

R E S T R I C T E D

SECTION II - NARRATIVE

By 26 May 1944 all plans and preparations were completed for the Division to carry out the mission assigned it by First United States Army. Field and administrative orders had been published and distributed. In a series of map maneuvers on a special 1/5,000 map regimental and battalion commanders had outlined their plans in order that all commanders might be briefed thoroughly on the prospective Division operations. Divisional seaborne echelons already had departed for the marshalling yards and were assembled in camps scattered along the Welsh and southern English coasts. The Division mission was to be as follows:

"Land by parachute and glider before and after dawn of D-Day west of ST. SAUVEUR LE VICOMTE: seize, clear and secure the general area ST. JACQUES DE NINOU (156985) - BESNEVILLE (157928) (both inclusive) - ST. SAUVEUR LE VICOMTE (exclusive) - ELANDMOUR (167982) (Inclusive), and reorganize; seize and destroy the crossings of the PRAIRIES MARCAGEUSES north of LA SANGSURIERE (188698), at ST. SAUVEUR DE PIERRE FORT (145890); destroy the crossings of the OLLOMONDE River in the vicinity of ST. LO D'OURVILLE (090994) and block crossroads vicinity LE CHEMIN (102902); prevent enemy forces moving north between ST. LO D'OURVILLE and junction of DOUVE River with PRAIRIE MARCAGEUSES (228921); and protect the south flank of VII Corps north of the same line."

The mission, however, was changed by the First Army Commander on 26 May due to confirmed intelligence reports the enemy had strengthened his forces on the COTENIN, (CHERBOURG) Peninsula with the addition of the 91st Infantry Division in the general area of ST. SAUVEUR LE VICOMTE. The revised mission of the 82d Airborne Division was to be:

"Land by parachute and glider before and after dawn of D-Day astride the MERDERET River, seize, clear and secure the general area: OR (261938) - OR (263958) - OR (265975) - RJ (274982) - RJ (283992) - Bridge (309987) - NEUVILLE AU PLAIN (340985) - BANDIENVILLE (360987) within its zone; capture ST. MERE ELISE (340965); seize and secure the crossings of the MERDERET River at (315957) and (321930), and a bridgehead covering them, with HLR along the general line: OR (261938) - OR (263958) - OR (265975) - RJ (274982) - RJ (283992); seize and destroy the crossings of the DOUVE River at BEUZEVILLE LA BASTILLE (309911) and ETISVILLE (also known as PONT L'ABBE) (265927); protect the northwest flank of VII Corps within the Division zone; and be prepared to advance west on Corps order to the line of the DOUVE north of its junction with the PRAIRIES MARCAGEUSES."

New orders and other administrative details made necessary by the new mission were worked out quickly and disseminated within four days. The change did not effect the basic plan for movement in three echelons which had been worked out as follows:

Force "A" - commanded by Brigadier General JAMES M. GAVIN, assistant Division Commander, to be committed by parachute before dawn of D-Day and to include

Planes

Det Hq & Hq Co, 82d Abn Div

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