

ENGLISH CHANNEL

COSQUEVILLE



C 24
23 JUNE

22
26 JUNE

ST. PIERRE EGLISE

MAUPERTUS

MAUPERTUS

AIR
FIELD

A 24
25-26 JUNE

C 24
25-26 JUNE

CHERBOURG

PINABEL

1200-23 JUNE

GONNEVILLE

B 24
25-26 JUNE

TK DIVERSIONARY ATK
24 JUNE

TK- INF ATK
23- JUNE

22
22 JUNE

ENY ATK 1945-23 JUNE

4RCM

HALL AUVRAY

24
27 JUNE

BOIS

du

Le THEIL

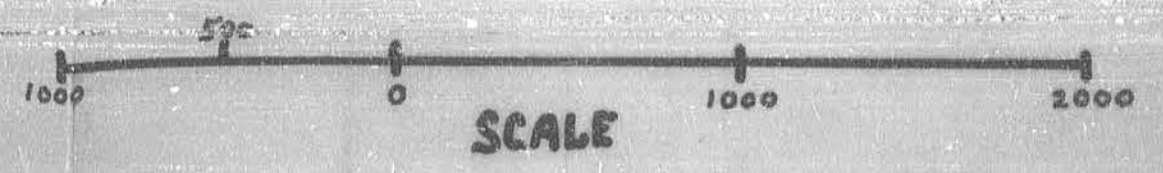
E 24
23 JUNE

MAP "F"

FINAL OPERATIONS-23-27 JUNE

LEGEND

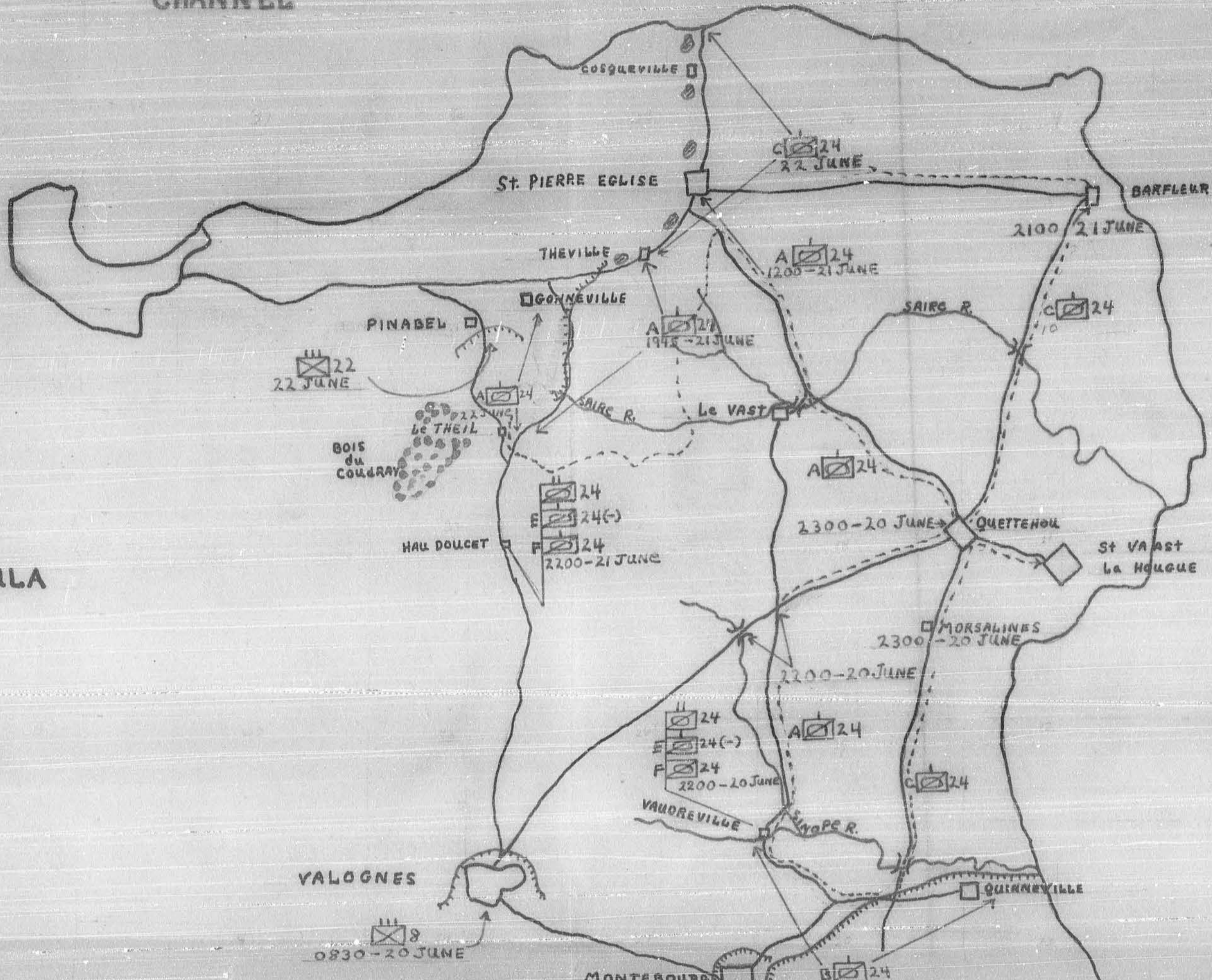
- HEDGE-ROW
- WOODS
- INFANTRY POSITIONS
- OUTPOST LINE
- VEHICULAR WEAPONS
- ENEMY FORTIFICATIONS
- ENEMY GROUPS
- DIRECTION OF INFANTRY ADVANCE



ENGLISH CHANNEL

CHERBOURG

COTENTIN PENINSULA



22 JUNE

St. PIERRE EGLISE

BARFLEUR

THEVILLE

2100 21 JUNE

PINABEL

GONNEVILLE

A 24
1200-21 JUNE

SAIRE R.

C 24
10

BOIS du COUDRAY

Le THEIL

SAIRE R.

Le VAST

A 24

HAU DOUCET

E 24

F 24

2200-21 JUNE

2300-20 JUNE

QUETTEHOU

St VAAST La HOUCHE

MORSALINES
2300-20 JUNE

2100-20 JUNE

E 24

F 24

2200-20 JUNE

A 24

C 24

VAUDREVILLE

SAIRE R.

VALOGNES

0830-20 JUNE


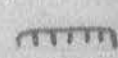


MONTEBOURG

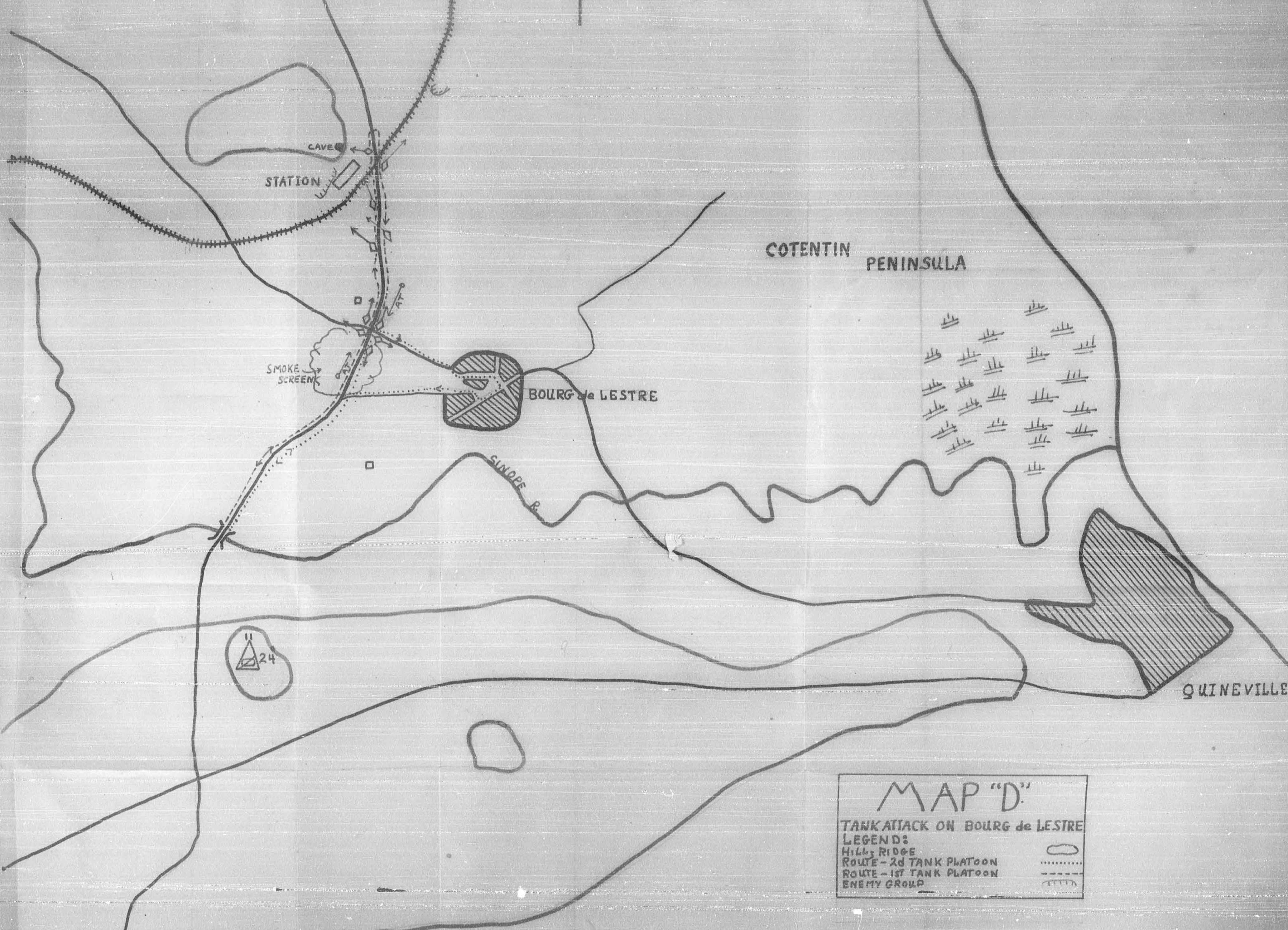
B 24
20 JUNE

1800-19 JUNE

MILES 0 1 2 3 MILES
SCALE

9th Inf. Div. cut PENINSULA 18 JUNE

MAP "E"
RECONNAISSANCE
LEGENDS
 OWN LINES 
 ENEMY LINES 
 ENEMY FORTIFICATIONS 
 ROUTES-TROOPS "A" and "B" 




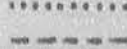


COTENTIN PENINSULA

BOURG de LESTRE

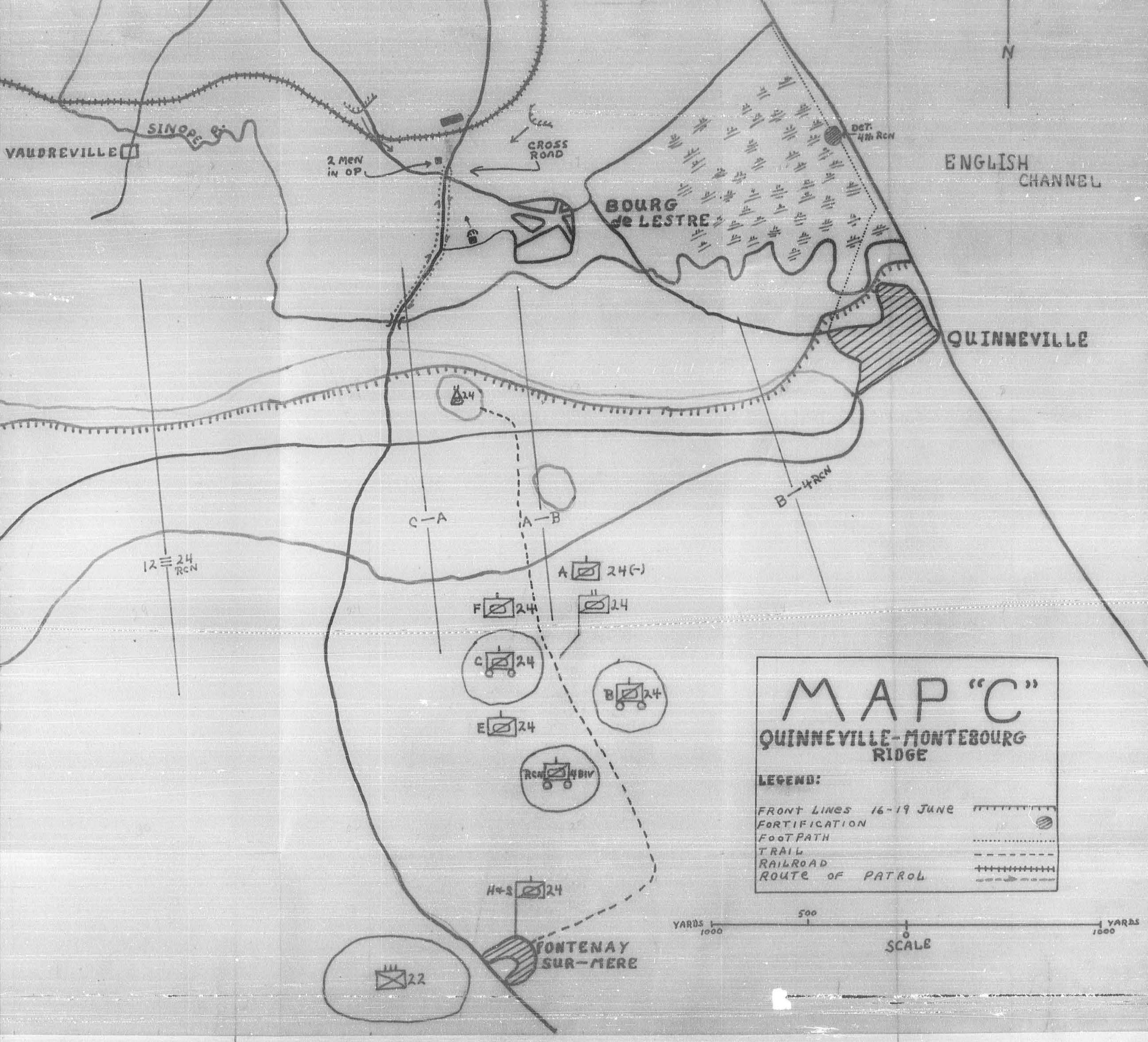
SINDE R.

QUINEVILLE

24

MAP "D."
TANK ATTACK ON BOURG de LESTRE
LEGEND:
 HILL RIDGE 
 ROUTE - 2d TANK PLATOON 
 ROUTE - 1st TANK PLATOON 
 ENEMY GROUP 

YARDS 500 400 300 200 100 0 SCALE 500 1000 YARDS



N

VAUDREVILLE

SINOPE

2 MEN
IN OP

CROSS
ROAD

BOURG
de LESTRE

DET.
4th RCN

ENGLISH
CHANNEL

QUINNEVILLE

12 ≡ 24
RCN

C-A

A-B

B-4RCN

A 24(-)

F 24

24

C 24

B 24

E 24

RCN 4 DIV

H+S 24

FONTENAY
SUR-MERE

22

COTENTIN
PENINSULA

VAUDREVILLE 

SINOPE 

2 MI
IN O

12 \equiv 24
RCN

 MONTEBOURG

COTENTIN
PENINSULA



ENGLISH
CHANNEL

VALOGNES

4th DIV Obj

SINDE R.

ELMS 739

BOURG DE LESTRE

QUINNEVILLE

MONTEBOURG

12 24 RCN
12

24

FONTENAY
SUR-MER

22

8

904

979

828

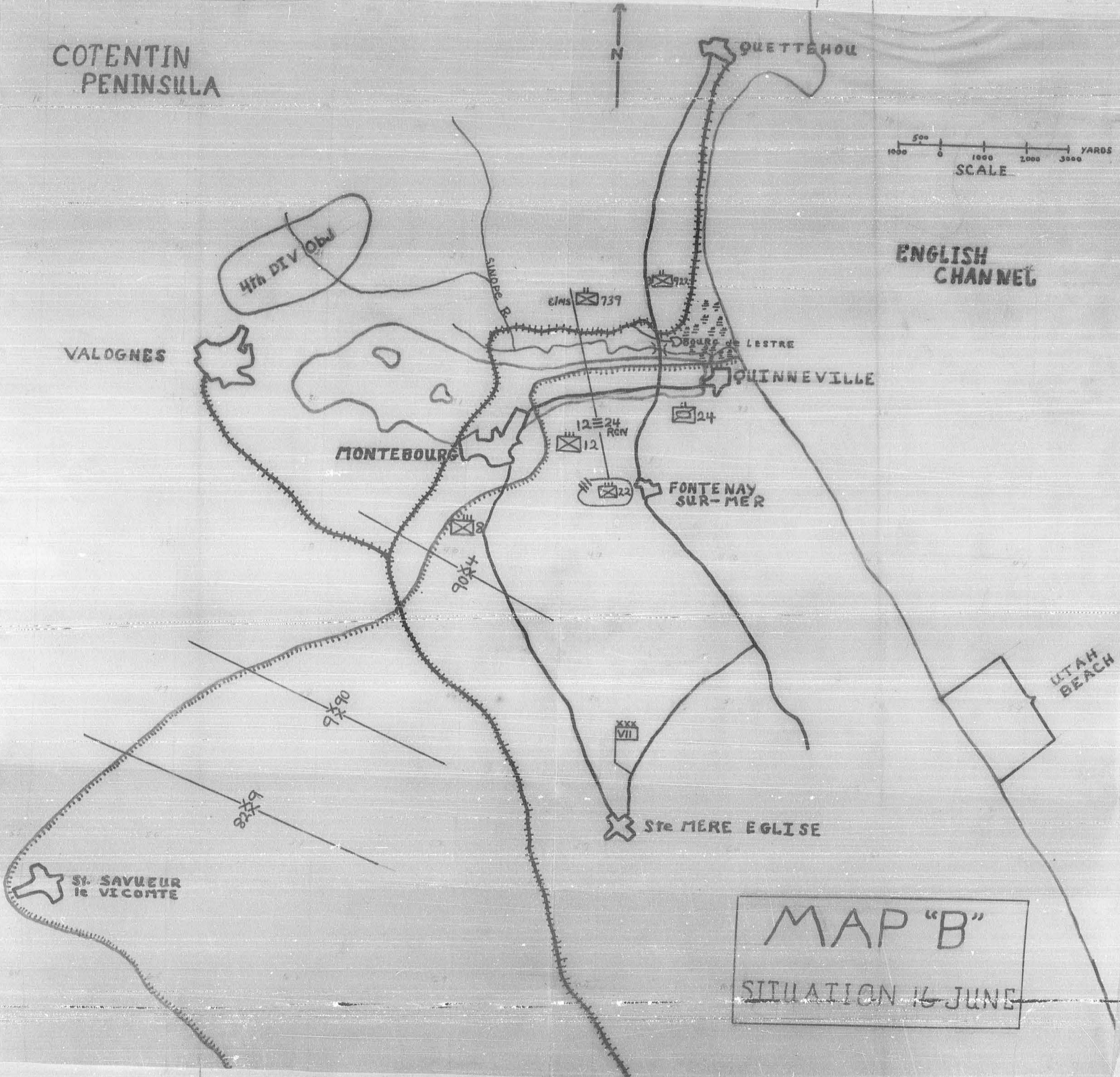
UTAH
BEACH

XXX
VII

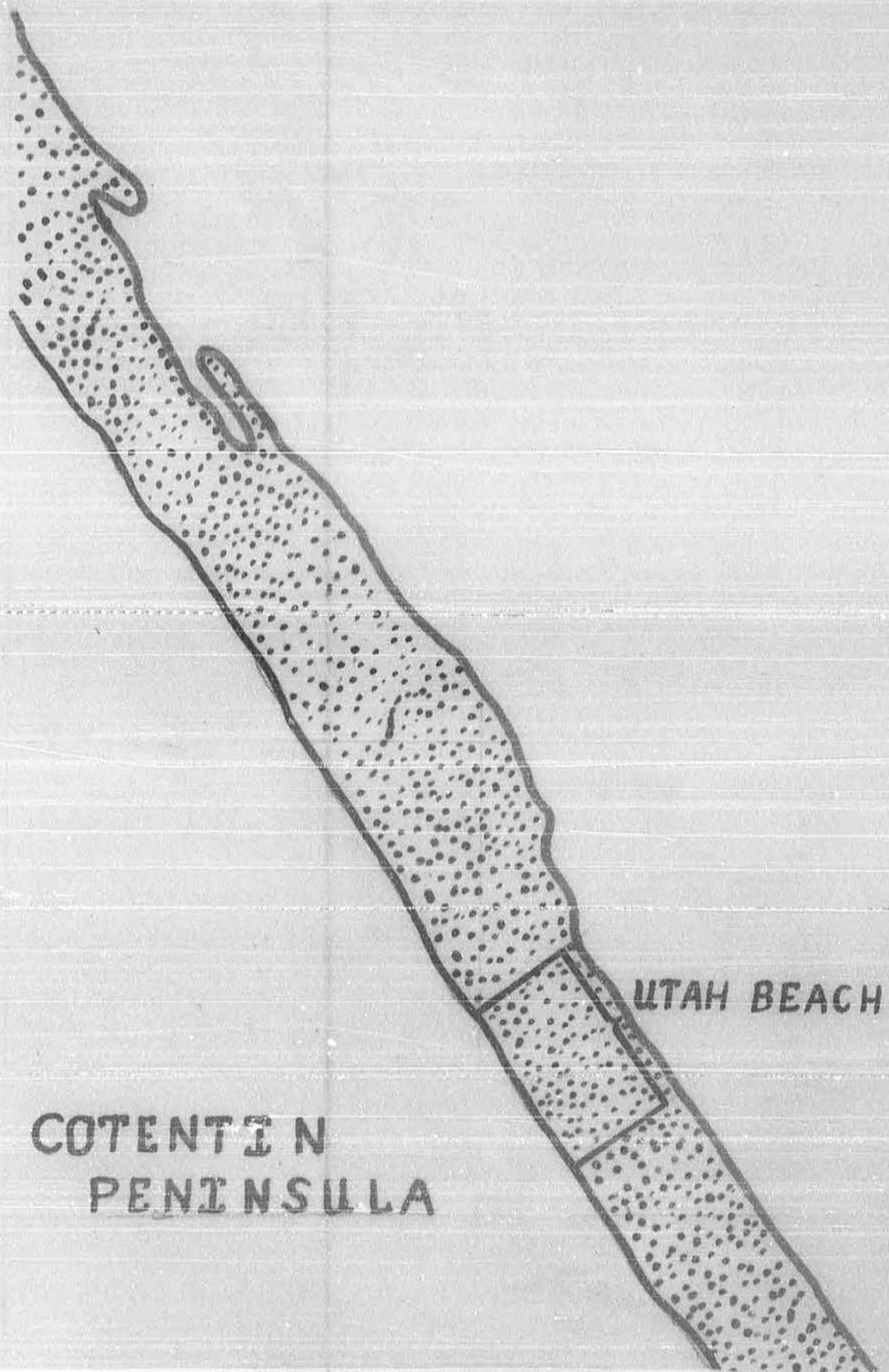
Ste MERE EGLISE

St. SAVUEUR
le VICOMTE

MAP "B"
SITUATION 16 JUNE

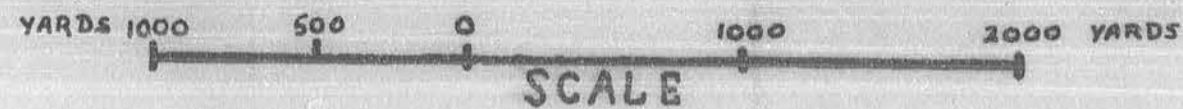


ENGLISH
CHANNEL



COTENTIN
PENINSULA

UTAH BEACH



MAP "A"
SECURING ILE de LARGE
6 JUNE - 0430 HOURS

LESSONS

The old adage "experience is the best teacher" is a sound statement. The more important lessons learned by the 24th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in the Normandy Campaign are as follows:

1. Mechanized cavalry must be prepared for a variety of missions. ✓
2. The assault gun troop in a cavalry squadron is most effectively employed in battery. ✓
3. Aggressive patrolling in broad daylight is disastrous against a numerically superior enemy particularly with only one well defined avenue of withdrawal. ✓
4. Smoke is extremely useful when employed properly in conjunction with a tank attack. ✓
5. Swift, aggressive action coupled with surprise is extremely influential in the success of a tank attack. ✓
6. Good reconnaissance is dependent on good communications. ✓
7. In a fluid enemy situation particular emphasis must be placed on protection of supply lines. ✓
8. The 37-mm gun, employed with cannister ammunition at close quarters, is an extremely effective weapon.
9. The tank-infantry team is a very effective combat combination.
10. Bypassing strong, determined enemy resistance does not necessarily result in voluntary surrender and may retard the rate of advance.

3. Reconnaissance on the eastern side of the Cotentin Peninsula kept both VII Corps and the 4th Division informed of the enemy situation on the right flank to include his ultimate withdrawal to the fortified line extending from the Channel south through Cosqueville, St. Pierre Eglise, Theville, and Gonneville.

4. In protecting the supply route of the 22d Infantry which extended north from Le Theil, the Squadron again released the bulk of the 22d Infantry Regiment enabling it to continue its advance to the north and west.

5. Company F provided the armor in a successful tank - infantry attack on the town of Pinabel, and launched valuable diversionary attacks toward the southern extremities of the town of Gonneville.

6. The Squadron contained enemy forces at the Maupertus air field while the 22d Infantry bypassed this area and then turned south and systematically assaulted and reduced the enemy and the fortifications contained therein.

The 37-mm anti-tank gun, mounted in all armored cars and tanks, proved an extremely useful and effective weapon in this campaign against enemy personnel and equipment. Its accuracy with HE ammunition and its destructive power at close quarters and in hedge row areas with cannister ammunition far surpassed the expectations of the using troops; they gained respect for the gun as the campaign progressed. Its power of penetration with AP ammunition was extremely limited when employed against enemy fortifications, however.

Radio communication in the Squadron was generally reliable and accurate. It expedited the rapid transmission of information when the Squadron was employed on reconnaissance missions. The effectiveness of this communication was due mainly to the excellence of the radio equipment provided and to well trained communications personnel.

In summary it is believed that VII Corps, the 4th Infantry Division and the 22d Infantry Regiment made maximum effective use of the Squadron in this campaign. The employment of the Squadron as a whole or in part produced the following results:

1. The detachment from Troop B occupied the Ile du Large and provided security for the landings on Utah Beach.

2. The Squadron in occupying the Quineville - Montebourg ridge line relieved the entire 22d Infantry allowing this Regiment to rest, reorganize, and finally to be employed in a more critical area.

The enemy was quite adept at changing the positions of his anti-tank guns, which was apparent from the absence of such weapons during the patrol action and the presence of two anti-tank guns along the same route during the tank attack. The HE concentration and smoke screen delivered by Troop E denied the enemy observation and caused him to become confused and expose his rear, culminating in the destruction of the anti-tank gun situated south of the cross road. Had the enemy, however, employed the two anti-tank guns to greater advantage, the outcome of the tank attack might have been different.

The tank attack by Company F on the Bourg de Lestre area displayed the success that may be enjoyed by bold, aggressive action coupled with surprise and good fortune. This attack was based on scant enemy information and was launched without the support of dismounted troops. The Squadron Commander employed a large portion of his reserve in this attack further depleting the depth and flexibility of an already shallow defense. If the tank attack had been repulsed and followed by a strong counter-attack, a deep penetration of our lines by the enemy could not have been prevented.

The assault guns of Troop E were never used as the name implies. The most effective employment of this troop was by battery when the situation allowed all troops employed to be supported by fire from one location. The attaching of individual platoons to reconnaissance troops, however, was often necessary, particularly in a fluid situation over an extended frontage.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The varied missions assigned the Squadron in this campaign did not completely follow the doctrines for employment of Cavalry in the current field manuals. For instance the first mission for the Squadron, screening the Quineville ridge, lay in the realm of counter-reconnaissance. However, the lack of cover and concealment, the close proximity of the enemy, and the fact that the enemy knew the ridge was occupied rendered the use of vehicles and their accompanying fire power impractical. The additional requirement, to prevent enemy movement to the south, coupled with the broad frontage and lack of depth changed the complexion of the mission to resemble a defense with insufficient flexibility. A chance was taken in assigning the Squadron this sector for if the enemy had been aware of the opposing strength, he could easily have penetrated the thinly held lines and advanced south causing considerable damage in the rear areas of VII Corps.

The patrol action in the vicinity of the cross road near Bourg de Lestre was not of sufficient strength to sustain itself during daylight, particularly with the Sinope River as a barrier to withdrawal at the patrol's rear. Although they gathered sufficient information to substantiate the tank attack which followed, it is believed that needless losses were suffered which could have been avoided if the patrol had withdrawn prior to dawn, or before becoming actively involved in a fire fight.

It was believed by the Commanding Officer of the 22d Infantry that the enemy forces at the air field would surrender voluntarily when they realized they had been surrounded. A large portion of the hostile force, however, consisted of fanatical German air cadets who were manning the dual purpose anti-aircraft guns installed in the fortifications. (32)

On the 26th of June the 22d Infantry, which by this time had completed the encirclement of the air field, was forced to turn south and launch a coordinated attack to reduce the field's fortifications while the 24th Squadron continued to block all avenues of escape. It was only after a bitter fight that the German force surrendered early on the 27th of June. (33) (34)

This ended the last resistance that the 24th Squadron engaged in on the Cotentin Peninsula. The Squadron moved to the vicinity of Hau Auvray on the afternoon of the 27th of June and reorganized. At 1000 on the 27th of June all organized resistance in the City of Cherbourg ceased. (35)

The 24th Cavalry Squadron during the period of the 16th to the 27th of June killed 205 and captured 342 enemy. The following losses were sustained by the Squadron during this period:

Killed in Action	11	
Wounded in Action	45	
Missing in Action	3	(36)

(32) A-7, p. 63; (33) A-1, p. 201; (34) A-7, p. 63; Personal Knowledge; (35) A-1, p. 197; Personal Knowledge; (36) A-4, p. 4.

obstacles. The town fell to the 22d Infantry on the morning of the 26th of June. (27) (28)

During the assault on Gonneville the enemy threat to the supply line of the 22d Infantry was considerably reduced. As a result Troop B on the evening of the 25th of June was given the mission of protecting the entire length of the route. (29)

Concurrently with the above activities, the 22d Infantry, less the 2d Battalion, was also engaged in protecting the Corps right flank by blocking enemy movement to the west from the Maupertus - Gonneville area. The bulk of the enemy had been driven by pressure from the east, south, and west to the protection afforded by the Maupertus air field which was surrounded by prepared fortifications. (30)

On the 25th of June while the 22d Infantry progressed slowly to the north, the 24th Squadron was employed in containing the enemy at the air field. Troop C moved from the St. Pierre Eglise area and contained the eastern side of the field. Troop A maintained contact with the rear of the attacking Infantry and contained the western side of the field, and Troop B contained on the south with the additional task of patrolling the supply route south to Le Theil. The 4th Reconnaissance Troop and Company F were in Squadron reserve. Troop E was utilized in furnishing artillery support for the forces containing the air field. (31)

(27) A-4, p. 3; Personal Knowledge; (28) A-1, p. 201;
(29) Personal Knowledge; (30) A-1, p. 183; Personal Knowledge;
(31) A-1, (footnote), p. 183; Personal Knowledge.

and Company F accounted for 30 enemy killed and was instrumental in the capture of the town which fell about noon. Two F Company tanks were destroyed in this battle by enemy anti-tank fire but the crews escaped with only minor injuries and rejoined the company.

At 1945 the enemy launched an uncoordinated but determined attack from the east in an estimated reinforced company strength, toward Troop A's position. The outpost withdrew and fire from Troop E's assault guns was adjusted in support of Troop A. As the enemy attack progressed it was met by intense machine gun and 37-mm cannister fire delivered from the vehicles. The enemy was driven off after suffering heavy casualties including some 50 killed and an undetermined number wounded. Company F, having reorganized after the attack on Pinabel, was returning to the Squadron CP when the attack on Troop A began. Company F Commander was ordered to coordinate with Troop A and render any possible assistance. After the attack was repulsed by Troop A, Company F pursued the retreating German force northeast toward Gonneville, killing an additional 50 enemy.

On the 24th of June Company F and the light tank company of the 70th Tank Battalion launched two separate attacks on Gonneville from the south. These attacks were employed as a diversion to draw the enemy's attention from the main effort made by the 22d Infantry from the east. The tank attacks failed, however, to penetrate the Gonneville defenses which included numerous road blocks and tank

AGAINST
GONNEVILLE?

FINAL OPERATIONS

(SEE MAP F)

On the 23d of June the Squadron was detached from the 4th Infantry Division and attached to the 22d Infantry Regiment. Orders immediately followed directing the Squadron to physically occupy the supply route extending north from Le Theil and to keep this route open, thereby relieving the 22d Infantry of this task. The route was divided into three parts and Troop A was given the northern section, Troop B the center, and the 4th Reconnaissance Troop the southern section. The Squadron CP moved to Le Theil with Company F in reserve. Troop E, less one platoon attached to Troop C, was employed in the vicinity of Le Theil to support this operation. Troop C continued its screening mission from St. Pierre Eglise north to the Channel and maintained contact with the enemy lines by means of mounted and dismounted patrols.

The three troops protecting the supply route occupied positions on either side of the road employing all vehicular weapons in partial defilade behind hedge rows to cover the areas to the east and west of the route. Beyond these defenses dismounted outposts were employed for security measures.

At 0900 Company F was ordered to move north along the supply route to the Infantry position where it joined one battalion of the 22d Infantry in an attack on Pinabel. This action, although hastily organized, was successful

On the 22d of June the Squadron Commander directed Troop C to reconnoiter west in the zone bounded on the north by the English Channel and on the south by the Barfleur-Cherbourg highway. Some scattered resistance was encountered initially, becoming stronger as the troop progressed to the west, and culminating in a strongly held line consisting of a series of fortifications extending from Theville north through Cosqueville to the Channel. The 4th Reconnaissance Troop was again attached to the Squadron on this date and was employed to contain the enemy on the Gonnevillle - Theville line relieving Troop A. By this time the 22d Infantry Regiment had secured the high ground southeast of Pinabel, and Troop A was employed to protect the Regiments right flank along the line Gonnevillle - Le Theil. Company B of the 801st T. D. Battalion moved south and took over the Quineville - Vaudreville line relieving Troop B which reverted to Squadron reserve at Hau Doucet. (25)

The enemy situation at this time in the Gonnevillle - Bois du Coudray area was extremely fluid. The advance of the 22d Infantry Regiment to the north and west was hampered to such an extent by harassing enemy that it had to be temporarily abandoned. The enemy was infiltrating from the Gonnevillle area southwest to the Bois du Coudray, cutting the Regiments supply line which extended from Le Theil north along a stretch of unimproved road about 3000 yards in length to the Regiment's position. Nearly all of the Regiment's strength was employed in protecting this supply route and in "mopping up" operations. (26)

(25) A-4, p. 2; Personal Knowledge; (26) A-1, pp. 174-175.

road toward Quettehou. Numerous obstacles, mined sections, craters, and debris were encountered along this road necessitating a cautious advance. By 2300 Capt. Bone reported having reached Morsalines. The Squadron CP had moved to the vicinity of Vaudreville with Company F in reserve, and the remainder of Troop E held in readiness to support Troop B by fire if needed.

On the 21st of June Troop A was ordered to reconnoiter northwest to Le Vast and north to St. Pierre Eglise while Troop C was ordered to continue north through Quettehou to Barfleur. The coastal road was still cluttered with obstacles and Troop A's advance was more rapid than Troop C's. By noon Troop A had succeeded in reaching Le Vast and St. Pierre Eglise, picking up several German prisoners who offered no resistance. At 1400 Troop A was ordered to reconnoiter west in the zone bounded on the south by the Saire River and on the north by the St. Pierre Eglise - Cherbourg highway. This troop now began to encounter small enemy columns retreating toward Cherbourg and by 1945 the troop was in contact with strong enemy forces along the line Theville - Gonneville - Le Theil. Meanwhile Troop C continued north through Quettehou and reached Barfleur by dark finding the town unoccupied. The Squadron CP with Company F and Troop E (-) moved north to the vicinity of Hau Doucet leaving Troop B on the Quineville - Vaudreville line to continue the screening mission. Company B of the 801st T. D. Battalion was attached to the Squadron at 2200.

Having reported to the 4th Division the actions occurring on the 19th of June, the 24th Squadron was ordered, on the 20th of June, to extend its zone westward to the vicinity of Vaudreville and to reconnoiter to the north in the area east of the Sinope River. The 4th Reconnaissance Troop was detached from the Squadron at this time.

Troop B took over the screening mission of the entire front from Quineville west along the Sinope River to Vaudreville. Since the breadth of the sector was too wide for one troop to cover dismounted, vehicular patrols were utilized to connect strong points which were established at likely avenues of approach.

Troops A and C mounted in their vehicles in preparation for reconnaissance missions. Troop A, with one platoon of assault guns from Troop E attached, was ordered to move west to Vaudreville, and to reconnoiter north along the Vaudreville - Le Vast road to its junction with the Valognes-Quettehou highway and to secure the bridge over the Sinope River southwest of this junction. At 2200 Capt. Brooks O. Norman, commanding Troop A, reported that his troop had reached the junction of these two roads, secured the bridge, captured two Germans guarding the bridge, and had reduced demolitions which had been prepared for the destruction of the bridge. Capt. Norman was then directed to resume reconnaissance east to Quettehou, which his troop rapidly reached and reported unoccupied at 2300. At the same time Troop C, with one platoon of Troop E attached, was directed to move over the bridge south of Bourg de Iestre and to reconnoiter north along the coastal

hits or near misses from artillery or mortars were sustained by the tanks and both platoons returned unscathed. The total time consumed by the entire action was one hour and fifteen minutes. (21) (22)

RECONNAISSANCE

(SEE MAP E)

The night of the 19th-20th of June was extremely quiet and completely devoid of shelling by the enemy. Patrols reported evidence of enemy movement and the following day it was discovered that the German force in the Bourg de Lestre area had withdrawn to the north. Civilians reported that the retreating column consisted of about 150 enemy, many of whom were wounded. (23)

Meanwhile the 4th Infantry Division continued its advance to the north. At 1800 on the 19th of June Montebourg fell to the 22d Infantry and at 0830 on the 20th of June Valognes fell to the 8th Infantry. At about noon on the 20th of June, it became apparent that General Von Schleiben, the German commander, had ordered a withdrawal of the remnants of his four German divisions along the entire front toward Cherbourg. This decision was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that the 9th Infantry Division had completely cut the Cotentin Peninsula, sealing off Von Schleiben's forces from any contact or aid from the main German forces to the south. (24)

(21) A-4, p. 2; (22) A-5, pp. 2-3, Personal Knowledge;
(23) A-5, p. 5; (24) A-1, pp. 153, 159.

tion and explosives, and a terrific explosion followed. At about the same time a small group of German infantry was discovered advancing from the northeast. Withering fire was directed at the group from the three lead tanks and those enemy, not killed or injured, withdrew.

By this time heavy artillery and mortar concentration were falling on the cross road area and the OP. The Squadron Commander ordered both platoons to withdraw, the 2d Platoon to move from the cross road southeast through the town of Bourg de Iestre and the 1st Platoon to withdraw south to the cross road and cover the movement of the Second.

The 2d Platoon, entering the town from the northwest, discovered several groups of enemy sprinting for cover in buildings. A circuitous route through the town was taken which covered the main streets and point blank fire was delivered through the apertures of all buildings where the enemy had taken cover. The Platoon emerged at the western end of town, gained the main road, headed south, crossed the bridge, and returned to its assembly area. The 1st Platoon withdrew behind the second and the entire company closed in the assembly area behind the ridge at 1530.

This maneuver was boldly conceived and executed and met with tremendous success. An estimated 75 enemy were destroyed as well as the two anti-tank guns and a large supply of ammunition. The Germans obviously did not expect an attack following the skirmish with the patrol that morning and were caught completely by surprise. No direct

was being delivered by the enemy on the cross road. A running commentary of this action was reported to the Squadron Commander at the OP by radio.

The 1st Tank Platoon commanded by Lt. Kiffin Browning was directed to move immediately, pass through the 2d Platoon at the cross road, and proceed north and reconnoiter in the vicinity of the railroad station. As the lead tank of the 2d Platoon approached the cross road, a well camouflaged anti-tank gun located about 150 yards south of the cross road, pointing north, was discovered. One well aimed round of 37-mm HE was fired at the gun and hit the supply of ammunition stacked in the immediate vicinity of the gun. A large explosion resulted and the gun and crew were destroyed. By this time the smoke screen had completely dissipated and the crew of the anti-tank gun, apparently blinded by smoke when the 2d Platoon passed their position and not expecting more tanks from the south, had turned their gun to the north to engage the 2d Platoon at the cross road.

The 1st Platoon cleared the cross road and continued north toward the railroad station in the vicinity of which a group of about 40 enemy were discovered. The Platoon blasted away at these Germans with all available weapons on the tanks causing numerous casualties and the withdrawal of all enemy who were not hit. Sgt. Hartin, commanding the lead tank, then spotted a cave dug in an embankment in rear of the station. A round of 37-mm HE was pumped into the cave, which apparently contained large supplies of ammuni-

de Lestre was occupied by enemy troops of unknown strength, no tanks or anti-tank guns were seen and no evidence of any anti-tank mines was detected on roads that had been examined. Meanwhile the Tank Company had been alerted for movement on ten minutes notice.

At 1400 the Squadron Commander directed Capt. John F. Christensen, the Tank Company Commander, to move his entire company along the road ^{leaving?} (with) the lead tank at the cross road immediately south of the ^{Squadron?} OP. The Company Commander and his tank joined the Squadron Commander at the OP to direct the tank attack.

Meanwhile a ten minute artillery concentration consisting of HE ammunition was delivered in the vicinity of the cross road by Troop E followed by a white phosphorous concentration immediately south of the cross road. The 2d Tank Platoon commanded by Lt. Sam Mitchell crossed the bridge at 1415 and moved rapidly toward the cross road with about 75 yards distance between tanks. The lead tank of the platoon broke through the smoke screen and encountered an enemy anti-tank gun immediately north of the cross road. The gun and crew were destroyed by 37-mm HE and machine gun fire. The tank then proceeded past the cross road and went into position to cover the approach from the north. The second tank moved up to the vicinity of the first also covering the northern approach. The third and fourth tanks turned right and left and covered the approaches from the east and west while the platoon leader's tank covered the rear. Only a few enemy infantrymen had been seen but mortar fire

information to Capt. Bone who meanwhile had left the troop CP to make a personal reconnaissance. Lt. Gardner met him enroute and reported this information.

By this time it was 0630 and Sgt. Slater, the rear man of the patrol, saw three Germans emerge from the house 300 yards to the southeast and approach the cross road. He waited until they were in range and destroyed them with a hand grenade. Immediately fire opened up from the northeast followed by fire from the west. A fire fight ensued and German forces estimated at 100 men started converging on the cross road. The two men in the OP stayed well back from the windows and sniped at the approaching Germans accounting for about thirty. The enemy was unable to detect the direction of this fire and had actually reached the house before realizing it was occupied.

Capt. Bone realizing the futility of the situation ordered the patrol to withdraw. A total of 15 losses were suffered by the group before withdrawal across the river was accomplished. Eight of these men were killed; the other seven, including the 2 men in the OP, were taken prisoner and rejoined the Squadron after Cherbourg fell. (20)

THE TANK ATTACK ON BOURG DE LESTRE

(SEE MAP D)

The patrol was briefed for information at the Squadron CP. They reported that the cross road and vicinity were held by an estimated reinforced company, the town of Bourg

(20) A-5, pp. 1-2; Personal Knowledge.

Upon being interrogated they revealed that enemy forces opposing our front were a reinforced regiment in strength.

(19)

It was apparent that enemy mortars had found their mark in the C Troop sector from the accuracy displayed during the night of the 17th-18th of June. At 1800 the 18th of June, Capt. Bone commanding Troop C, was ordered to send a strong patrol over the one intact bridge to reconnoiter the cross road north of the bridge and northwest of Bourg de Lestre. Accordingly a 20-man patrol commanded by Lt. Gardner was organized with instructions to cross the bridge at 0300 the 19th of June. The patrol was preceded to the cross road by Lt. Keinath and his detachment which had been guarding the bridge. The detachment arrived at the cross road without incident and Lt. Keinath sent two men to establish an observation post on the second floor of a house immediately north of the cross road. The remainder of the detachment took cover in ditches south of the cross road.

The patrol, with a jeep carrying a 510 radio to maintain communications, crossed the bridge on schedule and proceeded cautiously to the cross road arriving there about 0500. The jeep was concealed at a bend in the road about 300 yards south of the cross road to avoid unnecessary noise. The patrol was quickly disposed to cover all approaches to the cross road. Lt. Keinath reported having heard enemy activity and digging in a field to the northeast and he suspected that a house about 300 yards to the southeast was occupied by enemy. Lt. Gardner attempted to report this

(19) Personal Knowledge.

small detachment of the 4th Reconnaissance Troop which was occupying a captured enemy coastal fortification north of Quineville. A generous supply of German ammunition and rations was stored in this fort and it is believed the Germans were reconnoitering to see if these supplies could be retrieved. (17)

Harassing fire was delivered by Troop E and Corps Artillery on suspected enemy locations. In return enemy mortar and light artillery fire was received but no casualties were sustained.

During daylight on the 17th of June the front line troops improved their positions and weapons emplacements. At about 2000 enemy mortar and artillery concentrations became heavier across the entire front. This heavy fire continued intermittently throughout the night accompanied, during the lulls, by active enemy patrolling which attempted unsuccessfully to penetrate the screen. A small detachment from Troop C commanded by Lt. Keinath was stationed at the bridge southwest of Bourg de Lestre to prevent its destruction by the enemy. Our own patrols were engaged in reconnoitering the Sinope River for additional crossings which would support vehicles. Several fords were reported but these were suitable only for foot troops. Several casualties were suffered during the night, particularly in the C Troop sector, from enemy shelling. (18)

On the morning of the 18th of June two German soldiers approached our front and surrendered. They were identified as members of the 3d Battalion, 922d Grenadier Regiment.

(17) A-7, p. 63; Personal Knowledge; (18) A-5, p. 1; Personal Knowledge.

fields and orchards, surrounded by the now familiar hedge rows, about 1000 yards south of the ridge. Troop A, less one platoon, and Company F were held in Squadron reserve, and Troop E, commanded by Capt. John Seddon, rapidly set up in battery position and registered howitzers to provide artillery support for the entire sector. An artillery liaison officer from VII Corps, with necessary forward observers, was attached to furnish additional artillery support. The Squadron rear echelon, commanded by Capt. J. L. Phelan, was established in the vicinity of Fontenay Sur Mer. (15)

The remainder of the Squadron and the 4th Reconnaissance Troop were conducted forward dismounted to the front lines. Relief was accomplished during the hours of darkness and was completed prior to midnight. The 22d Infantry withdrew and reverted to 4th Division reserve in an assembly area at Fontenay Sur Mer. The front line positions were held by the 4th Reconnaissance Troop, Troop B, one platoon of Troop A, and Troop C from right (east) to left (west) in that order. Troop C was in contact with the 12th Infantry Regiment on the left. The Squadron CP was established about 500 yards south of the ridge line. (16)

Because of the extreme width of the sector the Squadron, in spite of the attached troop, was over extended. The night of the 16th-17th of June was comparatively quiet. Small patrols probed to the Sinope River and they detected some enemy patrolling activity on the opposite bank. It was believed that relief had been accomplished without detection by the enemy. Two enemy soldiers were killed by a

(15) Personal Knowledge; (16) A-4, p. 1; Personal Knowledge.

screen in that sector, and prevent any enemy movement to the south. (12)

The sector occupied by the 22d Infantry Regiment included the coastal town of Quineville and extended along a pronounced ridge line from the town 4000 yards to the west. North of this ridge lay the Sinope River valley and north of the river and parallel to it lay a double-tracked railway. The only bridge over the River which remained intact was situated southwest of the town of Bourg de Lestre. All other bridges over the River and opposite this sector had been destroyed. The area northwest of Quineville and adjacent to the coast was swampy and untenable for vehicular traffic. (13)

The enemy opposing this sector was estimated as a reinforced infantry regiment. Positive identification of elements of the 739th and 922d Grenadier Regiments had been established. (14)

(See Map C) A command group from the Squadron, with necessary guides, preceded the Squadron to the Quineville area and contacted the Commander and Staff of the 22d Infantry to consult on plans for relief. A suitable plan was rapidly agreed upon dividing the overall sector into four parts. The Commanders of the Reconnaissance Troops A, B, and C, and the Commander of the 4th Reconnaissance Troop were guided to the front lines where they formulated detailed plans for the relief with the Infantry Commanders. The main body of the Squadron arrived in the area at about 1600 and the vehicles were dispersed by platoon in troop areas which consisted of small

(12) A-8, p. 15; Personal Knowledge; (13) A-4, p. 1; Personal Knowledge; (14) A-1, p. 118, p. 213.

aircraft unit and proceeded to the mainland where it provided security for the headquarters of VII Corps. (8) (9)

SCREENING THE QUINEVILLE RIDGE

(See Map B) By the 14th of June the 4th Infantry Division had driven north along the east coast of the Cotentin Peninsula and, in conjunction with the 39th Infantry (9th Infantry Division), had captured the town of Quineville and occupied the ridge line running west from Quineville toward Montebourg. Montebourg, however, was still held by the enemy. (10)

At 1530 the 15th of June, the 24th Squadron less the detachment from Troop B effected a dry landing on Utah Beach and proceeded inland to the vicinity of Ste. Mere Eglise. During the remainder of the day maintenance was performed on all vehicles to rid them of water-proofing which had been laboriously applied prior to departing from England. On the morning of the 16th of June the detachment from Troop B rejoined the Squadron bringing it up to full strength.(11)

Before noon the 16th of June orders were received from VII Corps attaching the Squadron to the 4th Infantry Division. The Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. F. H. Gaston Jr., reported to the 4th Division command post and received additional orders as follows: The 24th Cavalry Squadron, with the 4th Reconnaissance Troop attached, will proceed to the Quineville area, relieve the 22d Infantry Regiment on the Quineville-Montebourg ridge line, establish a counter-reconnaissance

(8) A-6, pp. 8-9; (9) Personal Knowledge; (10) A-1, p. 114; (11) Personal Knowledge.

Iles St. Marcouf, situated 6000 yards off the east coast of the Cotentin Peninsula and north east of the Utah Beach site.

(5)

The St. Marcouf group consisted of two islands, the Ile de Terre and the Ile du Large, which were so situated that, if occupied by the enemy, havoc could be played with any landing attempts in the Utah Beach area. Ile du Large, the northernmost of the two islands, contained an old Napoleonic fortress surrounded by a moat. Air reconnaissance disclosed this information prior to D-Day. (6)

On the 5th of June the detachment from Troop B departed from England aboard an LST. When within a few miles of the Ile du Large the detachment transferred to LSVP's and proceeded to a point approximately one mile from the island. Sgt. John W. Zander and Cpl. Melvin F. Kinzie, armed only with knives and supplied with flashlights, loaded into a rubber assault boat and rowed to within a few hundred yards of the island. They sank the boat, swam ashore, and with the aid of their flashlights guided the rest of the detachment to a suitable landing site. (7)

The detachment succeeded in landing unopposed at 0430 (H minus 2 hours) on D-Day. The island was found to be unoccupied but contained a network of anti-personnel mines and cleverly conceived booby traps which caused the detachment some casualties. Later the same day both islands were shelled by large caliber coastal guns but few casualties resulted. On the 8th of June the detachment was relieved by an anti-

(5) Personal Knowledge; (6) A-7, p. 62; (7) A-1, p. 43.

This procedure was ordered by higher headquarters and served a dual purpose. Long range transmissions easily reached across the Channel and provided a ruse to confuse the enemy; the experience gained in these exercises by the communications personnel of the squadron proved invaluable in future operations.

Once weekly the entire squadron was combat loaded and inspected. These inspections were conducted in the form of alerts and accomplished three things: rapidity of loading in preparation to move, balanced and compact vehicular loads, and the elimination of excess equipment and baggage.

During the third week in May a detachment from Troop B, consisting of 3 officers and 64 enlisted men, commanded by Capt. Wales Vaughan, was relieved from normal training. They immediately commenced vigorous training which included strenuous physical conditioning and the scaling of high rock walls with the aid of grappling hooks, ropes, and rope ladders. These activities continued for about 10 days when the detachment suddenly left the squadron and, with a similar detachment from the 4th Cavalry Squadron, moved to the southern coast of England to pursue amphibious training with the Navy. (4)

SECURING THE ILE DU LARGE

(SEE MAP A)

The mission of these two detachments was kept secret until D-Day when it was revealed that they had landed on the

(4) A-6, p. 8; Personal Knowledge.

the squadron with a tremendous amount of fire power. The fire power, except for the 60-mm mortars, was most effective when the weapons were employed on the vehicles. In addition, all personnel were mounted in a vehicle of some type and were provided with an individual weapon: either the M-1 rifle, the carbine, the sub-machine gun, or the pistol.

The signal equipment in the squadron included a total of 167 radios. These radios were generally of three types and were used for three different purposes. The SCR 506 provided long range communication and was mounted in all armored cars and in command vehicles of squadron headquarters. The SCR 508 series provided medium range communication and were mounted in all armored cars, command vehicles, tanks, and assault gun carriages. The SCR 510 provided short range communication and was mounted in jeeps or used as a pack set for control and liaison work, patrolling, and artillery adjustment.

PREPARATION

During the early months of 1944 the 24th Squadron was engaged in intensive training on the southern coast of England. This training included the firing of all weapons, combat firing problems, and practical exercises in reconnaissance, and mounted and dismounted patrolling.

From time to time communications exercises were conducted lasting from 24 to 48 hours. These exercises involved all radios in the squadron and consisted of pre-arranged messages.

anti-aircraft gun mounted on a ring mount above the turret. Of the six jeeps in each platoon, three carried light machine guns mounted on pedestal mounts, and three carried 60-mm mortars. Each section, composed of an armored car and two jeeps, made up a small reconnaissance team.

The Assault Gun Troop provided the artillery for the squadron. It was composed of three platoons of two 75-mm howitzers each. These howitzers were mounted on an M5A-1 chassis, full tracked, with an open turret. Other armament on this vehicle included a light bow machine gun and a 50-caliber anti-aircraft gun mounted on a pedestal mount on the turret.

The Tank Company consisted of a total of 17 light tanks M5A-1. Two of the tanks were in troop headquarters, and 5 were in each of the three platoons. The principal weapon on the tank was a 37-mm anti-tank gun which was augmented by three light machine guns, one bow, one co-axial, and one anti-aircraft on a pedestal mount on the turret.

All machine guns mounted on vehicles, except the co-axial and bow guns, were provided with ground tripods. This allowed a total of 39 caliber 50 machine guns and 44 light machine guns to be employed in dismounted action. There were not, however, sufficient personnel, who could be employed dismounted, to man and properly supply all of the above automatic weapons at once in a defensive situation. These machine guns supported by the 60-mm mortars, the 37-mm anti-tank guns, and the six 75-mm howitzers in the assault gun troop provided

ORGANIZATION

At this point it might be well to briefly outline the organization, the main armament, and the types of equipment peculiar to a Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. This will enable the reader to better understand the employment of the Squadron during this Campaign.

The composition and strength of the Squadron was as follows:

	<u>Aggregate Strength</u>
Headquarters, and Headquarters and Service Troop	135
Three Reconnaissance Troops - (A, B, and C)	132 (each)
The Assault Gun Troop (E)	97
The Tank Company (F)	<u>107</u>
TOTAL STRENGTH	733

The Headquarters, and Headquarters and Service Troop consisted of a headquarters section, mounted in half-track command vehicles, a communications platoon consisting of four armored cars and four jeeps, a maintenance platoon, and a transportation platoon consisting of sixteen 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks which were the supply vehicles for the squadron.

The Reconnaissance Troops were composed of a troop headquarters and three reconnaissance platoons of three sections each. The main reconnaissance vehicles were the M-8 armored car and the $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton truck. Each platoon had three armored cars, each mounting a 37-mm anti-tank gun, a co-axial 30-caliber light machine gun, and a 50-caliber

INTRODUCTION

This monograph describes the operations of the 24th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron Mechanized, 4th Cavalry Group, from the 6th of June to the 27th of June, 1944, in the Normandy Campaign.

The Allied assault against the German Army on the continent of Europe, to open a second front, was launched on the 6th of June, 1944. The VII Corps, United States Army, was given the mission of capturing the Port of Cherbourg, which later served as a base for the life line of the Allied Armies on the Western front.

Landings on Utah Beach, which were made initially by the 4th Infantry Division, together with the airborne landings of the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions, proved extremely successful. (1) The German High Command, failing to estimate the initial landings as a main effort, held large forces in mobile reserve in anticipation of an additional Allied landing in greater strength at a different site. The American and British Air Forces pounded German troop concentrations and columns, clogging their lines of communication. (2)

When full realization of the extent of the seriousness of the situation dawned on the Germans, it was too late. A firm foothold was established on the Cotentin Peninsula and the invasion of Europe from the west was in full swing. (3)

(1) A-3, p. 43-44; (2) A-2, p. 24; (3) A-1, pp. 57-60.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A-1 Utah Beach to Cherbourg (6 June - 27 June 44)
Historical Division, Department of the Army
Washington 25 D.C., 1 October 1947 (TIS Library)
- A-2 Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined
Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Europe of the
Allied Expeditionary Force (6 June 44 - 8 May 45)
(TIS Library)
- A-3 First U. S. Army Report of Operations (20 Oct 43 -
1 Aug 44) D 767.6 - U - 11 (TIS Library)
- A-4 History of the 24th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron
Mechanized (5 June 44 - 28 June 44) D 731.1 - A2#19702
(TIS Library)
- A-5 Account of Operations of the 24th Cavalry Reconnaissance
Squadron (16 June - 19 June 44) D 731-1-E91#491
(TIS Library)
- A-6 4th Cavalry in Diverse Roles
By 2d Lt. Pierre V. Maltby
Cavalry Journal, May - June 45 (TIS Library)
- A-7 4th Cavalry Group in Combat
By Maj. Eugene J. Field
Armored Cavalry Journal, Jan - Feb 48 (TIS Library)
- A-8 Reconnaissance in Normandy
By Maj. Robert R. Fincher
Cavalry Journal, Jan - Feb 45 (TIS Library)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Index	1
Bibliography	2
Introduction	3
Organization	4
Preparation	6
Securing the Ile du Large	7
Screening the Quineville Ridge	9
The Tank Attack on Bourg de Lestre	14
Reconnaissance	18
Final Operations	22
Analysis and Criticism	26
Lessons	30
Map A - Securing Ile du Large	
Map B - Situation on 16 June	
Map C - Quineville - Montebourg Ridge	
Map D - Tank Attack on Bourg de Lestre	
Map E - Reconnaissance	
Map F - Final Operations	

General Subjects Section
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE
1948 - 1949

OPERATIONS OF THE 24TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE
SQUADRON (MECHANIZED), 4TH CAVALRY GROUP
(VII CORPS) IN THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN, FRANCE
6 - 27 JUNE 1944

(NORMANDY CAMPAIGN)

(Personal Experience of a Cavalry Squadron Executive Officer)

Type of operation described:

A CAVALRY SQUADRON IN SUPPORT OF INFANTRY

Major Harry A. Clark Jr., Infantry
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO 2