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THE AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS OF THE 7TH INFANTRY  
REGIMENT (3RD INFANTRY DIVISION) AT CAPE CAVALAIRE-SUR-MER,  
SOUTHERN FRANCE, 15 AUGUST - 19 AUGUST 1944  
(SOUTHERN FRANCE CAMPAIGN)  
(Personal Experience of an Acting Regimental S-3)

Type of operation described: AMPHIBIOUS LANDING

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ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO 2

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### NOTE:

On 1 July 1943, the officer personnel of the S-3 Section consisted of Major Jack M. Duncan, Captain Irving R. Wyeth and 1st Lt John D. Foulk. About 2 July, Major Duncan was injured and hospitalized. Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro, Commanding Officer 7th Infantry Regiment, reorganized the S-3 Section as follows: Captain Wyeth was placed in charge of all small unit training to include battalion level. 1st Lt Foulk was assigned the mission of completing, executing and coordinating all planning phases of the amphibious operation, which included two practice landings during the training phase. His mission also included the publication and issuance of the orders contained in Field Order No. 12 "Anvil Dragoon". 1st Lt Foulk functioned as temporary S-3 until about 17 August 1944 at which time Captain Wyeth assumed full S-3 duties.

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph includes the training-planning phases and combat operations of the 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd US Infantry Division during the amphibious assault landing on Red Beach, east of Cape Cavalaire-sur-Mer, France, on 15 August 1944.

Stress will be placed on the aggressiveness of all units concerned, the relationship of prior experience, organized training, Esprit de Corps and leadership, as a direct influence on the success and accomplishment of an assigned mission. It might be said that the success of an operation is in ratio to the training received.

Prior to the Southern France operation the 7th Infantry Regiment participated in the following World War II Campaigns:

1. French Moroccan Campaign      8-11 November 1942  
    (amphibious landing)
2. Tunisian Campaign              17 November 1942-13 May 1943
3. Sicilian Campaign              14 May-17 August 1943  
    (amphibious landing)
4. Naples-Figgia Campaign        19 Sep 1943-21 Jan 1944
5. Anzio Campaign                22 January-24 May 1944  
    (amphibious landing)
6. Rome-Arno Campaign            25 May-14 August 1944

With such a successful background the 7th Infantry Regiment was prepared to profit by previous experience in preparing for the Southern France operation.

The Allied Forces in the Mediterranean were mounting a new blow against the German forces as far back as 1 April 1943, in the form of a landing in Southern France. (1) By December 1943 the point of decision was reached and a directive was issued to General Eisenhower that the operation would take place in May 1944. However, due to the Italian stalemate in the battle for Rome, plans were set back until July 1944 when the mission date was designated as 15 August 1944. (2)

The operation was to be known as "Anvil" but this name was compromised and the alternate name "Dragoon" was assigned. (3)

There were four main reasons and purposes why the Allied Command decided on the Southern France invasion:

1. To assist the Normandy attack by engaging German forces that might otherwise be used in Northern France.
2. To capture a major port through which large scale reinforcements could flow.
3. To liberate France.
4. To join up with the cross-channel invasion for the decisive battle with the German Armies of the west. (4)

The US Seventh Army under the command of Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch was selected as the invading force. Plans formulated were based on ideal weather conditions and the landing areas' favorable approach to the Rhone valley. Subordinate elements selected for the operation were Major General Lucian Truscott's VI Corps; US 1st Special Service Force; the French Groupe de Commandos; and a British-American Airborne Task Force. (5)

(1) A-1; (2,3) A-1, A-5, p. 126; (4) A-5, p. 126; (5) A-4, p. 68.

Plans for the Dragoon operation were nearly cancelled at 1100 hours, 9 August 1944, when Allied Force Headquarters told the planning sections to take Taskforce Dragoon and strike the southern coast of Brittany. However, with troops loading and sailing dates so near, more thought was given and no changes executed. (6)

Beginning in June 1944 the German Armies were harder pressed than ever before in World War II. A major Allied offensive in Italy was in progress and Rome had been captured. An all out pursuit was being made north of the Tiber River. On 6 June 1944 the Normandy invasion opened another battle front for the Germans, and the Soviet Armies began massive attacks across the Pripet marshes. By mid-July the Germans had recovered and stopped the Italian advances and established the Pisa - Rimini line; but the Allies in Normandy and the Soviets in Poland continued successful attacks to disrupt German resistance. By 14 August 1944 the Allied Armies in France were breaking the resistance of the German 7th Army, by closing the Falaise pocket and threatening Tours, Dreux, Orleans, and Paris. (7) The Russians were driving the Germans back, and had separated the Baltic countries at Riga and reached the borders of East Prussia and Warsaw, Poland. (8)

For about a year the Germans had been worried as to the whereabouts of General Patton's old Sicilian Command. (9) The threat of an invasion in Southern France had held a substantial German force, consisting of the Nineteenth and First Armies, immobilized in the Southern France areas.

(6) A-5, p. 126; (7) A-4, p. 67; (8) A-5, p. 126; (9) A-1.

## THE GENERAL SITUATION

The enemy had thirteen identified divisions south of the Loire River on 28 July 1944. Of that, nine were limited employment divisions and four were offensive divisions. The latter included two Panzer divisions and two infantry divisions. The 341st Assault Gun Brigade was somewhere in the Marbonne area. Three tank battalions and sixteen OST\* Battalion<sup>s</sup> were scattered throughout ~~the~~ Southern France. ~~some~~ Several other labor units which were organized under the supervision of the German SS were also to be found in this area. Combat efficiency was considered to be fair; however, caution was taken so as not to under-estimate the enemy's capabilities, because the offensive divisions were considered high calibre outfits and veterans. German airpower was depleted to about 150 long range bombers, 30 bomber reconnaissance planes and 100 single engine fighters which could be expected to participate. No naval forces were considered as a major threat. The attitude of the civilian population was considered friendly and assistance from the FFI organizations was expected to be helpful and dependable. (10)

Enemy capabilities were limited to the following:

1. To defend on the water line
2. To defend on the high ground inland
3. To counterattack the beachhead forces
4. To contain the beachhead
5. To delay or withdraw (11)

Fixed defenses in the 3rd Division sector consisted of a shallow line of pillboxes, casements and strong points located

(10) A-3, A-5, p. 132; (11) A-3.

*\* See from source #6*

inland from the landing areas. All defenses were enclosed with tactical wire and mines. Offshore mines and obstacles were numerous in the 7th Infantry Regimental sector. Counter-attacks by the enemy could be expected in short time after the establishment of the initial beachhead line.

In general, the German forces consisted of the following order of battle: (12)

Army Group G, in control of all armies in Southern France  
Nineteenth Army, in control of the French Mediterranean Coast

LVIII Panzer Corps, participated in the German withdrawal from Southern France, August 1944

189th Infantry Division, involved after the initial Allied landing in Southern France

716th Infantry Division, engaged in combat during the initial phases

11th Panzer Division, engaged in combat throughout the Southern France Campaign.

In the 7th Infantry Regimental sector only the following German troops were considered as an immediate threat: (13)

917th Infantry Regiment less two companies

Elements of two companies 917th Infantry Regiment located at Cape Cavalaire-sur-Mer.

80% of an OST Battalion, located north of Red Beach

One battalion 155mm Artillery

205th OST Battalion

1190th Artillery Battalion

Reinforcements from the 765th Infantry Regiment which was

(12) A-8 (See Map A); (13) A-5, p. 132.



located about four miles north of Red Beach.

242nd Fussiliare Battalion

918th Infantry Regiment located west of Cape Negre.

G-2 reports indicated that hostile civilians swarmed the Naples - Pozzuoli area in Italy, thus a strict and rigidly controlled security system was established.

On 14 June 1944 the US 3rd Infantry Division moved from Rome, Italy, to the Naples area to once again prepare and train for an amphibious assault on enemy shores. (14) The 45th and 36th Divisions also began intensive preparations for their respective missions in the invasion. The 1st US Special Force and the French Groupe de Commandos prepared for their special assignments. The US Navy began their assembly of assault and supporting landing craft with the problem of supplying personnel and equipment to assist the infantry units in training. Special supplies and equipment, such as DD tanks, LCVP's, and radios, were assembled and combined Army-Navy coordinating meetings began planning operations.

In order to orient the reader, so as to understand the problem of terrain that confronted the planning boards, it is necessary to digress and mention a brief terrain analysis. (15) The coast line of Southern France is irregular with rocky headlands and small beaches. In general, directly behind the beaches, mountains rise to an elevation from 1,000 to 1,500 feet. The peninsula bounded by the Gulf de St. Tropez and Baie de Cavalaire rise from sea level to an elevation of 300 feet. Drainage is generally south to the sea and north to La Mole and Grande rivers.

(14) On 1 January 1944 the 7th Infantry Regiment began training in this same area for the Anzio operation; (15) A-3, A-5, p. 133.

No surface water would be found. There is one ridge system in the 7th Infantry's area between the coast and La Mole valley extending from Bormes. Red Beach consisted of a soft fine sand beach flanked by a narrow belt of tree covered dunes behind which is the coast road and railroad. Exits were adequate initially for a limited amount of personnel and heavy motor transportation after which minor preparations would be necessary.

(16) A single track narrow gauge railroad extends along the coast from the west thence northeast to Le Croix. One principal hard surfaced road, Route 98, existed, however several other good roads formed a suitable network for transportation. Mountain slopes, mentioned previously, are covered with scattered woods, however the lower slopes are usually terraced and cultivated. The bay of Cape Cavalaire-sur-Mer contains two beaches. The east beach was considered inadequate, ~~for landing operations,~~ therefore the west beach was selected for landing operations. Good anchorage for craft could be obtained 400 yards off shore in six fathoms of water. Red Beach (the west one) is 3900 yards long and from 20 to 50 yards wide; the southwestern half of the beach<sup>is</sup> backed by wooded slopes and the outskirts of the village of Cavalaire-sur-Mer. In the eastern half of Red Beach the hinterland consisted of cultivated fields with scattered field and farm houses.

The following military obstacles were considered: (17)

1. The lack of good roads
2. The difficulty of vehicle dispersion in the mountains
3. Ease of enemy defense capabilities
4. Limited use of armor, particularly tanks and tank

(16) Personal knowledge; A-3; (17) A-3, Annex II.

destroyers

5. Large number of vulnerable bridges, culverts, etc.
6. In general, cover and concealment were considered adequate.

It was expected that the enemy would have the beach moderately defended, with minor beach defenses, consisting of a rather shallow line of pillboxes and strong points located in rear of the landing areas. All defenses were mined and protected with tactical wire. Offshore mines and underwater obstacles were known to exist prior to the operation planning.

The enemy's ability to marshal reserves was considered to be dependent on the speed and surprise of the invasion. Counterattacks were to be expected in a minimum of time. The enemy's alternate, in the event he could not repel the invasion, was to delay and build up defenses to protect Toulon and Marseilles.

In general, the<sup>US</sup> Seventh Army's mission was to conduct an amphibious assault against Southern France in the sector east of Toulon with an immediate mission of capturing that port for future operations. This mission was accomplished by the following units:

VI Corps was assigned the mission of conducting a simultaneous daylight assault on the beaches from Cape Cavalaire to Agay employing three divisions abreast, advance inland and contact the Provisional Airborne Division at Le Muy area, and extend the beachhead to the high ground north of St. Raphael and Frejus, secure the Argus valley airfield sites, protect the right flank, seize Le Muy and advance to the northwest, maintaining contact with the I French Corps on the left flank. (See Map A)

1st Special Service Force would land and capture Port Cros and Leyant islands.

French Groupe de Commandos would land in the vicinity of Cape Negre prior to daylight D-day and seize the high ground two miles north of Cape Negre and protect the left flank.

An Airborne Task Force was assigned the mission of landing on the high ground north, west and south of Le Muy to prevent enemy movement into the assault areas.

Combat Command I, 1st French Armored Division, would land as directed by Commanding General VI Corps.

5th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group would be in direct support to 3rd Infantry Division.

Naval gunfire and air support was continuous and planned under separate orders. (18)

VI Corps planned to accomplish its mission in the following manner. 36th Division would land in the St. Raphael area; 45th Division would land in the Ste Maxime area; and the 3rd Division would land at two points as follows:

15th Infantry Regiment land at the Domaine area

7th Infantry Regiment land at Cape Cavalaire-sur-Mer area

30th Infantry Regiment land as reserves and pass through the 7th Infantry Regiment

The mission of the 3rd Infantry Division consisted of nine (9) assignments:

1. Land assault forces on beaches RED and YELLOW and clear them of all enemy resistance.

2. Capture St. Tropez, Grimaud, Cogliin and clear St. Tropez

(18) A-3.

peninsula of all enemy resistance.

3. Advance inland aggressively, coordinate all elements and capture the Corps beachhead line, prepare to continue west on Corps order.

4. Destroy all enemy resistance encountered.

5. Employ armored reconnaissance to reconnoiter all roads in the zone and gain contact with French Groupe de Commandos.

6. Protect VI Corps left flank.

7. Coordinate with 45th Division on right flank.

8. When passed through by elements of I French Corps, regroup and continue offensive in the right zone.

9. Maintain contact with I French Corps.

The 3rd Infantry Division, reinforced by approximately 20,000 troops consisting of supporting tactical and service troops, planned to attack with 7th and 15th Infantry Regiments landing as assault units and 30th Infantry Regiment, in reserve, to pass through the 7th Infantry Regiment upon the capture of Red Beach. Mission of 30th Infantry Regiment was to capture Coglin and Grimaud. 15th Infantry Regimental area for landing was located between Cape Comarat and Pointe de Capon to St. Tropez.

This invasion was to be the first daylight assault landing ever conducted by the 7th Infantry Regiment. All previous operations were initiated with the assault troops landing during the hours of darkness. (19)

#### THE REGIMENTAL SITUATION

The 7th Infantry Regiment participated in the capture of Rome, Italy, after which a short period was spent as occupation

(19) A-3, A-7.

troops of the Rome area. On 14 June the regiment moved by vehicle to Lido di Roma for six days. On 20 June the regiment moved via Anzio, to the Naples area to begin preparations for an operation, then unknown to anyone in the regiment.

The 7th Infantry Regimental bivouac and training area was located north of Pozzuoli, Italy, where the regiment had just six months prior embarked on the Anzio operation.

Upon arrival in this area small unit training began simultaneously with physical conditioning and general housekeeping. The training directives from higher headquarters seemed to indicate that the next operation would be either a river crossing or an amphibious operation. On about 27 June 1944 the Regimental Commander and S-3 were called to a planning board and the ground floor for an amphibious assault invasion took form. Immediately a small unit training section was set up in S-3 sections. (See Annex) Unit training included coordinated tank-infantry attacks on platoon and company level; small unit coordination with naval liaison groups (fire control parties); and coordinated supporting weapons training. The advanced training included assault boat landings with naval craft and regimental practice landing operations on beaches that were very similar to those beaches of Southern France. Each practice operation and training phase was carefully critiqued. This proved to be one of the most valuable training phases available in that it assisted each individual to note his errors and visualize his part in the regimental plans. It was in this phase that many of the lessons learned in previous operations were pointed out and corrective action taken. The result of this extensive and detailed training

was perfection of performance of all individuals. Due to the shortage of naval craft initially, mock-up LCVP's were constructed on the ground. Necessary barbed wire courses, demolitions, night attack problems, mountain training, mine field work, formations, communications, and many other minor subjects were formulated into a progressive training schedule; however, all of the training strove for physical conditioning, aggressiveness and coordination. Two actual practice landings were conducted. All personnel participated so as to be certain that each man knew his job. It is well to point out that these practice landings were conducted on beaches and terrain very similar to that of Red Beach, Southern France. During this time many planning, logistical, loading, and combined Army-Navy coordinating boards were developing the final plans. Briefing of personnel began with key regimental staff members and battalion commanders. Sandtables, maps and air photos, all without identification, were used to good advantage. S-4 and the motor officers began the detailed waterproofing task and completed it with the utmost speed and efficiency. During the initial planning stages only an outline of plans ~~were~~ known, but by 1 August 1944 a complete regimental plan was ready for issue. On 3 August 1944 a combined meeting was called for all officers. (See Annex)

This meeting was the final one and proved most valuable because small points most vital to an operation of this type were coordinated and each officer understood his part in the completed picture. For the next few days each unit commander held briefings with his men. As a final preparation each battalion placed a small identification symbol painted on the backs

of their helmets. For simplicity the battalions decided to use a heart, diamond, club, respectively. Other units within the regiment used a similar marking. By doing this, a commander could immediately recognize his men and better control his movement across the beaches.

Needless to state that during the training and planning phases up to the embarkation all security measures were strictly enforced. No one except selected commanders and staff officers knew the exact country where the landing was to take place. After the ships were loaded with both men and equipment, and in their rendezvous areas, the Regimental S-2 personally delivered maps and data to each unit commander. They were instructed not to open the sealed packages until 24 hours out at sea. (20)

It is necessary to digress at this time to explain the organization of the Regimental Battle Patrol. On Anzio each regiment in the 3rd Infantry Division organized regimental battle patrols consisting of a small headquarters and supply group, three groups of 15 men each. Total strength 4 officers and 48 enlisted men. All personnel were volunteers with battle experience. Officers and men were specially trained and equipped for all types of limited reconnaissance and combat patrolling or attacks. For the Southern France operation this organization was changed to consist of a headquarters, three rifle platoons, two gun mortar sections, two gun machine gun sections, and a small demolitions section. Total strength 4 officers and 160 enlisted men.

Attachments to the 7th Infantry Regiment consisted of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion with 634th Battalion less one  
(20) Personal knowledge.



battery, Company A 10th Engineer Battalion, Company A 3rd Chemical Battalion, Company A 3rd Medical Battalion and 30th Infantry Regimental Battle Patrol, Company A 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company A 756th Tank Battalion. Supporting elements were numerous, a few mentioned herein were the 3rd Battalion 36th Engineer Regiment, Naval Shore Fire Control Parties, Detachment 6617 Mine Clearing Company, Detachment 3rd Signal Company and Prisoner of War Interrogation Teams.

The mission of the 7th Infantry Regiment was assigned as follows: (21)

1. Land two battalions in the assault at H-hour.
2. Land remainder of the regiment in accordance with the landing schedule, advance to initial beachhead line and destroy enemy in zone of action.
3. Occupy and hold enemy beyond the initial beachhead line.
4. Establish and maintain contact with the 15th Infantry Regiment.
5. Reconnoiter toward Cape Negre and establish contact with French Groupe de Commandos.
6. Protect the Division left flank.
7. On Division order advance to the west along highway 98 through LaMole.

#### THE REGIMENTAL PLAN OF ATTACK

The 7th Infantry Regiment planned to accomplish its mission by the method outlined by Field Order No. 12 dated 2 August 1944. An explanation of the method and material utilized to derive this plan would involve a long description of various coordinated

(21) A-3.

activities of all staff sections and subordinate commanders, based particularly on S-2 information and S-3 map studies in conjunction with adjacent units and the division plan. The following plan is condensed but all vital points are mentioned herein: (22) (See Map B)

1. 2nd Battalion (reinforced) was to land in the right half of Red Beach, destroy all enemy resistance in that zone. Reorganize on the coordinating line X-Y and advance to the initial beachhead line, thence to objective D. Prepare to advance to the west, on regimental order; or establish road-blocks and hold present position and support by fire 30th Infantry Regiment advance to the north and northwest. Patrol aggressively on all avenues of approach.

2. 30th Infantry Battle Patrol (attached to 2nd Battalion) was to land on the right of 2nd Battalion, destroy all enemy resistance and contact 15th Infantry Regiment at C-1 (see Map B) on the extreme right flank of the initial beachhead line. Upon contact revert to control of 30th Infantry Regiment.

3. 3rd Battalion (reinforced) was to land on the left flank of Red Beach, destroy all enemy resistance in that zone. Reorganize on the coordinating line M-N and continue the advance along coastal road to the initial beachhead line. (23) One company 3rd Battalion to seize high ground (24) and destroy all enemy forces encountered. Establish road blocks. Prepare to advance to the west along coastal road to division beachhead line. (25) Protect the division left flank. Patrol aggressively on all avenues of approach.

(22) A-3; (23) Map B, Objective A; (24) Map B, Objective B; (25) Map B, Objectives 1,2,3,4,5, and 6.

4. Battle Patrol 7th Infantry Regiment (attached to 3rd Battalion) was to land on the extreme left flank, assist in clearing the beach of enemy resistance, advance along the coastal road, clear enemy resistance from defensive positions at Cape Cavalaire-sur-Mer peninsula, and contact the French Groupe de Commandos at Cape Negre.

5. 1st Battalion was to land on Red Beach at H plus 30, clear any enemy resistance remaining on the beach, send a strong patrol to capture high ground 3500 yards north of the landing area (Objective C2), contact 2nd Battalion at a point on the western edge of their objective, prepare to meet a counterattack or continue the advance to west astride highway 98 to division beachhead line, maintain contact with 30th Infantry Regiment on the right and 3rd Battalion on the left. (26)

6. Anti-tank and Cannon Companies were to land on schedule and plan support of either battalion by fire against both enemy personnel or armor. Anti-tank Company to attach one platoon each to 2nd and 3rd Battalions.

7. 10th Field Artillery (reinforced) was to support the regiment by fire and place fire on highway 98 upon receipt of regimental orders.

8. Company A, 10th Engineer Battalion was to give direct support to the regimental advance until ordered to revert to division control.

9. Company A, 756th Tank Battalion and Company A, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion were to land and attach one platoon to each assault battalion, as soon as de-waterproofing was accomplished.

(26) Refer to Map B.

These companies, less above platoons, were to support the regimental advance and be prepared to meet an enemy counterattack.

10. Company A, 3rd Chemical Battalion was to support the regiment by fire.

11. Company A, 3rd Medical Battalion, Regimental Medical Section, Service Company, Prisoner of War Teams, and a Signal Detachment 3rd Signal Company were to land on schedule and support the regiment in their respective roles. Such administrative details as traffic control, evacuation, straggler lines, and supplies were covered by separate orders. (27)

Three alternate plans were developed and issued in preparation for an unfordable beach.

If no obstacles for landing were present the assault echelon would discharge a red smoke grenade. When beach defenses were neutralized the assault battalions would display a violet smoke grenade. Yellow grenades would identify friendly troops to air support units. If obstacles prevented a landing, a green parachute flare would be discharged.

An elaborate smoke plan was issued in conjunction with the air and naval support plans.

The regimental code for reference to ground locations was issued in the form of a check point code system.

Final coordination with the Navy resulted in two loading areas being designated. One at Baia and one at Nisida, Italy, both within a few miles of the regimental assembly area at Pozzuoli, Italy. All ships and landing craft were loaded in priority manner and early on 9 August 1944 troops began to

(27) A-3.

board their various assigned craft. Each man carried his combat landing equipment and in many cases extra ammunition for crew served weapons. Other individual loads consisted of pole charges, satchel charges, grenades, extra radios, packs, wire cutters, and gas masks. Each individual carried one K ration and three D rations.

#### H-HOUR D-DAY

On 9-10 August 1944, the craft bearing the 7th Infantry Regimental Combat Team moved from the ports of Naples, Italy, and rendezvoused in the Gulfs of Naples and Salerno. On 12 August 1944 the invasion armada sailed and began the voyage to Southern France. On 13 August 1944 the convoy passed through the Bonifacio Strait that separates Corsica and Sardinia. Continuing to the harbor of Ajaccio, the convoy conducted another rendezvous where the final assembly of the armada was completed. During this period small unit briefings were conducted and mental rehearsals prepared each individual and prevented him from forgetting his part in the invasion. (28)

On 14 August 1944 the armada closed the formation and by darkness had maneuvered into assigned areas off the coast of France. H-hour was set at 0800 hours. Assault troops were alerted prior to 0630 hours 15 August 1944 and after a hot breakfast, were loaded into waiting LCVP's. (29) At 0630 hours the Naval guns began the bombardment of Red Beach, air strikes by the Air Corps became frequent. All types of aircraft could be observed in the air, some of which were attack bombers, fighters, heavies, and observation aircraft. All fires of both

(28) A-5, p. 133, Personal knowledge; (29) LCVP-landing craft vehicle or personnel.

air and navy were pounding the beaches on organized precision schedules. Medium bombers bombed Red Beach with 100-pound quick-fuze bombs in an attempt to detonate known enemy mine fields and destroy beach obstacles.

About one-half hour prior to H-hour the Naval rocket ships began their bombardment of Red Beach, firing a series of 4000 rockets in accordance with a prearranged schedule. (30)

The Naval Commander (31) ordered the V-boats sent ashore. (32) A total of four were launched and, upon contact with enemy off shore mines and obstacles, all four sent up a dense cloud of water when they exploded.

The enemy made no immediate answer to the fire. The massed coordinated fire plan was the most intensive landing fire preparation ever witnessed by the 7th Infantry Regiment in its long history of amphibious operations. These fires continued while each assault wave rendezvoused in its respective area.

Teams of army and navy personnel under navy control with special training and equipment were used with limited success in clearing underwater obstacles. (33)

An LST with a constructed flight ramp on the main deck enabled artillery liaison, L-4 and L-5 aircraft planes to take off and support the infantry advance. These planes with observers directed naval gunfire in addition to the supporting air and artillery fires.

Finally as the stage was set, under the cover of the mass of fires and the dense smoke caused by the impact areas, all

(30) A-7; (31) Commander Greiger, US Navy, in command of all navy assault craft on Red Beach; (32) These boats were LCVP's loaded with explosives that would detonate upon contact with offshore mines or obstacles; (33) A-7.

waves began their run for shore. At this time radios were opened but no transmittals except emergencies were to be made until ashore.

From the Command LCI, which was running in just in rear of the assault battalions, a serious incident could be observed and for the moment it looked as though an alternate plan might be necessary. The 2nd Battalion had struck water mines and obstacles about 75 yards off shore. Two LCVP's of Company G were blown to bits, a total of 40 men were missing, and another LCVP of Company F struck a mine and lost 20 men. (34) It might be said that at this time an alternate plan could have been placed into effect; however, as the assault waves approached shore the chances of a successful change in plans decreased. In view of the fact that the 30th Infantry Battle Patrol and 3rd Battalion had not encountered a similar situation, the Commanding Officer 7th Infantry Regiment decided to proceed as planned. (35)

The exact time that troops set ashore is not known by the author; however, everything was on schedule and it is assumed that troops hit the shore exactly at 0800 hours. The Navy smoke plan was now in effect and visibility became limited. Enemy fire was now being received from most of the known positions. Enemy 20mm, small arms, and machine gun fire began on the left flank, firing final protective lines across the water obstacles and beach areas. When the Regimental Commander and his party were about one-quarter mile off shore, they loaded into an await-

(34) A-5, p. 134, Personal knowledge and statement of Captain Richard L. Kerr, then Executive Officer Company G; (35) Statement of Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro.

ing LCVP and moved ashore, nearly hitting an underwater minefield about 200 yards off shore.

The 30th Infantry Battle Patrol began their mission immediately upon beaching. Radio communications failed and no contact with this unit was maintained. If this patrol had encountered heavy resistance, no one would have known it. Several attempts failed to gain knowledge of their location, however 2nd Battalion was able to verify their situation at about 1000 hours. This patrol did accomplish their mission very effectively and after meeting only light resistance consisting of scattered riflemen, contacted the 15th Infantry Regiment at 1025 hours. No further incidents occurred.

The 2nd Battalion landed with Company F on the left, Company G center and Company E on the right, moved through beach obstacles and mine fields rapidly so as to avoid the enemy beach defensive fires which were now increasing and being fired from the enemy inland defenses. At 0825 Commanding Officer 2nd Battalion (36) sent the following message to the Regimental Commander, "Receiving mortar and small arms fire on the right flank". A Red smoke grenade was observed indicating that enemy obstacles did not prevent the landing. At 0850 another message from 2nd Battalion stated that "Battalion at Coordinating line X-Y". A violet smoke grenade was observed indicating that enemy beach defenses had been neutralized in the 2nd Battalion sector. The battalion moved rapidly and at 1025 captured objective C, established road blocks, and sent patrols (36) Lt. Col. Clayton Thobro



towards objective D. Many enemy emplacements were found abandoned, a probable effect of the naval and air preparations. The Regimental Commander ordered 2nd Battalion to proceed to objective D. This objective was captured after a skirmish with 20 German riflemen by Company F while crossing the hills. Thirty-five prisoners were captured but since the Regimental PWI team had not landed, accurate information was not available. Minor interrogation was accomplished by 2nd Battalion but no important information could be obtained. 2nd Battalion temporarily remained on objective D. (37)

By the time 1st Battalion landed, enemy anti-aircraft guns, machine guns, mortar, self propelled and artillery were firing but our smoke plan was effectively destroying the enemy's accuracy thus all units landed successfully.

1st Battalion landed on the right of the 3rd Battalion at 0845, advanced, through enemy beach defensive fires and mine fields, to the regimental reserve area. A strong combat patrol was sent to objective C-2 and no resistance was encountered. The remainder of the battalion moved to objective B, at 1400 hours, to relieve Company I. The reason, obviously, why 1st Battalion was not moved prior to this time was because they were held as a security and counterattacking force.

The Regimental Commander's forward party landed simultaneously with elements of the 1st Battalion. The smoke covering the landing began to disperse somewhat and enemy heavy mortar and some self propelled weapons fire was being directed effectively

(37) A-5, p. 134, personal knowledge and statement of Captain Richard L Kerr, executive officer Company G and Major Robert D. Marsh then Company Commander Company F.

onto the beach. After moving about 100 yards inland to a small cluster of trees on the north edge of the beach, a short halt was effected. In the anxiety to gain contact with all units, radio nets were reopened. (38) This forward party was brought under observed heavy mortar fire and six casualties resulted; all were key communications and other specialists personnel. A short time later the 30th Infantry Regiment began landing and crossing the beaches. It was found that due to the mass of troops crossing the beach at this time, a slight state of confusion was caused temporarily. Elements of the 30th Infantry Regiment passed through the 7th Infantry Regimental forward CP and disrupted communications by accidentally tearing out wire lines, and several of our men thought that the troops passing through the area were our own and started to follow them. The Regimental Commander's forward party decided to move to the area designated previously and try to contact the battalions from that location. In advancing to this area it was necessary to pass through two mine fields, one of which was a dummy field, obviously an attempt to confuse our landing party. Upon reaching the draw designated to be the forward CP area, contact was gained with all units as well as the beach engineers, who were by now destroying mines and underwater obstacles in an attempt to establish landing lanes for the supporting weapons. At 1030 all units reported that they were making progress and the Regimental Commander ordered the 2nd Battalion to capture the objective D. About this time the forward CP

(38) Radio nets were closed for the periods of beaching.

party came under artillery fire of a heavy caliber and was forced inland further than anticipated. Minor casualties in the CP group caused a reorganization while on the move.

Four floating tanks, known as DD tanks, were landed with the assault waves. Two on each flank of the regiment. Three of these reached shore, one was hit by a short rocket round and subsequently sunk by an underwater mine. In another of these tanks the tank commander was wounded by enemy small arms fire. The two remaining tanks landed without incident and supported the infantry by fire. (39)

The effectiveness of the use of check points, proved very valuable and saved a great amount of time as evidenced by the convenience and brevity of the following message from the regimental S-3 to the regimental executive officer, "CP 400 yds N of Pt. EX. Join us immediately." Contact points and phase lines also proved valuable in the same manner particularly in coordinating and continuing advances. Phase lines were also used as lines of departure. An example of the use of contact points is cited by this message from Commanding Officer 7th Infantry Regiment to Commanding Officer 1st Battalion, "Concord will contact you at Utah". (40)

Immediately after the assault troops landed, beach engineers began exploding the remaining mines and destroying water obstacles. Some armor and artillery was on its way in to the respective landing areas. The Regimental Commander requested that this

(39) A-2; (40) Personal knowledge

operation be expedited due to the excellent breakthrough and advances being exploited.

It is well to note at this time that much of the equipment carried by the assault troops was found discarded. Items found by the beach engineers consisted of gas masks, extra bangalore torpedos, satchel charges, etc.; However, most of the items were in excess to the individual's combat loads.

The 3rd Battalion landed with Company I on the right, Company L in the center and Company K on the left. Company I encountered no resistance and advanced rapidly capturing objective B. Company K encountered small arms fire immediately upon landing. All units except Company I received enemy light mortar and artillery fire from the peninsula at Cavalaire-sur-Mer; however casualties were light and the battalion advanced rapidly, bypassed Cape Cavalaire and captured objective A. Road blocks were established and patrols sent to the west and north. Due to the preparation fires of the navy and air support, many dazed prisoners were captured without resistance. (41)

At 1030 hours Company K drove on for objective A-1 and Company L dispatched a patrol to contact Company I at the contact point Texas. The route of advance for the 3rd Battalion was more heavily mined than the routes of other units in the regiment. Shortly after 1030 hours the 3rd Battalion was ordered to follow Company K's advance to the Division Beachhead line to the west. Scattered enemy resistance, at appropriate defensive positions, was quickly neutralized by the 3rd Battalion. The forward elements

(41) A-5, p. 135, Statement of Lt Col Ralph Flynn then S-3  
3rd Battalion

of the battalion reached the division beachhead line at 1900 hours.

It is well to point out that the actual occupation of all objectives indicated was not accomplished. Only such objectives as the battalion commanders decided to actually place troops on, and those where the enemy indicated a defensive attitude, were captured and occupied by our forces. The objectives indicated were the responsibility of the commanders concerned and had the enemy held each one in force it would have been necessary to coordinate an attack on each objective.

The 7th Infantry Battle Patrol landed on the left flank of the 3rd Battalion but received mortar, 20-mm flak and some self-propelled weapons fire throughout their landing. Mines were encountered by the first elements on the beach. The patrol experienced great difficulty in advancing to the beach highway due to this enemy fire and mines. The navy increased their smoke concentrations and this assisted in screening the movement by decreasing the enemy's observation and accuracy of fires. Two casualties were reported prior to hitting the beach. The Battle Patrol after reorganization on the beach line, pivoted their movement to the west with three platoons abreast, astride the coastal highway. The 1st Platoon on the left, south of the highway, encountered a large amount of small arms machine gun and sniper fire when they reached the edge of the town of Cavalaire-sur-Mer. The peninsula afforded the enemy the best position from which to hamper the landing operations, and utilize his forces to the best advantage. Weapons observed at this time consisted of one self-propelled artillery piece, 4 artillery pieces,

numerous anti-aircraft 90-mm guns, one anti-tank gun, 2 casements and numerous machine gun positions. The 1st Platoon leader and platoon sergeant were killed, the platoon guide was seriously wounded in the neck by a mine fragment but he led his platoon through the minefield and attacked a fortified position. It was in this action where he was again wounded in the shoulder by a sniper. He continued to lead his platoon in the attack through mortar fire and conducted a house to house assault against enemy machine guns and snipers. This time he was shot in the leg which felled him from where he continued to give orders and direct the assault as best he could. Finally, unable to continue, he was forced to give the command of the platoon to a section sergeant who continued the action. The platoon, now about one-third its original strength, was successful in continuing the advance. (42) Many other individual actions occurred which may be attributed to the training, initiative and courage. Another sergeant single handed, destroyed two enemy machine gun positions and a lieutenant captured 18 determined enemy. A private destroyed another machine gun and two other privates first class destroyed an enemy anti-tank gun and killed 10 enemy personnel. (43) The Battle Patrol's 2nd and 3rd Platoons encountered the same minefield as did the 1st Platoon, and received fire from two pillboxes west of the 1st Platoon's pivot position. These were quickly destroyed and the 2nd Platoon advanced through Cavalaire-sur-Mer into the peninsula. The yards and certain areas in and around the streets of Cavalaire-sur-Mer contained minefields enclosed by barbed wire.

(42) A-5, p. 134, statement of Captain William Dieleman Battle Patrol Commander. Sgt. James P. Connor received the CMH for this action. (43) A-5, p. 134

Particular care was taken to prevent troops from entering these mined areas. The 2nd Platoon emplaced machine guns and mortars so as to fire in rear of the enemy positions which were located along the coast to the east. An automatic rifleman was placed so as to fire directly on to a self propelled weapon located between the platoon and the coast. The 3rd Platoon joined the 2nd Platoon at this time. The 1st Platoon was nearly exhausted and tactically destroyed, and no further mission could be assigned this unit. A strong patrol was dispatched by the Battle Patrol commander to destroy all remaining enemy along the eastern coast of the peninsula. In about 1-1/2 hours the self-propelled weapon was destroyed by a satchel charge and all other enemy weapons were neutralized by small arms fire and hand grenades. One lone enemy machine gun opened fire at the Battle Patrol CP but it was quickly neutralized. At approximately 0945 hours the Battle Patrol continued on its mission to the west.

The exact number of enemy and <sup>equipment</sup> destroyed ~~is~~ unknown; however, the overall picture of the prisoners taken during 15 August 1944 indicated the enemy order of battle included elements 765 Regiment, 242 Division; 242 Artillery Regiment; 10/1291 Artillery Regiment; 1/765, IV/76, III/917 and IV/917; I/305, 6/757/ II/933 and II/757; miscellaneous army and navy personnel. (44)

The Battle Patrol mission remained that of being attached to the 3rd Battalion.

(44) A-2.

ADVANCE TO THE WEST

At 1700 hours 15 August 1944 the Commanding General 3rd Infantry Division ordered the continuance of the advance to the west. 1st Battalion was ordered to move west astride highway 98, through La Mole, to the corps beachhead line. This move was begun immediately. During the night of 15-16 August the Battle Patrol established a road block in the vicinity of Canadel, on the right flank of the 3rd Battalion. The forward elements of the 3rd Battalion contacted the French Groupe de Commandos, and passed through their positions in the vicinity of objectives A-4 and A-5, at 1900 hours. (S-3 17200 17)  
(45)

Company K with the Battle Patrol attached led the 3rd Battalion advance to the west along the coastal road and encountered strong stubborn enemy delaying forces entrenched in appropriate defensive positions. At 2345 hours Company K was forced to a halt, in the vicinity of Cavalaire and Pointe de La et, due to enemy fire from about 40 enemy who were defending on terrain that afforded only little troop and no armor maneuver. The high hills to the north and the open soft beaches provided the enemy with ideal positions. All approaches were mined and protected with both small arms and anti-tank fires. One tank, attached to 3rd Battalion, and one reconnaissance vehicle from the 3rd Reconnaissance Troop, were destroyed by fire. Commanding Officer Company K directed tank fire and destroyed one enemy machine gun, but the enemy retaliated heavily and caused minor  
(45) Statement of Lt Col. Ralph Flynn then S-3 3rd Battalion.



disorganization in the company. The Company Commander led his men through a mined area and destroyed three hostile machine guns. Unable to advance the Commanding Officer 3rd Battalion (46) led Companies I and L to the north on high ground where they could observe enemy positions which were located on Pointe de La et, a small peninsula south of the coast road. The enemy had Companies I and L areas well registered with mortar and artillery fire which was placed on these two companies as soon as they reached the hills. Mines were also encountered and several casualties were caused by these scattered fields. Despite this fire and mines the flanking forces had the enemy nearly sealed off by 1300 hours. After a coordinated attack on these positions by the 3rd Battalion, the enemy attempted to escape but only a few accomplished this due to the completeness of the 3rd Battalion pincer movement. Enemy personnel captured consisted of one officer, 91 enlisted men. During this action many men displayed outstanding courage. (47)

At 1900 hours 16 August the 3rd Battalion again continued the advance to the west.

During this action and subsequent engagements of the 7th Infantry Regiment the enemy failed to destroy the very limited road net in the Red Beach sector. Had the enemy done this, it would have been difficult to overcome such an obstacle.

The 7th Infantry regiment less the 3rd Battalion advanced to the west through Le Mole astride highway 98. 1st Battalion, in the lead passed through Le Mole at approximately 2230 hours.

(46) A-5, Capt John W. Blaikie Company Commander Company K and Lt Col Lloyd B. Ramsey Commanding Officer 3rd Battalion.  
(47) Pfc Juland A. Aaron received the DSC and 5 other men received Silver Stars for this action.

At 2300 hours the Regimental CP advanced party entered Le Mole and were fired on by several small arms weapons from a road block in the vicinity of a lumber yard. Upon proper investigation it was found that a French Groupe de Commando party had established the block and opened fire by mistake. The Regiment continued its advance in the order of 1st Battalion, Regimental CP forward party, and 2nd Battalion. The forward elements of 1st Battalion encountered small enemy resistance, consisting of 5 to 20 riflemen, throughout the night. At 0800 hours 16 August 1944, the advanced guard encountered a strongly held road block at Grattleloup road junction. <sup>(SECRET)</sup> The regimental forward party immediately set up operations on the side of the highway in a draw close to the 1st Battalion elements. A road blowout protected by enemy small arms fire prevented 1st Battalion troops from advancing. The 1st Battalion rifle companies maneuvered but were unable to penetrate the enemy's small arms machine gun, mortar, and artillery fires. An all day battle was fought with little advance being accomplished prior to night fall. At 1500 hours the enemy increased all fires particularly those of his artillery and heavy mortars. An enemy concentration, searching the draws and highway approaches hit an ammunition truck and several other supply vehicles which inflicted a few casualties and started a forest fire. The Regimental S-3 vehicle was hit by an artillery shell and all records and equipment were destroyed. Needless to say that the ammunition, gasoline and other equipment lost was detrimental to the operation

since supplies were in limited amounts. Elements of the 2nd Battalion were committed to fighting forest fires which threatened our main supply route. At 2000 hours 16 August, Company C captured the enemy position at hill 240, 7; but Company B was experiencing great difficulty in moving to the high ground north of the road junction. The 2nd Battalion, at 1415 hours 16 August, dispatched Company F, with an artillery liaison officer, cross-country to the south of Company C position and parallel to a secondary road which connects Bormes and Gratteloup road junction. At 0800 hours 17 August, 3rd Battalion captured Bormes and shortly thereafter Company F gained contact at this point. The terrain along Company F route of advance was rugged, in that very high hills and rough terrain retarded their advance. The majority of the hills were terraced, with steep walls. The uncertainty of the enemy's positions along this route caused the company much concern and forced a slow advance with extended reconnaissance patrols. The darkness of the night lent itself to the advantage of the enemy, all these factors combined restricted the speed of the operation to a great extent. 2nd Battalion less Company F passed through 1st Battalion at 0900 hours. They succeeded in destroying enemy resistance and continued the advance to the west. (48)

The 3rd Battalion advanced along the coastal road and passed through Le Lavandou during the night of 16-17 August. Enemy personnel and positions were bypassed throughout this movement. The forward elements of the 3rd Battalion received

(48) Personal knowledge and the combined statements of Lt Col Ralph Flynn and Major Robert D. Marsh. A-5, p. 135

fire from positions 2000 yards south of Bormes at 0300 hours 17 August. Since the battalion was to advance rapidly as possible; it was decided, after a small skirmish, that this position should be bypassed. At 0700 hours Company L reinforced with tanks and tank destroyers, was sent to capture the town of Bormes which was accomplished after a fire fight. About 10 enemy with two artillery pieces were captured in this action.

Supporting the 3rd Battalion during this maneuver was Battery C of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, commanded by Captain Anderson. At 1030 hours he was passing through Le Lavandou, while on reconnaissance for new positions, when he and his party were captured by an enemy force which had been bypassed during the night. (49)

The 3rd Battalion advanced to Le Verriere road junction where all units of the 7th Infantry Regiment converged.

It is well to note that many enemy were bypassed and caused alarm several times by sniper action in our rear areas. In one instance an enemy patrol cut the axis of communications between Regimental and Division Headquarters.

The 2nd Battalion continued the advance to the west astride highway 98 and continued to encounter isolated islands of resistance consisting of an automatic weapon protected with 5 to 10 riflemen. One tank supporting Company E was destroyed by enemy anti-tank gun fire in the vicinity of Maravenne River.

(49) Personal knowledge and statement of Lt Col Ralph Flynn, then S-3 3rd Battalion

During these many fire fights several officers and enlisted men distinguished themselves by courageous combat while under intense fire. (50)

The Regimental CP was established in a draw east of ~~St~~ Honore. 1st Battalion moved by vehicle from their assembly area north of Le Verriere to Pierrfeu arriving there at 1745 hours 17 August. Company A established a road block on the Hyeres-Cuers <sup>(Wier)</sup> road while Company B moved to Cuers two miles northwest of Pierrfeu.

3rd Battalion passed through 2nd Battalion and assembled in the vicinity of Le Lassons during the night of 17-18 August. At 0615 hours 18 August, 3rd Battalion attacked along the high ground north of highway 98. Due to the rugged terrain, advance was slow and at 1200 hours the forward elements encountered heavy resistance in the vicinity of Le Galoupet. This resistance consisted of all types of fire, particularly that of small arms which was fired from well prepared defenses which protected the coastal guns. Companies I and L, abreast, repulsed an enemy counterattack that attempted to advance between the two company flanks. 3rd Battalion assumed defensive positions on the high ground north of highway 98 overlooking Hyeres.

RELIEVED BY THE I FRENCH CORPS

At 1245 hours 18 August a unit of the French Groupe de Commandos consisting of approximately 800 troops attached to the

(50) A-5, p. 135, S/Sgt Stanley Bender Company E received the CMH for his action in capturing La Londe; Pvt Edward S. Hargt Company E received the DSC (posthumously) for his participation in the same action; many others were cited for bravery during 16-17 August action.

7th Infantry Regiment relieved the 2nd Battalion who were in a hasty defensive position in vicinity of La Londe.

Companies I and L attacked a pillbox and enemy entrenchments to the west of their positions but received very heavy fire. A subsequent attack from the southeast by the French Groupe de Commandos succeeded in capturing the position. The French units supported by the 3rd Battalion efforts destroyed 8 blockhouses, with walls 6 feet thick, 4 artillery pieces, killed 60 Germans and took 100 prisoners. The French, at this time, continued the action and reverted to their own respective command. The 7th Infantry Regiment completely relieved by the French forces began the movement by motor to the north.

2nd Battalion moved by vehicle to the north of Flassins thence on 19 August 1944 occupied temporary positions in the vicinity of Meounes and Forcalqueiert.

3rd Battalion moved by vehicle to the north to the vicinity of Aix on 19 August and prepared for an advance to the north.

By 20 August 1944 the entire regiment was again exploiting the advance to the north towards the Rhone Valley penetrations and on to Montelimar.

#### Statistics (51)

Total KIA (7th Infantry Regiment) on Red Beach

D-Day 58\*

Total casualties (7th Infantry Regiment) on Red

Beach on D-Day 203

\*This figure does not include MIA or other unreported casualties as of 16 August 1944.

Contrary to common belief the southern France invasion was the costliest one of the four amphibious assaults conducted by the 7th Infantry Regiment.

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In analyzing this operation, it can be realized that detailed plans and coordination prior to an invasion, are a vital instrument in success. Training was probably the most important and proved its worth by the numerous occasions of individual heroism and actions. Small unit commanders displayed initiative in practically all instances. Plans and preparations for amphibious landings must anticipate situations which include both a speedy breakthrough with extended supply lines, and the opposite situation where the enemy might contain the beachhead.

Emphasis on small unit training, physical conditioning, and briefings paid large dividends as evidenced by the lack of exhaustion, fatigue, and confusion of the individual in this operation.

The excellent coordination between the army small units, navy commanders and air forces prevented hinderance in accomplishing a difficult mission.

The advantages of a daylight landing were realized by the 7th Infantry Regiment when the tremendous fire power and close supporting weapons, which were lacking in previous night landings, prepared the way for assault troops.

Loading of troops and troop comfort must be considered. Although troops were crowded, all conveniences possible were provided. During the period aboard ship briefings and activities were continuous; however not to the extent of harassing the men and depriving them of needed rest and relaxation.

Such improvised field expedients as DD tanks, V boats, and rocket ships, proved themselves worthy of existence in this operation. There is however room for improvement in these instruments.

Communications with the units within the regiment failed in several instances, primarily in the case of the 30th Infantry Battle Patrol, and the 3rd Battalion actions. There is a definite need for more powerful communications equipment in this type of operation. Wire was used only in local situations. Due to the heavy traffic across Red Beach, wire was the most difficult to maintain. Civilian open wires were used but with only limited success. Pyrotechnics were used to good advantage during the initial beaching of units.

Special combat organizations such as battle patrols were most effective and freed the battalions for larger and more aggressive missions. These organizations are however a field expedient and probably would not prove successful as part of a normal organization.

The possibility of accomplishing the execution of an alternate plan decreased as units began movement ashore. As in the case of the 2nd Battalion when three LCVP's hit mines,



it is doubtful if the alternate plans could have been executed in an orderly manner. Once the invasion began it would have been impossible to recall or maneuver the regiment. Emergency alternate action, as affects the smaller units, could be initiated by individual boat commanders.

The use of coordinating lines and reference point code systems proved to be the most expeditious means in designating positions. This was pointed out to be the actual messages transmitted.

As experienced by the regimental CP group, all units must clear the beach, especially when follow-up-troops are to pass through the area. Execution of the original plan is imperative except when the situation demands a change.

Close-up beach engineer support is of utmost importance as obviously pointed out by the fact that the 36<sup>th</sup> engineers began destroying beach obstacles and mines immediately, so as to allow supporting armor and artillery to land.

The planning and designation of individual equipment loads is an important factor in efficiency. Individuals were forced to drop many items that were found to be too bulky and heavy to carry. Aids in carrying equipment may help shoulder the load, but the weight remains the same. Much of the equipment and supplies was recovered by the beach parties and used to good advantage; therefore if individuals are overloaded as a means of getting limited supplies ashore, this method is successful.

Due to the limited road net and the rough impassable terrain, the enemy failed greatly in utilizing one of his most

potent weapons when he failed to destroy the roads at the numerous places which lent themselves to his advantage. In considering the location of the southern France landing, the question arises as to whether this was given consideration and what preparations were made to overcome this great obstacle. Within the 7th Infantry Regiment there were no means of assisting armor and supplies across the rugged mountains; therefore foot travel would have definitely retarded the operation and reduced the rapid advance and fighting effectiveness.

In the 3rd Battalion sector, vicinity of Cavalaire, the high mountains channelized the movement of the battalion; this was also true of 1st and 2nd Battalion actions in the vicinity of Grattleloup. The channelized condition caused the commitment of troops of one small unit at a time; this was not true in all instances, but where applied, the shock of massed fire was lost.

Units particularly those of the 3rd and 2nd Battalions and the Battle Patrol, continued to advance regardless of the mines encountered. This is important as can be realized by the fact that if mines stop a unit they immediately become vulnerable to enemy fire.

Another fact, outlined by this operation, is that of continued strong attacks and the maintenance of the initiative. All units of the regiment continued the attack in a steady pressure throughout the days and nights in which they were engaged. Once the attack started defense was not considered as

a probable line of action.

During this operation, although not expressed in preceding paragraphs, control was facilitated by the fact that this was a daylight operation. Needless to say that concealment could be obtained as indicated by the smoke plans, but this lent itself to the maintenance of better control than did the darkness of a night landing.

Reconnaissance patrol reports and other reports were lacking from both lower and higher units. However since this operation was on a large front, only such actions by the enemy as would affect the entire operation seemed important. Normally the information gained affected the immediate unit. The exception to this was reports on road conditions, bridges, etc.

Sniper action, although costly to our forces, was ineffective in halting or even retarding the advance. This is evidenced by the actions of the 2nd Battalion in Le Croix and the Battle Patrol at Cape Cavalaire-sur-Mer.

Mop-up operations and road patrols are necessary to keep bypassed enemy personnel and positions from interfering with supporting units and supply echelons. This was verified by the capture of the artillery commander long after our units had passed through the Le Lavandou and the enemy road block set up between regimental and division command posts.

Speed in reorganization, at coordinating lines, was accomplished by all units. Undoubtedly previous briefings and training enabled commanders to execute this with utmost speed.

Prisoner of War Interrogation Teams did not land soon enough to gain information from the first prisoners captured. 2nd Battalion captured thirty-five prisoners in vicinity of objective D but were unable to obtain needed information as to enemy capabilities, because no trained interrogators were available. Interrogators should land with the advance command post party and immediately establish an interrogation center where they can gain an immediate over-all picture of the enemy's opposing forces. S-2 landed with the executive officer's party, in a subsequent base, and joined the regimental commander one hour after landing (see Annex Page 3).

Individual leadership by small unit commanders and the combined courage of each soldier is the backbone of a combat operation. This is proven by the outstanding examples displayed by individuals throughout the operation.

In comparing this operation with the nine principles of war the following points can be noted:

**Mass and Objective:** Certainly these principles were executed to the fullest extent as indicated by the large amount of troops concentrated in accomplishing one mission. The force of the 30th Infantry Regiment landing placed more than enough mass across Red Beach. All troops had the same objective and that was to destroy the enemy resistance.

**Surprise and Security:** This was maintained only insofar as to the exact location of the invading force, once the preparatory fires were initiated, even this was lost. The

Germans expected an invasion but did not know where. In considering the operation, shock seemed to have more affect on the enemy than the initial surprise; this shock was accredited primarily to the preparation fires followed up by the aggressive landing forces.

**Cooperation and Offensive:** Cooperation between the 7th Infantry Regiment and the naval forces was perfect. There may have been minor discrepancies but these were easily overcome through the efforts of all persons concerned. This point is verified by the support rendered during the training and operational phases. Certainly the results of this operation clearly indicated that offensiveness was clearly understood and supported by all troops.

**Movement and Economy of Force:** Although troop movements were limited at times, the overall operation of the 7th Infantry Regiment maintained movements and maneuver at all times. Economy of force was demonstrated by the use of 3rd Battalion's advance along the coastal road supported by the 1st and 2nd Battalions flanking advance inland in rear of enemy defenses.

**Simplicity:** This may have been violated to a minor extent in the original planning. Field Order Number 12 outlined the regimental plans and orders in minute detail. The pivot to the west may be considered as a complicated move, but under the existing circumstances pressure could not be released from the left flank. A foothold to allow the reserve regiment to land had to be forced, therefore with this in mind and also the

realization that the plans worked perfectly without flaw it may be assumed that the plans were simple enough for adequate success.

To sum up the results of this operation: The 7th Infantry Regiment, although a veteran in night amphibious assaults, executed a daylight landing against enemy forces with great success. No matter how well planned and executed an operation might be there are always numerous lessons to be learned. The regiment, operating on a broad front, depended greatly on the individual commander to carry out and maintain the aggressiveness and initiative. The continuous rapid advance regardless of conditions kept the enemy off balance and he was only able to set up delaying forces but never able to counterattack in strength. Close coordination and the efficiency of all supporting weapons and units enabled the regiment to accomplish its mission. The enemy's losses most definitely affected his tactical forces and intentions. This blow opened the way for a rapid pursuit up the Rhone Valley and the elimination of the German 19th Army at Montrelimar.

#### LESSONS

Some of the lessons observed by this operation are:

1. Plans and alternate plans for an amphibious operation must be prepared in detail, with all logical conditions considered, and all operations carefully coordinated.
2. Realistic, progressive, and physical training is a very essential part of preparations for an invasion.
3. Daylight landings have the advantage of massed close-in support of observed fires and better control of troops.

4. The importance of briefings and instructions to each individual cannot be over-emphasized.

5. Field expedients such as DD tanks, V boats, rocket ships, and special organizations are a definite asset and should be used to the maximum extent.

6. Surprise, followed by heavy and intensive fire preparations, can confuse and subdue the enemy to a point where he is reluctant to return fire.

7. Communications are vital to an operation and should be supplemented by alternate means.

8. Adequate simple and understandable codes must be utilized and designed for use by all units of the regiment. The use of reference points and coordinating lines proved to be the best method.

9. The decision to use an alternate plan must come early in the operation.

10. All units of the assault echelon should clear the beach without delay.

11. The original plan should be executed to the letter, unless the situation demands a change.

12. Infantry support by beach engineers and other such personnel must be immediate and continuous.

13. Individuals should not be overloaded with excess equipment that hinders their fighting efficiency.

14. Enemy actions and capabilities, as pertains to obstacles and blocking of road nets, should be considered and appropriate action planned.

15. When attacking astride highways with extreme mountains on either side, it is necessary to by-pass scattered enemy and fight only those who block your advance.

16. Mop-up operations and armored road patrols are needed along main supply routes and axis of communications in this type operation.

17. Troops must continue the attack regardless of mine-fields and obstacles encountered.

18. Constant pressure must be maintained against the enemy.

19. Sniper action in rear areas will not halt an advancing force.

20. Speed in reorganization is necessary and essential in capturing the initial beachhead line and preventing the enemy's recovery from initial shock.

21. Penetrations must be exploited immediately.

22. Aggressive leadership in small units is particularly important in an amphibious operation.

23. Supporting elements must provide close and continuous support throughout the entire operation, particularly supporting weapons such as armor, artillery and naval gun fire.

24. Prisoner of War Interrogators must land with either the battalion or regimental forward command post parties, in order to effectively support the operation.



ANNEX:

THE ACTUAL PARTICIPATION OF THE S-3 SECTION

The S-3 Section of the 7th Infantry Regiment, on 1 July 1944 at Pozzouli, Italy, consisted initially of one major, one captain, one first lieutenant, one second lieutenant, one master sergeant, one staff sergeant, three technicians fourth grade, two technicians fifth grade, and one private. On or about 2 July two additional lieutenants were added to the section for the purpose of assisting in training and liaison missions.

Major Jack M. Duncan (S-3) and Major Richard Smith (S-4) attended the first planning board at Naples, Italy, where the initial plans, coordination, and logistics were developed. The S-3 Section at this time combined operations with S-2 and established a "War Room". Actually this "War Room" was a large tent surrounded by barbed wire and heavily guarded by regimental military police. All planning material, maps, sandtables, S-2 material and conversation that pertained to the operation were kept in this secure area.

The S-4 established a small set-up of his own where he conducted the logistical part of the operation in complete secrecy. No identification or reference to the landing plans were maintained in the S-4 installation.

When Major Duncan was hospitalized on about 2 July 1943, the S-3 Section was reorganized by the Regimental Commander. Captain Wyeth set up a training section that consisted of himself, three lieutenants and several enlisted men. This section organized and conducted a vigorous and progressive training

program. The emphasis of training was placed on squad and platoon combat firing problems, physical conditioning, night attacks, organization and operations of boat teams, attacks through gassed areas, and command post exercises. This section conducted specialized training such as amphibious communications, operations, functions of cannon and antitank companies, and combined tank-infantry attacks. A short training phase also included a river crossing based on the anticipation of crossing the Rhone River, France. Needless to say, the training subsection was very busy and the many problems that arose were adequately handled by those involved. This section held the responsibility of teaching each man what he must know in order to successfully accomplish our mission.

Colonel O'Mohundro decided to handle the amphibious operations in another subsection, which consisted initially of Lt. Foulk, M/Sgt Powell, S/Sgt Sallee, T/4 Cherapeka, and Pfc Arnel, from the S-3 Section. Captain Dymock and T/4 Uecker constituted the personnel from the S-2 Section. This subsection operated in the "War Room" previously described.

The regimental command post installations were situated along an improved road which connected highway 6 with the ocean. The various tents were located in an olive grove well concealed, but this concealment decreased in ratio with the time the regiment spent in the area. Training and operational areas were adequate and available for practically any phase of training or experiment. Deserted pillboxes, which dotted the area, were utilized as excellent training aids. The Mediterranean Sea was

within walking distance and the hinterland offered various types of mountains and rivers.

During the month of July the "War Room" was a hive of activity. The S-3 personnel were busy coordinating naval support in compliance with division directives. Plans were formed, studied, revised, and restudied. S-2 was busy supplying S-3 with up-to-date information, recommendations and planning aids. Sandtables, rubber terrain maps, aerial photos and other aids were adequately supplied by the S-2 Section. This coordination was continuous and mutual throughout the operation. S-3 made frequent visits to the 15th and 30th Infantry Regiments to coordinate contact points, landing plans, phase lines, time schedules, and general planning data.

Throughout the planning phase, the Regimental Commander and S-3 conducted conferences with battalion commanders where they issued fragmentary instructions and tentative plans. Gradually battalion S-3, S-2, and unit commanders attached to the regiment were allowed to view the plans and operations anticipated. Finally when the tentative plans were formed, a meeting of the above personnel was held at the "War Room". A discussion of the plans was conducted by the Regimental S-3 and the recommendations of the Battalion Commanders and staff were accepted.

It must be understood, that during the planning phase, enough information was disseminated to the troop commanders so they could prepare and acquaint themselves for the operation.

Security consisted mainly of secrecy of plans, places, and times. All troops obviously knew that they were to make an amphibious landing that would conform to their training and preparations.

Simultaneously with the planning and coordinating phase two practice operations were conducted by the 7th Infantry Regiment. These operations included loading of token vehicles loads. All attached and supporting troops participated in detail. The practice area was outlined by 3rd Division G-3 but the exact landing areas and practice beaches were selected by the regimental executive officer and S-3. Units practiced landings with the ships and small boats that they were to use in the actual operation.

When all plans were completed, and necessary coordination with the navy, beach engineers and adjacent units was effected, a final briefing was conducted by the Regimental Commander at the "War Room". All officers were assembled including those attached, supporting, observers and liaisons. The final briefing included a detailed explanation of the plan followed by each battalion and separate commander stating their respective operations. No identification as to the country involved was mentioned.

The S-3 Section conducted the loading of troops while the S-4 handled vehicle and materiel loading. Troops were marched to the loading area at Biai and Nisidi, Italy. A time schedule was used but to no advantage; an accident at the loading area made it necessary to have the control posts (Control officer

stationed along the route of march) halt the columns and move the troops into an emergency assembly area.

The S-3 Section was organized into two operational sections for landing purposes. Two officers and three enlisted men were placed on the command LCI with the Regimental Commander. The communications officer, headquarters commandant, and several other enlisted men were also present on the command LCI. The Executive Officers and S-2 with the remainder of the command post personnel landed in a subsequent wave.

There was no activity during the trip except mental rehearsals of the operation and miscellaneous reports to division by use of radio. S-3 acquainted himself with the command LCI communications and operational control system. This was to play an important part at a later date.

One hour prior to H-hour, command and S-3 radio nets were opened. This was a safety measure in case of emergency, however no transmissions were made during this period.

At 0600 hours, the Regimental Commander and S-3 moved to the deck of the LCI where three SCR 300 radios were opened with one on each battalion net. Communications to division was through the ship's radio.

D-day morning was clear and bright with a mild breeze and warm temperature. During the navy and air preparations and the initial run for shore no operational control was necessary. Prior to landing, several unimportant messages were transmitted to the battalions which were more in the form of a verification of contact. All persons watched the landing progress under the

fire support, and when the enemy opened fire it was unnecessary for S-3 to call for fires because the naval observers immediately provided counterbattery fires.

A command LCVP was launched about one quarter mile off shore. This boat contained a 1/4 ton 4x4 vehicle equipped with a SCR 196. The Regimental Commander, three SCR 300 radio operators, two S-3 officers, communications officer, headquarters commandant, three S-3 enlisted men, and the navy coxswain. The CP group advanced inland to a small wooded sand dune where an attempt to contact the battalions was unsuccessful.

The action which followed this incident is outlined in the body of this monograph. The S-3 Section arrived at the designated CP location which was in defilade in rear of objective B. Contact was gained with all units immediately. S-3 on order of the Regimental Commander attempted to expedite the movement of armor and other supporting weapons. Normal functions of the section began when the remainder of the section joined the forward group.

When the CP moved to La Mole, S-3 accompanied the forward party and contacted elements of the 1st Battalion. The majority of orders were issued in fragmentary form directly by the Regimental Commander to the Battalion Commanders. S-3 handled the supporting troops. Radio was the primary means of communication but wire was installed whenever practical.

Normally when the Regimental Commander went forward, one of the S-3 officers would accompany him, but due to the peculiar situation in this operation, the S-3 was more valuable at the

forward CP, where complete control of the regiment was possible.

The S-3 Section followed the advance of 1st and 2nd Battalions and maintained liaison with the 3rd Battalion by ~~COVERIES~~ and radio communications. During the rapid advances on 16-17 August S-3 Section operated on the road or in a draw close to the assault battalions.

Captain Wyeth assumed full S-3 duties and Lt Foulk reverted to assistant S-3 on 17 August.

During combat operations the following S-3 records, reports, and files were maintained:

1. S-3 Journal: This was actually a combined S-2, S-3 Journal maintained by the enlisted personnel under the supervision of the S-3. All messages were recorded and the names of both sender and receiver were noted. The journal was supported by a file of written messages and orders.

2. Daily Situation Reports: These reports were submitted by CW radio or liaison officers. Division G-3 indicated the frequency of such reports. Normally this report was submitted at 1500 hours daily; however there were situations where it was required twice daily.

3. Periodic Reports: This was the normal periodic report, as required by regulations, submitted at the end of each month.

4. S-3 Work Sheet: No formal work sheet was maintained. The operations sergeant usually kept notes as dictated by the S-3.

5. Daily Summary of Operations: Normally submitted as of 1200 hours for the previous day's action. Usually the assistant S-3 compiled this report which was a summary of the regiment's operations, patrols, advances, present situation, morale, and enemy affects on operations. An overlay showing all moves, unit locations, and front line positions accompanied this report.

6. Situation Map: During rapid moving situations and amphibious landings the situation map consisted of a small hand board type map. The "War Room" contained many larger and more detailed maps.

7. Planning Maps: These were omitted during the landing operations and not established during the period covered by this monograph.