

D 731.1 Opns 82nd A/B divl
.E 91
#154

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HEADQUARTERS
COMMUNICATION ZONE
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY
WAR DEPARTMENT OBSERVER BOARD

APC 887
2 August 1944

SUBJECT: Operations 82nd A/B Division on Cherbourg Peninsula,
6 June - 8 July 1944.

SUBMITTED BY: Colonel CHARLES H. COATES, Infantry.

Forwarded herewith as Exhibit A is copy of graphic story of 33 days of action by the 82nd A/B Division on the Cherbourg Peninsula, 6 June - 8 July 1944. It should be noted that this division consisted of three parachute regiments and one glider regiment.

/s/ Charles H. Coates
/t/ CHARLES H. COATES;
Colonel, Infantry,
WD Observer Board.

1 Incl: Exhibit A

C-154

unclassified, etc HQ A6F
380.01/107 (D/G) 2/7/46

ARTILLERY DIRECT SUPPORT-

1. ACTION AT STE MERE EGLISE
1 HOW. (PARACHUTE) OF 466 PRCHT FA BN SUPPORTED 505 PRCHT INF. 2 HOW. (LINED) OF 320 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 505 PRCHT INF.
2. BATTLE OF THE MERDERET
320 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 505 PRCHT INF AND 325 GLI INF. 319 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 507 PRCHT INF AND 508 PRCHT INF.
3. OPERATIONS IN THE LE HAM AREA
320 GLI FA BN AND 325 GLI INF BN SUPPORTED 505 (REINFORCED) PRCHT INF.
4. BEUZEVILLE-LA BASTILLE BRIDGEHEAD
519 FA BN SUPPORTED 508 PRCHT INF.
5. ACTION FROM ETIENVILLE WESTWARD TO ST SAUVEUR LE VICOMTE
320 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 505 PRCHT INF. 456 PRCHT FA BN SUPPORTED 507 PRCHT INF AND 508 PRCHT INF.
6. ST SAUVEUR LE VICOMTE BRIDGEHEAD
456 PRCHT FA BN SUPPORTED 505 PRCHT INF AND 508 PRCHT INF.
7. ETIENVILLE BRIDGEHEAD
320 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 325 GLI INF (REINFORCED). 319 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 507 PRCHT INF.
8. DEFENSE OF THE ETIENVILLE BRIDGEHEAD
456 PRCHT FA BN SUPPORTED 505 PRCHT INF. 320 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 325 GLI INF. 319 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 507 PRCHT INF AND 508 PRCHT INF.
9. BATTLE OF THE HILLS AND THE RIDGE
320 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 325 GLI INF. 456 PRCHT FA BN SUPPORTED 505 PRCHT INF. 319 GLI FA BN SUPPORTED 508 PRCHT INF. ST ARMD FA BN SUPPORTED 2ND BN 507 PRCHT INF.

BY AUTHORITY OF
CG 82ND A/B DIV.
INITIALS: - 14-3
DATE: 10-7-44

82ND A/B DIV. OPERATIONS ON CHERBOURG PENINSULA
6 JUNE - 8 JULY 1944
MAP: GSGS 4250, FRANCE, 1/50,000

A GRAPHIC STORY OF 33 DAYS OF ACTION WITHOUT RELIEF, WITHOUT REPLACEMENTS, EVERY MISSION ACCOMPLISHED. NO GROUND GAINED EVER RELINQUISHED.

OFFICIAL
JACK
G-2

Ridgway
COMMANDING

TROOP LIST

THE INFANTRY BORE THE BRUNT AND THE BATTLE ARROWS BEAR THE REGIMENTAL NUMBERS, BUT EVERY PHASE OF EVERY BATTLE WAS A TEAM PROPOSITION WITH THE CADETS ROLLING ALONG TO ADD JUSTICE TO THE INFANTRY TEAM. WITHOUT THE TANKS, ART GUNS, THE ENGRS, TANK DESTROYERS, MEDICAL CORPS, CHEMICAL UNITS, SIGNAL UNITS, QM AND ORD UNITS THE STORY WOULD BE INCOMPLETE.

ORGANIC

- HQ 82 A/B DIV
- HQ CO 82ND A/B DIV
- HQ + HQ CO. 2ND A/B BDE
- 325 GLI INF
- 505 PRCHT INF
- 507 PRCHT INF
- 508 PRCHT INF
- HQ + HQ BTRY 82 A/B DIV ARTY
- 319 GLI FA BN (75 MM (PK) HOW)
- 320 GLI FA BN (105 MM A/B HOW)
- 456 PRCHT FA BN (75 PACK HOW)
- 307 A/B ENGR BN
- 80 A/B RA BN
- 307 A/B MED CO
- 82ND A/B SIG CO
- 407 A/B QM CO
- 782 A/B ORD M CO

ATTACHED

- TR B 4TH CAV SQ
- 87 ARMD FA BN (105 MM HOW)
- 28 FA BN (85 MM HOW)
- 172 FA BN (4.5 INCH GUN)
- CO A 740 TK BN
- CO C 740 TK BN
- CO A 712 TK BN
- CO C 809 TD BN
- CO A 507 TD BN
- 801 TD BN (3)
- 803 TD BN (3)
- CO D 80 CMC BN (4.2 MORTARS)
- CO B 87 CML BN (4.2 MORTARS)
- 3809 QM TRK CO
- 3810 QM TRK CO
- 1 PLAT 404 AMB CO (3 MED GP)
- 1ST PLAT 505 QM (GR) CO
- 574 COLL CO. 50 MED BN
- 405 COLL CO. 179 MED BN
- 429 AMB CO
- 429 LITTER BEARER PLAT
- 891 COLL CO.

ENEMY CASUALTIES

- PERSONNEL - PW - 2159
DEAD (EST) 1500
- MATERIAL
- TANKS - 02
 - LIGHT RCN VEH - 2
 - AT GUNS - 24
 - AA GUNS - 14
 - SP GUNS - 3
 - MISC ARTY - 3

9. BATTLE OF THE HILLS AND THE RIDGE

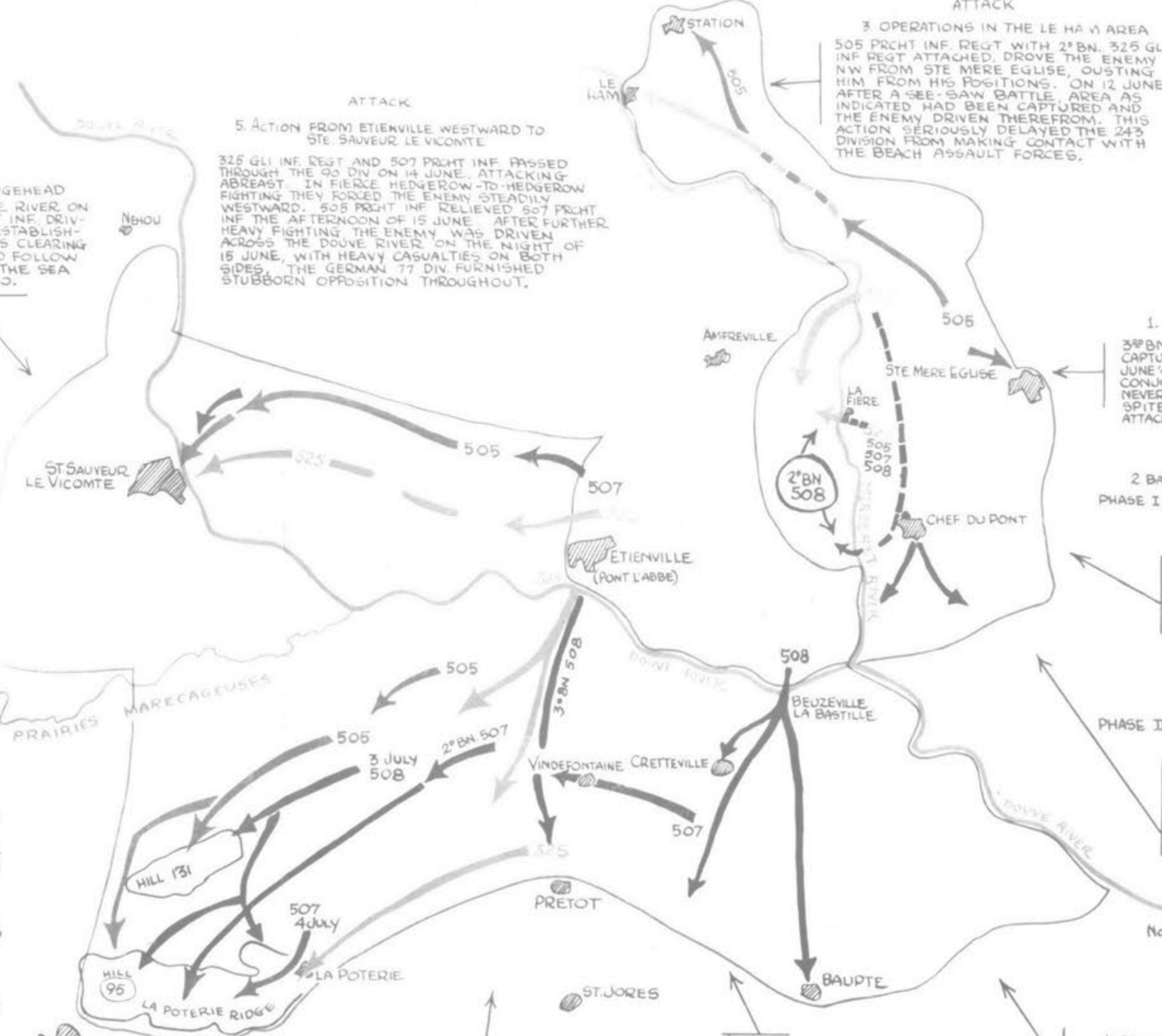
325 GLI INF, 505 PRCHT INF, 508 PRCHT INF REGTS AND 2ND BN 507 PRCHT INF REGT JUMPED OFF MORNING OF 3 JULY AS PART OF XIII CORPS ATTACK. THE REMAINDER OF 507 PRCHT INF, ORIGINALLY IN DIV RESERVE, SWUNG INTO ACTION IN THE FOLLOWING DAY. THE DIV CAPTURED HILL 131 AND PART OF LA POTERIE RIDGE ON FIRST DAY, AND THE REMAINDER OF ITS OBJECTIVE, ON THE SECOND DAY. IT WAS THEN HELD ON CORPS ORDER AND WENT INTO DEFENSIVE POSITIONS ALONG THE PERIMETER OF THE DIV ZONE OF ACTION. THE ENEMY WAS FROM MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE 265 AND 353 INF DIVS., REINFORCED WITH OST BNS. ENEMY CASUALTIES DURING THIS PERIOD: PW 772, DEAD (EST) 500.

10. WITHDRAWN INTO ARMY RESERVE ON 11 JULY 1944

11. ARTILLERY, ENGINEERS, ANTI-TANK

AT BTRYS OF 80TH AA GAVE CLOSE SUPPORT TO INF AND WAS CREDITED WITH KNOCKING OUT 10 TANKS, 2 RCN VEHICLES AND THREE ENEMY GUNS, AND AA BTRYS BESIDES ASSISTING RIVER CROSSINGS WITH PLUNGING FIRE, CLAIMED ONE GERMAN PLANE DESTROYED, ONE PROBABLY DESTROYED. 307 A/B ENGR BN (LESS ONE COMPANY) WAS CALLED UPON TO DO PRACTICALLY EVERY TYPE OF COMBAT ENGINEERING WORK, WORKING WITH FOUR INF REGTS. AT THE SAME TIME IN SEVERAL INSTANCES, AND IN ALL CASES ACCOMPLISHED THEIR MISSION TO ASSIST THE DIVISION IN ITS ADVANCE.

DIV ARTY, INCLUDING ORGANIC AND ATTACHED BATTALIONS SUPPORTED EACH ASSAULT, BRIDGEHEAD AND DEFENSIVE MISSION WITH HIGHLY EFFECTIVE FIRE. IN THE WORDS OF A GERMAN PRISONER OF WAR, "ARTILLERY CONCENTRATIONS ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT WERE NEVER THIS INTENSE."



5. ACTION FROM ETIENVILLE WESTWARD TO STE SAUVEUR LE VICOMTE

325 GLI INF REGT AND 507 PRCHT INF PASSED THROUGH THE 90 DIV ON 14 JUNE, ATTACKING ABREAST IN FIERCE HEDGEROW-TO-HEDGEROW FIGHTING THEY FORCED THE ENEMY STEADILY WESTWARD. 505 PRCHT INF RELIEVED 507 PRCHT INF IN THE AFTERNOON OF 15 JUNE. AFTER FURTHER HEAVY FIGHTING THE ENEMY WAS DRIVEN ACROSS THE DOUVE RIVER ON THE NIGHT OF 15 JUNE, WITH HEAVY CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES. THE GERMAN 77 DIV FURNISHED STUBBORN OPPOSITION THROUGHOUT.

3. OPERATIONS IN THE LE HAM AREA

505 PRCHT INF REGT WITH 2ND BN, 325 GLI INF REGT ATTACHED, DROVE THE ENEMY NW FROM STE MERE EGLISE, OUSTING HIM FROM HIS POSITIONS. ON 12 JUNE, AFTER A SEE-SAW BATTLE, AREA AS INDICATED HAD BEEN CAPTURED AND THE ENEMY DRIVEN THEREFROM. THIS ACTION SERIOUSLY DELAYED THE 243 DIVISION FROM MAKING CONTACT WITH THE BEACH ASSAULT FORCES.

1. ACTION AT STE MERE EGLISE

3RD BN, 505 PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGT CAPTURED STE MERE EGLISE BY 0600H30 JUNE 44 (0-DAY, 8 HOURS 30 MINS) AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH 2ND BN, SAME REGT., NEVER RELINQUISHED THE TOWN, DESPITE HEAVY AND CONTINUOUS ENEMY ATTACKS FROM N AND S.

2. BATTLE OF THE MERDERET

PHASE I: 1ST BN, 505 PRCHT INF REGT, TOGETHER WITH ELEMENTS OF THE 507 AND 508 PRCHT INF REGTS FORCED THE ENEMY W OF THE MERDERET FROM 08-08 JUNE. 1ST BN, 505 PRCHT INF THEN ASSUMED THE DEFENSE OF THE BRIDGE. AT THE SAME TIME, A FORCE FROM THE 507 PRCHT INF CAPTURED CHEF DU PONT, 508 PRCHT INF ESTABLISHED BRIDGEHEAD ON W BANK OF RIVER OPPOSITE CHEF DU PONT, CONTACTING 2ND BN, 508 PRCHT INF ISOLATED 2 MILES SW OF LA FIERE. THROUGHOUT PHASE I, FIGHTING WAS PARTICULARLY HEAVY, BOTH SIDES SUSTAINED HEAVY LOSSES.

PHASE II: 1ST BN, 325 GLI INF REGT, CROSSED THE MERDERET RIVER ON SUNKEN ROAD EAST OF AMPREVILLE ON NIGHT OF 8-9 JUNE. 3RD BN, 325 GLI INF REGT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 507 PRCHT INF REGT, AND CO A 740 TANK BN, FORCED ANOTHER CROSSING AT LA FIERE ON THE MORNING OF 09 JUNE. PART OF THE 508 PRCHT INF THEN CROSSED AT LA FIERE AND ADVANCED TO THE SW TO CONTACT THE ISOLATED 2ND BN, 508 PRCHT INF REGT. THIS WAS THE BRIDGEHEAD SECURED. FIGHTING THROUGHOUT THIS PHASE WAS PARTICULARLY SEVERE AND HEAVY CASUALTIES WERE SUSTAINED BY BOTH SIDES.

NOTE - IN OPERATIONS 1 AND 2 THE GERMAN 91ST INF DIV WAS EFFECTIVELY STOPPED AND WAS UNABLE TO CONTACT THE BEACH ASSAULT FORCES.

8. DEFENSE OF THE ETIENVILLE BRIDGEHEAD

ON 20 JUNE 505 PRCHT INF OCCUPIED BOIS DE LIMORS. BETWEEN THAT TIME AND 3 JULY THE DIV DEFENDED THE ETIENVILLE BRIDGEHEAD, ALONG THE LINE BOIS DE LIMORS-PRETOT, A PERIOD MARKED BY SHARP LOCAL ACTIONS, COMBAT PATROL CONTACT, AND MORTAR FIRE. CASUALTIES MODERATE TO HEAVY ON BOTH SIDES.

7. ETIENVILLE BRIDGEHEAD

ON NIGHT OF 18-19 JUNE THE 325 GLI INF REGT, WITH 3RD BN, 508 PRCHT INF ATTACHED, FORCED THE CROSSING OF THE DOUVE RIVER AT ETIENVILLE AND ADVANCED S. 507 PRCHT INF MAKING A COORDINATED ATTACK WESTWARD FROM THE CRETTEVILLE AREA. 307 A/B ENGRS OPERATED ASSAULT BOATS AND ASSISTED 3RD CORPS ENGINEERS IN BUILDING A BRIDGE OVER THE CAUSEWAY.

4. BEUZEVILLE-LA BASTILLE BRIDGEHEAD

508 PRCHT INF REGT FORCED A CROSSING OF THE DOUVE RIVER THE NIGHT OF 12-13 JUNE, AND SWEEPED THROUGH THE CRETTEVILLE, BAUPE AREA. 307 A/B ENGRS OPERATED THE ASSAULT BOATS AND ASSISTED 3RD CORPS ENGINEERS IN BUILDING A BRIDGE OVER THE CAUSEWAY.



1. DROP ZONE FOR 505TH PRCHT INF DET DIV HQ, DET 464 FA BN, 1 PLAT CO B 307 A/B ENGR BN NIGHT OF 5/6 JUNE 44. LANDING ZONE FOR DETACHMENTS, DIV HQ, DIV HQ CO, 80TH A/B AA BN, 82ND A/B SIG CO, HQ + HQ BTRY, DIV ARTY, NIGHT OF 5/6 JUNE 44
2. DROP ZONE FOR 507 PRCHT INF, NIGHT OF 5/6 JUNE 44
3. DROP ZONE FOR 508 PRCHT INF, CO B (-) 307 A/B ENGR BN AND DETACHMENTS OF DIV HQ, DIV HQ CO, HQ + HQ BTRY, DIV ARTY, AND 82ND A/B SIG CO.
4. LANDING ZONES FOR:
 - a) 307 A/B MED CO, 319 A/B FA, 320 A/B FA, 307 A/B ENGR BN, AND OTHER DETACHMENTS OF DIV.
 - b) EVENING OF 6 JUNE 44
5. 325 GLI INF MORNING OF 7 JUNE 1944
5. DEBARNONE ELEMENTS ARRIVED BEGINNING 2 JUNE, THEY INCLUDED 456 PRCHT FA BN, 407 QM CO, 782 ORD M CO, AND ATTACHED UNITS AND DETS. OF OTHER DIV UNITS.

SCALE
MILES 0 1 2 3
MAP: GSGS 2738, FRANCE, 1/250,000

- LEGEND
- 505 PRCHT INF REGT
 - 325 GLIDER INF REGT
 - 508 PRCHT INF REGT
 - 507 PRCHT INF REGT

SCALE
MILES 0 1 2 3
MAP: GSGS 4250 FRANCE, 1/50,000
C.G. MAJ GEN M B RIDGWAY
ASST C.G. BRIG GEN G P HOWELL
ASST C.G. BRIG GEN J M GAVIN

- COMMAND
- 325 GLI INF COL H L LEWIS
 - 504 PRCHT INF COL R H TURNER, RE-EQUIPPING IN U.K. AFTER ANZIO
 - 505 PRCHT INF LT COL W E EKMAN
 - 507 PRCHT INF COL G V MILLETT JR AND COL E D RAFF
 - 508 PRCHT INF COL R E LINCOLN
 - DIV ARTY COL F A MARCH
- STAFF
- CHIEF OF STAFF COL R REATON
 - G-1 LT COL F M SCHELLHAMMER
 - G-2 LT COL W JACK
 - G-3 LT COL R H WIENECKE
 - G-4 LT COL B A ZINN AND LT COL F W MOORMAN