

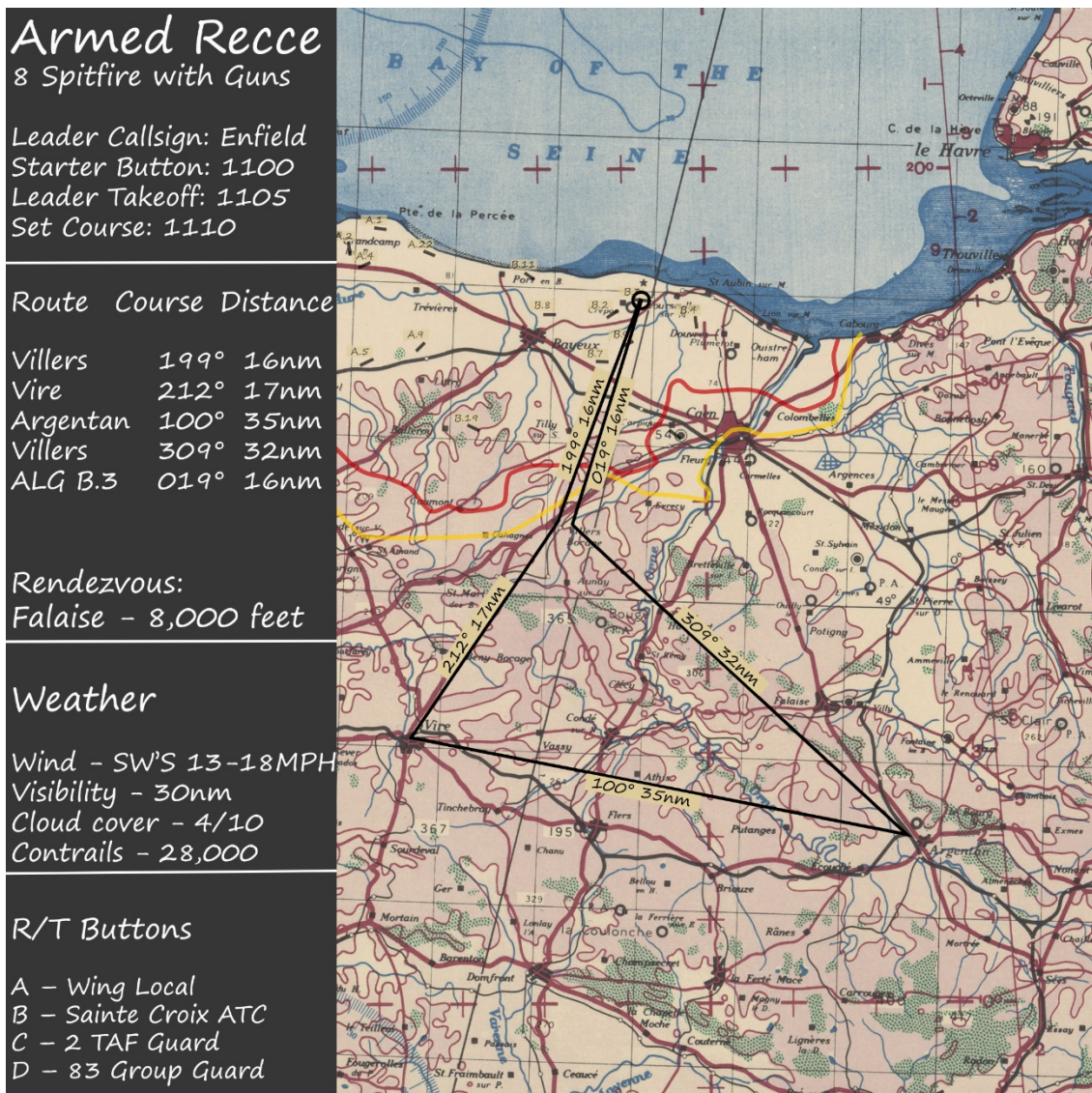
28 June 1944, 1000

Advanced Landing Ground B.3 Sainte-Croix-sur-Mer, France



Enfield squadron will fly a late morning armed reconnaissance southwest of Caen in the Villers-Bocage-Vire-Argentan area. The objective is to prevent reinforcements and supplies from reaching the enemy lines near Caen by destroying vehicles moving along the roads and disrupting activity along the rail lines. Heavy enemy road activity has been reported north east of Villers-Bocage so we will make every effort to engage vehicles in that area. Vehicles parked in the open or dispersed in trees are also valid targets if it is clear they are not decoys and that they have not already been destroyed.

A path is laid out for planning purposes but the exact course will be at the discretion of the squadron leader. Pursuit of enemy aircraft will take priority over other tasks if they appear.



Route, Target, Tactics

Engine Start and Form-up

Engine start is at 1100 and the lead aircraft will take off from ALG B.3, Saint Croix at 1105. The lead aircraft will contact the Group Control Centre, callsign Kenway, on R/T button D to report the squadron as airborne immediately after takeoff. All aircraft will monitor 83 Group Guard on button D throughout the flight. Each section of four aircraft will hold over base in echelon starboard formation in a left-hand turn at 3,000 feet until all aircraft in the squadron have formed up. If cloud base is below 3,000 feet, the squadron will form up underneath.

Route

When formed up over base, sections will transition to finger four formation and fly south climbing to 6,000 feet. The front lines will be crossed near Villers-Bocage at a lower altitude than usual. Heavy enemy road activity has been reported north and east of Villers-Bocage so we will make every effort to engage vehicles in that area. Heavy flak has been common when crossing the lines in this area so be prepared to widen formation and to change course regularly if engaged.



Route, Target, Tactics

We will continue southwest to Vire which marks the edge of the British patrolled area. American Thunderbolts and Lightnings are active just to the west of town and friendly fire due to mistaken identity is a common occurrence. We will not fly west into their area without good reason.

At Vire, we will turn east and follow the road and rail line past Flers to Argentan. At Argentan, we will turn northwest and follow the road and rail line past Falaise and back to Villers-Bocage.

We will have the option of continuing the reconnaissance or returning to base as appropriate based on fuel and ammunition remaining. If returning to base, we will cross the front lines here. Otherwise, we will turn southwest and continue to patrol the roads. The route at that point will be at the squadron leader's discretion.

Your kneeboard contains a series of maps showing landmarks along the route and notes to help you along the way. Access it in flight using keyboard command RShft-K and navigate to the different pages using the bracket [] keys.

Return to Base

When ready to return to base, we will cross the lines no lower than 5,000 feet. If flak is observed to be active, we will climb to 10,000 feet when approaching the lines then cross at high speed in a shallow dive. Sections will then transition to echelon starboard formation and enter the landing pattern at Sainte Croix.

Rendezvous

If we become split up due to an engagement, climb or descend to 8,000 feet and rendezvous at Falaise. Attempt to notify the squadron if unable to rendezvous due to battle damage or low fuel. Return to base in pairs if necessary.

Bomb Line

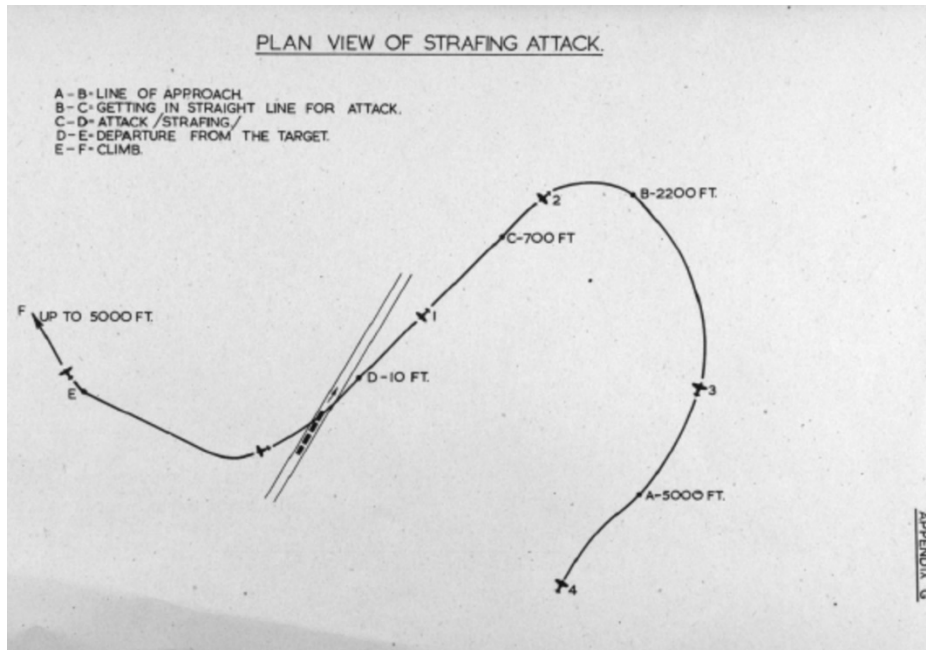
The current front lines are marked in red on our planning maps and the bomb line is marked in yellow. The bomb line was picked to be easily identifiable on the ground and any targets south of the line are fair game. Anything on the friendly side should only be attacked in coordination with our ground forces. The bomb line currently runs south along the road from Cabourg to Banneville la Campagne, then west along the road running to Caen. The Epsom battle has pushed the line south slightly in this area. It now runs from Caen, along the Orne River as far as Percouville, west along the stream to Evercy, northwest along the road to Noyers, then along the main road to Villers-Bocage. From there, it follows the main road southwest from Villers-Bocage, then runs west along farm roads to Torigny and out of our area.

Armed Recce Tactics

A low altitude of 500 feet or less provides the best opportunity to spot enemy activity but exposes aircraft to small arms fire and light flak. A higher altitude of five to six thousand feet provides greater protection from flak but makes spotting the enemy more difficult. The squadron leader will choose an appropriate altitude based on the current conditions.

Route, Target, Tactics

Keep a sharp lookout for movement of any type along the roads and report any sightings to the squadron immediately. Most enemy activity on the roads occurs at night so keep an eye out for vehicles dispersed under trees out of sight. There are many abandoned vehicles in this area so be sure your target is valid before wasting ammunition. The enemy have also been known to concentrate flak around dummy targets hoping to lure unsuspecting aircraft in. Be prepared to evade and call off an attack at any time if flak is too thick.



From 'Tactical Paper IV', Air Ministry, 1947

Strafing columns on the road within range of their flak and small arms is one of the most dangerous tasks we are likely to face. Our standard attack approach is started from a wide turn leveling out at about 1,500 feet above the target. Attacks on moving targets such as motor transport and locomotives are generally carried out from an angle of 30 degrees from their front. The pilot will then line the target up

in their sights in a 25-30 degree dive and start firing at max effective range of about 500 yards. Departure from the target is at full throttle and low level for about 30 seconds to keep out of any nearby flak gunner's view. A turn is also made to stay out of the line of fire of the next aircraft. We will only repeat an attack if there are many vehicles present and it is determined that the flak is not dangerous.

Trains running during the day have been rare but goods cars parked in marshalling yards or on rail line sidings have been common. Our guns are very effective against the locomotives themselves and against cars carrying fuel or ammunition but are of little use against cars carrying bulk goods. Choose the targets you fire at wisely. We can always come back to the area later with bombs or call big targets in to Kenway so they can send more heavily armed Typhoons or Mustangs.

R/T Callsigns and Buttons, Homing Procedure, IFF

Aircraft Radio

Button assignments for the day are as follows:

- A – Wing Local
- B – Sainte Croix ATC
- C – 2 TAF Guard
- D – 83 Group Guard

All aircraft in the squadron will monitor 83 Group Guard on button D throughout the flight. The Group Control Centre, callsign Kenway, will provide advisory calls to all 83 Group squadrons on this channel.

The Wing Local channel on button A can also be used for coordination between aircraft within our own squadron. The other two squadrons of our wing may also use this channel if they are airborne. 2nd TAF Guard on button C is for coordination with aircraft not assigned to 83 Group. This channel will not be used on this mission.

These units are expected to be operating on 83 Group Guard, button D when airborne:

Callsign	Unit	Acft Type	Airfield	Mission	Planned Time
Tavern	403 Sq	Spitfire IX	Bazenville B.2	Front Lines Patrol	1005 - 1115
Mushroom	443 Sq	Spitfire IX	Sainte Croix B.3	Armed Recce to Villers-Bocage area	1040 - 1235
Sheebang	416 Sq	Spitfire IX	Bazenville B.2	Beachhead Patrol	1100 - 1215
Lobster	412 Sq	Spitfire IX	Beny-sur-Mer B.4	Armed Recce to Caen-Falaise area	1105 - 1220
Joystick	602 Sq	Spitfire IX	Longues B.11	Armed Recce to Caen-Falaise area	1105 - 1235

R/T Callsigns and Buttons, Homing Procedure, IFF

Homing

Direction finding service is available through Sainte Croix Flying Control on button B. Contact the controller through the ATC menu and select 'request azimuth'. The controller will respond with a course to steer for base if your aircraft is within communications range. Your kneeboard contains a map that can be used to estimate your current location. Access it in flight using keyboard command RShft-K and navigate to the page using the bracket [] keys.



IFF

Use of the IFF system is prohibited in order to prevent excessive clutter on our controller's radar screens. IFF switches will remain Off for the entirety of the mission.

Squadron Communications

Orders to the lead section are given through the normal communications menu. Orders to the second section of four aircraft are given by selecting F10 (Other) from the communications menu then selecting the appropriate command.

Main

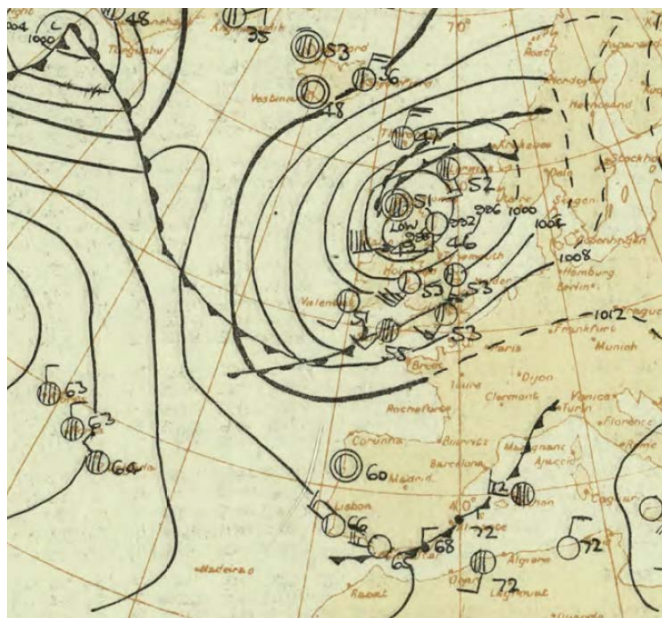
- F1. Wingman...
- F2. Flight...
- F3. Second Element...
- F5. ATC...
- F8. Ground Crew...
- F10. Other...
- F12. Exit

2. Main. Other

- F1. Enfield 2, rejoin.
- F2. Enfield 2, engage ground targets.
- F3. Enfield 2, engage bandits.
- F4. Enfield 2, attack primary target.
- F5. Enfield 2, RTB.
- F11. Previous Menu
- F12. Exit

Weather

General Synoptic Situation

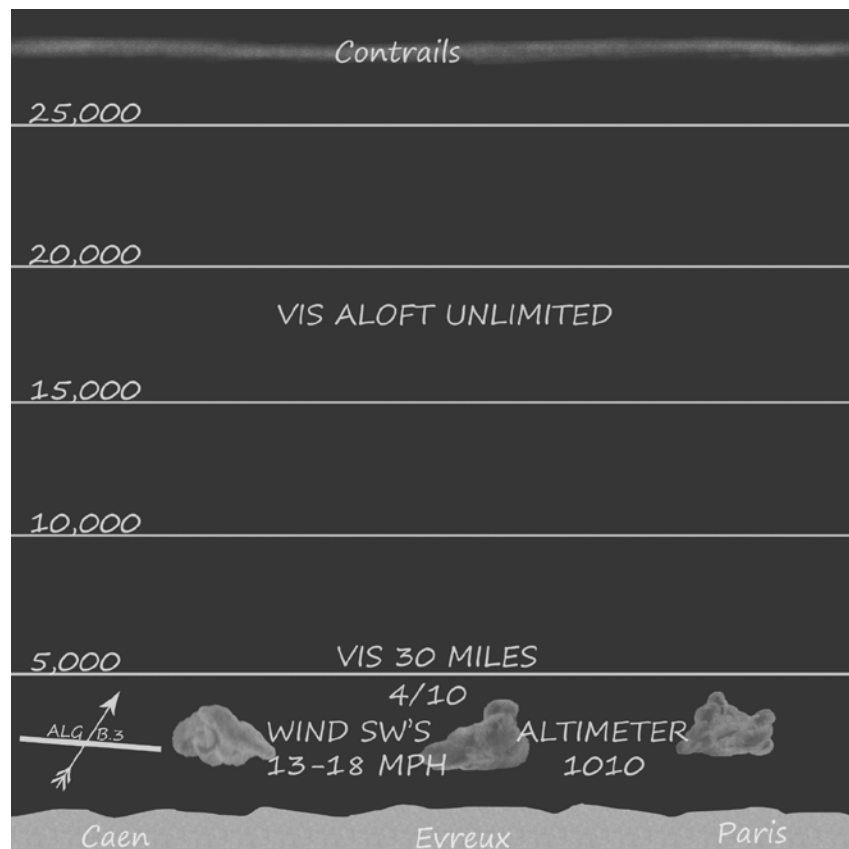


Daily Weather Report, 28 June 1944, UK Met Office

A depression centered over Scotland and an associated secondary over Southwest England are both moving northeast and filling up. It will be cloudy at first with rain at times. Improving conditions will spread from west with bright periods but some scattered showers. It will be generally cool.

Further outlook is for a generally fair period, but general rain spreading from the west later.

Route Forecast

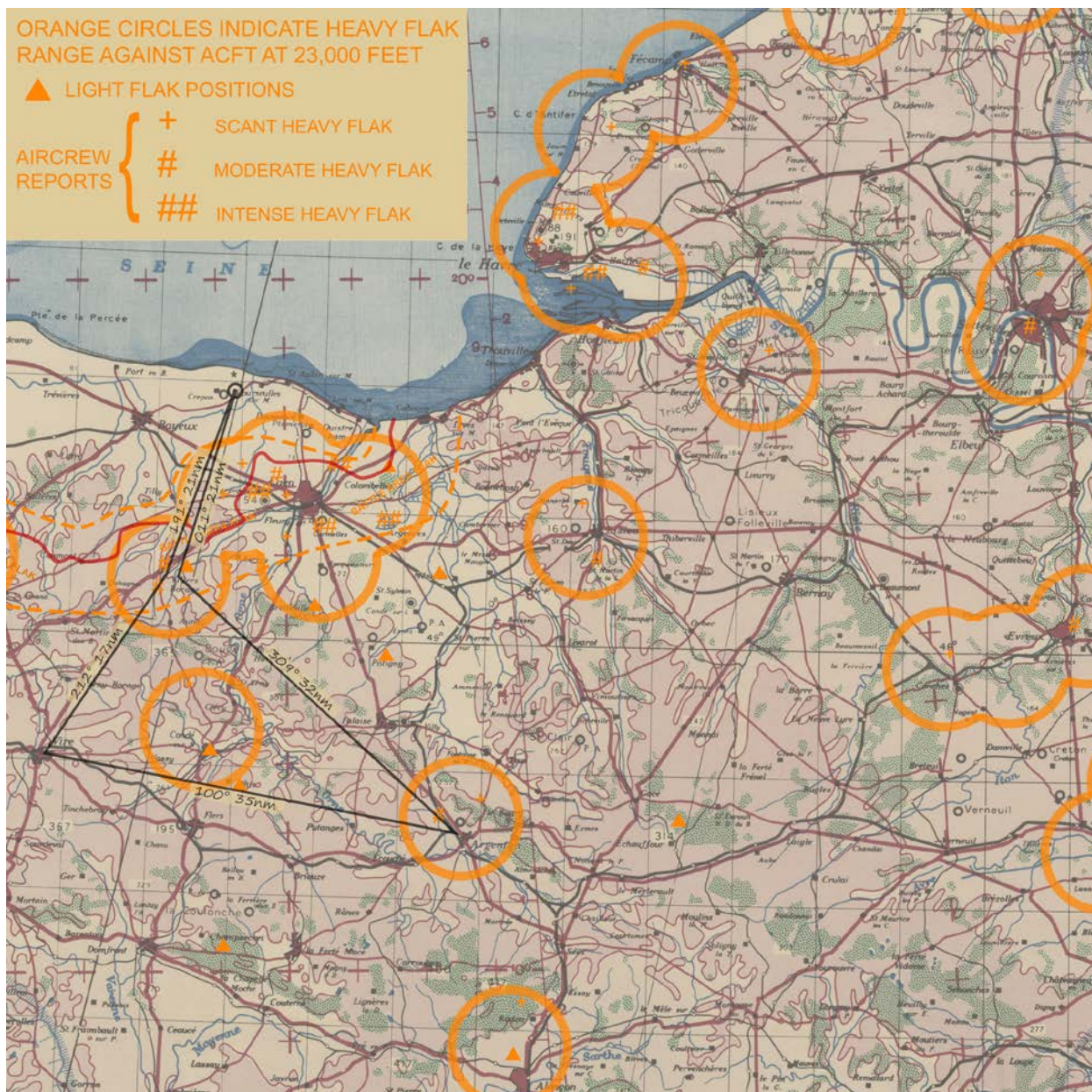


Flak

Heavy flak is expected near large towns and airfields, especially Caen. Change height and direction at least every 30 seconds if engaged.

Light flak and small arms has been very thick all along the front lines. Light flak is effective up to 6,000 feet while small arms, even when not seen, is effective up to 3,000 feet. Climb to 10,000 feet and cross the line at high speed in a slight dive if possible. If these areas must be entered at low altitude, widen the formation and make constant changes to height and direction until clear.

Convoys on roads are expected to be protected by sporadic light flak and small arms fire. A height of 5,000 feet is usual while searching for targets, only descending deeply into flak range when carrying out an attack. Egress the target area at minimum altitude after an attack and ensure you are out of range before climbing to rejoin the formation.



Enemy Intel and Recognition

Day Air Activity

Enemy air activity has picked up with more units entering the area in an attempt to support the Epsom battle. Groups of two to six Bf 109 and Fw 190 have been common with occasional groups of 10-20. The enemy has preferred to make quick hit and run attacks before returning to their side of the lines. Their preference has been to decline any engagement other than those where they enjoy superior numbers, hiding in the clouds or turning to disengage at high speed if attacked.

Most Luftwaffe units have pulled back to bases in the Paris area. Within Normandy itself, the main base at Evreux known to be active as well as the small Lonrai strip near Alencon. Increased activity is expected over the next several weeks with the arrival of additional units from the eastern front.

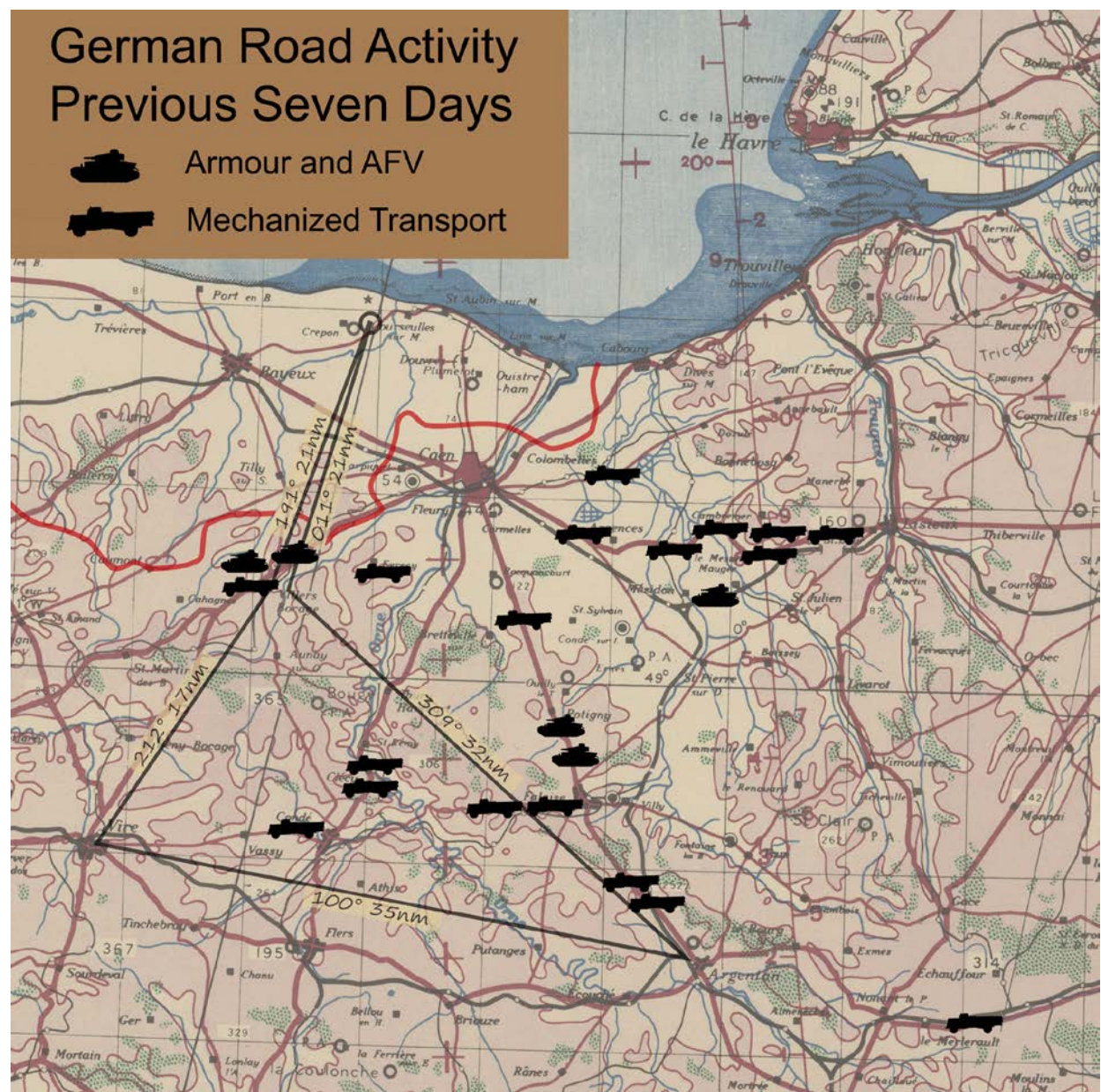


Enemy Intel and Recognition

Road Activity

Scattered groups of two or three vehicles have been common with an occasional convoy of 10 or more sighted very occasionally. Convoys on roads are sometimes protected by sporadic light flak and small arms fire. Most enemy activity on the roads occurs at night so keep an eye out for vehicles dispersed under trees out of sight. There are many abandoned vehicles in this area so be sure your target is valid before wasting ammunition. The enemy have also been known to concentrate flak around dummy targets hoping to lure unsuspecting aircraft in.

The Germans are choosing to risk movement by day regardless of allied air cover. Roads leading to and from Villers-Bocage are very active as reinforcements flow into the Epsom battle area. Flak is reported to be very thick in that area with convoys protected by both fixed and mobile flak positions.



Army Liaison Officer (ALO) Briefing

Previous 24 Hours

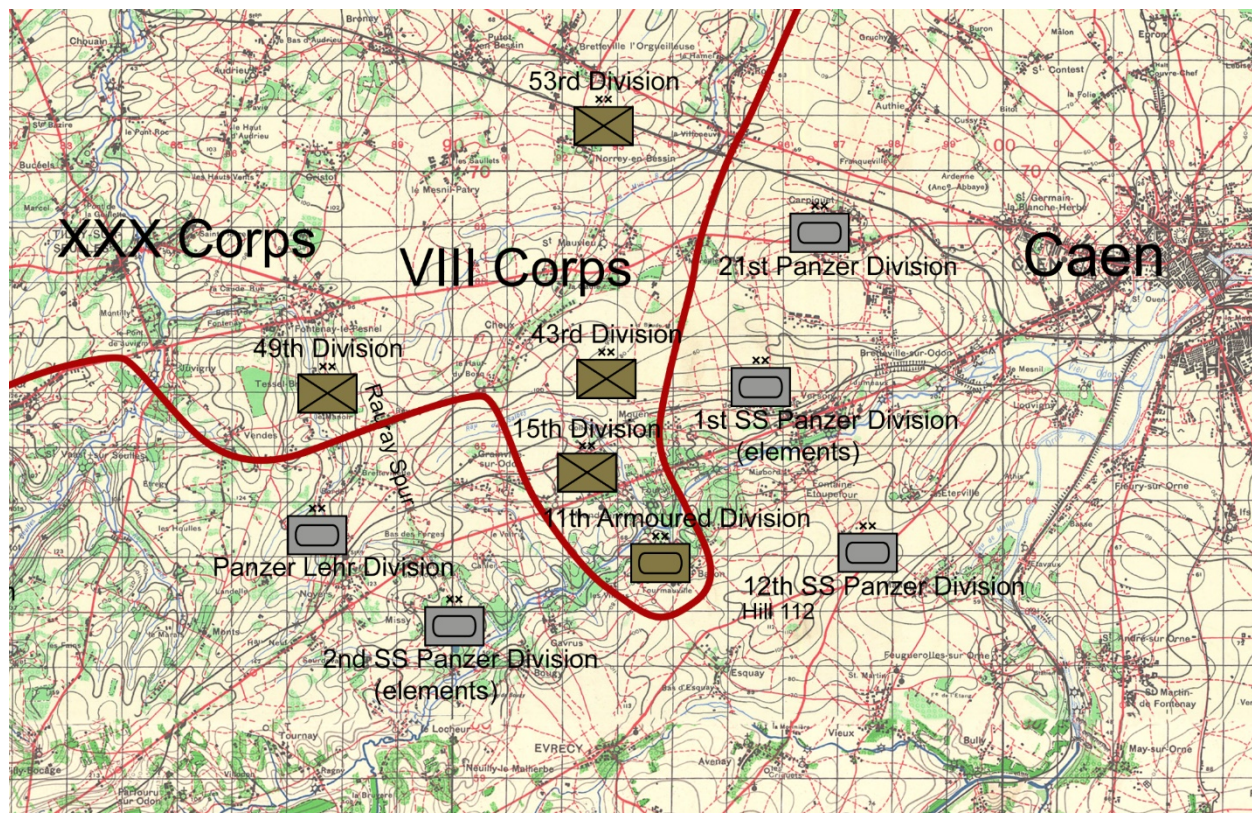
Weather yesterday was still bad enough to ground aircraft operating from England until around dusk. All Wings reported that enemy fighters were more active than of late and claimed 11 aircraft destroyed with a loss of five of their own.

The 15th Division started early in the morning yesterday with attacks to the south along two roads: one to the west running through Grainville in the direction of the Odon bridge at Gavrus and one to the east, in the direction of the bridge at Tourmauville. They were unable to make progress in the east but overcame light resistance to establish a small bridgehead over the Odon near Tourmauville.

Soon afterwards, tanks of the 11th Armoured Division crossed the Odon and moved out in the direction of Hill 112, prominent high ground with a commanding view of the surrounding area, but were unable to take the hill.

Meanwhile, the 43rd Division who had taken over ground already secured by 15th Division the previous day fought off a series of probing attacks by the German I SS Panzer Corps. The most serious of these reached Cheux before being defeated and the ground retaken late in the morning.

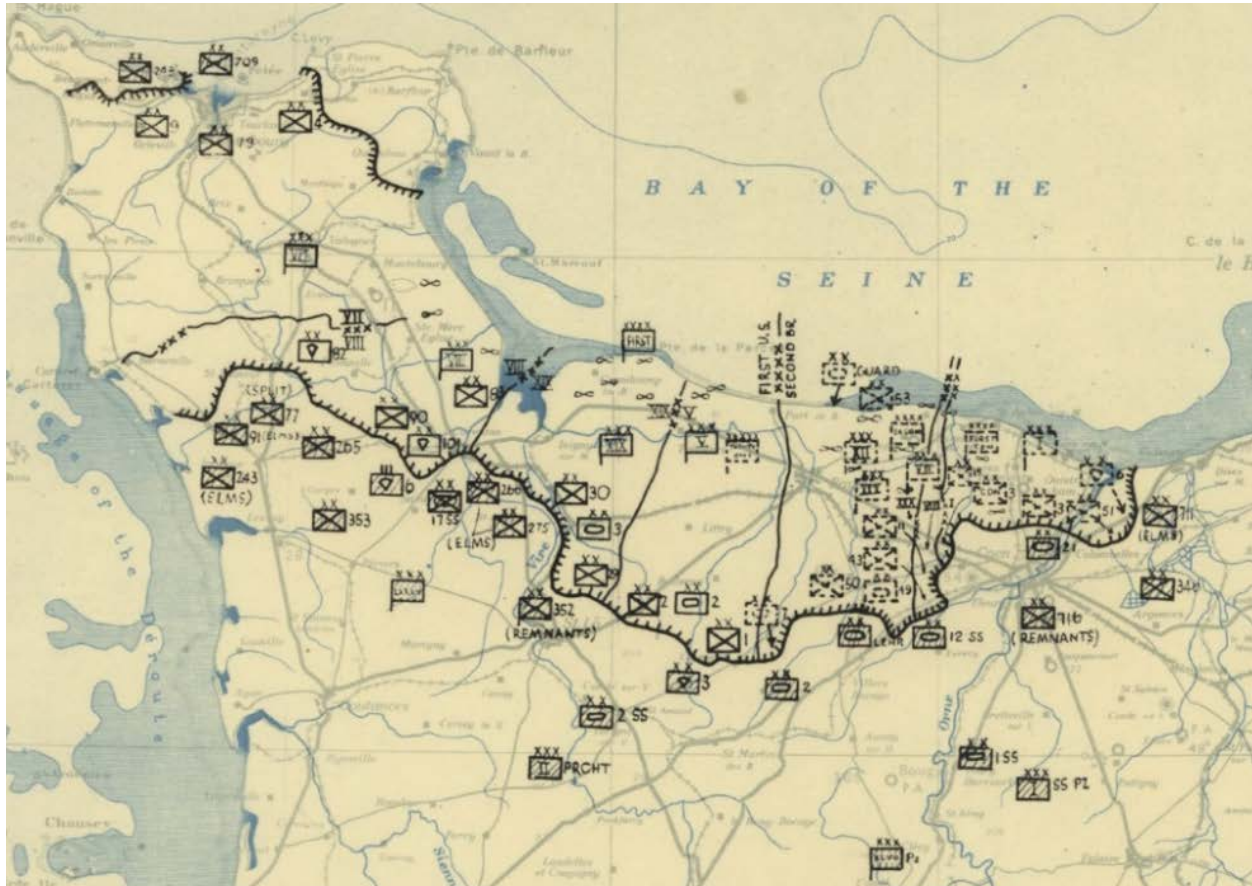
Late in the afternoon XXX Corps had finally captured the village of Rauray but the high ground south of it was still strongly held. The 15th Division, now holding the eastern road to the river, set out from Colleville to cut the enemy's possession of the western road by attacking Grainville from the east. The outskirts of the town were reached but too late to attack that night.



Army Liaison Officer (ALO) Briefing

In the U.S. First Army's VII Corps area, organized resistance at Cherbourg ceased during morning when Brig Gen Robert Sattler, deputy commander of the Cherbourg fortress, surrendered the arsenal to 9th Infantry Division after the Allies broadcast an ultimatum. 4th Infantry Division took over garrisoning of Cherbourg, overran Maupertus airfield, and quickly cleared Cap Levy. 9th Infantry Division prepared to attack to clear Cap de la Hague. Advance engineer units arrived at Cherbourg to restore facilities and make the port operational.

In VIII Corps area, newly arrived 83d Infantry Division took over defensive positions on the corps left flank held by 101st Airborne Division.

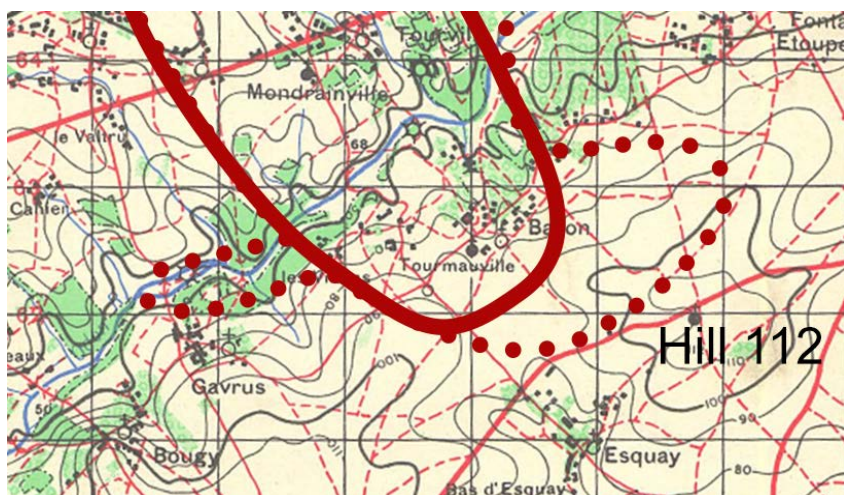


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Current Operations

One source of constant worry for VIII Corps is the increasing pressure building up on both sides of the narrow salient they occupy. Reports from the air indicate movement of new German units into the area and massing for a counterattack. Additional forces are risking movement by daylight from the southwest under a heavy umbrella of flak. This has been enough to give our commanders pause and direct that no attempt to reach the Orne river will be made until the 15th and 43rd Divisions had cleared and solidified their hold on the area between Cheux and the Odon.

Army Liaison Officer (ALO) Briefing



At daybreak, the bridgehead south of the Odon river was enlarged as more of 11th Armoured Division passed over the river. Their 29th Armoured Brigade is currently pressing the attack through the wooded area near Baron and on to Hill 112 but are meeting opposition from tanks, anti-tank guns, and mortars. Their tanks are receiving fire from hills to their right, the wooded area to their left, and Hill 112 itself.

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, part of 15th Division, have moved west from the eastern bridgehead and taken the western bridge at Gavrus. They remain isolated with the road between them and le Valtru held by the enemy. Other elements of 15th Division are attempting to clear the western road and relieve them.

The 49th Division is making another attempt to secure the Rauray spur while 15th and 43rd Divisions are attacking to the west and east to clear the area between Cheux and the Odon. The village of Mouen was taken earlier but a counterattack by newly arrived elements of 1st SS Panzer Division is in progress.

