold; Force J under Commodore G. N. Oliver on board the HMS Hilary handled Juno; and Force S under Rear Admiral A. G. Talbot on board the HMS Largs dealt with Sword. The hundreds of ships taking part in the Normandy invasion departed their assembly ports in Great Britain on 5 June 1944. The separately proceeding convoys headed first toward Area Z, a rendezvous point located southeast of the Isle of Wight. Once there, they steamed into one of the 10 swept channels through the German-laid minefields off the French coast. Far to the east and west of them were arrayed naval covering forces consisting of antisubmarine escort carrier groups and destroyer squadrons. All of the assault convoys reached their allotted sectors off the Normandy beaches before dawn on 6 June, despite high winds and waves along their routes.

Learn More About:

Bombarding Force K (Gold Beach)
Bombarding Force E (Juno Beach)
Bombarding Force D (Sword Beach)

Bombarding Force K

Bombarding Force K, supporting Gold Beach, consisted of:

HMS Orion (Cruiser)
HMS Ajax (Cruiser)
HMS Argonaut (Cruiser)
HMS Emerald (Cruiser)
HNMS Flores (Dutch) (Gunboat)
HMS Grenville (Destroyer)
HMS Jervis (Destroyer)
HMS Ulster (Destroyer)
HMS Ulysses (Destroyer)
HMS Undaunted (Destroyer)
HMS Undine (Destroyer)
HMS Urania (Destroyer)
HMS Urchin (Destroyer)
HMS Ursa (Destroyer)
HMS Cattistock (Destroyer)
HMS Cottesmore (Destroyer)
HMS Pytchley (Destroyer)
ORP Krakowiak (Polish)

Bombarding Force E

Bombarding Force E, supporting Juno Beach, consisted of:

HMS Belfast (Cruiser)
HMS Diadem (Cruiser)
HMS Faulknor (Destroyer)
HMS Fury (Destroyer)
HMS Kempenfeldt (Destroyer)
HMS Venus (Destroyer)
HMS Vigilant (Destroyer)
HMCS Algonquin (Destroyer)
HMCS Sioux (Destroyer)
HMS Bleasdale (Destroyer)
HMS Stevenstone (Destroyer)
HNMS Glaisdale (Norwegian) (Destroyer)
FFS La Combattante (French) (Destroyer)

Bombarding Force D

Bombarding Force D, supporting Sword Beach, consisted of:

HMS Warspite (Battleship)
HMS Ramillies (Battleship)
HMS Roberts (Monitor)
HMS Mauritius (Cruiser)
HMS Arethusa (Cruiser)
HMS Frobisher (Cruiser)
HMS Danae (Cruiser)
ORP Dragon (Polish) (Cruiser)
HMS Kelvin (Destroyer)
HMS Saumarez (Destroyer)
HMS Scorpion (Destroyer)
HMS Scourge (Destroyer)
HMS Serapis (Destroyer)
HMS Swift (Destroyer)
HMS Verulam (Destroyer)
HMS Virago (Destroyer)
ORP Slazak (Polish) (Destroyer)
HNMS Stord (Norwegian) (Destroyer)
HNMS Svenner (Norwegian) (Destroyer)
HMS Middleton (Destroyer)
HMS Eglinton (Destroyer)

U.S. Coast Guard

In addition to individual Coast Guardsmen serving on board naval vessels and landing craft, the United States Coast Guard deployed two flotillas in support of the Normandy invasion. Rescue Flotilla One consisted of sixty 83-foot patrol boats – the so called “match-box fleet” – and rescued hundreds of men from the waters off Normandy, often while under enemy fire. LCI(L) Flotilla 10 consisted of 24 Coast Guard-manned Large Infantry Landing Craft (LCI(L)), and delivered hundreds of troops and tons of equipment to Omaha Beach at the outset of the invasion.

Learn More about:

Rescue Flotilla One
LCI(L) Flotilla 10

Coast Guard Rescue Flotilla One

Rescue Flotilla One's sixty 83-foot patrol boats sailed both in support of the American invasion forces and half with the Canadians and British. They braved enemy fire and obstacles time and again, whether alongside the transports or close to the shore. One vessel, CGC-16, began picking up survivors from disabled landing craft in the assembly area at 0530. By the end of the day it had pulled 126 men from the English Channel, the largest number saved by a "matchbox-fleet" craft that day. The CGC-35 supported 24 Royal Navy LCI(L)s, followed the first wave onto Sword Beach, and rescued survivors from burning landing craft. The CGC-34 pulled 32 British soldiers and sailors from the Channel. The CGC-53 rescued men from swamped landing craft and came under fire from German shore batteries. The CGC-1 escorted a group of LCVPs to Omaha Beach. Two miles offshore its Coast Guardsmen jumped overboard and tied lines to the freezing survivors of a British LCA because these men were too cold to get on board themselves. This cutter's crew rescued 24 soldiers and four Royal Navy sailors on this occasion, later recovered 19 survivors from an LCI, and spent most of D-Day within 2,000 yards of the beach under enemy fire. In the United States Coast Guard's finest tradition, Rescue Flotilla One saved more than 400 lives on D-Day and 1,438 altogether.

Coast Guard LCI(L) Flotilla 10

Flotilla 10 consisted of 24 Coast Guard-manned LCI(L)s. LCI(L)s were ocean-going landing craft with a crew of 25 men and four officers. Each was capable of transporting up to 200 assault troops and landing directly on a beach. The LCI(L) crews of Flotilla 10 were veterans of the invasions of Sicily and Salerno, and had landed troops during both invasions without losing a single vessel. On 6 June 1944, they braved heavy enemy fire to deliver hundreds of troops and tons of equipment to Omaha Beach. They cleared channels through minefields and obstacles to enable subsequent vessels to reach the beaches. Exposed to fierce enemy fire and heavy seas, the LCIs shuttled between the beaches and the transports, delivering badly needed supplies and reinforcements. They also rescued and transported over 400 injured soldiers and sailors to safety, most to hospital ships offshore. Four of the LCI(L)s – LCI(L) 85, LCI(L) 91, LCI(L) 92 and LCI(L) 93 – were lost in this day of fierce battle.

ALLIED AIR FORCES

At the time of the Normandy Landings, Allied Air Forces based in England and associated with the invasion had multiple roles and several distinct organizations. The Allied Expeditionary Air Force, commanded by Air Chief Marshall Sir Trafford L. Leigh-Mallory, reported directly to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force. It was the air component of a force with the mission to “enter the continent of Europe” and “undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces.” Its major components consisted of the Royal Air Force Second Tactical Air Force, the United States Ninth Air Force, the Royal Air Force Air Defense of Great Britain, and the Royal Air Force Airborne and Transport Forces.

The Allied Strategic Air Force was independent of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force, and had for some time been conducting a strategic bombing campaign to cripple German war industries and draw out and destroy the German air force. The British had mounted a 1,000-plane raid against Cologne as early as May 1942, and the Americans began strategic bombing by that August. The two nations coordinated their efforts in the Combined Bomber Offensive. The Allied Strategic Air Force reported to and coordinated with the headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force when in support of Operation OVERLORD. The Allied Strategic Air Force consisted of the Royal Air Force Bomber Command and the United States Eighth Air Force.

The Royal Air Force Coastal Command had been fighting in the prolonged Battle of the Atlantic, and in coordination with the Royal Navy shared the mission of keeping the waters in the vicinity of the British islands clear for Allied maritime traffic. It reported to and coordinated with the headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force when in cooperation with Operation OVERLORD.

Learn More About:

United States Eighth Air Force
United States Ninth Air Force
Royal Air Force Second Tactical Air Force
Royal Air Force, Air Defense of Great Britain
Royal Air Force Airborne and Transport Forces
Royal Air Force Bomber Command
Royal Air Force Coastal Command

United States Eighth Air Force

Lieutenant-General James H. Doolittle
Commanding General
Major-General Earle E. Partridge
Deputy Commander
Brigadier-General John H. Samford
Chief of Staff

7 Photographic Reconnaissance Group

Lightning

(4 Squadrons)		Spitfire
1st Bomb Division – Major-General Robert B. Williams 91, 92, 303, 305, 306, 351, 379, 381, 384, 398, 401, 457 Groups (48 Squadrons)		Fortress
2nd Bomb Division – Major-General James P. Hodges 44, 93, 389, 392, 445, 446, 453, 458, 466, 467, 489, 491, 492 Groups (56 Squadrons)		Liberator
3rd Bomb Division – Major-General Curtis E. Le May 94, 95, 96, 100, 385, 388, 390, 447, 452, Groups (36 Squadrons) 34, 486, 487, 490, 493 Groups (20 Squadrons)		Fortress Liberator
VIII Fighter Command – Major-General William E. Kepner		
65 Wing 4, 56, 355, 356, 479 Groups (15 Squadrons)) Lightning) Mustang > Thunderbolt	
66 Wing 55, 78, 339, 353, 357 Groups (15 Squadrons)))	
67 Wing 20, 352, 359, 361, 364 Groups (15 Squadrons)		Lightning, Mustang

United States Ninth Air Force

Lieutenant-General Lewis H. Brereton (to 6.8.44)
Major-General Hoyt S. Vandenberg (from 7.8.44)
Commanding General
Brigadier-General Victor H. Strahm
Chief of Staff

10 Photographic Reconnaissance Group (5 Squadrons)		Lightning Black Widow
U.S. IX Tactical Air Command – Major-General Elwood R. Quesada		
70 Wing 48, 367, 371, 474 Groups (12 Squadrons)		Lightning Thunderbolt
71 Wing 366, 368, 370 Groups (9 Squadrons)		Lightning, Thunderbolt
84 Wing 50, 365, 404, 405 Groups (12 Squadrons)		Thunderbolt
67 Tactical Reconnaissance Group (4 Squadrons)		Mustang
U.S. XIX Tactical Air Command Brigadier-General Otto P. Weyland		
100 Wing 354, 358, 362, 363 Groups (12 Squadrons)		Mustang Thunderbolt
303 Wing 36, 373, 406 Groups (9 Squadrons)		Thunderbolt
422, 425, Night Fighter Squadrons		Black Widow

U.S. IX Bomber Command - Brigadier-General Samuel E. Anderson		
97 Wing	409, 410, 416 Groups (12 Squadrons)	Havoc
98 Wing	323, 387, 394, 397 Groups (16 Squadrons)	Marauder
99 Wing	322, 344, 386, 391 Groups (16 Squadrons)	Marauder
	One Pathfinder Squadron	Marauder
U.S. IX Troop Carrier Command - Brigadier-General Paul L. Williams		
50 Wing	439, 440, 441, 442 Groups (16 Squadrons)	Dakota
52 Wing	61, 313, 314, 315, 316 Groups (20 Squadrons)	Dakota
53 Wing	434, 435, 436, 437, 438 Groups (20 Squadrons)	Dakota
	One Pathfinder Group	Dakota

Royal Air Force, Second Tactical Air Force

Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham
 Air Marshal Commanding
 Air Vice-Marshal A. V. Groom
 Senior Air Staff Officer

34 Reconnaissance Wing	16, 69, 140 Squadrons	Spitfire Wellington Mosquito
3 Naval Fighter Wing (Air Spotting Pool)	808 (FAA), 885 (FAA), 886 (FAA), 897 (FAA) Squadrons 26, 63 Squadrons 1320 Special Duty Flight	Seafire Spitfire Typhoon

No. 2 Group - Air Vice-Marshal B. E. Embry

137 Wing	88, 226, 342, (Fr) Squadrons	Boston Mitchell
138 Wing	107, 305, (Pol), 613 Squadrons	Mosquito
139 Wing	98, 180, 320 (Dutch) Squadrons	Mitchell
140 Wing	21, 464 (RAAF), 487 (RNZAF) Squadrons	Mosquito

No. 83 Group - Air Vice-Marshal H. Broadhurst

39 (RCAF) Reconnaissance Wing	168, 400 (RCAF), 414 (RCAF) Squadrons 430 (RCAF) Squadrons	Mustang Spitfire
121 Wing	174, 175, 245 Squadrons	Typhoon
122 Wing	19, 65, 122 Squadrons	Mustang
124 Wing	181, 182, 247 Squadrons	Typhoon
125 Wing	132, 453 (RAAF), 602 Squadrons	Spitfire
126 (RCAF) Wing	401 (RCAF), 411 (RCAF), 412	Spitfire

127 (RCAF) Wing	(RCAF) Squadrons 403 (RCAF), 416 (RCAF), 421 (RCAF) Squadrons	Spitfire
129 (RCAF) Wing	184 Squadrons	Typhoon
143 (RCAF) Wing	438 (RCAF), 439 (RCAF), 440 (RCAF) Squadrons	Typhoon
144 (RCAF) Wing	441 (RCAF), 442 (RCAF), 443 (RCAF) Squadrons	Spitfire
Air Observation Posts	652, 653, 658, 659, 662 Squadrons	Auster

No. 84 Group – Air Vice-Marshal L. O. Brown

35 Reconnaissance Wing	2, 4, 268 Squadrons	Mustang Spitfire
123 Wing	198, 609 Squadrons	Typhoon
131 (Pol) Wing	302 (Pol), 308 (Pol), 317 (Pol) Squadrons	Spitfire
132 (Nor) Wings	66, 331 (Nor), 332 (Nor) Squadrons	Spitfire
133 (Pol) Wing	129, 306 (Pol), 315 (Pol) Squadrons	Mustang
134 (Cz) Wing	310 (Cz), 312 (Cz), 313 (Cz) Squadrons	Spitfire
135 Wing	222, 349 (Belgian), 485 (RNZAF) Squadrons	Spitfire
136 Wing	164, 183 Squadrons	Typhoon
145 (Fr) Wing	329 (Fr), 340 (Fr), 341 (Fr) Squadrons	Spitfire
146 Wing	193, 197, 257, 266 Squadrons	Typhoon
Air Observation Posts	660, 661 Squadrons	Auster

No. 85 (Base) Group – Air Vice-Marshal J. B. Cole-Hamilton (to 9.7.44)
Air Vice-Marshal C. R. Steele (from 10.7.44)

141 Wing	91, 124, 322 (Dutch) Squadrons	Spitfire
142 Wing	264, 604 Squadrons	Mosquito (N/F)
147 Wing	29 Squadron	Mosquito (N/F)
148 Wing	409 (RCAF) Squadron	Mosquito (N/F)
149 Wing	410 (RCAF), 488 (RNZAF) Squadrons	Mosquito (N/F)
150 Wing	561 Squadron	Spitfire
Airfield Construction Wing	5022, 5023, 5357 Squadrons	
Beach Squadrons	1, 2, 4	
Balloon Squadrons	947, 976, 980, 991	
Port Balloon Flight	104	

Royal Air Force Regiment Group – Colonel R. L. Preston

Mobile Wings	1300, 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304, 1305, 1306, 1308, 1309, 1310, 1311, 1312, 1314, 1316, 1317, 1318
Armored Squadrons	2742, 2757, 2777, 2781, 2805, 2817
Light Anti-Aircraft Squadrons	2701, 2703, 2734, 2736, 2773, 2794, 2800, 2819, 2834, 2843, 2872, 2873, 2874 2876, 2880, 2881
Rifle Squadrons	2713, 2717, 2726, 2729, 2798, 2816, 2827
Special Duty Squadron	2739

Royal Air Force, Air Defence of Great Britain

Air Marshal Sir Roderic M. Hill
Air Marshal Commanding
Air Vice-Marshal W. B. Callaway
Senior Air Staff Officer

No. 10 Group – Air Vice-Marshal C. R. Steele (to 9.7.44)
Air Vice-Marshal J. B. Cole-Hamilton (from 10.7.44)

1, 41, 126, 131, 165, 610, 616 Squadrons	Spitfire
263 Squadron	Typhoon
151 Squadron	Mosquito (N/F)
68, 406 (RCAF) Squadrons	Beaufighter (N/F)
276 (A/SR) Squadron	Spitfire, Warwick, Walrus
1449 Flight	Hurricane

No. 11 Group – Air Vice-Marshal H. W. L. Saunders

33, 64, 74, 80, 127, 130, 229, 234, 274, 303 (Pol), 345 (Fr), 350 (Belgian), 402 (RCAF), 501, 611 Squadrons	Spitfire
137 Squadron	Typhoon
96, 125 (Newfoundland), 219 456 (RAAF) Squadrons	Mosquito (N/F)
418 (RCAF), 605 Squadrons	Mosquito Intruder
275 (A/SR), 277 (A/SR), 278 (A/SR) Squadrons	Spitfire, Warwick, Walrus

No. 12 Group – Air Vice-Marshal M. Henderson

316 (Pol) Squadron	Mustang
504 Squadron	Spitfire
25, 307 (Pol) Squadrons	Mosquito (N/F)
Fighter Interception Unit	Beaufighter, Misquito, Mustang, Tempest

No. 13 Group – Air Commander J. A. Boret

118 Squadron	Spitfire
309 (Pol) Squadron	Hurricane

Royal Air Force, Airborne and Transport Forces

Air Vice-Marshal L. N. Hollinghurst
Commander
Air Commodore F. M. Blandin
Senior Air Staff Officer

No. 38 Group (Airborne Forces) – Air Vice-Marshal L. N. Hollinghurst	
295, 296, 297, 570 Squadrons	Albemarle
190, 196, 299, 620 Squadrons	Stirling
298, 644 Squadrons	Halifax
No. 46 Group (Transport Command) – Air Commodore A. L. Fiddament	
48, 233, 271, 512, 575 Squadrons	Dakota

Royal Air Force, Bomber Command

Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur T. Harris
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief
Air Marshal Sir Robert Saundby
Deputy Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief
Air Vice-Marshal H. S. P. Walmsley
Senior Air Staff Officer

No. 1 Group – Air Vice-Marshal E. A. B. Rice	
12, 100, 101, 103, 166, 300 (Pol), 460 (RAAF), 550, 576, 625, 626 Squadrons	Lancaster
No. 3 Group – Air Vice-Marshal R. Harrison	
15, 75, 115, 514, 622 Squadrons	Lancaster
90 Squadron	Lancaster, Stirling
149, 218 Squadrons	Stirling
138 Special Duty Squadron	Halifax, Stirling
161 Special Duty Squadron	Halifax, Hudson, Lysander
No. 4 Group – Air Vice-Marshal C. R. Carr	
10, 51, 76, 77, 78, 102, 158, 346 (Fr), 347 (Fr), 462 (RAAF), 466 (RAAF), 578, 640 Squadrons	Halifax
No. 5 Group – Air Vice-Marshal The Hon R. A. Cochrane	
9, 44 (Rhodesian), 49, 50, 57, 61, 106, 207, 463 (RAAF), 467 (RAAF), 619, 630 Squadrons	Lancaster Lancaster, Mosquito
No. 6 (RCAF) Group – Air Vice – Marshal C. M. McEwen, RCAF	
415 (RCAF), 420 (RCAF), 424 (RCAF), 425 (RCAF), 426 (RCAF), 427 (RCAF), 429 (RCAF), 431 (RCAF), 432 (RCAF), 433 (RCAF), 434 (RCAF) Squadrons	Halifax
408 (RCAF), 419 (RCAF) Squadrons	Lancaster

428 (RCAF) Squadron	Halifax, Lancaster
No. 8 Pathfinder Group – Air Vice-Marshal D. C. T. Bennett	
7, 35, 83, 97, 156, 405 (RCAF), 582, 635 Squadrons	Lancaster
105, 109, 139, 571, 608, 627, 692 Squadrons	Mosquito
No. 100 (BS) Group – Air Commodore E. B. Addison	
85 (BS), 141 (BS), 157 (BS), 169 (BS) 239 (BS) Squadrons	Mosquito
23, 515 (BS) Squadrons	Mosquito Intruder
214 (BS) Squadron	Fortress
192 (BS) Squadron	Halifax, Mosquito, Wellington
199 Squadron	Stirling
223 (BS) Squadron	Liberator

Royal Air Force, Coastal Command

Air Chief Marshal Sir W. Shelton Douglas
 Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief
 Air Vice-Marshal A. B. Allwood
 Senior Air Staff Officer

No. 15 Group – Air Vice-Marshal Sir Leonard E. Slatter	
59 Squadron	Liberator (VLR)
120 Squadron	Liberator (VLR, L/L)
422 {RCAF}, 423 {RCAF} Squadrons	Sunderland
811 (FAA)	Avenger, Wild Cat
No. 16 Group – Air Vice-Marshal F. E. Epps	
119 Squadron	Albacore
143, 236, 254, 255 (RAAF), 489 (RNZAF) Squadrons	Beaufighter
415 (RCAF) Squadron	Wellington, Albacore
819 (FAA), 848 (FAA), 854 (FAA), 855 (FAA) Squadrons	Avenger, Swordfish
No. 18 Group – Air Vice-Marshal S.P. Simpson	
86 Squadron	Liberator (VLR)
210 Squadron	Caroline
330 (Nor), 333 (Nor) Squadrons	Caroline, Mosquito, Swordfish
1693 Flight	
No. 19 Group – Air Vice-Marshal B. E. Baker	
144, 235, 404 (RCAF) Squadrons	Beaufighter
58, 502 Squadrons	Halifax
53, 224 Squadrons	Liberator (L/L)
206, 311 (Cz), 547 Squadrons	Liberator
248 Squadron	Mosquito
10 (RAAF), 201, 228, 461 (RCAF) Squadrons	Sunderland
172, 179, 304 (Pol), 407 (RCAF), 612 Squadrons	Wellington (L/L)

524 Squadron
816 (FAA), 838 (FAA), 849 (FAA),
850 (FAA) Squadrons
Attached 103 (USN), 105 (USN), 110 (USN),
114 (USN) Squadrons

Wellington
Avenger, Swordfish

Liberator

BRITISH 6TH AIRBORNE DIVISION

6 June

The 6th Airborne Division landed in the early morning darkness by parachute and glider to secure the extreme left flank of the Normandy landings. To do this it had to secure bridges over the Orne River and the Canal du Caen between Benouville and Ranville, destroy four bridges across the Dives River, deny the enemy the use of the ground between the Orne and the Dives, and destroy a fortified battery near Melville. Despite losses and some misdirection to aircraft and gliders, the division achieved these objectives and then held its ground against fierce German counterattacks. This D-Day performance has become a classic account of successful airborne operations.

7-13 June

The 6th Airborne Division consolidated ground it had seized on D-Day and developed its positions to secure the left flank of the Normandy landings. The marshy low ground and woods in the vicinity of the Dives River and the high ground between the Orne and the Dives Rivers were particularly important in this regard. To establish its perimeter the division seized Breville in a fierce battle; 141 of 160 assaulting paratroopers became casualties, and the defending Germans lost 418 of 564.

14-20 June

The 6th Airborne Division secured the left flank of the expanding Normandy beach-head and conducted an active defense in its sector, pinning enemy forces in front of it by vigorous patrolling and active artillery fire. The Germans again attacked the critical Ranville bridgehead, this time with forces involving the redoubtable 21st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions. These attacks were beaten back, and the units committed were not available to oppose ongoing Allied offensives west of Caen or in the Cotentin Peninsula.

21-30 June

The 6th Airborne Division secured the left flank of the expanding Normandy beach-head and conducted an active defense in its sector, pinning enemy forces in front of it with vigorous patrolling and active artillery fire. A great storm in the English Channel delayed the Allied buildup for four days, but attacks nevertheless progressed to seize Cherbourg and advance east and west of Caen. The 6th Airborne Division particularly secured the flank of an attack that seized Sainte-Honorine, east of Caen.

1-18 July

The 6th Airborne Division secured the left flank of the expanding Normandy beach-head and conducted an active defense in its sector, pinning enemy forces in front of it with vigorous patrolling and active artillery fire. The Allies mounted major offensives to seize Saint-Lô and Caen. The 6th Airborne Division particularly secured the flank of the attack on

Caen, which followed up on massive carpet bombing to force its way through the portions of the city north of the Orne River.

19-25 July

The 6th Airborne Division secured the left flank of Operation GOODWOOD, a massive converging attack to seize the rest of Caen and ground to the south of it, and to draw reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. GOODWOOD followed up on massive carpet bombing to break through German lines and link participating forces into a continuous front three miles south of the city. The Germans counterattacked, but were beaten back.

26-31 July

As the American breakthrough at Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of them, to include a preponderance of the German armored forces. The 6th Airborne Division continued to secure the Allied extreme left flank, and to pin German forces in front of itself with an active defense. It further covered a massive redeployment of Commonwealth forces, as General Bernard L. Montgomery shifted them westwards to take advantage of the emerging situation.

1-13 August

As the American breakthrough overran Brittany and also hooked eastwards towards Le Mans, Commonwealth forces massed west of Caen and attacked through determined defenses to advance on Falaise. The twin offensives converged to shape a huge trap, the Falaise Pocket. The 6th Airborne Division continued to secure the Allied extreme left flank, an economy of force mission that became ever more challenging and critical as Allied forces pushed on to the south through expanding frontages.

14-19 August

The 6th Airborne Division, reinforced by the 1st and 4th Special Service Brigades, the 1st Belgian Infantry Brigade and the Royal Netherlands Brigade (Princess Irene's), attacked to seize Troarn. It secured this objective without difficulty, and pushed on to cross the Dives River. An enemy battery at Houlgate was overrun, but high water and inundations slowed the advance through the Dives delta. Meanwhile the Falaise Pocket had been closed, and over 50,000 fleeing Germans captured.

20-25 August

The 6th Airborne Division forced its way across the Dives River, and then across the Touques as well. It fought its way to the line of the Risle River and seized Pont Audemer, a critical tactical position. The German retreat in this sector was part of a larger rout all across France. By 25 August the Seine River had been forced in numerous places, and on 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered

newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds.

BRITISH 3RD DIVISION

6 June

The 3rd Division amphibiously assaulted Sword Beach on a brigade front, with two additional brigades to pass through ground gained by the first. Their sector was low-lying and sandy, with a coastal highway lined with buildings connecting several villages on line. The Germans had converted the villages into heavily defended strong points covering beach obstacles, mines and barbed wire. Despite these challenges, the division seized la Breche and Ouistreham after fierce fighting and pushed inland. By day's end the 3rd Division had seized Bieville, over four miles inland, linked up with the embattled 6th Airborne Division, and beaten back a major counterattack by the 2nd Panzer Division.

7-13 June

The 3rd Division consolidated ground it had seized on D-Day, and pushed on to the south. It seized the village of Périers-sur-le-Dan, and linked up with the 3rd Canadian Division advancing off of Juno Beach. The British and Canadians together attacked Cambes, a strongly held position enjoying fields of fire across a thousand yards of flat open ground. Cambes fell after difficult and costly fighting. On its other flank, the 3rd Division broke up a German counterattack east of the Orne with well directed artillery.

14-20 June

German resistance stiffened as more reinforcements, delayed by Allied air strikes and concern for a landing at the Pas de Calais, began to arrive. The preponderance of their armor concentrated in the vicinity of Caen. The 3rd Division went over to the defensive in its sector, an economy of force mission as the Allies diverted ammunition and resources elsewhere. The division's defense was an active one, pinning German units to its front with active patrolling, limited attacks and well-aimed artillery fire.

21-30 June

The newly arrived VIIIth Corps, consisting of an armored division, two infantry divisions, a tank brigade and an armored brigade, conducted the main attack for Operation EPSOM, a major drive to outflank Caen from the west. Another attack seized Sainte-Honorine, east of the Orne. Between these major efforts, the 3rd Division continued to pin down the enemy with an active defense, and also captured the Chateau de la Londe, just north of Epron, after two days of difficult fighting.

1-18 July

I Corps, following a major "carpet" bombing, attacked to seize the portion of Caen north of the Orne River. The 3rd Division was the leftmost of three divisions conducting this attack, and fought its way through determined resistance and thick minefields and obstacles to seize the strong points of Herouville and Lebisey on 8 July. From these positions they

outflanked the Germans to their left and pushed on into Caen itself. By 9 July they had reached the Orne, now impeded more by rubble than enemy.

19-25 July

The 3rd Division attacked as the leftmost division of Operation GOODWOOD, a massive converging attack that seized the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it, and drew enemy armored reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. The division seized Sannerville and Banneville la Campagne quickly, and Touffreville, Manneville and Guillerville after difficult fighting. From these positions it secured the east flank of the remainder of the offensive.

26-31 July

As the American breakout through Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of them, to include a preponderance of the German armored forces. They also shifted west to attack down an axis alongside the Americans, and repositioned units that had been fighting around Caen. The 3rd Infantry division was among these units, and pulled into a reserve position east of the Orne River to refit, refurbish and prepare for further offensive operations.

1-13 August

The 3rd Division redeployed across the breadth of the 21st Army Group's front to attack along the Army Group's extreme west flank. Here it tied in with the American 2nd Infantry Division, and attacked to seize the villages of Montisanger and La Holdenguerie. From these positions it secured and supported the flank of an American attack that seized the town of Vire. The 3rd Division then pressed on to the southeast, part of a larger offensive squeezing German forces into a pocket forming around Falaise.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the Germans encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. By 16 August the 3rd Division had secured Saint-Paul, a village along the western rim of the pocket as it then existed. By 19 August the pocket was closed altogether. Falaise proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured in addition to their tens of thousands of casualties already, and many who escaped abandoned their heavy equipment to do so.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 3rd Division mopped up its portion of the Falaise Pocket, and then redeployed to rejoin the general advance. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this

event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 15TH DIVISION

6 June

The 15th Division – the “Scottish Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 15th Division – the “Scottish Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 15th Division – the “Scottish Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 15th Division led the main attack for Operation EPSOM, a drive to outflank Caen from the west. It forced its way through formidable defenses in difficult terrain to seize Chœux and its surrounding villages in fierce fighting. It then pushed on to seize Grainville and forced the Odon River, establishing a bridgehead against fierce resistance. The Germans counterattacked in force with two armored divisions, but were beaten back and their several mounted penetrations mopped up.

1-18 July

The 15th Division beat back determined German counterattacks against its positions on both sides of the Odon River. It then supported an attack to seize Hill 112, deepening the Odon bridgehead and over watching the terrain between the Odon and Orne Rivers. The 15th Division then fought its way forward through difficult terrain, thick defenses and stout resistance to seize the villages of Bougy and Gavrus. These attacks diverted German forces from Operation GOODWOOD, scheduled several days later.

19-25 July

The 15th Division secured ground to the right flank of Operation GOODWOOD, a massive converging attack to seize the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it, and to draw reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. GOODWOOD followed up on a massive carpet bombing to break through German lines and link up three miles south of the city. The 15th Division conducted an active defense in its sector, pinning the German units to its front.

26-31 July

As the American breakthrough at Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of them, including a preponderance of their armor, and attacked in parallel from Caumont-l'Éventé to Caen. The 15th Division attacked

to seize les Loges and Point 309, prominent terrain strongly defended from prepared positions. By the night of 30 July Point 309 was in their hands, and the division held this position against determined counterattacks over the course of the next two days. .

1-13 August

Having seized Point 309 south of Caumont-l'Éventé, the 15th Division fought off determined German counterattacks. When these collapsed, it pushed on into the villages of La Ferriere and Galet. The division then battled its way through broken terrain to seize Montcharivel, and forced itself on to the dominant ridgeline in the vicinity of Estry. Here it encountered fierce resistance as the Germans, desperately trying to stabilize their line, reinforced with the newly redeployed 9th and 10th SS Panzer Divisions.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces encircled the Germans in a Falaise "Pocket" and squeezed them into an ever smaller area. By 19 August the 15th Division had redeployed, shifted in alignment from VIIIth Corps to XIIth Corps, and was in the vicinity of Saint-Pierre-du-Bu, south of Falaise. Falaise proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured, in addition to tens of thousands already lost in the Normandy fighting. Many who escaped abandoned their heavy equipment to do so.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 15th Division moved to cross the Seine at Louviers in its portion of this general advance. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 43RD DIVISION

6 June

The 43rd Division – the “Wessex Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 43rd Division – the “Wessex Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 43rd Division – the “Wessex Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 43rd Division supported the main attack for Operation EPSOM, a drive to out-flank Caen from the west. It forced its way through difficult terrain to secure Cheux and Saint-Mauvieu, and defended these against fierce counterattacks. The division then captured Mouen after a sharp fight, and continued its advance to clear the ground to the Odon River. It pushed a battalion and then a brigade across the Odon River, reinforcing a bridgehead that threatened Caen itself.

1-18 July

The 43rd Division supported an attack to seize Carpiquet, a prelude to the seizure of Caen north of the Orne River several days later. The division then attacked to seize Hill 112, dominant terrain between the Odon and Orne Rivers strongly held by German tanks and infantry. In savage fighting the 43rd Division forced its way onto Hill 112 and the ridge line running from Hill 112 through Eterville. The Germans counterattacked with two SS Panzer Divisions, but the 43rd Division beat them back in fierce fighting.

19-25 July

The 43rd Division secured ground to the right flank of Operation GOODWOOD, a massive converging attack to seize the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it, and to draw German reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. GOODWOOD followed up on a massive carpet bombing to break through enemy lines and link up three miles south of the city. The 43rd Division pinned German units to its front and tied into the II Canadian Corps as it advanced.

26-31 July

As the American breakthrough at Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army, shifted forces westward, and attacked on a frontage from Caumont-l'Éventé to Caen. The 43rd Division seized Briquessard and Cahagnes, and

then pushed on to seize Saint-Pierre-du-Fresne as well. This sector was stoutly defended and heavily mined, and the terrain lent itself to close quarters fighting. Enemy counterattacks were beaten off with heavy losses, and the division continued its advance.

1-13 August

The 43rd Division pushed on from Saint-Pierre-du-Fresne to seize Hill 361, dominant terrain to the immediate south. It pushed the Germans out of Jurques, and seized Ondefontaine in 24 hours of fierce fighting. The 43rd Division next attacked to seize Mont Pincon, a prominent feature over watching much of the British sector. A tank squadron scrambled onto the crest assisted by smoke, followed shortly by two infantry battalions assisted by fog. The division then mopped up the area in confused fighting.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces encircled the Germans in a newly formed Falaise "Pocket", and squeezed them into an ever smaller area. By 16 August the 43rd Division had fought its way south from Mont Pincon to seize the village of Berjou, on the northern rim of the pocket. Falaise proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured, in addition to tens of thousands already lost in the Normandy fighting. Many who escaped abandoned their heavy equipment to do so.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 43rd Division moved to cross the Seine at Vernon as its portion of this general advance. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 49TH DIVISION

6 June

The 49th Division – the “West Riding Division” – prepared for deployment into France.

7-13 June

The 49th Division – the “West Riding Division” – debarked across Gold Beach beginning 12 June and assembled south of Arromanches.

14-20 June

German resistance in Normandy was stiffening as more reinforcements, delayed by Allied air strikes and concern for a potential landing at the Pas de Calais, began to arrive. Their defense was much assisted by the difficult Norman bocage terrain, broken into small fields separated by thick hedgerows. The 49th Division nevertheless battered its way into the villages of Saint-Pierre and Cristot, capturing both in fierce fighting against determined resistance.

21-30 June

The 49th Division conducted a supporting attack for Operation EPSOM, a major drive to outflank Caen from the west. The division constituted the right flank of this offensive, and overcame stiff opposition to seize Bas de Fontenay and nearby critical terrain. The 49th pushed on to seize Rauray and the spur associated with it in further fierce fighting. The Germans counterattacked, but were beaten off. Division artillery proved particularly effective in turning back their counterattacks.

1-18 July

The 49th Division defended Rauray and Tessel-Bretteville against determined German counterattacks. These counterattacks featured a heavy use of smoke closely followed by tanks and infantry. Some tanks broke through, but all were hunted down and destroyed. A few days later I Corps, following a major “carpet” bombing, attacked and seized the portion of Caen north of the Orne River. After this, the 49th Division attacked and seized Vendes in two days of savage fighting against tanks, infantry and artillery.

19-25 July

The 49th Division redeployed from west of Caen to east of Caen, and here joined I Corps on the right flank of Operation GOODWOOD. Operation GOODWOOD was a massive converging attack to seize the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it, and to draw reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. GOODWOOD followed up on a massive carpet bombing to break through German

lines and link up three miles south of the city.

26-31 July

As the American breakthrough at Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces fixed a major fraction of the German army in front of them and repositioned to weight their own attacks to the west. The 49th Division assumed the sectors of both the 3rd and 51st Divisions, east of the Orne River, as these pulled out of the line to refit for further offensives. The 49th Division conducted an active defense in its sector, pinning German units to its front through energetic patrolling and aggressive demonstrations.

1-13 August

The 49th Division attacked to seize Hill 272, a prominent terrain feature about seven miles southeast of Caen. It then pushed on to the village of Vimont, and was fighting on its outskirts by the evening of 13 August. Meanwhile the American COBRA breakthrough overran Brittany and also hooked eastwards towards Le Mans, while the 49th Division and other Commonwealth forces were advancing towards Falaise. These twin offensives converged to shape a huge trap, the Falaise Pocket.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the Germans in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. By 16 August the 49th Division had secured Mezidon, forced the Dives River, and separated the German LXXXVI Corps from encircled forces to its south. Falaise proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured in addition to their tens of thousands of casualties already suffered, and many who escaped abandoned their heavy equipment to do so.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 49th Division approached the Torques River near Pont l' Eveque, and pushed on in its portion of this general advance. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 50TH DIVISION

6 June

The 50th Division – the “Northumbrian Division” – amphibiously assaulted Gold Beach in two brigade groups. This sector was low-lying and sandy, presenting few obstacles and allowing open fields of fire. Patches of soft clay and soggy grassland threatened the movement of vehicles, and strong points covered continuous belts of beach obstacles, mines and barbed wire. Despite these difficulties, the division seized strongly defended Le Hamel, Hable de Heurtot and La Riviere in sharp fighting, and commenced to push inland. By day's end the 50th Division secured most of Arromanches, and pushed more than four miles inland to seize the villages of Esquay-sur-Seulles and Coulombs.

7-13 June

The 50th Division consolidated ground it had seized on D-Day, and pushed on to the south and west. The attached 56th Brigade seized Bayeux, and British forces fighting their way off of Gold Beach linked up with American forces from Omaha Beach at several places. The 50th advanced astride the rivers Aure and Seulles to seize La Belle Epine and Hill 103, and by 13 June was engaged in fierce fighting for Tilly-sur-Seulles. The 50th also secured the flank of the 7th Armored Division attacking Villers Bocage.

14-20 June

German resistance stiffened as more reinforcements, delayed by Allied air strikes and concern for a landing at the Pas de Calais, began to arrive. Their defense of Tilly-sur-Seulles was particularly determined, and much assisted by the difficult Norman bocage terrain. The 50th Division battered its way into the nearby villages of Lingevres and La Senaudiere by 14 June. On 19 June the 50th Division drove the Germans out of Tilly-sur-Seulles after a week of fierce fighting, and then pushed on to the outskirts of Hottot.

21-30 June

The newly arrived VIIIth Corps, consisting of an armored division, two infantry divisions, a tank brigade and an armored brigade, conducted the main attack for Operation EPSOM, a drive to outflank Caen from the west. The 50th Division secured the right flank of this offensive, and tied into the 49th Division, which was a participant. The Germans counterattacked fiercely, and the 50th broke up or assisted in breaking up several of these counterattacks. Division artillery was particularly effective in this regard.

1-18 July

I Corps, following a major “carpet” bombing, attacked and seized the portion of Caen north of the Orne River. The 50th Division secured ground west of this main offensive with an active defense, and pinned down German units to its front. On 15 July XXX Corps, to which the 50th Division was assigned, began its own offensive to position for the upcom-

ing Operation GOODWOOD. During this fierce fighting, punctuated by numerous German armored counterattacks, the 50th attacked and seized Hottot.

19-25 July

The 50th Division secured ground to the right flank of Operation GOODWOOD, a massive converging attack to seize the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it, and to draw reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. GOODWOOD followed up on a massive carpet bombing to break through German lines and link up three miles south of the city. The 50th Division conducted an active defense in its sector, pinning the German units to its front.

26-31 July

As the American breakthrough at Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of them, to include a preponderance of the German armored forces. The 50th Division attacked to seize the Saint-Germain d'Ectot Ridge, throwing back several counterattacks as it did so. German defenses in this sector had progressively been built up over a period of six weeks, and the clearance of thickly planted land mines became one of the most challenging aspects of the offensive.

1-13 August

The 50th Division attacked to seize the Amaye-sur-Seulles, a prominent terrain feature two miles west of Villers-Bocage, and captured a regimental headquarters as they did so. The division then pushed on to capture Villers-Bocage itself. Meanwhile the American COBRA breakthrough overran Brittany and also hooked eastwards towards Le Mans, and other Commonwealth forces advanced on Falaise. These twin offensives converged to shape a huge trap, the Falaise Pocket.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the Germans being encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. By 16 August the 50th Division had secured Conde, a town marking the northwest corner of the pocket as it then existed. By 19 August the pocket was closed altogether. Falaise proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured in addition to the tens of thousands already killed or captured, and many who escaped abandoned their heavy equipment to do so.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 50th Division moved to cross the Seine at Vernon in its portion of this general advance. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did

not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 51ST DIVISION

6 June

The 51st Division – the “Highland Division” – was embarked and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 51st Division debarked in Normandy and crossed the Orne River to reinforce the 6th Airborne Division and assume a sector alongside it. Here it anchored the east flank of the line as the Allies linked Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword beaches into a continuous front. The 51st Division's sector covered the critical sequence of bridges running from Benouville through Ranville. It secured terrain to the south of these, fought off German counterattacks, and participated in fierce fighting to seize Breville.

14-20 June

German resistance stiffened as reinforcements, delayed by Allied air strikes and concern for a landing at the Pas de Calais, arrived. The preponderance of the German armor concentrated in the vicinity of Caen. The 51st Division continued to defend in its sector east of Caen, an economy of force mission as the Allies diverted ammunition and resources elsewhere. The division's defense was an active one, pinning German units to its front with active patrolling, limited attacks and well aimed artillery fire.

21-30 June

The 51st Infantry Division attacked to seize Sainte-Honorine-la-Chardonnerette, a village flanking Caen on the east bank of the Orne River. The infantry advanced quietly through early morning darkness without artillery preparation, and overwhelmed the German defenders with a surprise attack. The division then defended the village against determined counterattacks. Meanwhile the newly arrived British VIII Corps conducted Operation EPSOM to outflank Caen from the west, and the Americans seized Cherbourg.

1-18 July

I Corps, following a major “carpet” bombing, attacked to seize the portion of Caen north of the Orne River. The 51st Division was on line immediately to the left of the three attacking divisions, and secured their eastern flank and the far bank of the Orne River. As the advance progressed the 51st Infantry Division's artillery played an important role, firing across the Orne in support of the advancing troops. With the northern half of Caen seized, planning and preparation turned to seizing the rest.

19-25 July

The 51st Division attacked in the left wing of Operation GOODWOOD, a massive

converging attack that seized the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it -- and drew German armored reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. After massive carpet bombing, the division advanced through heavily mined and broken terrain to seize the villages of Manneville and Guiller-ville in difficult fighting. These positions secured the east flank of the offensive.

26-31 July

As the American breakout through Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of them, to include a preponderance of the German armored forces. They also shifted west to attack down an axis alongside the Americans, and repositioned units that had been fighting around Caen. The 51st Infantry Division was among these units, and pulled into a reserve position east of the Orne River to refit, refurbish and prepare for further offensive operations.

1-13 August

The 51st Division attacked to seize the villages of Saint-Aignan and La Hogue as the opening move of Operation TOTALIZE, an encircling drive from Caen to Falaise. Attacking at night in the wake of a massive bombing and using bullet-proof vehicles to get the leading infantrymen forward quickly, the division overcame uneven residual resistance to secure its initial objectives. It then passed the exploiting Polish 1st Armored Division forward, and pushed on to seize Poussy la Campagne.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed Germans encircled in the newly formed Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. By 16 August the 51st Division had secured Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives and forced the Dives River, and by 19 August it was across the Vie River as well. These positions separated German forces retreating along the English Channel from those isolated near Falaise. Over 50,000 Germans were captured at Falaise, in addition to their tens of thousands of casualties suffered already.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 51st Division forced the Touques River near Lisieux, and then pushed on to the Seine River west of Rouen. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 53RD DIVISION

6 June

The 53rd Division – the “Welsh Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 53rd Division – the “Welsh Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 53rd Division – the “Welsh Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 53rd Division – the “Welsh Division” – debarked into Normandy, assembled, and moved forward to reinforce VIII Corps in the last days of operation EPSOM, an offensive that penetrated German lines five miles west of Caen.

1-18 July

The 53rd Division attacked to seize Cahier, securing ground to the right flank of Operation GOODWOOD, a major offensive to seize Caen that was to occur several days later. The division captured Cahier, and was immediately counterattacked by German tanks and infantry. The 53rd held its ground in fierce fighting, and supported similar attacks by the 15th and 59th Divisions to its left and right. The difficult combat drew in four German armored divisions, reducing potential opposition to GOODWOOD.

19-25 July

The 53rd Division secured ground to the right flank of Operation GOODWOOD, a massive converging attack to seize the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it, and to draw German reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. GOODWOOD followed up on a massive carpet bombing to break through enemy lines and link up three miles south of Caen. The 53rd Division pinned German units to its front and tied into the 43rd Division as its line swung forward.

26-31 July

As the American breakout through Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of themselves and shifted forces westward for a major offensive in the vicinity of Caumont-l'Éventé. The 53rd Division assumed the sector of the 43rd Division southwest of Caen as well as its own, doubling its frontage and freeing the 43rd to participate in the Caumont-l'Éventé offensive. The 53rd Division's defense was active, pinning German units with vigorous patrolling and limited attacks.

1-13 August

The 53rd Division attacked to seize Amaye, closing up to the Orne River. Thickly laid mines and booby traps proved as great a hindrance as actual enemy opposition, but the division nevertheless pushed on, forcing the Orne and clearing its far bank. The 53rd continued to attack through the Foret de Cinglais, and by 13 August had seized Hill 221 four miles to the south of it. The advance of the 53rd Division and units to its right and left shaped the northern shoulder of an emerging "Falaise Pocket".

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces encircled the Germans in the "Falaise Pocket", and squeezed them into an ever smaller area. By 16 August the 53rd Division reached the vicinity of Falaise, and by 19 August it had pushed on five miles to seize Pierrefitte as well. Falaise proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured, in addition to tens of thousands already lost in the Normandy fighting. Many who escaped abandoned their heavy equipment to do so.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 53rd Division moved to cross the Seine near Louviers as its portion of this general advance. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 59TH DIVISION

6 June

The 59th Division – the “Staffordshire Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 59th Division – the “Staffordshire Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 59th Division – the “Staffordshire Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 59th Division – the “Staffordshire Division” – prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

Following a major “carpet” bombing, the 59th Division attacked in the center of three divisions to seize Caen north of the Orne River. It fought its way through determined resistance and thick minefields to seize the strong points of La Bijude and Saint-Contest. From these positions it dominated Caen, and the divisions attacking on its flanks converged across its front to clear the city itself. The 59th then redeployed to the vicinity of Noyers, and attacked to seize Haut des Forges and Point 126.

19-25 July

The 59th Division secured ground to the right flank of Operation GOODWOOD, a major converging attack to seize the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it – and to draw German reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. GOODWOOD followed up on a massive carpet bombing to break through enemy lines and link up three miles south of Caen. The 59th Division pinned German units to its front with aggressive patrolling and limited attacks.

26-31 July

As the American breakout through Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned down a major fraction of the German army and shifted forces westward for a major offensive in the vicinity of Caumont-l'Éventé. The 59th Division continued to secure the sector facing Noyers between the Odon River and the Seulles River. The 59th Division's de-

fense was an active one, pinning German units to its front with vigorous patrolling, limited attacks, and punishing artillery fire.

1-13 August

The 59th Division attacked to seize Villars-Bocage, and pushed on to the Orne River. Thickly laid mines and booby traps proved as great a hindrance as enemy opposition, but the division nevertheless forced the Orne and cleared its far bank. In this sector the banks of the Orne were steep and thickly wooded and bridges destroyed, so infantry crossed first and vehicles after bridging had been installed. The advance of the 59th and units to its flanks shaped the northern shoulder of an emerging "Falaise Pocket".

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces encircled the Germans in the "Falaise Pocket", and squeezed them into an ever smaller area. By 16 August the 59th Division had seized the high ground south of OUILLY, and by 19 August the ridgeline of Bazoches-au-Houlme. Falaise proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured, in addition to tens of thousands already lost in the Normandy fighting. Many who escaped abandoned their heavy equipment to do so.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. At this point the 59th Division disbanded to provide replacements for other divisions, in accordance with existing plans to economize on scarce British military manpower. The 59th had been selected as the junior division.

BRITISH GUARDS ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

The Guards Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The Guards Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The Guards Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The Guards Armored Division embarked and deployed to France, forming up in an assembly area six miles south of Arromanches. Its constituent 32nd Guards Brigade arrived early, was attached to the 43rd (Infantry) Division, and participated in Operation EPSOM, a four division drive to outflank Caen from the west. EPSOM forced the Odon River and secured bridges across it. The Odon bridgehead provoked the Germans into furious counterattacks, drawing in the better part of six panzer divisions.

1-18 July

I Corps, in the wake of “carpet” bombing, attacked and seized the portion of Caen north of the Orne River. Meanwhile the Guards Armored Division redeployed secretly by night for Operation GOODWOOD, a major attack to seize the rest of Caen and push on to the southeast of the Orne River. GOODWOOD began with massive “carpet” bombing on the morning of 18 July, after which the Guards Armored Division pushed forward to seize the village of Cagny and its nearby ridgeline in fierce fighting.

19-25 July

The Guards Armored Division attacked and seized the villages of Le Poirier and Frenouville in two days of fighting. These positions anchored the ground secured during Operation GOODWOOD southwest of Caen, along the Caen-Vimont Highway. GOODWOOD provoked furious counterattacks, drawing in most German armored forces. The Guards then turned positions they had seized over to the 51st (Infantry) Division, and retired to an assembly area near Caen to refit for another mission.

26-31 July

As the American breakthrough at Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned German forces in front of themselves and shifted units westwards for a thrust through the vicinity of Caumont-l'Éventé. The Guards Armored Division redeployed across the 21st

Army Group's front from east of Caen to west of Caen. By the evening of 31 July it had passed Caumont-l'Éventé, secured the village of Saint-Martin-des-Besaches, and was heavily engaged in a fierce battle to seize Hill 192 from its German defenders.

1-13 August

The Guards Armored Division attacked to seize Hills 192 and 238 southeast of Saint-Martin-des-Besaches, and continued on to seize the village of Le Tourneur and a nearby bridge across the Souleuvre River. The Guards pushed on to the ridgeline defined by the Vire - Estry road, provoking fierce but unsuccessful counterattacks. Meanwhile the Americans overran Brittany and also hooked eastwards to Le Mans, and Commonwealth forces advanced on Falaise. These twin offensives shaped a huge trap, the Falaise Pocket.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the Germans encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. The Falaise Pocket proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured in addition to the tens of thousands of casualties they had suffered already. As German resistance in the Falaise pocket backpedaled and then collapsed, the Guards Armored Division pulled out of the line to refit for future missions.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The Guards Armored Division moved towards Vernon to cross the Seine River in its portion of this general advance. On 25 August French and American troops entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 7TH ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

The 7th Armored Division was embarked and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 7th Armored Division debarked, formed up, and joined the fighting south of Bayeux. It attacked and seized the village of Buceels, but found further progress down the road from Bayeux to Tilly-sur-Seulles impeded by hedge-bound bocage terrain thickly defended by well positioned infantry and armor. To regain freedom of maneuver it turned the ground it was on over to the 50th (Infantry) Division, swung west across the Aure River, swept south, recrossed the Aure, seized Livry and entered Villers Bocage.

14-20 June

German resistance stiffened as reinforcements arrived. The 7th Armored Division, already fighting deep into country defended by the Panzer Lehr Division, was about to be taken in flank by the newly arrived 2nd Panzer Division. The 7th repositioned to defend the ridgeline running through Tracy-Bocage, and severely punished German counterattacks with direct fire and massed artillery. The division then withdrew to defensible ground in the vicinity of Livry, drawing the massed German armor after it.

21-30 June

The newly arrived VIIIth Corps, consisting of an armored division, two infantry divisions, a tank brigade and an armored brigade, conducted the main attack for Operation EPSOM, a drive to outflank Caen from the west. The 7th Armored Division continued to defend in its sector in the vicinity of Livry, anchoring the right flank of the British Second Army. The division's defense was an active one, pinning German units to its front with active patrolling, limited attacks, and effective artillery fire.

1-18 July

I Corps, in the wake of "carpet" bombing, attacked and seized the portion of Caen north of the Orne River. During this offensive the 7th Armored Division continued its active defense in the vicinity of Livry, pinning German units to its front. The division then turned over its sector and redeployed secretly by night to reinforce Operation GOODWOOD, a major attack to seize the rest of Caen and push on southeast of the Orne River. GOODWOOD began with massive "carpet" bombing on the morning of 18 July.

19-25 July

The 7th Armored Division attacked as a portion of Operation GOODWOOD, a converging attack to seize the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it – and to draw

German reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. The division crossed the Orne River north of Caen and attacked south, seizing the villages of Four and Bourguebus. GOODWOOD provoked furious but unsuccessful counterattacks, drawing in most of the German armored forces.

26-31 July

As the American breakthrough at Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of themselves and shifted units westwards for a major thrust through the vicinity of Caumont-l'Éventé. The 7th Armored Division was part of this redeployment, and fell in behind the 43rd (Infantry) Division attacking to seize Cahagnes. The 7th Armored Division passed through the 43rd Division and pushed on to secure the village of Breuil, en route to an attack on Aunay-sur-Odon.

1-13 August

The 7th Armored Division attacked to seize Aunay-sur-Odon, a crossroads town linking together several road networks in the difficult terrain surrounding Mt. Pincon. It then pushed on towards the town of Conde. Meanwhile the American COBRA breakthrough overran Brittany and also hooked eastwards towards Le Mans, and Commonwealth forces to the east of 7th Armored Division advanced on Falaise. These twin offensives converged to shape a huge trap, the Falaise Pocket.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the Germans encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. Meanwhile the 7th Armored Division had redeployed from west to east across the 21st Army Group's sector, and attacked to seize Livarot. This penetration to the east furthered the isolation of the enemy encircled in the pocket. Falaise proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured in addition to their tens of thousands of casualties already.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 7th Armored Division captured Fervaques-sur-Touques and pushed on towards Lisieux in its portion of the general advance. On 25 August the French 2nd Armored Division and American 4th Infantry Division entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

BRITISH 11TH ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

The 11th Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 11th Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 11th Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 11th Armored Division participated in Operation EPSOM, a four-division drive to outflank Caen from the west. Acting as a mobile armored reserve initially, it passed through the attacking 15th (Infantry) Division, crossed the Odon River and secured river crossings, the village of Baron, and critical terrain to its south. The Odon bridgehead provoked the Germans into furious counterattacks, drawing in the better part of six panzer divisions. The 11th Armored Division held, sustaining the bridgehead.

1-18 July

I Corps, in the wake of “carpet” bombing, attacked and seized the portion of Caen north of the Orne River. Meanwhile the 11th Armored Division redeployed secretly by night for Operation GOODWOOD, a major attack to seize the rest of Caen and push on to the southeast of the Orne River. GOODWOOD began with massive “carpet” bombing on the morning of 18 July, after which the 11th Armored Division pushed forward to seize Cuverville, Demouville and Le Mesnil-Fremontel.

19-25 July

The 11th Armored Division attacked and seized the villages of Bras and Hubert Folie in fierce fighting. These positions anchored the ground secured during Operation GOODWOOD well south of Caen, and brought the division to the Caen-Falaise Highway. GOODWOOD provoked furious counterattacks, drawing in most German armored forces. The 11th turned the positions it had seized over to infantry, and retired across the Orne River to an assembly area near Douvres to refit for another mission.

26-31 July

As the American breakthrough at Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned German forces in front of themselves and shifted units westwards for a thrust through the vicinity of Caumont-l'Éventé. The 11th Armored Division redeployed, and attacked and

seized Saint-Martin-des-Besaches. Meanwhile their reconnaissance troops penetrated the Forêt l' Eveque and came upon an intact bridge across the Souleuvre River. The division quickly reinforced this bridgehead with tanks, thus turning the German defenses.

1-13 August

The 11th Armored Division attacked to seize Le Beny Bocage, and then pushed on to seize Le Bas Perrier. This put it onto the critical Perrier Ridge, overlooking the Vire-Vassey road, and provoked furious but costly and unsuccessful German counterattacks. Meanwhile the Americans overran Brittany and also hooked eastwards towards Le Mans, and Commonwealth forces to the east of the 11th Armored Division advanced on Falaise. These twin offensives converged to shape a huge trap, the Falaise Pocket.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the Germans encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. The 11th Armored Division drove down the spine of the pocket, successively securing Aubusson, Hill 263, Putanges, Montgarault and Sentilly as German resistance collapsed. The Falaise Pocket proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured in addition to the tens of thousands of casualties they had suffered already.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage extending from Troyes to the sea. The 11th Armored Division forced the Touques River near Gace, secured Laigle, and moved on towards Vernon in its portion of the general advance. On 25 August French and American troops entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. As noteworthy as this event was, however, it did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued.

2ND CANADIAN DIVISION

6 June

The 2nd Canadian Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 2nd Canadian Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 2nd Canadian Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 2nd Canadian Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

The 2nd Canadian Division debarked and assembled in France. On 18 July it attacked as a portion of Operation GOODWOOD, a major converging attack to seize Caen south of the Orne River. By midnight the division forced the Odon River, secured much of the village of Louvigny, and established a bridgehead across the Orne River at Vaucelles. GOODWOOD provoked the Germans into furious counterattacks, and drew their armor away from the American Operation COBRA through Saint-Lô a few days later.

19-25 July

The 2nd Canadian Division continued its Operation GOODWOOD attacks, seizing Fleury-sur-Orne and Ifs in difficult fighting. The division pushed on to seize Saint-Andre-sur-Orne and Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay, and then defended its positions against furious German counterattacks that extended over two days. On 25 July the 2nd Canadian Division attacked and seized Verrieres, and again weathered fierce counterattacks. Most German armor had been drawn into the fighting around Caen – away from the American sector.

26-31 July

As the American breakout through Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of them, to include a preponderance of the German armored forces. They also shifted west to attack down an axis alongside the Americans, and repositioned units that had been fighting around Caen. Beginning 25 July the 2nd Canadian Division had attacked down the Caen - Falaise Highway, provoking furious resistance and fixing several panzer divisions away from the American sector.

1-13 August

In Operation TOTALIZE, a drive from Caen to Falaise, the 2nd Canadian Division attacked at night in the wake of massive bombing, using bullet-proof vehicles to get its leading infantrymen forward. The division secured Point 122 overlooking Cramesnil, and then pushed past Bretteville-sur-Laize to seize Claire-Tizon. Meanwhile the Americans had hooked through Le Mans to attack towards Falaise and Argentan from the south. The converging attacks created an enormous trap, the “Falaise “Pocket”.

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the enemy encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. The 2nd Canadian Division attacked to seize the town of Falaise itself, advancing against determined resistance in difficult terrain. On 16 August the division broke into the town, and cleared it with another day of stubborn fighting. The Falaise pocket proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured, in addition to their tens of thousands of casualties already.

20-25 August

The 2nd Canadian Division pushed south from Falaise, mopping up Germans trapped in the Falaise Pocket as it did so. The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a broad front. On 25 August French and American troops entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. Although noteworthy, this did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued, with the 2nd Canadian Division oriented on Germans caught in the loops of the Seine near Rouen.

3RD CANADIAN DIVISION

6 June

The 3rd Canadian Division amphibiously assaulted Juno Beach on a two-brigade front, with an additional brigade to pass through as the advance continued. Their sector was low-lying and sandy, with a coastal highway lined with buildings connecting villages on line. The Germans converted the villages into heavily defended strong points covering beach obstacles, mines and barbed wire. Despite these challenges, the division seized Courseulles and Bernieres after fierce fighting, and pushed inland. By day's end the division had seized the villages of Le Fresne Camilly and Villons les Buissons, both more than five miles inland, and pioneered lines of communication to support their advance.

7-13 June

The 3rd Canadian Division consolidated ground seized on D-Day, and pushed on to the south. It drove back ferocious counterattacks by the 12th SS Panzer Division and other arriving German reinforcements as it did so. It linked up with the British 3rd Division advancing off of Sword Beach, and the British and Canadians together attacked Cambes, which fell after difficult and costly fighting. On its other flank, the 3rd Canadian Division seized Norrey en Bessin and tied into the British 50th Division from Gold Beach.

14-20 June

German resistance stiffened as reinforcements, delayed by Allied air strikes and concern for a landing at the Pas de Calais, began to arrive. The preponderance of their armor concentrated in the vicinity of Caen. The 3rd Canadian Division went over to the defensive in its sector, an economy of force mission as the Allies diverted ammunition and resources elsewhere. The division's defense was an active one, pinning German units to its front with active patrolling, limited attacks and well aimed artillery fire.

21-30 June

The newly arrived VIII Corps, consisting of an armored division, two infantry divisions, a tank brigade and an armored brigade, conducted the main attack for Operation EP-SOM, a major drive to outflank Caen from the west. Another attack seized Sainte-Honorine, east of the Orne. Positioned between these major efforts, the 3rd Canadian Division turned over a portion of its sector to the attacking divisions of VIII Corps, then conducted an active defense in the rest of its sector, pinning German units to its front.

1-18 July

I Corps, following a major "carpet" bombing, attacked to seize the portion of Caen north of the Orne River. The 3rd Canadian Division was the rightmost of three divisions conducting this attack, and fought its way through determined resistance, thick minefields and obstacles to seize the strong points of Gruchy, Buron and Ardenne on 8 July. From

these positions they outflanked the Germans to their right and pushed on into Caen. By 9 July they had reached the Orne, now impeded more by rubble than enemy.

19-25 July

Beginning 18 July the 3rd Canadian Division fought in Operation GOODWOOD, a converging attack to seize the remainder of Caen and terrain to the south of it – and to draw enemy armored reserves away from the American Operation COBRA scheduled through Saint-Lô a few days later. The division forced the Odon and Orne Rivers, and facilitated the forward passage of the 2nd Canadian Division. The 3rd pushed on to secure Hubert Folie, anchoring the GOODWOOD perimeter on the Caen - Falaise Highway.

26-31 July

As the American breakout through Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of them, to include a preponderance of the German armored forces. They also shifted west to attack down an axis alongside the Americans, and repositioned units that had been fighting around Caen. Beginning 25 July the 3rd Canadian Division attacked down the Caen - Falaise Highway, provoking furious resistance and drawing in several German panzer divisions.

1-13 August

The 3rd Canadian Division advanced as a participant in Operation TOTALIZE, a drive to seize Falaise. By 10 August the division had secured Bretteville le Rabet, and was involved in fierce fighting to reduce redoubts in the Quesnay woods. Meanwhile the Americans had overrun Brittany, and also hooked through Le Mans to attack towards Falaise and Argentan from the south. The converging attacks created an enormous trap for German forces as the Allies closed in upon an emerging Falaise "Pocket".

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed enemy encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. The 3rd Canadian Division, attacking in a phalanx of bullet-proof vehicles immediately behind heavy bombing, shelling and smoke, forced the Laison River and seized Montboint. It pushed on to assist as the 2nd Canadian Division entered Falaise. The Falaise pocket proved a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured in addition to their tens of thousands of casualties already.

20-25 August

The 3rd Canadian Division pushed on to Chambois, mopping up Germans entrapped in the Falaise Pocket as it did so. The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a frontage from Troyes to the sea. On 25 August French and American troops entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. Although noteworthy, this did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued, with the

3rd Canadian Division oriented on a Seine crossing near Elbeuf.

4TH CANADIAN ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

The 4th Canadian Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 4th Canadian Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 4th Canadian Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 4th Canadian Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

The 4th Canadian Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

19-25 July

The 4th Canadian Armored Division debarked in France, assembled, and began its deployment to join the II Canadian Corps southeast of Caen.

26-31 July

As the American breakout through Saint-Lô progressed, Commonwealth forces pinned a major fraction of the German army in front of them, to include most of their armored forces. They also shifted west to attack down an axis alongside the Americans, and repositioned units that had been fighting around Caen. The 4th Canadian Armored Division replaced infantry that had been attacking down the Caen - Falaise Highway, and faced off against and withstood the counterattacking 1st and 9th SS Panzer Divisions.

1-13 August

In Operation TOTALIZE, a drive from Caen to Falaise, the 4th Canadian Armored Division attacked to seize Cintheaux and Hautmesnil. It then pushed on to seize Bretteville le Rabet and nearby Point 195 in confused fighting. The division beat back fierce counterattacks, including remote controlled tanks with high explosives. Meanwhile the Americans had hooked through Le Mans to attack towards Falaise and Argentan from the south. The converging attacks created an enormous trap, the "Falaise "Pocket".

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the enemy encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. The 4th Canadian Armored Division attacked to seize the town of Trun, advancing against determined resistance in difficult terrain. On 18 August the division seized Trun, and pushed on to secure Saint-Lambert the next day. The Falaise pocket proved to be a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured, in addition to their tens of thousands of casualties already.

20-25 August

The 4th Canadian Armored Division defended Trun and Saint-Lambert against desperate efforts to escape the Falaise Pocket, capturing thousands. The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a broad front. On 25 August French and American troops entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds. This did not mark a pause. The pursuit continued, with the 4th Canadian Armored Division oriented on crossing the Seine near Elbeuf.

2ND FRENCH ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

The 2nd French Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 2nd French Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 2nd French Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 2nd French Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

The 2nd French Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

19-25 July

The 2nd French Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

26-31 July

The 2nd French Armored Division embarked at Southampton on 29 July and debarked across Utah Beach beginning 1 August.

1-13 August

Having deployed to the vicinity of Le Mans, the 2nd French Armored Division attacked to seize Alençon. After a day of sharp tank skirmishes, the division secured the town and its bridges intact in a daring night attack. The division then pushed on through Carrouges and the Foret d'Ecouves to seize Ecouche and contest Argentan. Meanwhile Commonwealth forces were pressing southwards toward the town of Falaise. These converging attacks were creating an enormous trap, the "Falaise "Pocket".

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the enemy encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. The 2nd French Armored Division secured a line south of Argentan, the southern jaw of the trap. It also participated in the seizure of Chambois, closing the trap. Falaise proved a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were

captured, in addition to the tens of thousands they had lost already. The 2nd French Armored Division alone captured 8,800 and destroyed over 800 tanks and other vehicles.

20-25 August

The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River on a front extending from Troyes to the sea. In Paris, French Forces of the Interior (FFI) rose and took control of much of the city. The 2nd French Armored Division raced to their relief, battering its way through residual German defenses en route. On 25 August the 2nd French Armored Division and supporting American troops entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds.

1ST POLISH ARMORED DIVISION

6 June

The 1st Polish Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

7-13 June

The 1st Polish Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

14-20 June

The 1st Polish Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

21-30 June

The 1st Polish Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

1-18 July

The 1st Polish Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

19-25 July

The 1st Polish Armored Division trained and prepared for deployment to France.

26-31 July

The 1st Polish Armored Division began debarking in Normandy, occupying an assembly area between Arranches and Courseulles.

1-13 August

In Operation TOTALIZE, a drive from Caen to Falaise, the 1st Polish Armored Division attacked to seize Robertmesnil in difficult fighting. It then pushed on to seize Saint-Sylvain, Cauvicourt and Soignolles. Resistance was determined, and the division beat back fierce counterattacks to secure its gains. Meanwhile the Americans had hooked through Le Mans and attacked towards Falaise and Argentan from the south. These converging attacks created an enormous trap, the "Falaise "Pocket".

14-19 August

Converging American and Commonwealth forces squeezed the enemy encircled in the Falaise Pocket into an ever smaller area. The 1st Polish Armored Division attacked to seize the town of Coudehard, advancing against determined resistance in difficult terrain. On 19 August the division fought its way into Chambois, linking up with the American 90th

Infantry Division and closing the Falaise Pocket. This proved a disaster for the Germans. Over 50,000 were captured, in addition to tens of thousands lost already.

20-25 August

The 1st Polish Armored Division defended Coudehard and Chambois against desperate German efforts to escape the Falaise Pocket. For a time it fought in two directions, as panzers attempted to break in from the east to rescue their comrades. The gallant Polish defense held until relief arrived. The German retreat across France turned into a rout as the Allies closed to and forced the Seine River. On 25 August French and American troops entered newly liberated Paris amidst wildly enthusiastic crowds.

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