



6th Fallschirmjager Regiment of 2nd Fallschirmjager Division

Tim Gaffney's WolfKrieg Force



“On the day of the landing, 6 June 1944, Hitler ordered that a Planspiel be staged in Rennes. Aimed at assessing the efficiency of strategic plans and the strength of available forces, the Planspiel was to be attended by the division commanders and their staff officers, army and unit commanders as well as one regiment commander from each division.

I was not the only one to be taken aback by a potential enemy attack and by the decision to stage a Planspiel as the premonitory signs that a major operation was in the offing were growing with every hour. On 5 June, a large number of Alsatian drivers deserted from my regiment's support unit. Later, the number of sabotage actions against our communication lines rose sharply as well as the radio transmissions between the French resistance and their countryman in Britain.

According to the Planspiel, the bulk of the participants was to arrive in Rennes in the evening of 5 June. This had to take place under the cover of darkness as American aircraft ruled the skies. On 5 June, I called at the headquarters of General Marcks, commanding LXXXIVth Corps, and seized the opportunity to ask him if we could drive together to Rennes. I also hoped that, during the ride, we could discuss the possibility of activating a resistance movement against Hitler. General Marcks kindly offered me a lift, but stressed that the larger part of the officers were not expected until the next morning at about 5am. In fact the General felt that it was risky to leave his command post for the night. I totally agreed with him and so, promised that I would report to St-Lo at 5am. I thought that I had better spend the night with my regiment as the neighboring 91. LL-Infanterie-Division was left without command after its chief and IA had decided to travel to Rennes on 5 June.

In the night of 5 June, Luftwaffe radio locators reported that numerous transport aircraft were regrouping over the south of England. At 11pm, my liaison officer notified me of this and so, I placed my regiment on immediate standby and ordered the men to be ready to drive off to combat. Even though our signals were jammed, I managed to get in touch with Heer and miscellaneous units deployed in the sector.

At long last, I managed to talk to general Marcks over the telephone network of his headquarters. He too, had been advised by the Luftwaffe of the unusual increase in air traffic over Britain and shared my opinion about the imminence of a landing.

After midnight, the last doubts were dispelled when American parachute drops were reported to the north of Carentan.

I ordered my regiment, quartered to the north of Periers, to form into combat order and to proceed towards Carentan.



Driving up the Cherbourg highway, the vanguard of my unit reached the north of Carentan in the grey light of dawn. In the distance, the rumbling of combat could be faintly heard.

Riding a side-car, I decided to reconnoitre the sector and set off ahead, on my own, in the direction of combat. Driving down a narrow, hedge-lined path, I reached a hamlet called Ste-Marie-du-Mont which, according to my map, was the last village before the coast. In the main square stood an old church with a fairly high steeple. I got hold of the keys and from the top, had a breathtaking view which I shall never forget.

Under my eyes stretched the dark blue, almost motionless sea while, on the horizon, countless warships were lined up, forming an almost unbroken chain. Numerous barges delivering American soldiers to the beach were unceasingly plying between the fleet and the shore. Of our defence line, only one bunker located on the right, was firing at the scores of invaders pouring in from the sea. A thick pall of artificial fog hid the Americans from our sight and hampered the aim of German artillery” Major Baron von der Heydte commander of FJR 6.(1)

FJR 6 was the first Airborne unit to see action against the allies in Normandy around Carentan. During the battle of Carentan, The Green Devils were entrenched along a main road leading into the city and held the American advance. After the FJR 6 was forced to withdraw towards Carentan, a single causeway surrounded by marshes was the only route into the city. On June 11th, the American 101st airborne attacked the FJR 6th positions. After heavy artillery strikes, the 6th moved into Carentan. The 101st was finally on the outskirts of the city after a three day battle. On the morning of 12 June 1944, the 6th withdrew from Carentan finally giving the city to the allies after four days of fierce fighting.(2)

On June 13, the SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment 37 of 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division Gotz von Berlichingen, supported by Stugs of the division's Panzer Abteilung and the 6th Fallschirmjäger attacked American paratroopers from the 502 and 506 Parachute Infantry Regiments in what the Americans called the Battle of the Bloody Gulch. The German Forces routed several paratroop companies before their attack was stalled by the arrival of the US 2nd Armored Division.

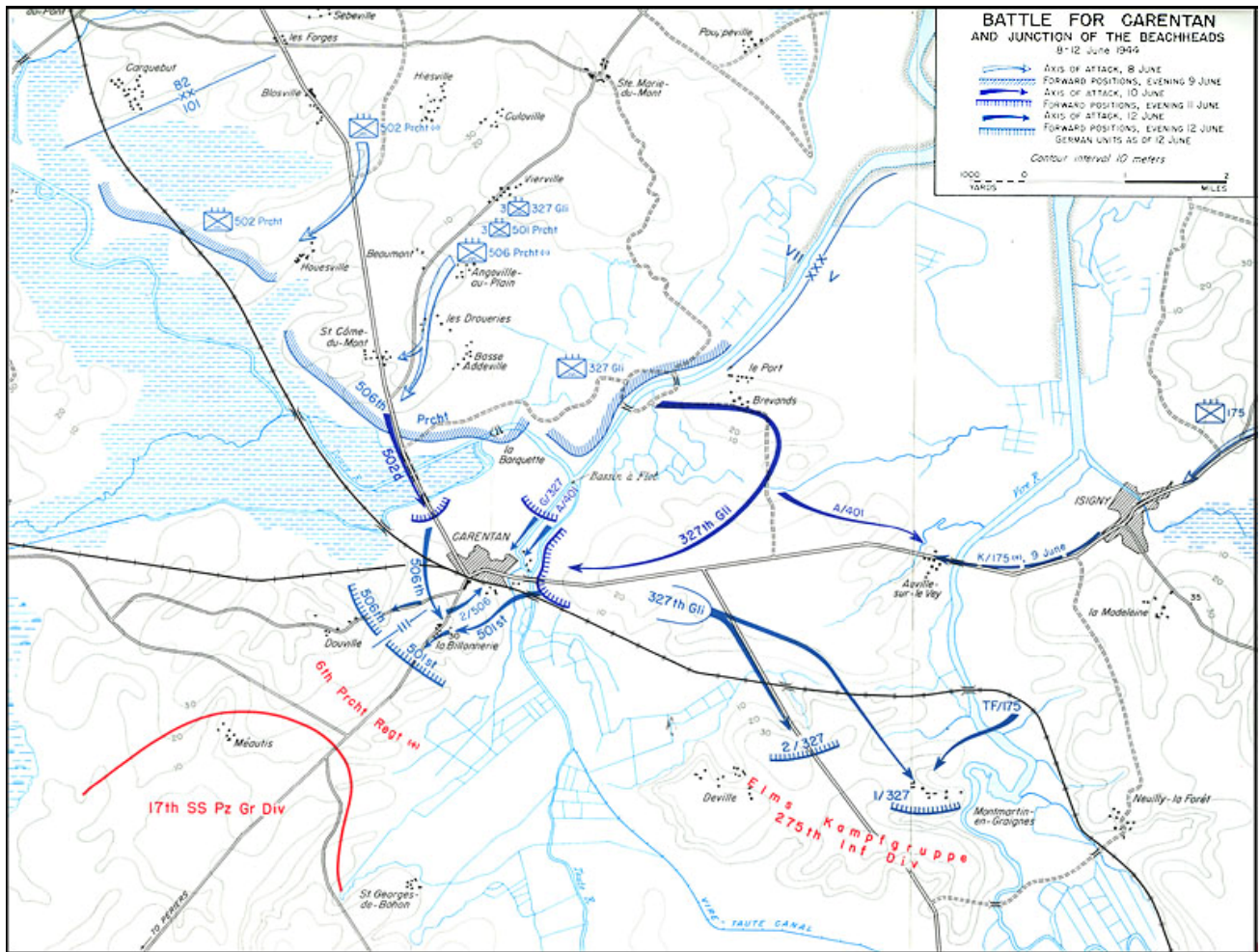


Steeple at Sainte Marie du Mont taken 04/24/2007

FJR 6 was caught in the Falaise pocket in July and after escaping the pocket von der Heydte's 6th Parachute regiment had lost a staggering 3000 men killed or missing since June 6th. The regiment was moved to Guestrow-Mecklenburg.

In September 1944 RJR 6 was assigned to 1st Parachute Army assigned to holding the front in the Low Countries between Antwerp and Maastricht. FJR 6, the only survivors of the old 2 Fallschirmjager division, fought against the Allied landings in the Arnhem corridor during Operation 'Market Garden'.

FJR 6 mounted a small scale parachute drop on 15 December 1944, in support of the Ardennes attack. The drop, in deep snow near the Malmedy-Eupen road, was a disaster with only 125 men landing on target. The majority of FJR 6 including von der Heydte was captured. (3)



My force for Wolfkrieg is based on the FJR 6 during the fighting around Carentan, specifically the Battle of Bloody Gulch. My force is Supported by SS-Panzer-Abteilung 17 of 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division Gotz von Berlichingen.

Sources

1. 1991 correspondence between Commander of Fallschirmjager Regiment 6 Baron von der Heydte and Jean-Yves Nasse. Published in Green Devils German Paratroops – 1939-45 1997.
2. Archives Dead Man's Corner Museum. Published on their website.
3. Osprey Men at Arms series German Airborne Troops 1939-45. By Bruce Quarrie published 1983.