

**C O N F I D E N T I A L**

HEADQUARTERS  
FIFTH RANGER INFANTRY BATTALION  
A. P. O. 230 U. S. ARMY  
22 July 1944

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

1. The following is the story of the Fifth Ranger Infantry Battalion from the landing on the coast of France on D-Day, 6 June 1944, to 10 June 1944 which was the unit's last day of combat during the month of June:

D-Day 6 June 1944

At 0530 hours the Fifth Ranger Battalion loaded into L. C. A.'s from the mother ships, H. M. S. Prince Leopold and Prince Boudouin, and started the ten mile run to the coast of France. The morale of the men was excellent, the weather cloudy, and the sea very choppy.

About five miles from shore, one (1) L. C. A. containing the First Platoon and a part of company headquarters of Company F had shipped so much water that it was forced to drop out of the formation. This platoon did not make the assault landing with the battalion but did land near the St. Laurent-sur-Mer Beach exit at 0900 after transferring to a passing L. C. T.

The beach was protected by a large number of under-water obstacles consisting of elements "C", hedgehogs and tetrahedra, many of which had Teller-Mines attached. Mortar and artillery shells were bursting in the area of these obstacles and a heavy concentration of small-arms fire swept the beach. A four foot sea-wall ran laterally along the beach about 75 yards from the waters edge. Friendly troops were observed utilizing the protective cover afforded by this wall. A pall of smoke obscured the sharply rising ground immediately in the rear of and overlooking the beach. Our naval bombardment evidently had set fire to the vegetation covering the hill.

The L. C. A.'s slowly threaded their way through gaps in the lines of obstacles and at H-75, 0745, the first wave consisting of one half Battalion Headquarters, Companies A, B, and E, landed on Omaha Dog White Beach at a point approximately 800 yards East of Exit D-1. The Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Max F. Schneider, had ordered the flotilla commander to touch down his craft east of the intended landing point, Dog Green, because the tremendous volume of fire which covered that portion of the beach was inflicting a large number of casualties on the preceding wave.

The first wave crossed the beach in good order with few casualties, halted temporarily in rear of the sea wall, and immediately reorganized.

The second wave, consisting of one half Battalion Headquarters, Companies C, D, and one (1) Platoon of Company F, duplicated the feat of the first wave.

At a signal from the Battalion Commander the landing echelon scrambled over the wall, blew gaps in the protective wire, and protected from enemy observation by the curtain of rising smoke advanced unhesitatingly to a point near the top of the hill. Here the smoke had cleared and the topographical crest was being swept by effective automatic weapons fire. First Lieutenant Francis W. Dawson, Company B, led his platoon over the top and wiped out a strongpoint thereby enabling the battalion to advance.

Because of numerous mine fields the battalion now changed into a column formation and, after winding through their intricate pattern, the leading unit, Company B, reached the St. Laurent-sur-Mer-Vierville-sur-Mer road at a point approximately one (1) kilometre east of Vierville-sur-Mer. During the advance numerous Germans, well concealed in weapons pits constructed in hedgerows, were killed.

Company B advanced toward Vierville-sur-Mer receiving heavy sniper and machine gun fire. Several direct hits from enemy artillery on the rear of the battalion column caused numerous casualties. Company E attempted a penetration to the South but was halted by intense machine gun fire. An 81 mm mortar concentration fired by Company C knocked out several of these positions but they were rapidly replaced and the advance remained halted.

The weight of the attack was shifted toward Vierville-sur-Mer and, after overcoming considerable sniper resistance, the battalion advanced through the village to its western outskirts where it was again held up by a large volume of concerted machine gun and sniper fire. At this point contact was established with the Commanding Officer First Battalion 116th Infantry and approximately 150 men of his unit. Dark was falling and the battalion was ordered to dig-in a perimeter defense for the night. Companies A, B, and C of the Second Ranger Battalion, numbering approximately 80 men, also assumed a portion of the defense area. Tanks of the 743rd Tank Battalion moved within the defense area where they remained for the night. Except for occasional exchanges with enemy snipers and machine guns the night was one of little activity.

One (1) platoon of Company A which became separated from the battalion after crossing the sea-wall proceeded through Vierville-sur-Mer to the rallying point southwest of the town, arriving there at 1600 hours. In accomplishing this feat they captured 12 Germans and killed at least an equal number. Leaving the rallying point shortly thereafter this unit fought its way through to Pointe du Hoc (the Battalion objective) and contacted the Second Ranger Battalion, arriving there at about 2200 hours.

The platoon from F Company which landed near St. Laurent-sur-Mer received a large amount of artillery and machine gun fire on the beach. Patrols were sent out to locate the remainder of the Fifth Battalion but were unable to gain contact. Attempting to move along the beach toward Vierville-sur-Mer this platoon was subjected to artillery fire receiving 8 casualties. After advancing 600 yards to the West the unit was engaged by a superior force and pinned down. When darkness fell the platoon retained this position.

The results for the first day were about 100 prisoners taken, 150 enemy dead, and approximately 60 Rangers killed and wounded.

D/1 7 June 1944

Plans were made for enlarging the beach-head and for relieving the three companies of the Second Ranger Battalion at Pointe du Hoc.

At 0600 a force composed of 80 men from the Second Ranger Battalion (Cos. A, B and C), Companies C and D of our battalion, 150 men from the First Battalion 116th Infantry, and 6 tanks of the 743rd Tank Battalion, advanced toward Pointe du Hoc. Encountering harassing sniper fire this force advanced to a point approximately one (1) kilometer west of St. Pierre Du Mont where it received a large concentration of artillery fire. This fire continued falling from 1000 hours until 1800. The force withdrew to St. Pierre du Mont and set up a defense in the town. Under cover of darkness a two man patrol moved through the enemy lines to Pointe du Hoc, contacted the Commanding Officer Second Ranger Battalion, and returned laying wire to establish communication between the two forces.

The remainder of the battalion was given the mission of improving the beach-head.

Company B resumed the attack to the southwest from the western edge of Vierville-sur-Mer at 0630. This unit was not able to advance far but did knock out several machine gun nests and numerous snipers.

The remaining platoon of Company A and the remaining platoons of Company F supported by four tanks of the 743rd Tank Battalion attacked South from the town wiping out snipers, machine gun nests, and several enemy combat patrols. Approximately 25 of the enemy were killed and 85 were captured.

During the night snipers had infiltrated back into the town so Company B cleaned out the town again.

At approximately 1100 these units were ordered to set up a defense around the town. At 1100 hours, Company E, which was defending the eastern portion of the town beat off a determined counter-attack of about company strength.

At 1900 hours elements of the 116th Infantry moved into the eastern half of the sector and the units of this battalion shifted to the right to defend only the remaining half of the sector.

The A Company platoon on Pointe du Hoc assisted in repulsing three counter-attacks early this morning. A seven man patrol from this platoon made an unsuccessful attempt to infiltrate through the enemy positions to contact the Fifth Ranger Battalion. The remainder of the day was spent manning a portion of the defense area.

The first platoon of Company F attacked inland from the beach at 0800 and by 1100 hours secured their objective, destroying three pillboxes and several weapons emplacements. 8 Germans were killed and 36 captured. At this time the platoon was contacted by Major Street of Admiral Hall's staff, loaded into a L.C.V.P. with food, water, and ammunition; and transported to Pointe du Hoc contacting the Commanding Officer Second Ranger Battalion at 1700 hours. An eight man patrol from this platoon infiltrated through the enemy positions and by 0800 of D+2 had contacted the force at St. Pierre-du-Mont.

Results for the second day were approximately 150 prisoners taken, 80 killed, and 40 Ranger casualties.

D-2 8 June 1944

At 0100 hours orders were received to prepare to move to Pointe du Hoc at 0600. At 0630 hours a force composed of two battalions of the 116th Infantry and three companies of the Fifth Ranger Battalion advanced from Vierville-sur-Mer down the road west toward Pointe du Hoc. No resistance was encountered and the force at St. Pierre-du-Mont was contacted at 0815.

Companies B and E were given the mission of taking and holding the high ground west of the Sluice Gate at Grandcamp-les-Bains. These companies in column, Company B leading, advanced through the low ground south of the East-West road leading into Grandcamp at 1000. Initially no fire was received and the town appeared to have been deserted by the enemy. The leading elements of the two companies approached to within 25 yards of the bridge where the force was pinned down by a heavy concentration of mortar and machine gun fire. The two companies withdrew to positions on the high ground east of the Sluice-Gate Bridge where they were joined by Company D which had just returned from Pointe-du-Hoc. They were passed through by the Second and Third Battalions of the 116th Infantry, which, supported by tanks, artillery fire, and naval gun fire, successfully captured the town of Grandcamp-les-Bains. D Company and E Company went into defensive positions protecting the Sluice-gate Bridge and mopped up positions along the coast toward Point du Hoc. B Company occupied a portion of the all round defense set up by the Second Ranger Battalion on the high ground east of the Sluice Gate Bridge.

At 0900 Companies C, D, one platoon F Company, the remainder of A, B, C, of the Second Ranger Battalion, and one Platoon Company A advanced toward Pointe du Hoc to assist the three companies of the Second Ranger Battalion. Meeting no resistance they contacted that unit. Companies A and F were now complete organizations.

Shortly thereafter the Rangers were brought under fire by the Third Battalion 116th Infantry and tanks of the 743rd Tank Battalion. This force was attacking Pointe du Hoc from the south west and inflicted six casualties on our force, two of which were killed.

D Company advanced toward Grandcamp-les-Bains and joined Companies B and E.

Companies A, C, and F advanced east and south of the inundated area toward Maisy as part of a force consisting of the First Battalion 116th Infantry. Two half-tracks of the Second Ranger Battalion were attached to the Rangers. This force halted one-half mile northeast of Maisy for the night, meeting no resistance enroute.

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Results for the third day were approximately 20 Germans killed and 35 captured. The battalion had 10 casualties.

D-3 9 June 1944

Company E continued to mop-up positions along the coast toward Pointe-du-Hoc killing several Germans and capturing about 40.

At 1300 hours Companies B, D, and E marched directly south from Grandcamp on a secondary road, changed direction to the west at Le Manoir, again changed direction to the south on the Isigny road, and went into bivouac about 400 yards west of Osmanville.

A, C, and F Companies, detached from the First Battalion 116th Infantry which had by-passed the battery position southwest of Maisy, were given the mission of cleaning out that strong point. They were supported on this mission by the two half-tracks Second Ranger Battalion, Company B, 81st Chemical Weapons Battalion, and the four 81 mm mortars carried by Company C. A concentration by the 58th Field Artillery Battalion preceded the attack. Attacking with two companies in column the position was successfully carried. The strong-point contained three 105 mm howitzers, numerous small arms, large stocks of ammunition and food, and ejected approximately 90 prisoners. Shortly thereafter this force marched to the bivouac area west of Osmanville where it joined the remainder of the battalion at 2000 hours.

At 2100 a three man patrol from Company E was dispatched to reconnoiter the Light Engineer Bridge across the Vire River. This patrol accomplished its mission and returned at 2400 hours.

Results for the fourth day were approximately 20 Germans killed, 130 prisoners, and 18 Ranger casualties.

D-4 10 June 1944

At approximately 0430 hours the battalion bivouac area was bombed and the unit suffered three casualties.

Companies C, D, and F were given the mission of mopping up the coastal fortifications from Grandcamp-les-Bains to Isigny. They moved out at 0630 and meeting little resistance, returned at 1530 with approximately 200 prisoners. Mine fields inflicted three casualties on the force.

Patrols in the vicinity of the battalion area captured approximately 35 Germans.

Results for the fifth day were 235 Germans captured and 6 Ranger casualties.

2. In five days of fighting this battalion had 23 men killed, 89 wounded, and 2 missing.

Approximately 850 prisoners were taken and 350 Germans killed.

For the Commanding Officer: