

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

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE
1947 - 1948

PLANS AND OPERATIONS OF THE 506th PARACHUTE
INFANTRY (101st AIRBORNE DIVISION) IN THE
INVASION OF NORMANDY,
(NORMANDY CAMPAIGN) 5--30 JUNE 1944
(Personal Experience of Company Commander 3rd
Battalion 5 to 7 June 1944.)

Type of operation described: PLANS AND OPERA-
TIONS OF PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT.

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the plans and operations of the 506 Parachute Infantry, 101st Airborne Division in the invasion of Normandy (Normandy Campaign), (5th June 1944 to 30th June 1944).^{11 13 44} Personal Experience of Company Commander, 3rd Battalion 5th June to 7th June 1944.

The first large scale use of Airborne troops in military history was made on 6th of June, 1944, when two American Airborne Divisions (the 101st and the 82nd), operating under VII Corps, landed during darkness on the Cotentin Peninsula, and carried out a coordinated plan to assist the beach landing of the 4th Division at H-hour on D-day morning. Six Parachute Infantry Regiments; the 505, 507, and 508 of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 501st, 502nd, and 506th of the 101st Airborne Division, together with the normal complement of Parachute Field Artillery and Parachute Engineers, totaling more than 14,000 men, were lifted in approximately 1,000 C-47 planes, and flown from bases in Southern England to designated Drop Zones in Normandy. (1)

The 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment was in the Marshaling Area (take-off air field) eight days prior to D-Day. During these eight days, additional supplies, equipment, and clothing were issued; medical and first aid instructions given. During this period the complete combat load was issued. After the Company Commanders had been given the first briefing, the Drop Zone locations of the Regiment were changed.

(1) A-5

Division had learned that the Germans had moved two additional Infantry Divisions into the Cserbourg Peninsula (2). The troops were briefed after the first two days in the Marshaling Area, and continuous and detailed briefing continued until the day of take-off, or D-1. The thoroughness of this briefing in the 3rd Battalion was satisfying to all, and each man had a perfect mental picture of the terrain in the vicinity of the Drop Zone assigned, and the details of the mission were clear to each individual. This briefing was carried out in a large barn, located in the Marshaling Area, by use of sand tables, maps, and aerial photographs. Sufficient time enabled small units to establish SOP's to meet various situations if they should occur. (3).

SITUATION AND MISSION

"In all, there were four causeways which connected Utah Beach with the solid ground of Normandy." The seizure of the two southern exits was part of the mission of the 506 Parachute Infantry. In addition, the two bridges near Le Port at the mouth of the Douve River were to be secured. The 502 Parachute Regiment had been given the mission of securing the two northernmost exits. The tactical situation and the nature of the ground in the operation against the Southern exits, were similar to the conditions confronting the forces farther to the North. The mission was considered an ideal one for parachute troops, was within the capabilities of the Regiment, and the operation was thought to be so timed that the seaborne forces would arrive before the enemy could build up a strong counter force.

(2) A-4 (3) A-5

On the extreme left flank of the beach, the causeway identified in the operation plan as Exit #1, tied in with the highway net of the Cotentin Peninsula just to the west of Pouppeville, a village near the mouth of the river Douve, about 5 miles northeast of Carentan. Exit #2, a little farther to the North led from the beach through Houdienville to St Marie du Mont. Both of these causeways were built to ^{a height of} (an average) of 6 feet above the marsh, which was an initial barrier to the westward advance of the forces landing on the beach. "Over most of its area, the marsh could be waded and it was therefore not a formidable obstacle to the passage of troops; but it was criss-crossed at many points by drainage canals, which though narrow, ran to a depth of 8 feet or more. The presence of these streams composed a very real danger; if the force coming by sea was denied the use of the causeways, many hours would pass before it could link up with the force which had arrived by air. The time, thus lost, might determine the fate of Utah Beach operation and finally, of the whole invasion." (A-1) - page 2

DETAILED PLAN 1st AND 2nd BATTALIONS

The plan called for the 506 Regiment, less the 3rd Battalion to land on Drop Zone "C". "This zone was just to the south of Boutteville and to the west of St. Marie du Mont, which put it about as close to the western approaches of the two lower causeways as was tactically practicable." (see Map "A") "As rapidly as it could complete its assembly, ^{the} 2nd Battalion, reinforced by one section of demolition men, was to move westward along a line running north of St. Marie du Mont towards Houdienville." From that point, the battalions' northern

ion, was to launch an attack eastward for the purpose of clearing Exit #2. The Southern element, Company F, would leave the column at Hebert, and attack toward Pouppeville and exit #1. Company D and the Second Battalion Headquarters Company were to set up in Hebert as the battalion reserve. To divert the Germans, and prevent them from taking the causeway forces in the rear, First Battalion was to send a reinforced platoon from Company "B", to the area just south of St. Marie du Mont; it would demonstrate strongly enough in that direction, to draw the attention of enemy forces, stationed in that village. The remainder of the 1st Battalion supported by ^{the} Regimental Headquarters Company would ^{remain} stand at Hiesville as the Regimental reserve." (4)

PLAN OF THIRD BATTALION

The third battalion supported by one platoon of the 326th Engineer Battalion, and 2 demolition sections, ^[It was] was to land on Drop Zone "D", which was located to the south of Vierville and west of Angoville au Plain. (See Map A) "From this ground the force was to strike southward as soon as possible, and secure the two bridges near Le Port, at the mouth of the river Douve." The bridges were to be ^[Expanded into a bridgehead] captured, and bridgeheads expanded, as rapidly as the tactical situation permitted. "By seizing the high ground in the direction of Brevands, the Battalion would be reaching toward the American forces, which were moving northward from Omaha Beach. It was believed that all these things could be accomplished on the first day." (5)

4th JUNE, D-DAY

(4) A-1 p. 3 (5) A-5

planes without hurrying or strain. About two hours prior to take off, the troops arrived at their assigned planes, under the command of their jump masters. During the two hours they put on and adjusted their equipment, Mae Wests, and parachutes, and took their positions in the planes. At 2310 the lead plane took off, this serial rendezvoused with the planes, carrying the 1st and 2nd Battalions and Regimental Headquarters Company and attached units, soon after midnight the serials crossed the English coast, and were headed over the channel toward the French coast and the enemy. The moon was bright as the English Coast was crossed, and the Channel could easily be seen beneath the formation. However, almost as soon as the Cotentin Peninsula came into view, the planes ran into heavy fog banks which obscured the ground and disarranged the formation. The fog thinned in spots, as the formation continued across the peninsula. Flak was encountered soon after the peninsula was reached. Due to the fog banks and the flak encountered, some of the pilots took evasive action to get away from the fire, and opened the formation in the dense fog banks. Because of this action nearly all unity was lost; the chance for a successful concentration of elements of the 506 Regiment thus depended on the accuracy and judgment of a large number of airmen who had no identity with the Regiment. (6)

In practice, the plane pilot is the [formal] jump master; it is his task to find the Drop Zone. Four minutes before the men are to jump, [the^{he} pilot] flashes a red light, when the green light is flashed, this is the signal that the plane is in proper flying condition, and that the Drop Zone has been reached. "The green light is the "Go" signal. What had already

happened to the 506 Regiment in the air, greatly increased the probability that it would encounter unexpected trouble on the ground; the problem of keeping the Regiment concentrated, had been delivered into too many hands." Because of the conditions as stated above, ^{out} of [the] 81 planes scheduled to drop their men on Drop Zone "C", only 10 found the mark. (See Map B). ^{1st} First Battalion had a comparatively good pattern, only one of its sticks being dropped far distant from the [designated Drop] Zone; ^{even so} the pattern was scattered enough that an additional 4 hours were required to get the Battalion moving toward its objective." The Second Battalion passed over Drop Zone "C" but only one plane unloaded its sticks anywhere near the designated zone. (See Map B).

The planes carrying [the] Second Battalion, had simply overshot the mark. The paratroopers occupying the planes of this serial, recognized the Drop Zone as the planes flew over. They reported seeing 3 large green T's formed of lights pass under them and recognized them as the zone markers which had been set up by the Regiment's pathfinders. The planes continued to fly and no jump signal was given for several minutes, when the signal was given the Battalion came to earth with its center about 5 miles from its designated Drop Zone. [Because of this, ^[They were thus] the Battalion was] denied any initial contact with the remainder of the Regiment, and [they] had no way of knowing whether the First Battalion and Regimental Headquarters had experienced any better fortune in getting on the designated Drop Zone. ^{1st} Third Battalion, aiming at Drop Zone "D", had a slightly better pattern than [the] First Battalion, but not enough to give it any practical advantage. It, too, had lost many hours because of a faulty drop." (7)

(7) A-1 p.5.

At Drop Zone D, there was trouble of another kind. The pathfinders had landed ^{about} 30 minutes ahead of the Third Battalion and had become engaged at once. ^{The Germans had figured} [Apparently the Germans anticipated] that the invaders might use this area for just such a purpose, ^{they} [and] had ringed it with machine guns, and mortars, and were sitting at their arms in readiness, when the [Third] Battalion came in. ^{Seven of the} [The] pathfinders had knocked out two machine gun positions with hand grenades before the arrival of the main body.

By that time, however, the field was well illuminated by enemy flares. Floating ^{down} into this well lit and fire covered area, the Battalion lost about 20 men from enemy action, before its first groups could collect themselves. [Yet it was an odd kind of action] with all their advantages, the Germans could not get their heads up. They fired from ^{whatever} cover, ^{not one man} [and few men] among them moved out to engage the invaders in personal encounter. This seemed to be true in all sections in which the Airborne forces landed. (8)

"Drop Zone "C" had also been strongly covered by the enemy with rifle pits and automatic weapons all around the perimeter. Around the northeast corner especially, the Germans were in strength. ^{[[though]]} Wherever the men dropped, they came in fire contact immediately with small enemy groups. The majority [of the men who dropped on the Drop Zone] got out of this deadfall, by lying quietly for a few minutes, until the attention of the defenders was drawn elsewhere, and then crawling off into the dark. At Drop Zone "C", the assembly areas for the Second Battalion, Regimental Headquarters Company, and First Battalion, [there] were 3 orchards strung across the zone from north to south. ^{The} Second Battalion was supposed to assemble on the northern orchard, and from there, move off to attack the exits. ^{The} First Battalion had planned to assemble on the southern

ward, before proceeding on its mission. Regimental Headquarters, after assembling in the center orchard, ~~was to move~~ 1 1/2 miles southward, to set up a CP at Ouloville. Had the drop taken place in this manner, it is quite possible that the greater breadth of the target would have given the waiting Germans a greater opportunity for killing. As things worked out, the relatively small force that was delivered, according to schedule, came to earth well strung out among the apple trees. Most of the ten planes which dropped their stick on or near the [correct Drop] Zone had been loaded with Regimental Headquarters men. Of these personnel the total loss was not more than 10, including dead and wounded. Elsewhere, however, the Headquarters [Section] had taken great losses which seriously crippled this operation. Three of the planes had missed the [Drop] Zone by 20 miles. These planes included a majority of the communication platoon. Only 5 Communication men were at hand when the Regiment began to fight. (9)

Not one of ^{506th Regiment's Battalions} [the Battalions of the 506 Regiment] had a drop pattern which was as good as the lowest mark which it had established during any training operation. "Whether the great spread of the drop pattern contributed materially to the casualty figures, is something of a question, but it undoubtedly slowed down assembly and acted as a drag on local operations."

[But] what was lost to tactics by these delays and misadventures was probably compensated for, ^[ten-fold] in the bewilderment and the strategic miscalculation of the enemy, which resulted from having parachute drops reported from all parts of the peninsula. The doubts which must have assailed the enemy in the critical hours when the defending forces were being redeployed to meet the invasion threat, doubts which were intensified by inadvertent work of carrier pilots who strayed from their courses, are reflected in the war diary of the ^[Seventh] "German Army High Command."

(S) 1-1 p. 6.

1944-notes that "Parachutists have been dropped since 0105
hours in the area between the Cotentin Peninsula and
and Montebourg; both sides of the Vire and on the East Coast
of Cotentin"; and 0200 hours: "it is reported that Airborne
landing embraces Montebourg" and "there is fighting by LaHam."
Some of these were points far outside the section of the in-
vasion. It appears that these reports of eruption resulted
from the chance landings of parachute forces, in areas, where
they were not supposed to be committed as ^{such} that. In conse-
quence of the reports, the German High Command marked time
for several hours, while trying to determine what these varying
thrusts indicated. At 0240 there was still debate, as to the
measure of the danger, the Commanding General of the West
Group maintaining that the defenders were not confronted with
a "major action"; while the Chief of Staff replied that: "it
could be nothing less than that, in view of the depth of the
airborne penetration in the 84th Army Corps Area." It was at
0400 hour that the Commander of ^{the} Corps reported to the Chief
of Staff, 7th Army High Command, his conclusion that "the gen-
eral plan seems to be to tie off the Cotentin Peninsula at its
narrowest point." "Another hour passed before the Germans knew
that they were also about to be hit from the sea." ("From the
War diary of the German 7th Army High Command"). (10)

In the strained circumstances, ^{[the Americans went ahead with their} standard procedures for
^{assemblies according to standard procedures]} assembly were attempted. The assembly lights ^[did almost no good] [were not success-
ful as] the Normandy hedgerows blacked them out on every side.
Collection proceeded by individual soldiers working their way
"by guess, ^{and by God} to the Drop Zone ^[C P] [Assembly Points]"

Before daylight, Regimental Headquarters had been establish-
ed at Coulaville, however the 2nd Battalion had not reported

This report had been
acknowledged

to the Regimental CP, nor, had Regiment been able to contact this Battalion. The First Battalion had reported in by this time, and was ordered by Regiment to assume the previously planned mission of the Second Battalion, "the march on the southern causeway." This Battalion at this time, consisted of the Battalion Commander and approximately 50 men. The Battalion Commander was instructed initially, not to spread his force but to drive for Poupeville and Exit #1. They started as the dawn broke. ?

The fortunes of the Second Battalion had been in marked contrast to what had taken place at Drop Zone "D". "Dropped far outside of their designated area, the Battalion still had succeeded in achieving a far more rapid, and complete assembly, than the other elements of the Regiment." Although, far from the designated Drop Zone, this Battalion was not contacted by the enemy upon landing. By 0430 the force of approximately 200 men with the Battalion Commander, had assembled, and were moving out to the location of their assigned mission, the lower Exits. This force soon encountered the enemy and movement was slow. Its objective lay a considerable distance to the South, and Regiment could not be contacted. So far as this Battalion knew, the original assignment remained unchanged. The column continued to work its way south, until after 0900 hours when the head of the column was stopped by a German artillery battery, which was laying intradiotory fire across the road." Part of Company "D" was passed around the rear of the [enemy] battery with the mission of hurrying on to Exit #2. This part of Company "D", arrived at its objective at 1330 hour. The causeway leading to Houdienville was brought under control, practically without fighting. The remainder of the Second Battalion kept the German battery

entertained, until tanks from the beach were brought up and the German battery destroyed. The Second Battalion rejoined Company "D" about 1500 hours. By 1800 hours, the Second Battalion was well organized at Exit #2, with about 300 men on hand including the strays from other units.

Third Battalion had played in worst luck initially, but a mere handful of its men had set a shining example in initiative, for the remainder of the Regiment. When the planes carrying the Third Battalion passed over the flooded area between Garentan and St Come du Mont, heavy antiaircraft fire enveloped the formation and dissolved it. The planes taking evasive action in all directions resulted in the formation losing all semblance of a command. This ground fire leaped up at the parachutists as they responded to the jump signal; this signal had been given just a flash too early. The sticks were delivered a little short of Drop Zone "D", to the South and East of it. Square on the Zone, the Germans had prepared a giant torch by soaking a house in oil. They lit it as the first planes approached, and it blazed fiercely, illuminating the entire countryside. (11). ["The Battalion" that
[The Battalion - 3 officers and 30 men]

originally assembled, consisted of 3 officers and 30 men. This group set out to accomplish the Battalion mission, and] reached the canal bridges near LaPorte, at 0430 hours. Upon reaching the western approaches, this group was joined by 5 Officers and 15 Men who had also worked their way to the area of the assigned Battalion mission. ^{It was} [This force] decided to force a crossing of one of the bridges, and establish a bridgehead. The bridges were covered by German machine guns, set up on the East bank. Two, 5 men patrols, managed to cross the canal, by crawling on the girders under the bridge floor.

These patrols knocked out a machine gun emplacement, and

(11) A-5-3
A-1

[POWERED]
present in such numbers that they could bring up fresh guns faster than the patrols could proceed against them. "After engaging for about two hours the force was compelled to withdraw to the west bank for lack of ammunition." [This "skeleton Battalion" was] ^{They were} without communication, and knew nothing of the situation elsewhere in the ^[Division] Regiment. One Officer and two enlisted men were sent in an attempt to break through the German lines, in order to get help. Ammunition was running low and the group was small, in comparison, to the force it faced across the canal.

It was not an exceptionally favorable situation, but at least, though they did not know it, they could stand on one thing; they were the only element of the regiment, which had succeeded in reaching their objective [on schedule] and they had done more than their share toward assuring the link-up of the Omaha Beach and Utah Beach forces. The Officer in command of this force was the S-3 of the 3rd Battalion. The Battalion Commander and the Executive Officer, were killed immediately after landing.

OPERATIONS OF FIRST AND SECOND BATTALIONS

The First Battalion detachment, upon receiving orders from Regiment to assume the original mission of the Second Battalion and secure Exit #1, departed from Culoville for Pouppeville and Exit #1. The Battalion Detachment was gone all day, contact could not be maintained with Regiment. It reached Exit #1, after several skirmishes, but found that the town of Pouppeville had been secured. The First Battalion detachment returned to Culoville in the evening.

~~The Second Battalion...~~

prior to the arrival of the 4th Division troops from the beach, thus completing its mission; it was then moved back to Culoville. Thus all elements of the Regiment, ~~convinced~~ during D-Day, were assembled tactically at Culoville before dark. At this time the Third Battalion had not been contacted, nor any word received by Regiment.

At 2000 hours D-Day, the Regimental Commander received orders from Division, to gather all available forces and proceed ^[to the south] at dawn the following morning (D+1) (7-June), ^[to the South] to protect the South ^{[of the} flank of] the Corps from enemy forces advancing from Carentan. (12)

That night (6-June) the order for the movement was issued by Regiment. The movement was to get under way at 0430 hours (D+1) (7-June). The strength of the Regiment ready for the day's operation, included about 225 men from First Battalion, 300 men from Second Battalion, a platoon of AT Guns, about 40 men from the 82nd Division and men from various other units to number about 100. The 401st Glider Infantry Battalion, which had come off the Beach that afternoon was attached to the 506 Regiment for the operation. The 401st Glider Infantry Battalion was to be the leading element in this advance through Vierville to St. Come Du Mont. The next morning (D+ 1, 7 June) the 401st Glider Battalion failed to keep its appointment on time and the Regiment moved out with the First Battalion, the leading element. ^[First Bn stepped off]

Almost from the moment ^[began to buzz around the forces] ^[this element started out] enemy snipers became very active, using the numerous hedgerows for concealment of movement. (13) The column was slowed down and was forced to move on a broad front through the fields. "By 0900 hours, First Battalion had reached Vierville. At Vierville determined enemy resistance was encountered, but after

sharp fighting the town was won and the enemy retreated toward St. Come Du Mont. First Battalion was ordered to continue the attack ~~to~~ the cross roads to the South of St. Come Du Mont. Angoville au Plain was captured about noon but the further advance was held up about 1000 yards to the South-West.

Late in the afternoon (D+1) (7 June) Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Company moved to a large house in Angoville au Plain, and set up the CP. Late that night, an attack plan was issued for the next day (D+2) (8 June). The 506 Regiment became a combat team for the attack. The town of Angoville au Plain was very small and all available buildings were used for supply, communication, PW and Aid Station purposes. *No Ref*

The Third Battalion of the 501 Parachute Infantry Regiment, with a strength of about 280 men was attached to the 506 Regiment. The First Battalion of the 401st Glider Infantry, and ^[the] 8 available tanks of Company "D"; 70th Light Tank Battalion, plus Battery "A", 81st A.T. Battalion, were also attached to the 506 Regiment for the assault. ^(A-2 p 3) The assault against St. Come Du Mont was to take place the following morning (D+2) (8 June). *No Ref*

The attack on St. Come Du Mont was launched at dawn (D+2) (8 June) and severe ^[very] ^[hedge and street] hedgerow fighting took place throughout the day. The town was ^[finally] taken and all resistance eliminated by 2000 hours. "The 506 Regiment was ordered to bivouac in the vicinity of St Come Du Mont with strong protecting forces as far south as the main bridge over the Douve River." This bridge had been blown by ^{[a detachment] of} retreating Germans during the course of the day. By 2200 hours, the 506 Regiment was occupying the defensive sector from Lesquesnille along the Douve River to La

At 1000 hours, ~~the~~ ~~first~~ ~~contact~~ (142) (8 June) first contact

was established with elements of the Third Battalion.

On D plus 3 (9 June) the Regiment was occupying the defensive sector, including the guarding of the La Bourquette Locks, the Main Causeway over the inundated area into Carentan, and the general line of the Douve River from the Locks to a point 2500 yards Northwest of St. Come Du Mont. The Second Battalion was given the left sector, including the Locks, and the First Battalion, the right sector, including the Causeway and the town of St. Come Du Mont.

The Third Battalion had returned to the Regiment and was in Regiment reserve north of St. Come Du Mont. During the defense phase, the troops were able to rest for the first time. The Regiment continued the defensive during D plus 3 and D plus 4. (15)

CARENTAN

The original mission of the 101st Airborne Division did not include the capture of Carentan. The city is in a strong position with respect to ground and attack, but is not on commanding ground, and is open to observation from across the inundated area, however it was strongly defended. The Division was given the mission of seizing Carentan. (16)

The situation: Prior to the commitment of the Regiment on the night of D plus 5, the 327 Glider Infantry and the 501 Parachute Infantry had made successful crossing of the Douve River, east of Carentan, and were ready for a move against and around the city toward the West. The 502nd Parachute Infantry had attempted for two days to cross the Causeway and take the city, but were unable to do so even with strong ar-

(15) A-3 (16) A-3

On the night of 11 June the 502 Parachute Regiment received orders to move through the 502 Parachute Regiment, and advance to the South of Carentan and seize Hill #30, located west of the city. The mission was to hold the high ground and contact the enemy, while other units of the Division attacked Carentan from the East. At dawn the Regiment was to attack Carentan from the West and contact the forces attacking from the East. (17)

The First and Second Battalions moved during darkness and went into position West and Southwest of Carentan without opposition. The Third Battalion remained North of St Come du Mont in Division Reserve. After the First and Second Battalions were safely across, Regimental Headquarters Company crossed the Causeway and attempted to get into either the First or Second Battalion Area. This group had difficulty in that they were unable to locate the position of either Battalion. The Command Group halted, set up their radios and contacted the Battalions. At this time it was getting daylight and the enemy commenced firing at the group from all sides. The First Battalion was ordered by radio to cross behind Regimental Headquarters Company to relieve the pressure. The Battalion was guided to the correct place by the sound of enemy fire. Later orientation showed that Regimental Headquarters Company had set up its CP just outside Carentan and between the First and Second Battalions.

At dawn, (D+6) (12-June), the Second Battalion launched the attack toward Carentan from their position west of the city. This Battalion met units of the 401st Glider Infantry Battalion in Carentan, as contact was made the Germans made a vigorous attack on the rear and flank of the Second Battalion, one

(17) A-M E.S.

city had been substantially cleared of enemy. All elements

was set up southwest of the city. ^[First and] The 506 Regiment reorganized and proceeded to the west and southwest, along the main roads within its Sector. Very stiff resistance was encountered, and severe fighting ensued throughout the day. Losses in the [First and] Second Battalions of the 506 Regiment were high. ^[on the extreme Right and north flank]

A counterattack by the Germans about 1800 hours, forced them to withdraw some distance. The Third Battalion which had been held north of the Dove in Division reserve, was released to the ^[506] [Regiment] as of 2200 hours, and joined its parent unit immediately. (18)

Early in the morning (D+7* (13 June) the attack was resumed by the 506 Regiment, ^[both the 501st] and the reserve Battalion was committed. ^[Committing their RESERVE Bns] The 506 Regiment was again struck by a heavy enemy counterattack, and forced back to within 500 yards of the west edge of the city. The Regiment was reinforced at this time by units of the Division; this halted the counterattack and enabled the 506 Regiment to regain some of its lost ground. The ^{506 was} [Regiment was relieved and] withdrawn to Division reserve, in the vicinity of Bassin a Flot. (19)

The following day (D+8) (14 June) the 506 Regiment was ordered to prepare a strong reserve defensive position just west and southwest of Carentan, and spent the day organizing this position. On D+9 and D+10, the defensive positions were strengthened and an anti-tank mine belt was placed in front of the Regimental Sector.

On D+15 (21 June) the 506 Regiment relieved the 501 Regiment on the Main Line of Resistance, 2 miles southwest

(18) A-2 p. 6; (19) A-2 p. 7

they remained in this defensive position until D+21 (27 June), when the Regiment was moved into the tactical bivouac position, generally west of St. Sauveur de Visconte. (20)

On 29 June, the Regiment moved with Division to a bivouac area approximately 5 miles south of Cherbourg. The 101st Division took over the military protection of the Peninsula north of an east-west line through Mounte Bourg. The 506 Regiment was in reserve during this time, but one Battalion was motorized and alerted to move on short notice against an enemy thrust in any part of the area.

On D+32, the 506 Regiment was relieved and on D+35 loaded into LST's and returned to the United Kingdom to be re-equipped, receive replacements, and train and prepare for another mission. (21)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In recalling the events leading up to this operation, it is my opinion that the mission assigned was a good one for Parachute troops, and was within the capabilities of the Regiment. Assignments to the Regiment, of Enlisted men and Officers, were made under highly selective standards, designed to secure men with maximum physical capabilities and the proper mental attitude. This high standard was maintained during the training period, prior to this operation.

Physically, the troops were in excellent condition. This fact assumed particular importance during the first three days of the invasion, when Officers and men found little time to sleep or rest.

The fact that units were operating with only a fraction of
(20) A-2 p.9; (21)

their command was due to the faulty drop of the initial landing. The disorganization caused by the faulty drop disrupted the carefully made plans, although the missions of the Regiment were successfully completed. There is a question as to whether the faulty drop caused more disorganization among the enemy forces, than could have been created had the drop taken place according to plan.

The principle organizational weakness of the Regiment was the lack of a third rifle squad in the rifle platoon. The authorized T/O strength of a rifle company in a Parachute Regiment was 121 men. With a unit of this size all men are essential in an operation.

Much credit is due the Officers and men of this Regiment for the successful accomplishment of the missions assigned. The strength of the units were only a fraction of the organizations anticipated strength; generally speaking, the equipment and weapons of the Regiment proved to be suitable.

To sum up this operation: The units of the Regiment either completed the assigned missions, or upon arriving at the designated objective found that the objective was in friendly hands. For sustained action a Parachute unit should have personnel replacements and additional heavy vehicles and equipment provided.

LESSONS

Some of the lessons emphasized by this operation are:

1. Plans for Airborne missions must be thorough and details given to all participants as the possibility of a split command is highly probable.
2. Alternate missions should be planned for each unit, and units should be thoroughly familiar with them.

3. Information with depth and adequate flank security was found to be essential for patrols.

4. In a defensive position.

(a) Relief should be made man for man.

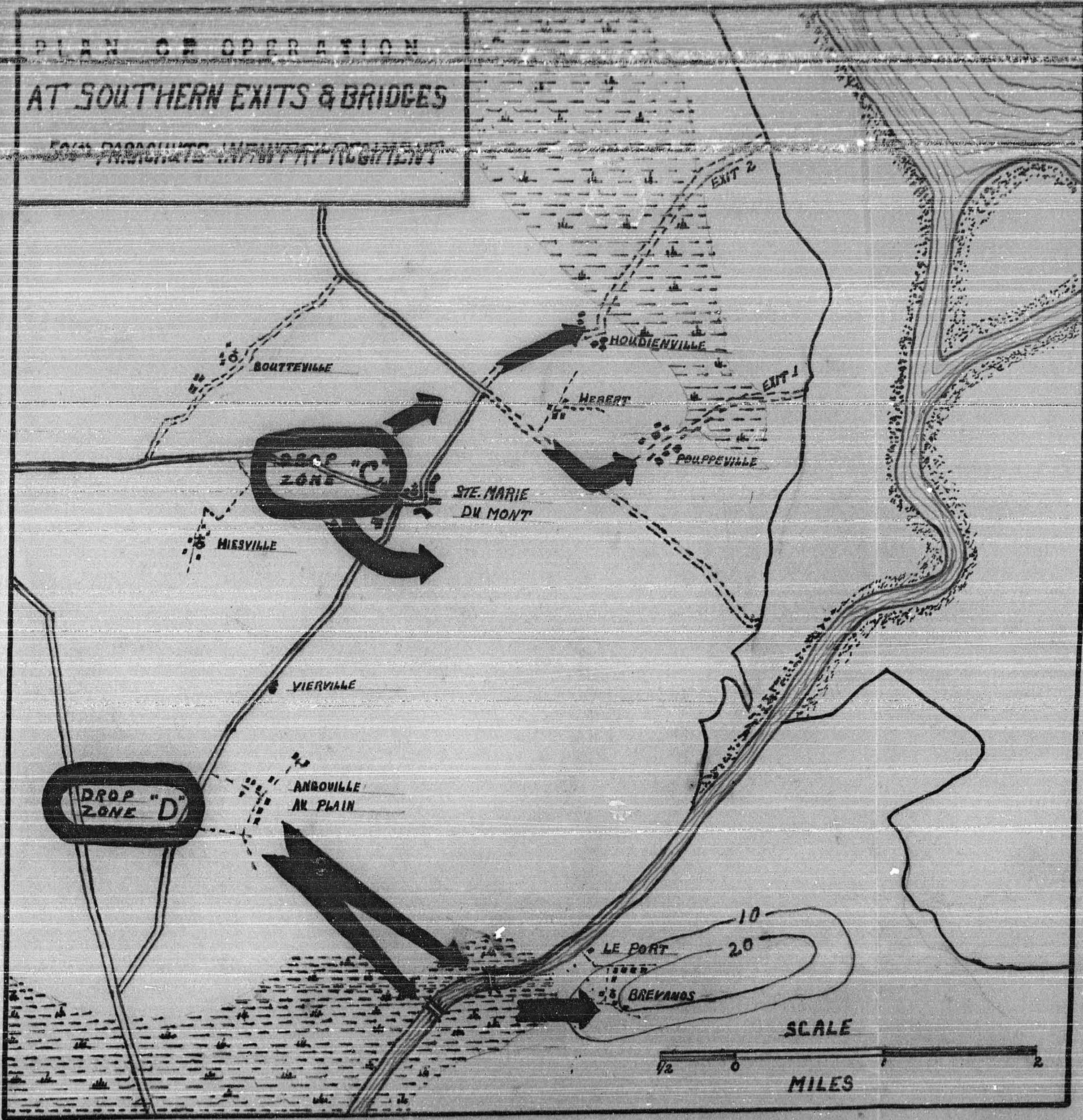
(b) Complete information of situation passed from men and Officers to his relief before he leaves position.

(c) Communication must be complete.

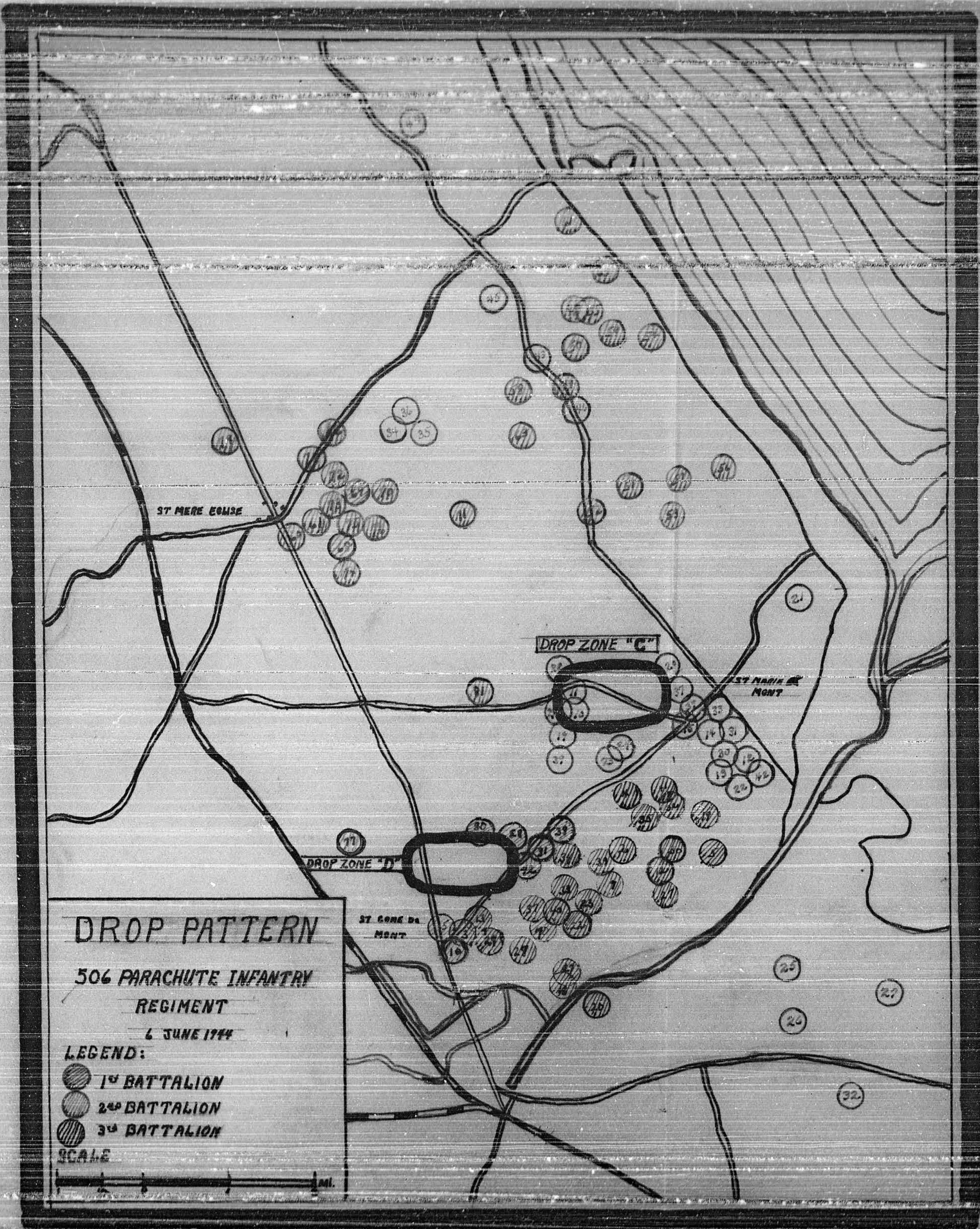
5. Accurate and continuous observation and patrolling is essential so that your fires will be effective against enemy concentrations, and to secure information essential for successful attack plans.

**PLAN OF OPERATION
AT SOUTHERN EXITS & BRIDGES**

FOR PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT



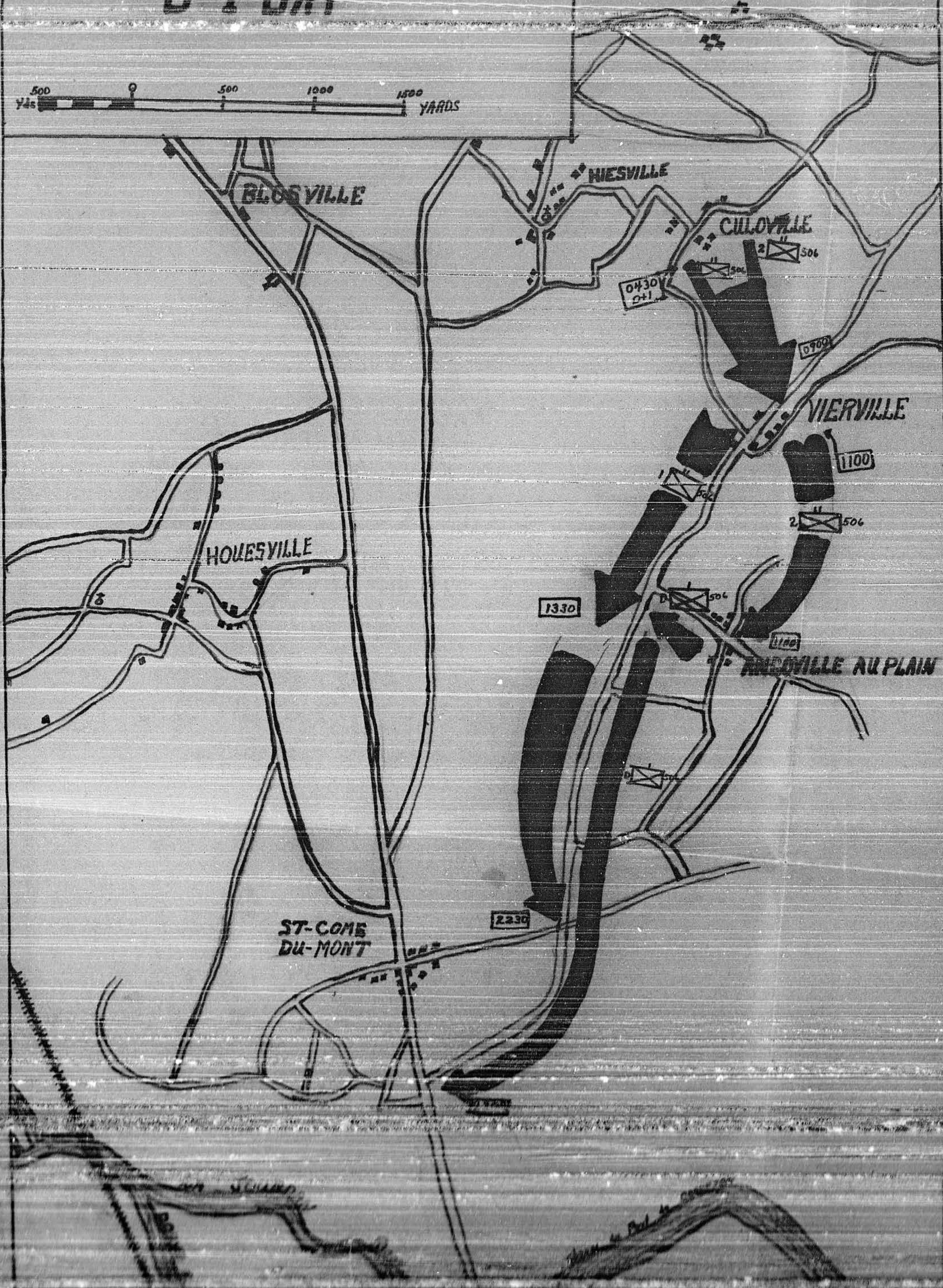
MAP "A"

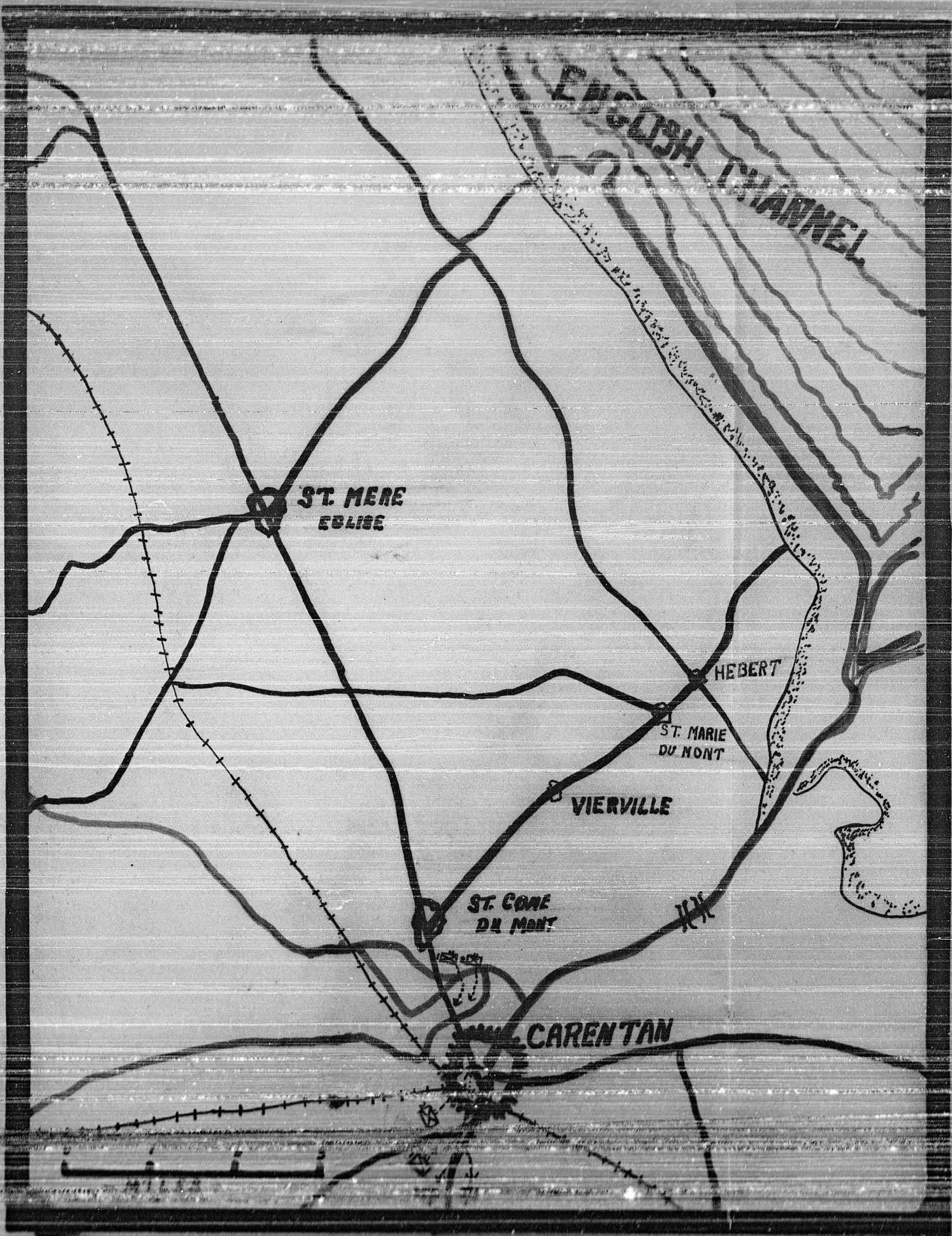


MAP "B"

ADVANCE D+1 DAY

500 0 500 1000 1500 YARDS





MAP "D"