

met a heavy volume of enemy fire that temporarily prevented them from reaching their line of departure. The Germans had discovered the slight withdrawal, had moved forward, and had thus escaped the full force of the twenty-minute artillery preparation. During the first half hour of the attack, they disabled with *panzerfaust* fire or forced to retire all six tanks in the first wave of one of the assault battalions. The stratagem of scooping out hedgerow banks to gain a surprise forward bound had thus been nullified.

American infantrymen advanced slowly with the help of heavy and accurate artillery fire. Twenty thousand rounds were fired by the division artillery alone; a total of 45 tons of high explosive came from all the artillery in support. Tanks and bazooka teams knocked out assault guns concealed in the rubble of a village. A dozen riflemen enveloped by stealth an enemy position known as "Kraut Corner," reached grenade distance, and destroyed the enemy weapons. Fifteen German paratroopers surrendered. Three who refused to capitulate were buried alive by a tank dozer.

"We have a battle on our hands," General Robertson said, "[but] things are breaking a little, a hundred yards here and a hundred yards there."<sup>13</sup> This was the pattern of the slow, vigorous advance that by noon got the 38th Infantry to the top of Hill 192. The Germans then disengaged and withdrew, and only scattered groups opposed the descent on the south slope. Part of the 38th Infantry dug in on a defensive perimeter just short of the highway and covered the road with fire; the other elements slipped

across the road in small groups and organized the high ground immediately to the south.

Meanwhile, a battalion of the 23d Infantry outflanked a gully called "Purple Heart Draw." Tanks placed direct fire on houses suspected of concealing German strongpoints. Several lucky shots by rifle grenades struck enemy-held hedgerows just right to achieve the effect of air bursts over enemy crew-served weapons. By late afternoon the battalion had crossed the east slope of Hill 192 and gained positions overlooking the Bérigny highway.

That evening Hausser, the *Seventh Army* commander, ordered Meindl, the *II Parachute Corps* commander, to hold Hill 192 at all costs.<sup>14</sup> It was already too late. As U.S. artillery placed harassing fires south of the Bérigny road during the night, the infantry repelled small and ineffective counterattacks. It became obvious to the Americans that the Germans were establishing a new line of defense in the hills south of and overlooking the St. Lô-Bérigny highway.

On 12 July the 2d Division advanced little, spending the day consolidating its new positions south of the Bérigny road. The Germans were relieved when the American attack halted, for with their troops tied down by the XIX Corps attack toward St. Lô, German commanders felt that if the 2d Division had continued its attack toward the south, the Americans would have accomplished a clean breakthrough.<sup>15</sup>

The 2d Division had nonetheless

<sup>14</sup> Telecon, Pemsel and Meindl, 1900, 11 Jul, *Seventh Army* Tel Msgs.

<sup>15</sup> Telecon, Blauensteiner to Helmdach, 1140, 12 Jul, *Seventh Army* Tel Msgs.

<sup>13</sup> 2d Div G-3 Jnl, 0925 and 0955, 11 Jul.

achieved a notable success. Although it had taken only 147 prisoners and sustained heavy losses—69 killed, 328 wounded, and 8 missing—it had captured the best observation point in the St. Lô sector, a point from which the Americans could look down the Martinville ridge toward the XIX Corps objective.

### *Down the Martinville Ridge*

The attack directly toward St. Lô, by that part of the XIX Corps east of the Vire River, should logically have followed soon after the successive corps attacks in the Cotentin—those of the VIII Corps on 3 July, the VII on 4 July, and the XIX Corps bridgehead operation launched on 7 July. Although General Bradley had tentatively extended the pattern of his offensive by scheduling the direct attack toward St. Lô for 9 July, considerations twice caused him to postpone the effort, each time for twenty-four hours. The first was his hope that commitment of armor west of the Vire would promote quick capture of the high ground west of St. Lô. The second was his feeling that additional troops were needed east of the Vire. Though the 29th Division, regarded as a good outfit, had formed the left of the XIX Corps early in July, Bradley believed, on the basis of combat experience in June, that a single division deployed on a wide front was not strong enough to take St. Lô. At least one additional division would be necessary in order to mount an attack that could be supported in depth.<sup>16</sup>

Whether the 35th Division, designated

for attachment to the XIX Corps, would reach France in time to participate at the beginning of the attack was the question. Though advance elements of the division had relieved portions of the 30th Division and freed them for their bridgehead operations on 7 July, it would take “very strenuous efforts” to get all of the division’s men and equipment into position to take over the right portion of the 29th Division zone. Not until 11 July was the 35th Division ready to attack.<sup>17</sup> (*See Map III.*)

A scant four miles north of St. Lô, the 29th and 35th Divisions held positions across an eight-mile front—from la Meauffe through Villiers-Fossard to the Couvains-Calvaire road. St. Lô was in the center of the projected corps zone of operations. In order to secure St. Lô, the divisions would have to advance to the river line west of the city and to the Bérigny road, the eastward exit from the city.

The divisions were to attack abreast in narrow zones. The boundary separating them ran from Villiers-Fossard along the western base of Hill 122 to the loop of the Vire River. The 35th on the right was to move to the two-mile stretch of the Vire immediately northwest of St. Lô; the 29th was to take the city. While one battalion of medium artillery supported the XIX Corps attack west of the Vire, the remainder of the corps artillery—four battalions of 155-mm. howitzers and a battalion each of 4.5-inch guns and 8-inch howitzers—was to assist the attack on St. Lô. General Corlett attached an additional battalion of medi-

<sup>16</sup> Telecon, Corlett and Gerhardt, 0825, 8 Jul, 29th Div G-3 Jnl; Ltr, Eisenhower to Marshall, 5 Jul, Pogue Files.

<sup>17</sup> 35th Div CofS Memo, 9 Jul, 35th Div G-3 Jnl; XIX Corps Ltr of Instrs, 7 Jul; XIX Corps and 29th Div Msgs, 0712 and 1200, 10 Jul, XIX Corps G-3 Jnl.

um artillery to the 29th Division, which was to make the main effort of the corps.<sup>18</sup>

The 29th Division was a veteran unit with D-Day experience on OMAHA Beach. Commanded by Maj. Gen. Charles H. Gerhardt, it had taken Isigny and attempted to capture St. Lô in June. While awaiting the reopening of offensive operations, General Gerhardt had organized small tank-infantry-engineer teams and rehearsed their co-ordinated action according to a plan that assigned an infantry squad and one tank to each hedgerowed field and an engineer squad to each infantry platoon or three fields. He directed the division ordnance company to weld iron prongs to his tanks so that they could ram holes in the hedgerow banks to facilitate the placing of demolitions. He also experimented with the technique of infantry crossing the center of the fields rather than moving along hedgerows.<sup>19</sup> By these means, and with heavy artillery support, he hoped—even though replacements had not brought all of his infantry battalions back to authorized strength—to make a rapid, sustained advance.

Bombed from the air and shelled from the ground, St. Lô was in ruins. To avoid not only the costly fighting involved in rooting Germans from the crumbling houses but also the task of clearing the rubble-clogged streets, General Gerhardt designated high ground near the city rather than St. Lô itself as the immediate objectives: Hill 122 north of the town and just inside the division right boundary, the Martinville ridge to

the east, and the heights southeast of St. Lô. With these in his possession and with the 2d Division holding Hill 192, Gerhardt hoped that by threatening to encircle the city he could compel the Germans to evacuate.

Two of the three heights General Gerhardt deemed necessary for his purpose were within striking distance—Hill 122 and the Martinville ridge. Although possession of Hill 122 would give the 29th Division a more direct avenue of approach to the city—the Isigny–St. Lô highway, which enters St. Lô from the northeast—Gerhardt preferred not to attack it directly. Second only to Hill 192 in importance in the St. Lô area, Hill 122 was a bastion of the German defensive line, a position that anchored fortifications on a two-mile ridge extending north to Carillon. The Germans were sensitive to a threat against this height, since its plateaulike crest ends abruptly at a steep slope near the edge of the northern outskirts of St. Lô. From the top of the slope, the city lies exposed and vulnerable.

General Gerhardt preferred to make his main effort on the left (east). He therefore deployed the 115th Infantry (Col. Godwin Ordway, Jr.) across a broad front, north and northeast of Hill 122, on the division right. Even though all three infantry battalions were in the line, a gap of several hundred yards separated two of them. The reason for such thin deployment was Gerhardt's plan to make his main effort to secure the Martinville ridge. By holding this eminence east of St. Lô, U.S. troops would threaten the Germans on Hill 122 with encirclement and isolation from the south. In a potentially untenable

<sup>18</sup> XIX Corps Arty AAR, Jul.

<sup>19</sup> The Div Comdr's After Combat Battle Notes, 29 Div AAR, Jul.



MARTINVILLE RIDGE

position, the Germans on Hill 122 would have to withdraw through St. Lô before the Americans entered the city and cut their route of escape. As the Germans withdrew the Americans could decimate them with artillery fire. Occupation of both Hill 122 and the high ground southeast of St. Lô would then be a simple matter.

Assuming that the 2d Division would take Hill 192 and thus secure his flank and rear, General Gerhardt directed the 116th Infantry (Col. Charles D. W. Canham) to slip south on a narrow front near the division left boundary to the Martinville ridge. There the regiment would turn right (west) and descend the ridge toward the eastern edge of town. The 115th Infantry was to make a diversionary effort down the Isigny-St. Lô road toward Hill 122 and protect the division right flank. The 175th Infantry (Col. Ollie W. Reed) was to be prepared to exploit success—either on the Martinville Ridge or, if despite contrary expectation the 115th met little

resistance from Hill 122, along the Isigny-St. Lô axis.<sup>20</sup>

General Gerhardt's scheme was almost disarranged just before daybreak on 11 July when the *II Parachute Corps* launched a diversionary feint in support of the *Panzer Lehr* attack west of the Vire.<sup>21</sup> A German patrol cut the communication wires of the 115th Infantry. Enemy artillery and mortars opened fire. Two paratroop companies supported by engineers struck the thinly deployed troops of the 115th, overran the American lines, encircled part of an infantry battalion, and drove a company of 4.2-inch mortar men from their positions. Without communication and direction from higher headquarters, heavy mortar support, or knowledge of the extent of the German effort, small groups fought isolated engagements in the early morning light. At 0730, judging that they had done their duty by *Panzer Lehr*,

<sup>20</sup> 29th Div FO 18, 4 Jul; 29th Div Arty FO 2, 4 Jul; 116th Inf FO 10, 5 Jul.

<sup>21</sup> See above, Ch. VII.

the German assault companies broke contact and withdrew to their former positions. What was essentially a raid alerted the 29th Division to the possibility that German reserves had been massed in depth for counterattack and would be in position to make a strong defense of St. Lô. The raid also inflicted more than a hundred casualties on the 115th and disrupted its scheduled jump-off. Regimental reorganization took the remainder of the morning, and Colonel Ordway did not launch his attack down the Isigny-St. Lô road until afternoon. As anticipated, little advance was made in the face of strong enemy fire directed from Hill 122.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, General Gerhardt had been able to get his main effort under way on the division left flank early that morning when two battalions of the 116th Infantry jumped off in column behind a heavy artillery preparation. The hedgerows made it difficult to locate the exact sources of enemy fire, and progress was slow against determined resistance. As 4.2-inch mortars fired on the Martinville ridge and tanks knocked out a self-propelled gun on the Calvaire road, the infantry finally got past its first major obstacle, a sunken road heavily protected by antipersonnel mines. The regiment still had gained only six hedgerows in five hours when, suddenly, as the 2d Division secured the crest of Hill 192, the German opposition gave way. The 116th Infantry then moved rapidly south to the Martinville ridge, turned right (west), and began to move down the ridge toward St. Lô.

As soon as the assaulting troops surged forward, Colonel Canham, the regimental commander, committed his reserve battalion. By the end of the day this battalion, with a company of tanks in close support, had set up blocking positions on the division left flank. Entrenched on the south slope of the Martinville ridge, the battalion overlooked the Bérigny road.

Toward the end of the first day General Gerhardt's effort to outflank Hill 122 from the east and south promised success. The 2d Division had captured Hill 192 and was protecting the strong 116th Infantry positions on the Martinville ridge. Apparently ready to close in on St. Lô and threaten Hill 122 with isolation, Gerhardt alerted his reserve regiment, the 175th, to pass through the 116th on the following day and drive into the city from the east.

The plan had one drawback. As soon as the 116th had turned the axis of attack from the south to the west, its left flank had become exposed; men moving across the open fields and orchards of the southern face of the Martinville ridge came under observed German fire from high ground south of the Bérigny road. Having in effect sought defilade from the fires of Hill 122 against the north face of the Martinville ridge, the Americans had come under enfilading fire from the south, shelling that harassed movement and depleted ranks. As a result the 29th Division on 11 July lost almost 500 men.

If Gerhardt persisted with his original scheme of maneuver and brought the bulk of the division down the Martinville ridge, he would send his men through a gantlet of German fire. But because control of the southern face of

<sup>22</sup> 29th Div AAR, Jul and Extract from the Battle Report of the 3d Parachute Division Operations, 10-20 Jul; XIX Corps Cml Sec Rpt, XIX Corps AAR, Jul.

the Martinville ridge would protect his flank against attack across the Bérigny highway and because an approach to St. Lô from the east still held out the promise of quickly dislodging the Germans on Hill 122, General Gerhardt decided to continue. He became convinced, however, that as long as the Germans had control of the hills north and south of St. Lô, they were not likely to give up the city. Thus he had to take St. Lô by direct assault and occupy the town. On the evening of 11 July he instructed Colonel Canham to "push on, if possible take St. Lô."<sup>23</sup> Encroaching darkness helped to thwart the attempt.

With the American scheme of maneuver revealed by a captured field order, German commanders during the morning of 11 July had been unworried by the American attack. By noontime the outlook had changed. They had lost the top of Hill 192, and the *Panzer Lehr* attack west of the Vire River had fizzled. The considerable American pressure, not only in the St. Lô region but all across the Cotentin, was having a cumulative effect that could not be wished away. Trying to retain possession of the St. Lô defenses, the *II Parachute Corps* reported that its entire front had "burst into flame." A strong volume of effective artillery fire had by nightfall of 11 July reduced the *3d Parachute Division* to 35 percent of its authorized strength. The *kampfgruppe* of the *353d Division*, fighting alongside the paratroopers, had shrunk from almost 1,000 men to 180. Approving commitment of the last reserve battalion of the *3d Parachute Division*, Meindl, the

corps commander, requested that a regiment of the *5th Parachute Division*, arriving at this time from Brittany, be sent to reinforce his sector. Hausser, the *Seventh Army* commander, refused, judging that the *Panzer Lehr* defeat made the region west of St. Lô more critical. Hausser insisted, nevertheless, that the Martinville ridge be held at all costs. In response, Meindl remarked that someone was soon going to have to come up with a brilliant plan if they were to counter the American pressure. Meanwhile, Meindl established a new line during the night. The positions extended north across the Bérigny highway and over the Martinville ridge to tie in with Hill 122, and faced eastward to meet the threat that had developed on the Martinville ridge.<sup>24</sup>

On the second day of attack, 12 July, the 29th Division made little progress. On the right the 115th Infantry, extended over a broad front, without a reserve, and under the eyes of the Germans on Hill 122, did little more than maintain pressure and sustain casualties. On the left, the 175th Infantry was unable—because of German artillery fire—to pass through the 116th and get into position for a drive down the Martinville ridge. German artillery and mortar fire immobilized the division and again inflicted almost 500 casualties.

Losing nearly 1,000 men in two days was a serious drain on the division, which had not been up to strength at the beginning of the attack. A battalion of the 175th Infantry, even before

<sup>23</sup> [Garth], *St.-Lô*, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> Telecons, Pemsel to Meindl, 1900, 11 Jul, and Blauensteiner to Helmdach, 1140, 12 Jul, *Seventh Army* Tel Msgs; *Seventh Army KTB* (Draft), 11 Jul; Daily Sitrep, 12 Jul, *AGP B Tagesmeldungen*; MS # B-455 (Ziegelmann).

commitment, had only 225 men in its three rifle companies. Several hours after the jump-off another battalion commander had replied, when General Gerhardt asked him how he stood in strength, "On one leg, sir." German fire depleted the division at an alarming rate, and the hedgerow fighting wore out the survivors. On the evening of 12 July a regimental commander understated the case when he informed Gerhardt, "I think everybody is enthusiastic about taking up a strong defensive position right now and I would recommend it too."<sup>25</sup>

After two days of battle the corps and division commanders, Generals Corlett and Gerhardt, both came to the conclusion, "Hill 122 is SOP"—they needed Hill 122 before they could take St. Lô. By 13 July, however, General Gerhardt no longer had the strength to seize the hill. The bulk of the 29th Division, the 116th and 175th Regiments, was inextricably committed in the left portion of the division zone, the Martinville ridge; the 115th Infantry, facing Hill 122 and in position to assault the height, remained stretched across a broad front. Gerhardt tentatively proposed to envelop and bypass the German strongpoint on Hill 122, but he did not press the point since he did not feel it was a satisfactory solution.<sup>26</sup>

General Corlett held the solution to the problem of Hill 122. He could commit his corps reserve against it. Yet before doing so, he wanted to give Gerhardt's original plan of maneuver—

continuation of the effort down the Martinville ridge—one more day. To support the attack he requested particularly heavy air bombardment of Hill 122.<sup>27</sup>

By morning of 13 July the two regiments on the Martinville ridge had managed to assume definite regimental zones abreast and facing west, the 116th generally holding the ridge line, the 175th occupying positions across the southern face of the ridge to the Bérigny road. In compliance with the corps commander's decision, General Gerhardt directed the 175th Infantry to drive down the Bérigny highway to St. Lô behind a spearhead of tanks. With dive bombers blasting ahead of the ground troops and neutralizing Hill 122, artillery giving close protection, and tanks driving the point down the road, there was reason to hope that the city might fall.

The hope was short lived. Hardly had daylight come before hindrances developed. Not only did bad weather nullify the air effort, but lack of proper co-ordination prevented the tanks from refueling and immobilized them for the duration of the attack. Deprived of both armor and air support, the infantry, although aided by strong artillery fire, advanced but 500 yards under the pounding of German artillery and mortar shells directed from the ridge south of the highway.

Late in the afternoon the regimental commander, Colonel Reed, requested permission to commit his reserve battalion against the high ground south of the Bérigny road. When General Ger-

<sup>25</sup> 29th Div G-3 Jnl, 1215 and 1558, 11 Jul, and 1707, 12 Jul.

<sup>26</sup> 29th Div G-3 Jnl, 0955, 13 Jul.

<sup>27</sup> 29th Div FO 20, 12 Jul; 29th Div Arty AAR, Jul.

hardt relayed the request to the corps commander, General Corlett refused for fear it might promote a dispersal of effort. Also, he had by then decided to take action against Hill 122 by committing his reserve, a regiment of the 35th Division, and he needed the reserve battalion of Reed's regiment to constitute a new corps reserve. Ordering General Gerhardt to rest his troops and reorganize his positions on the following day, 14 July, General Corlett turned his main attention to the 35th Division, the unit on the right that had also been attacking since 11 July and would now have to take Hill 122.

### *Hill 122*

Commanded by Maj. Gen. Paul W. Baade, the 35th Division, though well trained, was handicapped by the haste with which it had to be committed. The troops had taken over part of the active front without extensive ground reconnaissance; their knowledge of the enemy was limited to the general idea of where the German forward line lay, the impression that the Germans were defending with vigor, and the immediate realization that the Germans had excellent observation of all movement, particularly in the open fields. Only when the division launched its attack did the men learn how thoroughly the Germans had organized the terrain.<sup>28</sup>

From a line of departure running between la Meauffe (on the Vire) and Villiers-Fossard, the 35th Division faced hedgerow country. The objective, four

miles away, was the two-mile stretch of the Vire River between the loop and the bend. The division's right flank was fairly well protected by the Vire River; but on the left, just outside the boundary, Hill 122 dominated the entire zone.

For his attack on 11 July, the same day that the 2d and 29th jumped off, General Baade planned to commit two regiments abreast—the 137th (Col. Grant Layng) on the right adjacent to the river, the 320th (Col. Bernard A. Byrne) on the left. The 134th Infantry (Col. Butler B. Miltonberger) was to be held as corps reserve. After a thirty-minute artillery preparation, the division moved forward at 0600.<sup>29</sup>

The right flank elements of both assault regiments advanced a mile and a half in two hours and straightened the division front, but then the attack stalled. Meeting strong resistance in the hedgerows, the troops encountered many of the same difficulties that plagued nearly all inexperienced divisions in the hedgerows. Communications went out almost immediately. Gaps soon developed between units. The men seemed surprised to find strong opposition from machine guns in sunken roads and behind hedges. With astonishment they noted that it was "hard to put down [artillery] fire behind hedges close to our tr[oo]ps."<sup>30</sup> Though the troops had been informed while in England that the Cornish countryside was somewhat like Normandy, neither planning nor training to overcome the terrain obstacles of the hedgerows had gone far

<sup>28</sup> Interv with Lt Col Beckley by Capt Franklin Ferris, CI 106; 35th Div G-3 Jnl, 9 Jul.

<sup>29</sup> 35th Div FO 2, 10 Jul, and AAR, Jul.

<sup>30</sup> 35th Div G-3 Jnl, 1820, 11 Jul.





SUNKEN ROAD NEAR CARILLON

beyond speculation.<sup>31</sup> German mortar and automatic weapons fire was particularly heavy, and one of the wounded was a regimental commander, Colonel Layng. The first day of action did little more than give the troops their baptism of fire and rudely introduce them into the complexities of hedgerow warfare. Across the Vire River General Hobbs clamored for the 35th Division to advance and cover the 30th Division flank.<sup>32</sup>

On the second day of attack, 12 July, the 35th Division employed a 45-minute artillery preparation to try to soften the German defenses. This helped to achieve success against a fortified posi-

tion in a church and cemetery on the right flank, where machine gunners in concrete emplacements behind the cemetery walls had been an immovable obstruction since early the preceding day. A battalion cleared the obstacle shortly before noon; no prisoners were taken—all the Germans were dead. The infantry then proceeded to take the next strongpoint, a fortified château that had been set ablaze the previous night by artillery shells.

Despite this advance, the 35th Division made only slight gains on 12 and 13 July. Inexperience and the hedgerows were partly responsible, but more important was the strong German position at Carillon, which was in the center of the division zone and backed by the forces on Hill 122.

Though envelopment looked like the answer at Carillon, every attempt was thwarted by a lack of maneuver room and by the dominating German positions on Hill 122. It became obvious that if the 35th Division was to progress, Hill 122, in the 29th Division zone, had to be in American hands. Only then did it seem that General Baade would be able to advance his right flank sufficiently to cover the 30th Division on the other side of the river.

The situation was partially resolved on 14 July. While the 29th Division rested and reorganized, General Baade sent out part of the 35th in an attack along the east bank of the Vire. Helped by a strong 30th Division drive on the other river bank, the 137th Infantry, commanded now by Col. Harold R. Emery, advanced in rain through mine fields and heavy mortar and artillery fire to the Pont-Hébert-St. Lô highway.

<sup>31</sup> James A. Huston, *Biography of A Battalion* (Gering, Nebraska: Courier Press, 1950), p. 14. The volume gives an excellent account of operations as seen from the point of view of a battalion staff officer.

<sup>32</sup> See Telecon, 12 Jul, 35th Div G-3 Jnl File.

With all three battalions committed and with tanks, tank destroyers, and artillery giving strong support, the 137th secured part of the ridge road. The regiment lost 125 men and 11 medium tanks and took 53 prisoners.

The results of the advance were important. The *352d Division*, which defended the ground adjacent to and east of the Vire River, had always been troubled by its potentially precarious positions. The Vire River defined its left (west) flank and also crossed the unit rear. Since no permanent structures bridged the Vire between Pont-Hébert and St. Lô, if American troops drove to St. Lô or to the loop of the river, the division was trapped. To maintain lateral communications across the Vire, the Germans built an underwater bridge at Rampan, south of Pont-Hébert, but it could not support a wholesale exodus from the sector. The loss of Pont-Hébert so threatened the Rampan crossing site that German engineers hurriedly began to build a temporary bridge just northwest of St. Lô.<sup>33</sup>

Thoughts of withdrawal were becoming stronger as the battle proceeded. During the first three days of the American effort in July, the *352d Division* computed that it had borne 40 attacks—2 in regimental, 12 in battalion, and 26 in company strength. The effect of the incessant thrust over a three-day period had forced the Germans back. If the U.S. infantry attacks had been effective, their artillery had been devastating. During the first two days, the German division had sustained 840 wounded, most from artillery fire, and was unable to count its dead. American counter-



U.S. SOLDIER IN GERMAN POSITION

battery fire was particularly impressive, destroying in one instance six of the twelve guns of one battalion.

The rapid decline in the effectiveness of the *352d Division* had serious connotations for the Germans defending St. Lô. Should the *352d* collapse, Hill 122 would be lost. The loss of Hill 122 meant eventual withdrawal to the high ground south of St. Lô. Meindl therefore reinforced the forces on Hill 122 with *266th Division* troops he had held in reserve and with the *30th Mobile Brigade*, which had just returned to *II Parachute Corps* control after being relieved by *Panzer Lehr* in the sector west of the Vire.<sup>34</sup>

Unaware of the exact effect the *35th Division* was having on the opposition, General Corlett was nevertheless conscious that Pont-Hébert, secured in con-

<sup>33</sup> MS # B-439 (Ziegelmann)

<sup>34</sup> MS # B-455 (Ziegelmann); Hodgson, R-54.