

= Gold Beach =

Gold , commonly known as Gold Beach , was the code name for one of the five areas of the Allied invasion of German @-@ occupied France in the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944 , during the Second World War . Gold , the central of the five areas , was located between Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin on the west and La Rivière on the east . High cliffs at the western end of the zone meant that the landings took place on the flat section between Le Hamel and La Rivière , in the sectors code @-@ named Jig and King . Taking Gold was to be the responsibility of the British Army , with sea transport , mine sweeping , and a naval bombardment force provided by the Royal Navy as well as elements from the Dutch , Polish and other Allied navies .

The objectives at Gold were to secure a beachhead , move west to capture Arromanches and establish contact with the American forces at Omaha , capture Bayeux and the small port at Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin , and to link up with the Canadian forces at Juno to the east . Forces attacking Gold faced elements of the German 352nd Infantry Division and German 716th Infantry Division . About 2 @,@ 000 men were stationed in the immediate area . Improvements to fortifications along the Normandy coast had been undertaken under the leadership of Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel beginning in October 1943 .

On D @-@ Day at Gold , naval bombardment got underway at 05 : 30 , and amphibious landings commenced at 07 : 25 . High winds made conditions difficult for the landing craft , and the amphibious DD tanks were released close to shore or directly on the beach instead of further out as planned . Three of the four guns in a large emplacement at the Longues @-@ sur @-@ Mer battery were disabled by direct hits from the cruisers Ajax and Argonaut at 06 : 20 . The fourth gun resumed firing intermittently in the afternoon , and its garrison surrendered on 7 June . Aerial attacks had failed to hit the Le Hamel strongpoint , which had its embrasure facing east to provide enfilade fire along the beach and had a thick concrete wall on the seaward side . Its 75 mm gun continued to do damage until 16 : 00 , when a modified Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers (AVRE) tank fired a large petard charge into its rear entrance . A second casemated emplacement at La Rivière containing an 88 mm gun was neutralised by a tank at 07 : 30 .

Meanwhile , infantry began clearing the heavily fortified houses along the shore and advanced on targets further inland . The British Commandos of No. 47 (Royal Marine) Commando advanced on Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin and captured it on 7 June in the Battle of Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin . On the western flank , the 1st Battalion , Hampshire Regiment captured Arromanches (future site of one of the artificial Mulberry harbours) , and 69th Infantry Brigade on the eastern flank made contact with the Canadian forces at Juno . Company Sergeant Major Stanley Hollis received the only Victoria Cross awarded on D @-@ Day for his actions while attacking two pillboxes at the Mont Fleury battery . Due to stiff resistance from the German 352nd Infantry Division , Bayeux was not captured until the next day . British casualties at Gold are estimated at 1 @,@ 000 ? 1 @,@ 100 . German casualties are unknown .

= = Background = =

= = = Operation Overlord = = =

After the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 , Soviet leader Joseph Stalin began pressing for the creation of a second front in Western Europe . The decision to undertake a cross @-@ channel invasion of continental Europe within the next year was taken at the Trident Conference , held in Washington in May 1943 . The Allies initially planned to launch the invasion on 1 May 1944 , and a draft of the plan was accepted at the Quebec Conference in August 1943 . General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed commander of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) . General Bernard Montgomery was named as commander of the 21st Army Group , which comprised all of the land forces involved in the invasion .

On 31 December 1943 , Eisenhower and Montgomery first saw the plan , which proposed

amphibious landings by three divisions and two @-@ thirds of an airborne division . The two generals immediately insisted that the scale of the initial invasion be expanded to five divisions , with airborne descents by three divisions , to allow operations on a wider front . The change doubled the frontage of the invasion from 25 miles (40 km) to 50 miles (80 km) . This would allow for quicker offloading of men and materiel , make it more difficult for the Germans to respond , and speed up the capture of the port at Cherbourg . The need to acquire or produce extra landing craft and troop carrier aircraft for the expanded operation meant that the invasion had to be delayed to June .

The Americans , assigned to land at Utah and Omaha , were to cut off the Cotentin Peninsula and capture the port facilities at Cherbourg . The British at Sword and Gold , and the Canadians at Juno , were to capture Caen and form a front line from Caumont @-@ l'Éventé to the south @-@ east of Caen to protect the American flank , while establishing airfields near Caen . Possession of Caen and its surroundings would provide a suitable staging area for a push south to capture the town of Falaise . A secure lodgement would be established and an attempt made to hold all territory north of the Avranches @-@ Falaise line during the first three weeks . The Allied armies would then swing left to advance towards the River Seine . Montgomery envisaged a ninety @-@ day battle , ending when all the forces reached the Seine .

= = = Allied planning = = =

Originally , seventeen sectors along the Normandy coastline had been selected as possible invasion sites and each were provided with a code name taken from one of the spelling alphabets of the time . The coast was divided between Able , west of Omaha , to Rodger on the eastern flank of the invasion area . Eight further sectors were added when the planned invasion was extended to include Utah . Each sector was further subdivided into beaches identified by the colours Green , Red , and White . Gold did not refer to a particular beach but to a landing area . It was delineated by Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin on the west and La Rivière on the east , and included Arromanches , location of one of the artificial Mulberry harbours that were to be constructed shortly after the invasion . High cliffs at the western end of the zone meant that the landings would be undertaken on the flat beach between Le Hamel and La Rivière , in the sectors code @-@ named Jig and King . The area immediately behind the beach was marshy , with open ground and bocage (small fields surrounded by hedges and embankments) further inland . Roads led to the south via Asnelles and Ver @-@ sur @-@ Mer . The terrain to the south @-@ east rose to a ridge at Meuvaines , where on D @-@ day were located machine gun nests of the German 726th Regiment .

The Allied Expeditionary Air Force undertook over 3 @, @ 200 photo reconnaissance sorties from April 1944 until the start of the invasion . Photos of the coastline were taken at extremely low altitude to show the invaders the terrain , obstacles on the beach , and defensive structures such as bunkers and gun emplacements . Inland terrain , bridges , troop emplacements , and buildings were also photographed , in many cases from several angles , to give the Allies as much information as possible . Members of Combined Operations Pilotage Parties clandestinely prepared detailed harbour maps , including depth soundings . At Gold , frogmen discovered the shore between Asnelles and La Rivière was soft and could not support the weight of tanks . Twelve Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers (AVREs) were fitted with bobbins to overcome this problem by deploying a roll of matting over the soft surface . The material would then be left in place to create a route for more conventional tanks .

Gold was assigned to the British XXX Corps , with the 50th (Northumbrian) Infantry Division ? commanded by Major General D.A.H. Graham ? allotted as the assault division . It was an experienced division that had already seen combat in France , North Africa , and Sicily . The men underwent extensive training in amphibious landings , including Exercise Fabius , a major training exercise at Hayling Island in May 1944 . Demolition teams responsible for disabling underwater beach obstacles trained in swimming pools in the UK . Briefings were undertaken using detailed maps that used fictitious place names , and most of the men did not find out their destination until they were already on their way to Normandy . The amphibious landing was to be preceded by extensive air bombardment as well as naval bombardment by Bombarding Force K , a task force of

eighteen ships , primarily cruisers and destroyers . Amphibious tanks of the 8th Armoured Brigade were to arrive at 07 : 20 , followed by infantry at 07 : 25 . The 231st Brigade was assigned to land at Jig , and 69th Brigade at King . The 231st was to head west to capture Arromanches and establish contact with the American forces at Omaha , while the 69th was to move east and link up with the Canadian forces at Juno . The 47th Royal Marine Commando was assigned to land at Gold , infiltrate inland , and capture the small port at Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin from the landward side .

Arriving in the second wave on Jig , 56th Infantry Brigade was to capture Bayeux and a nearby ridge , thus cutting the N13 highway between Caen and Bayeux to make it difficult for the Germans to move in reinforcements . The second wave on King , 151st Infantry Brigade , was tasked with capturing the Caen road and railway , along with setting up positions on high ground between the Aure and Seules rivers . Other forces involved in the landing included artillery regiments , signals corps , and engineering units .

= = = German defences = = =

In late 1943 , Hitler placed Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in charge of improving the coastal defences along the Atlantic Wall in anticipation of an Allied invasion , expected to take place sometime in 1944 . Rommel believed that the Normandy coast could be a possible landing point for the invasion , so he ordered the construction of extensive defensive works along that shore . In the immediate area of Gold , between Le Hamel and La Rivière , seven defensive strongpoints designed to hold 50 men apiece were constructed . Two major concrete @-@ reinforced coastal artillery emplacements (a battery of four 122 mm guns at Mont Fleury and the Longues @-@ sur @-@ Mer battery , with four 150 mm guns) were only partially completed by D @-@ Day . Rommel ordered wooden stakes , metal tripods , mines , and large anti @-@ tank obstacles to be placed on the beach to delay the approach of landing craft and impede the movement of tanks . Expecting the Allies to land at high tide so that the infantry would spend less time exposed on the beach , he ordered many of these obstacles to be placed at the high tide mark . Tangles of barbed wire , booby traps , and the removal of ground cover made the approach hazardous for infantry .

Hitler gave Rommel command of the newly re @-@ formed Army Group B , which included the 7th Army , the 15th Army , and the forces guarding the Netherlands . Reserves for this group included the 2nd , 21st , and 116th Panzer divisions . Recognizing that Allied air superiority would make it difficult if not impossible to move reserves into position once the invasion was underway , Rommel decided to concentrate the defences along the coast . The 716th Infantry Division , which had been stationed in the area since March 1942 , was significantly understrength , with only 6 @,@ 000 men . This unit received reinforcements , and some of the older men were replaced by younger soldiers . It was also supplemented by several battalions of Osttruppen (eastern soldiers) , conscripted Soviet prisoners of war . The 352nd Infantry Division , a full @-@ strength unit of around 12 @,@ 000 , was brought into the area by Rommel on 15 March and reinforced by two additional regiments . About 2 @,@ 000 men , a mixture from the two infantry divisions , were stationed in the coastal area between Arromanches and Asnelles .

= = Order of battle = =

= = = British forces = = =

50th (Northumbrian) Infantry Division , commanded by Major @-@ General D.A.H. Graham
69th Infantry Brigade , commanded by Brigadier F.Y.C. Knox
5th Battalion , East Yorkshire Regiment
6th Battalion , Green Howards
7th Battalion , Green Howards
151st Infantry Brigade , commanded by Brigadier R.H. Senior
6th Battalion , Durham Light Infantry

8th Battalion , Durham Light Infantry
 9th Battalion , Durham Light Infantry
 231st Infantry Brigade , commanded by Brigadier A.G.B. Stanier
 1st Battalion , Dorsetshire Regiment
 1st Battalion , Hampshire Regiment
 2nd Battalion , Devonshire Regiment
 Divisional troops
 61st Reconnaissance Regiment , Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) (2 Squadrons)
 2nd Battalion , Cheshire Regiment (machine guns and heavy mortars)
 357th , 358th & 465th Batteries , 90th Field Regiment , Royal Artillery (RA) (Self @-@ propelled)
 99th & 288th Batteries , 102nd (Northumberland Hussars) Anti @-@ Tank Regiment , RA
 82nd Battery , 25th Light Anti @-@ Aircraft Regiment , RA
 233rd (Northumbrian) Field Company , Royal Engineers (RE)
 295th Field Company , RE
 505th Field Company , RE
 235th (Northumbrian) Field Park Company , RE (bulldozers)
 50th Divisional Signals , Royal Corps of Signals
 149th , 186th & 200th Field Ambulances , Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC)
 22nd Field Hygiene Section , RAMC
 50th Divisional Provost Company , Royal Military Police (RMP)
 Formations attached for assault phase
 Elements of 79th Armoured Division
 Westminster Dragoons (Flail tanks)
 141st Royal Tank Regiment (The Buffs) (Churchill Crocodiles) (2 Troops)
 81st & 82nd Assault Squadrons , 6th Assault Regiment , RE (AVREs)
 56th Infantry Brigade , commanded by Brigadier E.C. Pepper
 2nd Battalion , Essex Regiment
 2nd Battalion , Gloucestershire Regiment
 2nd Battalion , South Wales Borderers
 8th Armoured Brigade , commanded by Brigadier H.J.B. Carcroft
 4th / 7th Royal Dragoon Guards (DD Tanks)
 Nottinghamshire Yeomanry (DD Tanks)
 76th Anti @-@ Aircraft Brigade , commanded by Brigadier E.R. Benson
 113th Heavy Anti @-@ Aircraft Regiment , RA (HQ only)
 320th Battery , 93rd Light Anti @-@ Aircraft Regiment , RA
 394th & 395th Batteries , 120th Light Anti @-@ Aircraft Regiment , RA
 152nd Anti @-@ Aircraft Operations Room , RA
 A Troop , 356th (Independent) Searchlight Battery , RA
 Additional units attached for assault phase
 GHQ Liaison Regiment , RAC (' Phantom ')
 341st , 342nd , & 462nd Batteries , 86th (East Anglian) (Hertfordshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment , RA (Self @-@ propelled)
 413th , 431st & 511th Batteries , 147th (Essex Yeomanry) Field Regiment , RA (Self @-@ propelled)
 198th & 234th Batteries , 73rd Anti @-@ Tank Regiment , RA
 662nd Air Observation Post Squadron , RA (Ground crew of one flight only)
 73rd Field Company , RE
 280th Field Company , RE
 203rd Field Ambulance , RAMC
 168th Light Field Ambulance , RAMC
 1st Royal Marine Armoured Support Regiment
 No. 47 (Royal Marine) Commando
 104 Beach Sub @-@ Area HQ

9 & 10 Beach Groups and Signal Section
 69th , 89th , 90th & 183rd Field Companies , RE
 21st & 23rd Stores Sections , RE
 51st & 74th Mechanical Equipment Sections , RE
 1043rd Port Operating Company , RE
 953rd & 961st Inland Water Transport Companies , RE
 2nd Battalion , Hertfordshire Regiment
 6th Battalion , Border Regiment
 305th , 536th & 705th General Transport Companies , Royal Army Service Corps (RASC)
 2nd & 5th Detail Issue Depots , RASC
 244th Petrol Dept , RASC
 3rd & 10th Casualty Clearing Stations , RAMC
 3rd , 25th , 31st , 32nd & 35th Field Dressing Stations , RAMC
 Nos 41 , 42 , 47 & 48 Field Surgical Units , RAMC
 Nos 24 & 30 Field Transfusion Unit , RAMC
 22nd & 23rd Port Details , RAMC
 7th , 10th & 36th Ordnance Beach Detachments , Royal Army Ordnance Corps
 24th & 25th Beach Recovery Sections , Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (REME)
 XXX Corps Workshop , REME (2 Composite Workshops & 1 Light Recovery Section)
 240th & 243rd Provost Companies , RMP
 75th , 173rd , 209th & 280th (Pioneer) Companies , Pioneer Corps

== German forces ==

From June 1942 , 716th Infantry Division covered the Grandcamp Sector , which stretched from the base of the Cotentin Peninsula to the Orne River near Caen , a distance of 77 kilometres (48 mi) . When 352nd Infantry Division arrived on 15 March , the Grandcamp Sector was split into the Bayeux Sector (from Carentan to Asnelles) and the Caen Sector (from Asnelles to the Orne) . Most of the 716th Infantry Division remained where they were , and thus the defenses in Caen Sector (site of the Gold landings) were not substantially strengthened .

352nd Infantry Division under Generalleutnant Dietrich Kraiss
 915th Grenadier Regiment : south @-@ east of Bayeux , as reserves

916th Grenadier Regiment : covered Omaha and the westernmost part of Gold

352nd Artillery Regiment : covered Omaha and the westernmost part of Gold

716th Static Infantry Division under Generalleutnant Wilhelm Richter
 726th Infantry Regiment : two battalions in and around Le Hamel . Members of the 441st Ost Battalion garrisoned the coastal defenses . One battalion was stationed near Crépon as reserves .

736th Infantry Regiment : covered Juno , Sword , and the easternmost part of Gold

1716th Artillery Regiment : mobile and casemated batteries east and west of Crépon

== Landings ==

Bombing of Normandy began around midnight with over 2 @, @ 200 British and American bombers attacking targets along the coast and further inland . At Gold , naval bombardment by Bombarding Force K got underway at 05 : 30 , at which time the first waves of infantry were loading into their Landing Craft Assault (LCAs) for the run in to the beach . German defensive positions were attacked by medium and heavy bombers and by self @-@ propelled guns on board the landing craft . Results were good at Mont Fleury Battery and at Longues , where at 07 : 00 Ajax and Argonaut took out of commission three of the four guns . The fourth gun resumed firing sporadically in the afternoon , and the garrison surrendered the following day . Two heavily casemated gun emplacements (an 88 mm gun at La Rivière overlooking King and a 75 mm gun at Le Hamel overlooking Jig) were only lightly damaged , as they were heavily reinforced with concrete , especially on the seaward side . These positions had embrasures that permitted a wide range of

enfilade fire on the beach . Four other German strong points in the immediate area were also only lightly damaged , and had to be individually assaulted as the day progressed .

= = = King Sector = = =

H @-@ Hour for the landing at Gold was set at 07 : 25 on King sector (50 minutes later than in the American landings , because of differences in the tide) . The first wave on King was the 5th East Yorkshires and 6th Green Howards of 69th Brigade , assisted by amphibious DD tanks of the 4th / 7th Dragoon Guards . The 7th Green Howards landed at 08 : 20 . The original plan called for the 38 DD tanks to be launched from their landing craft tank (LCTs) about 5 @, @ 000 yards (4 @, @ 600 m) out . Due to extremely choppy seas , they decided to run the tanks directly onto the beach . Infantry , engineers , and DD tanks arrived almost simultaneously . Units disembarking onto the beach immediately came under fire from the casemated 88 mm gun at La Rivière , and the infantry were forced to take cover behind the sea wall . The gun was taken out when a flail tank of the Westminster Dragoons fired a charge directly into its aperture . The 5th East Yorkshires , supported by several tanks , spent the rest of the morning clearing out the heavily fortified houses of La Rivière , at the loss of 90 men , including six officers .

Specialised armour arriving in the first wave included AVREs , mine flails , and armoured bulldozers . Clearing paths off the beach proved difficult , as the tanks got stuck in the mud or were taken out by mines . A lone mine flail tank finally cleared a path from the beach up toward the Mont Fleury Battery and Ver @-@ Sur @-@ Mer . This route was used by the Green Howards and tanks of the 4th / 7th Dragoon Guards , who cleared the remaining resistance at the Mont Fleury Battery . B Company moved on to attack trench positions and machine gun emplacements at Meuvaines Ridge , while C Company moved to the west of Ver @-@ Sur @-@ Mer to help cover the assault on Crépon , where roads led to the important targets of Bayeux and Caen . The 7th Green Howards attacked the gun battery at Ver @-@ Sur @-@ Mer , where they took 50 prisoners . Colour Sergeant @-@ Major Stanley Hollis earned the only Victoria Cross to be bestowed for actions on D @-@ Day . On the way to the Mont Fleury Battery , Hollis came under machine gun fire while investigating a pillbox , so he shot into the entrance with his Sten gun and dropped a grenade through the roof , killing most of the occupants . He cleared a nearby trench of enemy soldiers , whereupon the occupants of a second pillbox surrendered . Later in the day , he saved the lives of three men during an attempt to take out a field artillery installation at a farm near Crépon .

Scheduled to land at 11 : 00 on Jig , the 56th Infantry Brigade was re @-@ routed King , because the gun battery at Le Hamel was still operational . They proceeded towards their objective of Bayeux . 151st Brigade arrived at the same time and after meeting fierce resistance , they achieved their objective of controlling the road and railway between Bayeux and Caen . 56th Brigade made slow progress and had to dig in for the night some distance from Bayeux . 69th Brigade secured the eastern flank and by nightfall made contact with the Canadian forces on Juno .

= = = Jig Sector = = =

At Jig , the first wave of infantry (the 1st Dorsetshires and 1st Hampshires of the 231st Infantry Brigade) arrived at 07 : 25 , and immediately came under fire from the casemated 75 mm gun at Le Hamel . Due to navigation errors and the strong current , both groups came ashore well to the east of their intended landing points . The DD tank and Royal Marine Centaur tanks that were supposed to arrive in advance of the landing were delayed by rough seas and did not arrive until 08 : 00 . Many of the tanks got bogged down on the beach or were taken out by enemy fire . The tide came in quicker than expected , before many of the beach obstacles and mines were cleared , and some of the landing craft were damaged as a result . Two companies of the 1st Hampshires landed very close to the strong point at Le Hamel , and had to fight inland through enemy garrisons to get off the beach . Attempts to flank Le Hamel were made difficult by the surrounding machine gun placements , mines , and barbed wire . Elements of the 1st Hampshires captured the German strongpoint WN @-@ 36 at the eastern edge of the village of Asnelles . When they turned west to move along the

beach towards their primary objective at Le Hamel , they came under heavy fire and had to break off the attack . Major Warren , in charge after the commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Nelson Smith was wounded , decided that the troops would have to circle around and attack the emplacement from the rear , a process that took several hours . The troops began to have some success around 15 : 00 with the arrival of an AVRE tank of 82nd Assault Squadron . The tank fired two petards into the sanatorium , where most of the defenders were located . The German soldiers fled into fortified houses in Le Hamel and Asnelles , and were taken out in house @-@ to @-@ house combat . Few surrendered . The 75 mm gun was finally silenced at 16 : 00 , when the AVRE tank fired a large petard charge into the rear entrance of the casemate . C / A Company , 1st Hampshires and the AVRE tank proceeded west along the beach and took out strongpoint WN @-@ 38 at La Fontaine St Côme , taking 20 prisoners . Still further west , D Company captured strong point WN @-@ 39 at the Arromanches radar station , capturing 30 more defenders .

The 2nd Devons arrived at 08 : 15 , while the beach was still under heavy fire . One company stayed to help with the assault on Le Hamel , while the rest moved to capture the village of Ryes astride the road to Bayeux . Ryes was captured at around 16 : 30 . The 1st Dorsets attacked a German position on the beach at La Cabane des Douanes and headed inland to arc westward toward the high ground south of Arromanches . They cleared enemy positions at Le Bulot and Puits d 'Hérode , and arrived at their destination late in the morning . Joined by elements of the 1st Hampshires and covered by indirect fire from the naval forces offshore , they took Arromanches late in the afternoon .

= = = 47th Commando = = =

The 47th Royal Marine Commando was assigned to capture the small harbour at Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin , on the boundary with Omaha , about 7 miles (11 km) west of Arromanches and 8 miles (13 km) from their landing point at Jig . The commanding officer , Lieutenant @-@ Colonel C. F. Phillips , opted to attack from the south , as the site was well protected on the seaward side . The force of 420 men consisted of five troops of 63 men , a mortar and machine gun troop , a transport group with four tracked vehicles , and a headquarters group . The plan was to land at Gold at 09 : 25 , assemble at La Rosière , and move cross @-@ country to a ridge (designated as Point 72) south of Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin , arriving at around 13 : 00 . Here they would call for indirect fire from the supporting vessels at sea and then move in to capture the town .

In rough seas and under enemy fire , the commandos began disembarking at Jig , some distance east of their intended position , at 09 : 50 . Five of their LCAs were sunk by beach obstacles or enemy fire , at the cost of 76 casualties . Major P. M. Donnell temporarily took charge until Phillips and some others who had got separated from the unit rejoined the group at 14 : 00 along the Meuvaines ? Le Carrefour road . The commando took additional casualties in several skirmishes , including at La Rosière , on the way to Point 72 . They did not arrive there until 22 : 30 , too late to launch an attack , so they dug in for the night . The town and port were captured in the battle of Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin on 7 ? 8 June 1944 .

= = = German response = = =

As the Luftwaffe meteorological centre in Paris had predicted two weeks of stormy weather , some Wehrmacht commanders were away from the front attending war games in Rennes , and many soldiers had been given leave . On D @-@ Day , Rommel was in Germany for his wife 's birthday and a meeting with Hitler to try to get more Panzers . The 352nd and 716th Divisions were placed on high alert after the Allied airborne landings , which had taken just after midnight behind Utah and Sword . The 2 @,@ 700 @-@ strong Kampfgruppe Meyer , near Bayeux as the divisional reserve , was sent to investigate the parachute drops behind Utah . Marcks recalled them when dawn broke and the scope of the invasion became apparent . One battalion was ordered to reinforce the German efforts at Omaha . The remainder were ordered to rendezvous with reinforcements at Villiers le Sec , 7 @.@ 5 miles (12 @.@ 1 km) east of Bayeux , to launch a counter @-@ attack .

Fired upon by Allied air forces , the column finally arrived in the late afternoon , at which time they were met by elements of the 69th Brigade . The British lost four tanks in the ensuing engagement but the Kampfgruppe was almost completely wiped out . Meyer was killed , and his detailed maps of German coastal emplacements fell into British hands .

Because Allied air superiority meant it would be difficult for the Germans to move up their reserves , Rommel believed that their best chance was to stop the invasion at the shore . The scope of the invasion meant that once these coastal defences were defeated and the troops scattered , it was difficult to defend territory inland or launch counter @-@ attacks . At 22 : 33 , Kraiss ordered the 352nd Division to create a defensive line north of Bayeux but this proved impossible , as most of the territory involved was already in British hands and all the defending units had taken serious losses . The Luftwaffe played only a minor role on D @-@ Day . At Gold , several small groups of bombers that arrived at sunset caused Allied casualties at Le Hamel and damaged a road near Ver @-@ sur @-@ Mer . At 06 : 00 on 7 June , the operations room of HMS Bulolo , offshore near Gold , was damaged by a bomber attack , but the ship was able to remain on station . The unit responsible was likely II . / Kampfgeschwader 40 (KG 40 ? Bomber Wing 40) . Under the command of Fliegerführer Atlantik (Flyer Command Atlantic) , it was based at Bordeaux ? Merignac . On the evening of the 6 / 7 June 1944 , 26 Heinkel He 177 heavy bombers equipped with Henschel Hs 293 anti @-@ ship guided missiles attacked shipping over Normandy , included the Gold area . II . / KG 40 lost 13 aircraft to all causes during the attack .

The 1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler were released before midnight from the OKW reserve and ordered to counter @-@ attack between Bayeux and the Orne , supplemented by 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend and Panzer Lehr Division ; the armoured divisions began arriving on 8 June .

= = Aftermath = =

= = = Analysis = = =

Pockets of German resistance remained throughout the beachhead area and the British were stopped about 3 @. @ 7 miles (6 @. @ 0 km) short of their D @-@ Day objectives . Bayeux , a primary D @-@ Day objective for 50th Division , was captured on 7 June . By the end of D @-@ Day , the 50th Division had lost around 700 men . Total casualties , from all units involved in operations at Gold , were in the region of 1 @, @ 000 ? 1 @, @ 100 casualties , of which 350 were killed . German losses are unknown ; at least 1 @, @ 000 were captured .

= = = Gold Beach after 6 June = = =

By the end of D @-@ Day , 24 @, @ 970 men had been landed at Gold Beach , along with 2 @, @ 100 vehicles and 1 @, @ 000 long tons (1 @, @ 000 t) of supplies . The follow @-@ up landings were slowed by the loss of 34 LCTs and the bad weather . The 24th Lancers and 61st Reconnaissance Regiment , due to land on D @-@ Day to help spearhead the drive towards Villers @-@ Bocage , were unable to put ashore until 7 June . In 2004 Trew wrote that the delay effectively ruled out any chance of a thrust south ... [and] ... represented a major blow to Second Army 's intentions and Montgomery 's plan .

The 7th Armoured Division and the 49th (West Riding) Infantry Division were the follow @-@ up divisions of XXX Corps . The 22nd Armoured Brigade (the armoured component of the 7th Armoured Division) was scheduled to land during the evening of 6 June , but it was unable to land until the next day . The bulk of the division landed from 9 ? 10 June , with some elements landing later . The 49th Division came ashore on 12 June .

The first components of the Mulberry harbours were brought across the Channel on D + 1 and the structures were in use for unloading by mid @-@ June . One was constructed at Arromanches by British forces , the other at Omaha by American forces . A severe storm on 19 June destroyed the

Omaha harbour . The Arromanches harbour was repaired and remained in use for the next ten months , with a maximum capacity of 7 @, @ 000 long tons (7 @, @ 100 t) of stores per day . Of the British supplies landed in Normandy by the end of August , 35 % arrived via the Mulberry harbour and 15 % came in via the small harbours at Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin and Courseulles @-@ sur @-@ Mer . Most shipments were brought in over the beaches until the port of Cherbourg was cleared of mines and obstructions on 16 July . The most important use of the Mulberry harbour was the unloading of heavy machinery that could not be brought across the beaches . Artificial breakwaters (Gooseberries) sheltered hundreds of ships during the storm of 17 ? 23 June , and provided shelter for craft unloading stores at Juno and Sword . A joint Anglo @-@ American oil depot was constructed at Port @-@ en @-@ Bessin , fed via buoyed pipes known as " Tombola " from oil tankers moored offshore . Using this method , 175 @, @ 000 long tons (178 @, @ 000 t) of petrol (half for the Second Army) was delivered by the end of August , by which time the underwater pipelines constructed in Operation Pluto were ready .

= = = Subsequent operations = = =

Fighting in the Caen area versus the 21st Panzer , the 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend , and other units soon reached a stalemate . Operation Perch (7 ? 14 June) failed to take Caen , and the British were forced to withdraw to Tilly @-@ sur @-@ Seules . After a delay because of storms during 17 ? 23 June , Operation Epsom was launched on 26 June , an attempt by VIII Corps to swing around and attack Caen from the south @-@ west and establish a bridgehead south of the Odon . Although the operation failed to take Caen , the Germans suffered heavy tank losses and had committed every available Panzer unit to the operation . Caen was severely bombed on the night of 7 July and then occupied north of the River Orne in Operation Charnwood on 8 ? 9 July . Two offensives during 18 ? 21 July , Operation Atlantic and Operation Goodwood , captured the rest of Caen and the high ground to the south , but by then the city was nearly destroyed .

= = Tourism = =

The site of the Normandy landings is a popular tourist destination . The battery at Longues @-@ sur @-@ Mer is well preserved , and its observation bunker houses a visitor centre . The gun emplacements at Le Hamel and La Rivière still exist , but many other batteries and defensive positions have been allowed to decay . Bayeux is home to the Musée Mémorial de la Bataille de Normandie and the Bayeux Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery . La Cambe German war cemetery is also near Bayeux . At Arromanches , many elements of the Mulberry Harbour are extant and a museum examines its construction and use . The radar station is the site of a visitor centre and theatre .