

**U.S.S. *Nevada* from June 6 to June 15, 1944, off
Normandy, France, UTAH Beach**

Part One

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U.S.S. *Nevada* (BB-36)
U.S. Navy Photograph PD102 National Archives and Records Administration, Still Pictures
Division, College Park, Md.

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Introduction

When the U.S.S. *Nevada* took part in Operation Neptune from June 6 through June 15, 1944, she was fulfilling her role on a strategic, operational, and tactical level as seen and taught by Alfred Thayer Mahan. In order to fully understand her role, we need to understand the doctrine she was operating under. The definition of doctrine are the procedures somewhat like an order that is instructional and authoritative but requires a level of judgement relative to the situation. Strategic level doctrine covers national policy and independent theatre strategy. Operational level doctrine combines strategy and tactics to create operational objectives necessary to meet strategic goals. Finally, the tactical level doctrine covers the location and utilization of forces. This level of doctrine is where actual battles, skirmishes, and engagements occur.¹

On the strategic level Mahan's third principle was the great strategic weakness of Hitler's Third Reich. He had a massive area along the coast from France to Norway with no effective navy that can defend this territory. This principle was Mahan's justification to build ships such as *Nevada* in the first place and the importance of developing a blue water navy. One must think of the sea along the coast as an extension of the land that an army cannot occupy. By 1944 the German surface navy was inadequate to contest control of the English Channel. This gave control of the sea to the Allies. Operation Overlord may be described as the planning, preparation, and execution of the 1944 invasion of Europe via Northwestern France, together with the subsequent allied military advance into the heart of Germany and the destruction of the German armed forces as its strategic goal. Operation Neptune was the cross-channel assault phase of Overlord with the object of securing a lodgment area from which further offensive operations could be developed.

U.S.S. *Nevada* supported Utah Beach operations. In December 1943 Operation Overlord only consisted of landing on three beaches by three divisions and it was scheduled for May 1944. The three beaches were Omaha, Gold, and Juno. General Sir Bernard Law Montgomery was to be General Eisenhower's supreme commander and when he first reviewed Operation Overlord, he felt the invasion was set on to narrow a front and it needed to be widened. He argued for the addition of Utah and Sword beaches to be added. This would require more planes, more landing craft, more time and delay the invasion at least one month which had direct political ramifications between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin. He gained the support of General Omar Bradley and recommended a new tactic of vertical envelopment using three divisions of paratroopers on a scale that had never been previously employed. The British undertook this revision of the plan on the assumption that half of the lift assigned to Operation Anvil would be made available for Operation Overlord. The United States Navy would be able to supply assault lift for the additional assault force only if Operation Anvil were cancelled. Thus, the decision

¹ Evolution of United States Navy Amphibious Landing Doctrine During World War II, Jaedon A. Foreman, pages 1-2.

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was made on February 1, 1944, to postpone Operation Anvil or the invasion of Southern France and increase the size of Operation Overlord and delay the invasion until June 1944.

Operational Objectives Utah Beach Sector

On paper the Utah Beach invasion plan was to drop the 82nd Airborne Division east and west of the Merderet River and seize Ste. Mère-Église, which was an important crossroad leading to Utah beach. The paratroopers were to seize the bridges at La Fiere and Chef Du Pont which lead to Ste. Mère-Église and take the hamlet of Neuville au Plain to protect the northern approaches to Ste. Mère-Église. Once this area was secure, gliders would land within friendly controlled territory to bring in reinforcements. This would allow the 82nd Airborne to hold the line facing west and to the north. The 101st American Airborne Division was to seize the four causeways that connect the beach inland and the Barquette lock. The 101st was also to destroy Target #6 (German designation STP108) the coastal battery of Ste. Martin de Varreville, and capture the bridges over the river Douve. They were finally to hold a line of defense facing south. The airborne forces would effectively cut off the German infantry manning the strongpoints along the beach which would allow the 4th Division to overwhelm the German defenses. The 4th Infantry Division would land at the most western beach of UTAH and break through Rommel's Atlantic Wall, push inland, and link up with the 82nd and 101st airborne by nightfall.

Utah beach was very isolated. It was 27 miles from Omaha beach, which does not sound like much, but 27 miles in combat was extremely far and if the German defenses held firm. If it took days or weeks before the 4th Division could link up with the 29th Division from Omaha beach then such a delay would present huge problems for the airborne divisions, as they were not expected to be able to hold their positions for that length of time. Thus, it was critical that the 4th Division push inland as soon as possible once it landed. One of the biggest problems for this to happen was that Utah was not an easy place to get off the beach. There are four causeways that lead onto and off the beach. Red Beach, where the 4th was to land, was near causeway 3 and there was a windmill and a large mud fort which were picked as landmarks for the 4th Division to guide on.

The 4th Division was to push inland, linking up with the 101st and 82nd, and then push on to take the fortifications at Azeville and Crisbecq. As more U.S. forces were landed, they were to link up with Omaha beach and then push across the Cotentin Peninsula to cut off the Port of Cherbourg and capture this port. Until Cherbourg was captured the Allies would create an artificial port off Normandy and this was something that neither Rommel nor the German High Command ever anticipated. One of the keys to the German defense was denying to the Allies a deep-water port. Near Normandy there are only two deep-water ports, Le Havre and Cherbourg and Rommel had both heavily fortified. Operation Neptune's objective was to capture Cherbourg within 8 days of D-Day or by June 14th.

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I have described battleship warfare as requiring three basic elements all vital to the success of the operation. The first is that the surface fleet is required to control the sea and land in a certain geographical area and place it under siege. The second is the Army or Marines are required to seize the land territory and take this resource away from the enemy. The third is a logistical train is needed to keep both the Navy and the Army supplied with everything they need to remain forward deployed until the operation is completed, and the objectives secured. If any one of these three basic elements is lacking then the operation is unlikely to succeed or will be reduced to a war of attrition, similar to the Guadalcanal campaign in 1942 when our logistical train was not yet developed enough to maintain forward deployment of the Navy and support the Marines on the island. This third element and the lack of a deep-water port is what Rommel was counting on to defeat the allies in the west. The inability of the Allies to capture one of the Normandy ports would result in the Allies not being able to build up forces on the continent faster than Germany could move their forces on land. Germany would win the battle of the build-up and gain the advantage of superior forces in the field. Rommel understood he did not have naval or air forces which could defeat the allied armada in a decisive battle, but he believed that he could win the battle of logistics. However, the Allies had a plan to prevent this from occurring. Operation Mulberry's plan of using sunken ships to create a temporary deep-water port was the answer to this operational problem.

For Operation Mulberry to work meant that the landing beaches must be captured quickly before German reinforcements can reach the beaches and stop its construction. This requirement prevents the use of a long Pacific style bombardment that could last days. At Normandy the allies do not have the luxury of time. In the Pacific the Navy could isolate an island and the Japanese defenders would be completely cut off from reinforcements. On the continent of Europe this was not possible and there will be a race on each side as to who can build up forces faster so that operations can be sustained. This is why the Normandy plan called for just a 40-minute bombardment prior to the troops seizing the beach.

Naval Bombardment Tactical Objectives

The naval bombardment had three major tactical objectives: First, to neutralize the German coastal defenses and inland batteries until each battery was captured or destroyed. Second, to neutralize or destroy the beach defenses through beach drenching bombardment and stun the defenders. Third, to support the land forces by engaging mobile batteries and attacking enemy formations, particularly during the period when the army's artillery was not fully deployed. As a major part of achieving these objectives, U.S.S. *Nevada* had a difficult task in that she was to support three U.S. divisions that were widely separated: The 82nd Airborne, the 101st Airborne and the 4th Army division. Simultaneously with this support she was expected to also suppress the Atlantic Wall fortifications. Initially, pre-arranged targets were assigned to each of the bombarding ships who would begin firing at pre-arranged times. Spotting aircraft were assigned to arrive before daylight to observe and report the fire from all heavy units.

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To assist in blasting a path through the beach obstacles and to neutralize local beach defense strong points, all fire support crafts, and all heavy ships not tasked with engaging enemy batteries were to open up at H minus 40 minutes and continuing until H-hour with all the fire power at their disposal, drenching the beach with the maximum weight of naval bombardment. The object of Beach Drenching was to put down as heavy a barrage as possible with the object of numbing and demoralizing the defenders. Except in special cases, aimed fire, with the object of destroying specific enemy positions, was impracticable at that stage because the smoke and dust of the bombardment would make accurate observation impossible.

Regarding the mission objectives provided to the fire support ships, this was provided in the Graham Report on "*Fire Support of Sea-Borne landings against a Heavily Defended Coast*". The two basic principles were that the heavy casemated gun batteries on the Normandy Coast were not expected to be destroyed by either aerial or naval bombardment but could be suppressed and rendered combat ineffective. The second principle was that through the tactic of beach drenching this would have the effect of numbing enemy ground troops and making the enemy units combat ineffective. The naval bombardment was always viewed as a combined effort between the naval, air, and army units. Until the army was well established onshore this job had to be carried out by the air and naval forces.

This is quite different from modern critics of battleships who like to point out that at Normandy the battleships did not outright destroy these fortifications and thus in their view they failed and were obsolete. That was never the expectation of the naval bombardment at the time. German engineers were fully knowledgeable and capable of designing structures that could withstand naval bombardment even from battleships. What readers need to judge is did the fortifications allow the German gunners to continue firing their guns against Allied forces or did the bombardments produce long periods of silence from the gun batteries? To remain combat effective these German gun batteries must maintain fire, and this would be the proper judgement if the aerial and naval bombardments achieved their goals.

The clearly stated objective was to render the heavy casement batteries combat ineffective through suppression by either aerial or naval bombardment. This would allow the Army to capture the fortification. Targets for air and naval bombardment were selected with priority given to targets that posed the greatest threat to the approach of the landing forces. Targets were to be bombed by air prior to D-Day at minimum of one time and more often if possible. This was complicated by the need to bomb other areas to prevent the Germans from learning the exact invasion point. The British would bomb ten selected gun batteries during the night with six more being attacked 30-60 minutes before H-hour. Forty minutes prior to H-hour, bombers were to attack beach defenses using the beach drenching tactic to numb the defenders by dropping 4,200 tons of bombs on the beach. During the balance of the assault naval artillery was to maintain pressure on these batteries and keep them silenced. Fighter-bombers were to be employed after H-hour.

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There were three forms of spotting for the bombardment force. The first was the use of Shore Fire Control Parties which were assigned to each assault battalion. In addition, nine naval gunfire spotting teams were assigned to the paratroop divisions. After the pre-arranged fires were over, the Shore Fire Control Parties were to assign targets for the ships to attack, spot fall of shot, and report on mission success or failure. This was hoped to minimize friendly fire incidents. Every firing ship was provided with an army artillery officer, charged with maintaining up-to-date information about the position of allied troops and with determining the desirability of firing at any given target. Shore Fire Control Parties were to be sent to the beaches as early as H plus 30 minutes.

The primary concern of the Shore Fire Control Parties was the placement of timely and accurate fires on target. A spotter observes the location of the shell bursts or the mean point of impact (MPI) of a group of bursts with respect to the adjusting point as observed along the observer-target (OT) line. From his position, the spotter provides up (U) or down (D) adjustments in yards, which denotes a shift in range but it can also apply to height of burst or target altitude, and right (R) or left (L) adjustments also in yards.²

The second form of bombardment spotting was by aircraft. Spotting was carried out by 104 single seater aircraft, mainly Spitfire fighters, operated by the R.A.F., Royal Navy, Fleet Air Arm, and U.S. Naval pilots in British planes. Single seaters were used because it was believed by the A.E.A.F. that high casualties would result if aircraft of low speed were employed. The ordinary two-seater observation plane was so slow that it was easily put out of action by enemy

² The ship's Fire Control Men used a special plotting board to convert spot correction information from the Shore Fire Control Parties and aircraft spotters into the units used by the fire control computer, which are changes in range by yards and changes in bearing by Mils. MILs, or Milliradians, are a unit of measurement dividing radians in a circle. A radian is equal to 57.3 degrees, with 6.283 ($\pi \times 2$) radians in a circle. There are 1000 Milliradians in 1 radian, and therefore 6,283 Milliradians (or Mils) in a circle. The USN defined a mil as equal to 3 minutes 26 seconds of arc. So, a 1 mil change in direction converts to a 1-yard displacement at 1,000 yards or 10 yards at 10,000 yards and so forth. For an example, say that one of the Shore Fire Control Parties sends a Map Coordinate for *Nevada* to attack. From *Nevada*'s location offshore, this Map Coordinate is determined to be a compass bearing of 95 degrees True and 20,000 yards in range. This information is entered into the fire control computer, and the guns fire their first salvo. From the Shore Party perspective, this first salvo lands 200 yards too far in range and 100 yards to the left. He would send a correction as follows: "D200 R100" meaning drop the range by 200 yards and move it to the right by 100 yards. Using the plotting board to change this information from the Spotter's perspective to the ship's perspective, the ship's Fire Control Men would convert this – again, this just an example – to a drop in range of 50 yards and a bearing change of 4 mils to the right and this information would be entered into the fire control computer for the next salvo. This process would repeat until the target was destroyed or put out of action.

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anti-aircraft guns or fighters. These spotting aircraft operated in pairs, one plane acting as a spotter and one as escort. Planes were capable of doing either job interchangeably. The plane then located the target and gave the exact location to the ship by means of a grid reference, on a pre-arranged gridded map, from which the ship directed its own fire. The plane then observed the fall of shot and gave corrections as required on the basis of the clock code. Owing to the shortage of aircraft, one plane was often employed to spot for more than one ship simultaneously.

Here the plane was constantly moving so the observation line is also constantly moving. They used a cardinal direction system and placed an imaginary clock over the target where 12 o'clock was compass north. Then it came down to the skill of the pilot to estimate how close the fall of shot was to the target. Typically, the up/down was referenced as something like "Spot 2 o'clock 200" which meant that the shots fell northeast of the target by 200 yards. The ship's fire control team would then convert the Spotter's report into a range and bearing correction to be entered into the ship's fire control computer.

The third method of observing fire was by the employment of the ship's own rangefinders and directors if the target was within the line of sight of the ship. This is direct fire as no outside source was required. If there was no spotter available, some missions were conducted unobserved, and this was where the ship's fire control team would plot the MPI and simply move it so that the normal dispersion of shells would saturate the area the target was located at. As the ship uses her own Directors and Rangefinders in this method to spot corrections, no conversions are needed, and the corrections can be entered directly into the fire control computer as range in yards and bearing in Mils.

Coastal Fortifications and the Atlantic Wall

The German coastal fortifications were built in a rather casual way without a full realization of Allied air and naval strength and without a system based on such a conception. After the summer campaign of 1940, the first step was the construction of a group of heavy offensive batteries between Boulogne and Dunkirk. Then the Navy installed batteries to protect the ports against attack from the sea. Defense against attack from other directions was given little consideration.³ These coastal batteries were for the most part unprotected from shells or bombs. Ordinary armored turrets had not been ordered in time and were unavailable after 1942 because of the ever-increasing scarcity of high-grade steel. The experts were loath to sacrifice maximum traverse for better protection, since immobile concrete blockhouses possessed an aperture allowing for only a 30-to-60-degree traverse. A very simple reinforced concrete turret, which could be rotated by hand, had been devised for medium caliber guns. Unfortunately, this

³ MS# A-982, Title: Rommel's Measures to Counter the Invasion, Author: VzAdm [Vice Admiral] Ruge, Friedrich
Position: Naval Liaison Officer, A [Army] Gp [Group] B, Date of MS: 31 Apr 46. Page 8.

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turret was rejected for over a year for no apparent reason.⁴ The casemates were largely positioned to fire straight out to sea, and this would limit their ability to engage targets to either side. So, one of the consequences for increased survivability was limited traverse.

Rommel's plan fundamentally accepted battle within the range of naval gunfire support so his idea was to heavily fortify his artillery positions so they could survive such attacks by either naval or aerial bombardment. This had direct consequences for the Allies who monitored the progress of the fortifications. Within Operation Neptune the naval bombardment requirement steadily increased over time. Initially the British were to supply the entire bombardment commitment. As the Germans transformed their gun batteries from open gun positions to heavy concrete fortifications the need for naval bombardment increased. In the final plan the U.S. Navy was tapped and would supply about one-third of the fire support ships.

The British were reluctant to send capital ships into the English Channel due to their World War One experience where they lost three capital ships at Gallipoli from naval mines. However, as the Germans fortified their coast the need for heavier guns became paramount. This actually had far-reaching consequences. Another consequence was that the German fortifications would need to be massive and there was a real shortage of concrete which would slow their construction. This meant that there was a great deal of difficulty in simply attaining the necessary materials to construct such an ambitious plan. With more battleships and cruisers being introduced to the Allied bombardment plan this also increased the range inland naval guns could reach. Rommel's plan typically called for fortifications to be within five miles of the coast, but with battleships, naval artillery could reach twenty miles inland and not only attack his fortifications but also attack any reserves attempting to move toward the beach. In the German Army heavy artillery was between 127-155mm and this gun caliber is typical for naval destroyers and light cruisers. The German Army did not have anything comparable to battleship's 356 mm guns.

This implies that Rommel's belt was too thin. The advantage in naval artillery over tactical air assets was its availability twenty-four hours a day no matter what the weather while tactical air assets were typically only available during the day and in good weather. In hindsight, Rommel's plan to fortify the coast may not have paid dividends as the Allies had plenty of naval support they could add to their plan, and thus increase the geographical depth they could place under siege. I believe that this was not something Rommel or his naval advisors truly considered when the decision to fortify the coast was made. As the German defenses grew, the Allies kept adding more warships to their bombardment plans as shown by the table below:

⁴ MS# A-982, Title: Rommel's Measures to Counter the Invasion, Author: VzAdm [Vice Admiral] Ruge, Friedrich
Position: Naval Liaison Officer, A [Army] Gp [Group] B, Date of MS: 31 Apr 46. Page 12.

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Operation Neptune - Number and type of Bombardment ships planned.

Ship Type	Initial 1943 plan	November 1943 plan	Final Plan
Battleships	0	2	7
Monitors	0	3	2
Cruisers	6	15	23
Gunboats	1	2	2
Destroyers	25	60	74
Support Craft	48	200	242

One of *Nevada*'s principal missions was to break the sea wall on Red Beach so that tanks could get off the beach. Sea walls were quite common and usually 6.5 feet to 10 feet tall and 3 to 8 feet thick. This would be conducted just prior to when U.S. troops were scheduled to land at 0630.

There were several major fortifications in the Utah Beach sector. Crisbecq designated Target #3 (German designation STP 135) was armed with three 210 mm guns. Azeville designated as Target #9 (German designation STP 133) was armed with four 105 mm guns. Mount Coquerel designated Target #14A (German designation Wn 22) also had four 105 mm guns. La Pernelle 1 designated as Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1) was armed with six 105 mm guns. There was a field battery designated as Target #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay) armed with four 155mm guns. The 101st Airborne was tasked with capturing Target #6 (German designation STP 108) the battery of Ste. Martin de Varreville armed with four 105 mm guns.

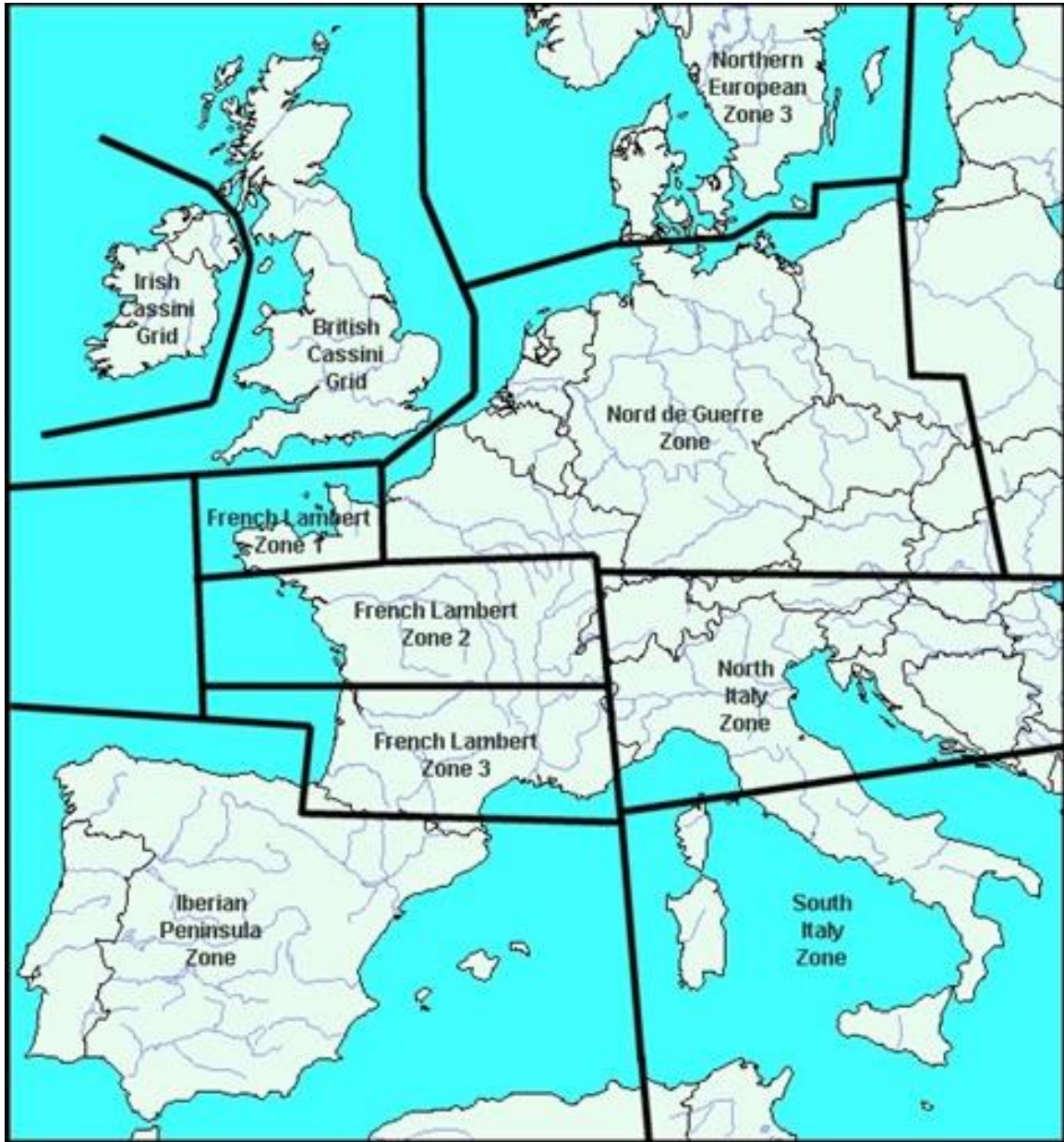
Directly along the coast was a series of strongpoints Wn1 to Wn13. Unlike at Omaha the geography of these positions left them very exposed on the very flat terrain. U.S. Target #44 (German designation Wn 1) to Target #84 (German designation Wn 13) were designated along the coast. These positions were targeted by U.S. destroyers and the secondary battery of cruisers and battleships with the heavily fortified gun batteries behind the coast being assigned to the main batteries of the cruisers and battleships.

Allied Targeting System

The Army Forces involved in WWII used a specific geographical coordinate system in order to specify the localization of points or targets located on the theater of operations. The fights of the First World War had shown all the interest of such systems which, used in conjunction with adequate cartographic data, had largely contributed to the improvement of the action of the units of artillery on the battlefield. Considerations relating to artillery had precisely led the French Army to adopt in 1915 the Lambert map projection "Nord de Guerre", covering the North-East of France and Germany, and which was going to be supplemented during the inter-war period by the Lambert 1, Lambert 2, and Lambert 3 projections in order to cover the rest of the French territory.

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Western Europe is thus cut out in ten zones, whose cartographic statements had been produced at the end of the Thirties and at the beginning of the war by the British and French Army Geographical Services (War Office, Geographical Section, General Staff for Great Britain). In the "Modified British System", each projected area is divided into squares of 500 kilometers on a side, each of which designated by a letter. Each of these squares is subdivided into 25 squares of 100 kilometers on a side which are also lettered from "A" to "Z" omitting the letter "I".

These squares of 100 kilometers on a side play a fundamental role in the determination of location coordinates and are thus often represented on the maps of the time. They are referred to

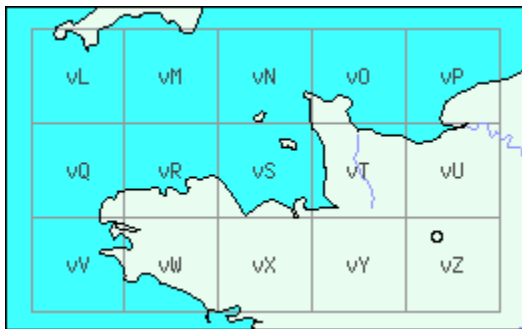
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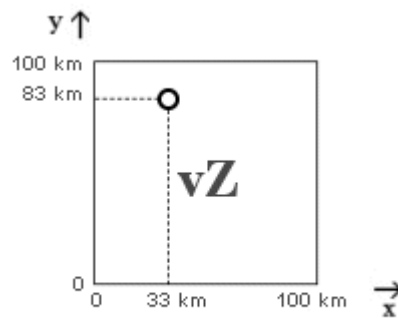
in a complete way by the combination of two letters, for example "vZ", indicating here the 100 km square Z included in the 500 km square v. The determination of the coordinates of a point in the "Modified British System" is carried out in two stages: firstly, by indicating the reference of the 100 km side square inside of which is where this point is located, secondly by defining the exact position of the point inside of this square.

A point is always located inside a square of 100 km by its co-ordinates x/y respectively measured on its x-axis (West-east) and y-axis (North-South), referred to the point of origin of this square (left lower corner). According to the scale of the map used for their determination, these coordinates are expressed in kilometers or hundreds of meters ; a network of vertical and horizontal lines separated by 10 km or 1 km is sometimes represented on the maps in order to facilitate the reading of the x and y values.

As an example, the town of Alençon (France) is located in the "vZ" square of the "French Lambert Zone 1" (LZ1). When we determine the position of the city compared to the origin of this square, using a map scaled to 1/250000°, we respectively measure x=33 km and y=83 km. Formatting this result in the "Modified British System", we finally obtain the following reference: (LZ1) vZ 331/835 or (LZ1) vZ3383, by joining the two values. The Normandy invasion took place in Lambert 1 squares vO and vT. Using a Coordinates Translator available on the internet, plugging in these coordinates will provide the location on Google Earth, which is how I know where U.S.S. Nevada was firing.



"French Lambert Zone 1" Grid



Coordinates of the point : vZ3383

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Preliminary Training

The American battleships arrived in European waters for preliminary training and preparation for Operation Neptune on 27 April 1944 and were assigned to Task Force 129. This task force was originally constituted as a training command for the support ships intended to support Operation Neptune. The *Nevada*, *Texas* and *Arkansas* were assigned to the Belfast Section of Task Force 129, designated as Task Group 129.1, for intensive training in gunnery, bombardment procedures, communication, and damage control under the direction of commander Battleship Division Five.

Training was conducted in the Belfast-Clyde area and every effort was made to simulate and rehearse conditions and procedures which would most closely duplicate the forthcoming operations. Aviation Units were transferred for intensive training in air-spotting using fast fighter aircraft. Communication personnel were thoroughly trained in the communication procedures that were to be used, particularly communication with Air Spot and Shore Fire Control Parties. This included Lt. Richard C. Nash and PFC Vernon Stanley of the 82nd Airborne Division, who were later to spot for *Nevada* on D-Day.⁵ Bombardment procedure drills were continuously conducted with a view toward attaining perfect coordination between Combat Information center, Navigation, Communication, and Gunnery departments in fixing the ship's position and laying batteries on selected targets. Damage Control drills and battle problems were frequently held with an emphasis on fire hazards, engineering and electrical casualties, and the control of underwater damage.

At this time, the officers and crews of the battleships were not cognizant of the specific details of Operation Neptune. However, as it turned out, the similarity between training for and the actual operation was so on the mark that all hands easily recognized actual conditions, and it was felt that the ships went into action with the utmost confidence and a thorough grasp of the situation. Dundrum Bay, North Ireland, which is geographically similar to the Bay of the Seine at Normandy, was utilized for approach and bombardment procedure. In the Clyde area, the actual spotters, both air and shore fire control parties that were to work with *Nevada* in Operation Neptune, were on board to conduct shore bombardment practices in Kilbrannan Sound, using the exact methods and procedures that were to be employed in Operation Neptune. Air spot would report direct hits, but shore fire control would only report if mission were successful.⁶ The crew was thoroughly indoctrinated in making the approach, following mine sweepers, and firing while navigating in swept waters with adverse currents and little sea room.

⁵ These men called in Missions 17, 18A and 18B which were three of the most important missions conducted by *Nevada* on D-Day.

⁶ From a historical perspective, this is unfortunate as I am looking for as much detail as possible to be able to tell the story and of course at the time this was not their concern and they simply needed to cut to the bottom line and simply report if the mission a success or not.

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Photographed from *Quincy* (CA-71), *Nevada* in Belfast Lough, Northern Ireland, 14 May 1944. *Texas* (BB-35) is at right. U.S. Navy Photograph 80-G-367897 National Archives and Records Administration, Still Pictures Division, College Park, Md.

Saturday 3 June 1944 Battleship Division 5 CTG 129.1 under command of Rear Admiral Bryant received its operational orders for Operation Neptune. At 0222 the task force got underway, and D-Day and H-hour were set for 5 June 0600. The first obstacle that needed to be overcome was to move over 6,000 ships on a set timetable through mine infested waters. By Sunday 4 June the TG 129.1 had passed point Y which was 5.75 miles from Anthony Head light. Then at 0739 she received a dispatch from Supreme Commander Allied Forces Expeditionary Forces postponing D-Day and H-hour to 0630, 6 June 1944. She reversed course to retrace her track to consume 24 hours of movement schedule. General Eisenhower had received a definitive prediction of bad weather for the 5th and postponed the invasion 24 hours. Admiral Moon was able to recall all the convoys except one which was known as convoy U-2A. Moon sent the U.S.S. *Forest* to catch U-2A and bring them back home before the Germans detected this force

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and gave away Allied intentions. The British sent a scout plane and luckily, they were able to turn back the convoy before it was detected.

At 0725 5 June 1944, Task Group D under the command of Rear Admiral M.L. Deyo USN in U.S.S. *Tuscaloosa* joined Task Group A and in accordance CTF 125.8 operation order 4-44 Bombardment groups O and U separated and reformed. Force O continued on with Rear Admiral Bryant, USN in U.S.S. *Texas*. U.S.S. *Nevada* took station with bombardment group U which formed the nucleus of Convoy U-1A in the movement and approach plans of the operational orders. TG 125.8 proceeded in channel QZS 418 making 12 knots for remainder of approach. By Monday 5 June at 0758 the Task Group 125.8 was back at point "Y" 5.75 miles from Anthony Head light. The Utah Bombardment Group consisted of the following ships. U.S.S. *Nevada*, H.M.S. *Erebus*, H.M.S. *Hawkins*, U.S.S. *Quincy*, U.S.S. *Tuscaloosa*, H.M.S. *Black Prince*, U.S.S. *Butler*, U.S.S. *Corry*, U.S.S. *Fitch*, U.S.S. *Forest*, U.S.S. *Gherardi*, U.S.S. *Herndon*, U.S.S. *Hobson*, U.S.S. *Shubrick*, U.S.S. *Bates*, H.M.S. *Hotham*, and H.M.S. *Tyler*.

June 5, 0758 the U.S.S. *Nevada* passed point Y bearing 120 degrees true 5.75 miles from Anthony Head light. By 1013 she entered channel QZS 477 and arrived at 1037 3.1 miles off Eddystone light. At 1045 she had reached point A. At 1118 CTF 125 Rear Admiral Moon in *Bayfield* joined column ahead of *Nevada* accompanied by U.S.S. *Forest* and *PT 199* who took station in screen. At 1213 she had reached point B. By 1237 she had reached point C and entered channel QZS 416. At 1348 she passed point D and entered channel QZS 461 having previously slowed to allow *Barnett*, *Dickman*, and *Empire Gauntlet* to enter column of convoy U-1A ahead of *Bayfield*, *Hobson*, *LCH 10*, *LCH 350* and *PC1176* and *PC 1261* took station ahead of *Nevada*. By 1547 she passed point E.

At 1747 *Nevada* had passed point F and entered a special swept channel course 110 degrees true from Portland Bill to point N, the head of approach channel No. 1. Two USCG cutters joined the screen. The route that the Task Group 125.8 needed to take was unexplored. Ahead were the 14th and 16th minesweeping flotillas. Then at 1757 June 5, the minesweeper U.S.S. *Osprey* was suddenly struck under her forward engine room by an explosion from what was believed to be a moored contact mine. The *Osprey* was hit in daylight twenty miles north of the alleged position of the enemy minefield. Admiral Moon ordered the area swept by a group of British minesweepers as night fell, which were commanded by Cmdr. M.H. Brown.

At 1800 June 5, the *Nevada* went to air and torpedo defense quarters, set complete material condition "Zebra" and condition of readiness I on the 5-inch and anti-aircraft batteries. Ship steaming under all boilers.

By 1815 the *Osprey* was sinking, and abandoned ship had been ordered. The *Chickadee* came along side and took off all survivors. The *Osprey* had lost six men and twenty-nine were wounded. She was the first victim of Rommel's first line of defense. The minesweepers deployed buoys to mark the edge of the swept channel. Once sweeping was begun from the

U.S.S. *Nevada*

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correct starting points, accuracy of navigation was aided using QH and QM electronic navigational devices and by taut wire. The course of all of the channels cuts were within 100 yards of their intended positions.

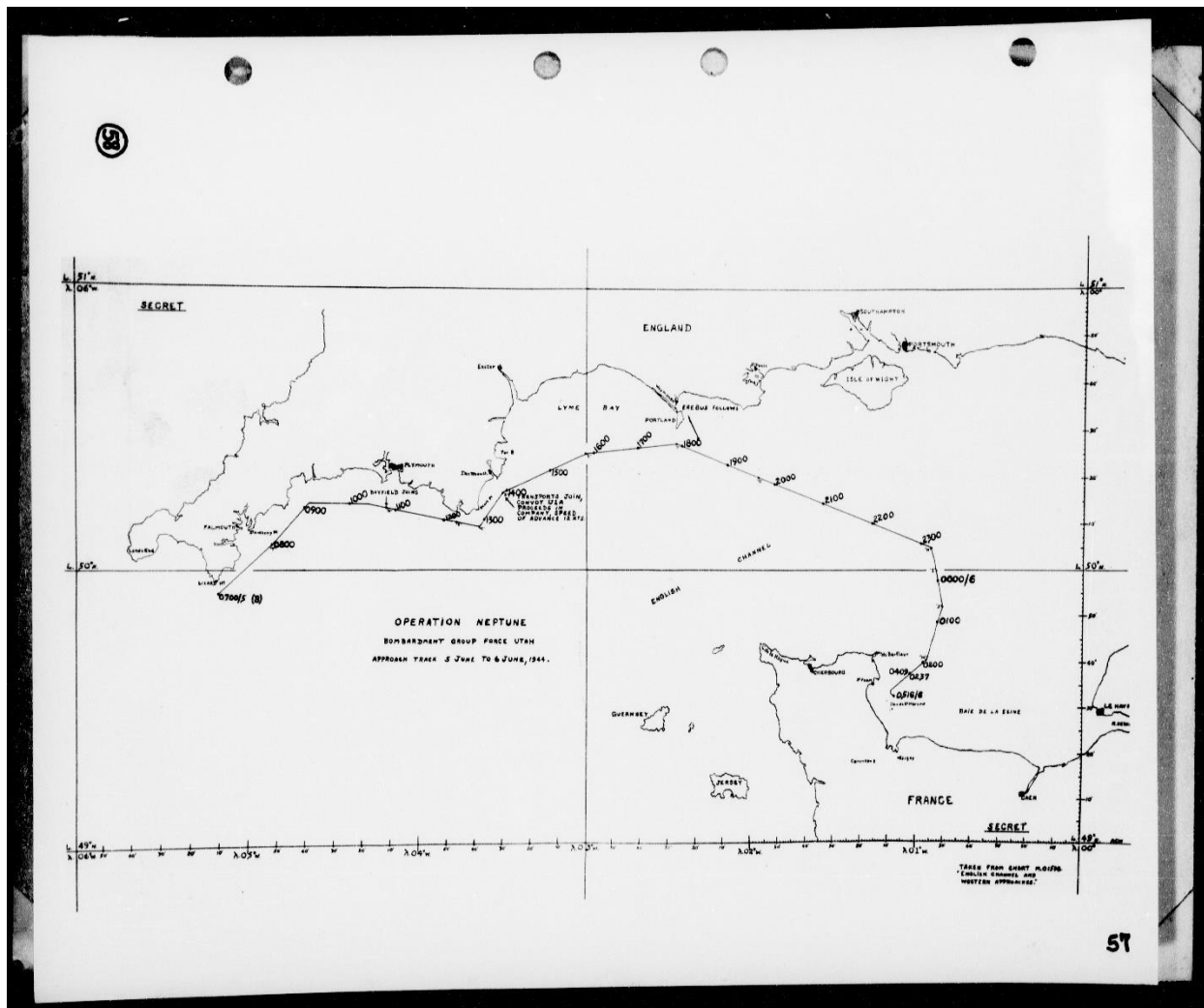
By 1920 they had passed point G. The sun set at 2206⁷ and by 2230 the *Nevada* went to General Quarters. She kept as well as possible in swept waters, hugging closely the red-light buoys to starboard and checking track by QH. The swift cross tidal current and dim lights of the buoys made the passage of this channel a very difficult one. At one period it was necessary to cut through a long column of LCTs bound for Utah beach area. This column had evidently been well to the eastward by the earlier flood tide and must have been behind schedule. From point J the channel was better marked and consequently easier to follow, the buoys being laid reasonably straight.

June 5, 2330, *Nevada* sighted antiaircraft fire in direction of Contentin Peninsula against friendly bombers. 2323 she passed point N at the entrance to approach channel No. 1 which was marked by a group of dan buoys flashing green every six seconds. At 2345 she passed point I which was marked by flashing white and oscillating red dan buoys. The course was made good on 168 degrees true between seven pairs of fixed white and fixed red dan buoys every mile. Most of these were lit and accurately placed geographically.

⁷ Note how late the sun set during this time of year at Normandy. The sun would rise around 0547 the next morning so during this time of year at Normandy there was only six or seven hours of darkness.

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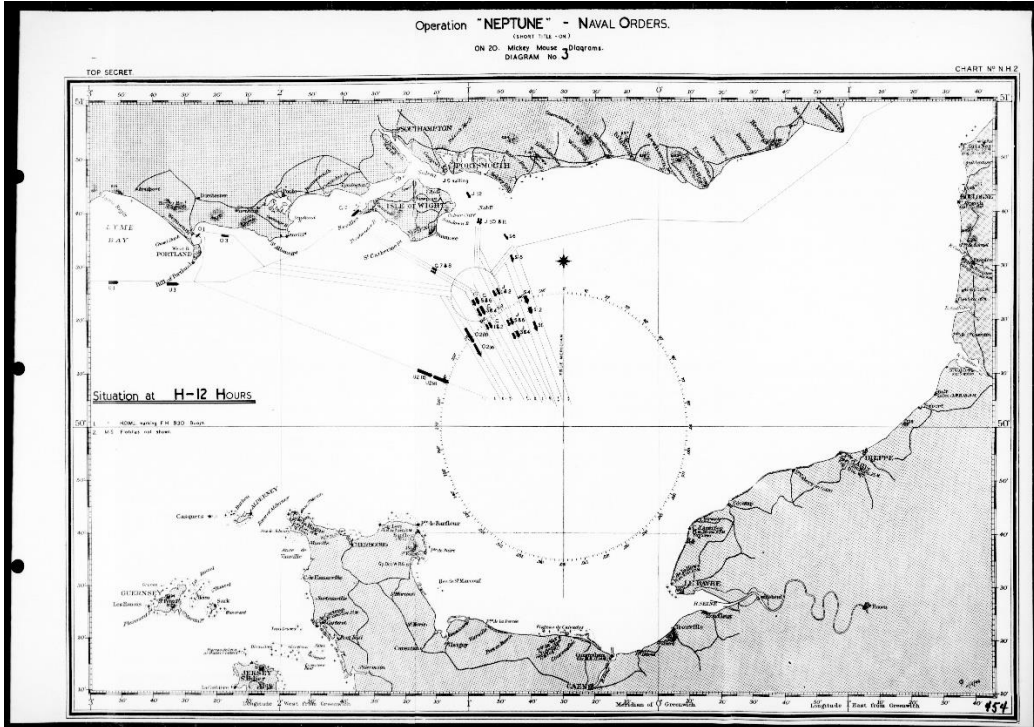


Path of bombardment group 4 June to 6 June 1944.⁸

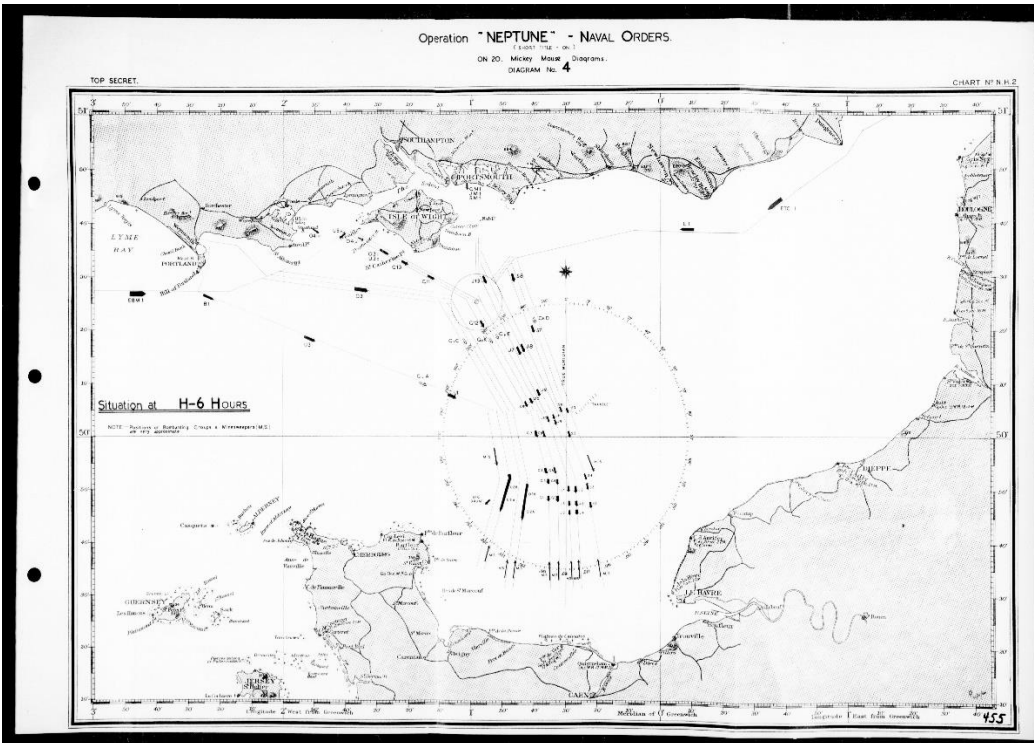
⁸ Action Report Commander Cruiser Division Seven, Vice Admiral M.L. Deyo, page 57.

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Position of Convoys H minus 12 hours or 1830 June 5, 1944



Position of Convoys H minus 6 hours or 0030 June 6, 1944

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D-Day June 6th, 1944, 0000-0230

June 6, 0000 *Nevada* was steaming in fast approach of Channel No. 1 between point I and J making good on course of 168 degrees true and speed over the ground of 12 knots in strong cross currents. By 0034 passed point J marked by a pair of flashing white and flashing red dan buoys. *Nevada* altered course to 197 degrees true. She passed 12 more pairs of fixed red and white dan buoys every mile, finding most of the white buoys lit and some of the red. This channel was accurately laid geographically. At 0130 many bombers and airborne troop transports passed overhead with heavy flak and searchlights seen over the assault area. Air bombardment was heard making a marked increase in volume. The invasion had begun with the deployment of the 101st and 82nd airborne divisions.

By 0140 *Nevada* passed point M entrance and branched off of to fire support channel No. 1 for the Utah area. Then problems developed as the next leg of the channel should have been marked by fixed green dan buoy abreast the fixed red dan buoy but both were unlit. *Nevada* altered to make good course 226 degrees true by radar fix and geographical navigation of the designated location of fire support channel No. 1 which should have been marked by fixed green dan buoys every mile. The first two were not lit and the others were either misplaced or had drifted so that the buoys were 1.4 miles northwest of their intended locations. *Nevada* was leading the column consisting of Fire Support Unit One, Utah area. The Barfleur Light was on with full brilliancy and proper characteristics and Saint Markouf Island provided excellent radar fixes. At 0147 *Nevada* sighted a fixed green dan buoy well off to starboard and adjusted to close a line 226 degrees true through this buoy. Thereafter green buoys in this channel were picked up with great difficulty as lights were very dim and buoys were well off to starboard.

Operation Neptune called for seventy-seven minesweepers in which thirty-two were American and the rest British and Canadian to proceed the massive convoy and get the ships into position. Time was of the essence as allied troops were now committed and the majority of the bombardment ships were not quite in their proper positions. By 0229 *Nevada* was not sure where the channel was and anchored between the 6th and 7th green buoy and dispatched two destroyers to locate point "N" before she steered into waters infested with naval mines. The *Nevada* in all respects was ready to return fire from shore batteries and protect the transports if required but no shore batteries opened fire and their presence seemed to be unnoticed. This may have been since the air bombardment was still in progress. She observed three friendly planes shot down and several heavy explosions with large fires and presumed they may be oil or ammunition dumps. Cmdr. Brown with his minesweepers searched for any German mines but did not encounter any.

Three fleet minesweeping flotillas were detailed to the Task force commanders for bombardment minesweeping, three for sweeping connecting channels and two to standby for special requirements. To safeguard the bombarding battleships, cruisers, destroyers and other ships which would be required to move around in the congested assault area, often awfully close

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to the shore, it was considered essential that their movements should be preceded by minesweeping. Bombardment was to begin before H-hour so that no time could be wasted between the completion of sweeping the approach channels and transport areas and the beginning of sweeping for bombardment forces. Twenty-nine mines were cut in Channels 2, 6 and 7. Seventy-eight moored mines were found over the next few days.

Bombardment Task Group U

The invasion had begun from 0015 to 0230 with the deployment of the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions. Two of the three U.S. divisions that the *Nevada* was to support were now in enemy held territory while *Nevada* was still in the process of transiting to her designated bombardment position.

The air attack opened at 0300 hours with over 1,000 British and U.S. bombers dropping around 5,000 tons of bombs on and around German positions. In spite of the incredible weight of firepower unleashed, the bombardment proved largely ineffective. The poor weather limited the impact of the bombing program and few enemy positions were hit. Typhoon squadrons assigned to attack beach targets found winds and overcast skies a serious challenge.⁹

The *Nevada* recorded B-17 heavy bombers along with medium bombers beginning intensive bombing of Utah beach at 0315 and the bombers dropped red and green flares to mark the red and green sectors of Utah beach. At Utah beach 293 B-26 bombers dropped 4,414 x 250 lb. bombs and 30 x 2,000 lb. bombs onto the coastal defenses. At 0340 *Nevada* got underway again, remaining on course 226 degrees true and by 0410 located point "N" and altered course to 146 degrees true and proceeded to firing station No. 7 in Fire Support Area One. At 0442 she anchored in position 263.6 degrees true and 4,980 yards off Saint Markouf Island in 12 fathoms of water with her port anchor, but the port chain would not veer causing some concern. She heaved up the port anchor at 0450 and let go of the starboard anchor and attempted to keep her batteries bearing on pre-arranged targets by use of engines while anchored but the current was too strong and in the wrong direction. At 0515 shell fire from the beach was seen but this fire was not directed at the *Nevada* herself. At 0530 communication with one of the air spotting planes was established.

Crisbecq Battery

On 6 June 1944 at 0500 at the Crisbecq battery, Oberleutnant Walter Ohmsen was the first to sight the Allied invasion fleet through the battery rangefinder. He immediately reported his observation to the Kriegsmarine headquarters at Cherbourg, which triggered the German alarm throughout installations on the Atlantic coast. The notification of the award of his

⁹ Fennell, Jonathan; *Fighting the People's War. The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK 2019, p.492-493.

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Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, announced in the German newspapers on 15 June 1944, also referred to Oberleutnant Ohmsen as the first soldier to report the invasion fleet off Normandy. At 0552 a.m. at the Crisbecq battery, Oberleutnant Ohmsen received the order to open fire on the enemy ships, which were then 17 kilometers (11 mi) away. At 0555 a.m., Ohmsen's battery targeted and exchanged fire with the destroyer U.S.S. *Fitch* (DD-462).



One of the 210 mm guns at Crisbecq which was photographed after it was captured. 111-SC-275907 National Archives and Records Administration, Still Pictures Division, College Park, Md.

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D-Day- The great bombardment 0547 to 0626-10.

The *Nevada* observed at 0534 that U.S.S. *Forest* (DD-461) came under fire from shore batteries and the destroyer returned fire.¹⁰ At 0538 the *Nevada* heaved up all anchors and commenced steaming, keeping in a general position with Saint Markouf Island bearing 266.5 degrees true and a distance of 4,700 yards with a ship heading of 315 degrees true with all port batteries bearing on designated targets. Then at 0542 the *Nevada* was straddled by shore batteries only 400 yards off her port bow and starboard quarter. At 0545 a three-gun salvo from shore batteries hit a landing craft off her port bow and it capsized. The sun broke the horizon at 0547.¹¹

During the massive bombardment roughly between 0550 and 0630, U.S.S. *Tuscaloosa* (CA-37) fired five HC 8-inch rounds at Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1), seventeen HC rounds at Target #9 (German designation STP 133) and seventeen HC rounds at Target #14A (German designation Wn22). She was hampered by German return fire from the various batteries and had to move to avoid and this prevented her from sustaining any one bombardment. Her secondary battery fired on Target #18 (German designation STP112).

U.S.S. *Quincy* (CA-71) fired forty-two HC 8-inch round at Target #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay) and then forty-eight HC rounds at Target #20 (German designation unknown, near Ferme du Chateau de Fontenay. Ruins are still visible today). Her secondary battery engaged Targets #70 (German designation Wn 9 south) and #72 (German Designation Wn 9 north) along the beach.

U.S.S. *Fitch* was also the target for the German gunners and had to maneuver to avoid fire. Initially she engaged Target #6 (German designation STP 108)¹² and #9 (German designation STP 133) and then shifted to Target #96 (German designation Wn18). She briefly fired on Target #112 (German designation Wn 140) then #110 (German designation Wn 23) and finally Target #18 (German designation STP 112).

U.S.S. *Corry* (DD-463) engaged Target #80 (German designation Wn 11) and Target #82 (German designation Wn12).

¹⁰ I believe this is an incorrect identification in U.S.S. *Nevada*'s report and the correct ship was U.S.S. *Fitch* which did come under fire at this time and did return fire. The U.S.S. *Forest* was in the Transport area providing a screen to the transports and on patrol looking out for German e-boats.

¹¹ Other sources say sunrise was at 0558, the 0547 time is taken from U.S.S. *Nevada*'s action report.

¹² I wonder if her target was not #6A (German designation Wn 134) which is the AA guns of Target #3 Crisbecq (German designation STP135) and this is an error in her report. Most of the naval bombardment was directed north of Target #60 (German designation Wn 5) and Target #6 (German designation STP108) is south. *Fitch* is in range of both targets, but I suspect her true target was #6A not #6.

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U.S.S. *Hobson* (DD-464) engaged Targets #70 (German designation Wn 9 south) and Target #72 (German designation Wn 9 north). She shifted to Target #74 (German designation Wn 10) during the air bombardment.

U.S.S. *Shubrick* (DD-639) engaged Target #68 (German designation Wn 8).

U.S.S. *Herndon* (DD-638) engaged Target #34 (German designation Wn 82), Target #36 (German designation Wn 87), Target #38 (German designation Wn 88), Target #40 (German designation Wn 90) and Target #42 (German designation Wn92).

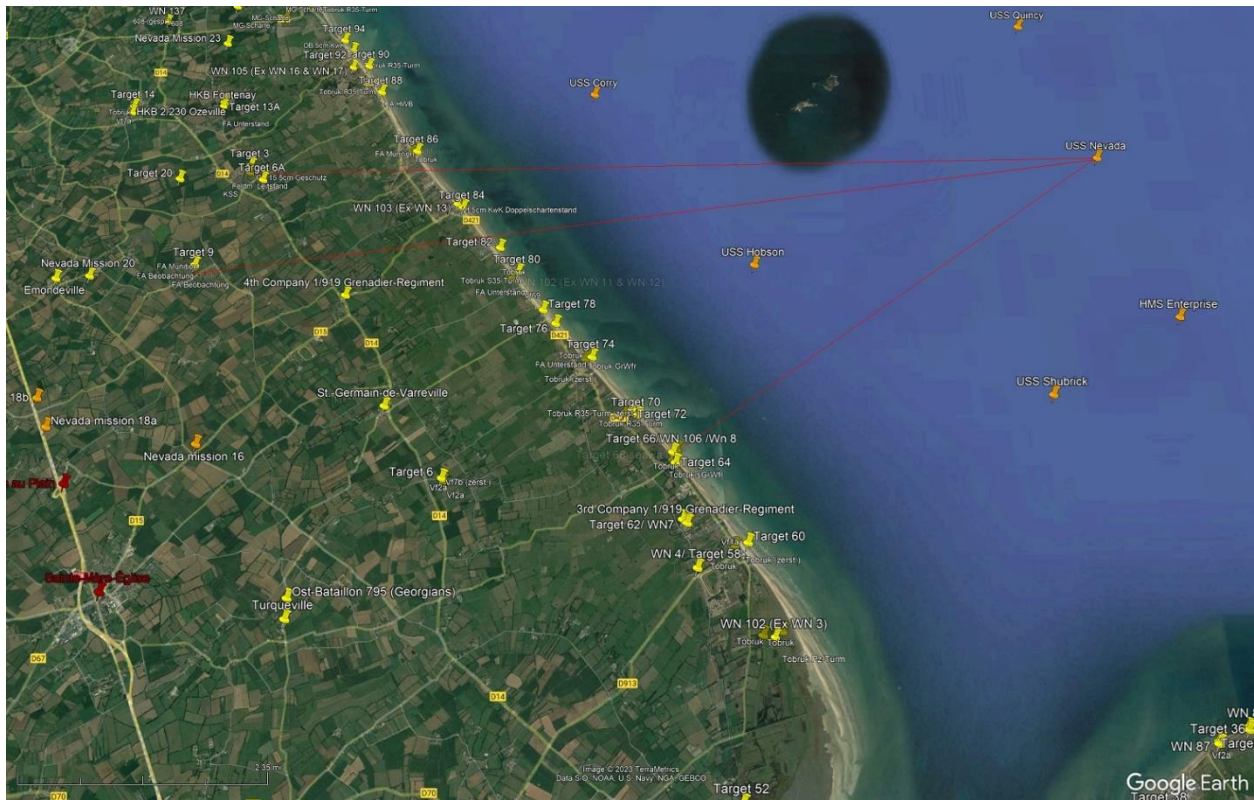
H.M.S. *Enterprise* engaged Target #62 (German designation Wn 7) with 242 rounds. H.M.S. *Black Prince* engaged Target #4 (German designation STP141). H.M.S. *Erebus* engaged Target #8 (German designation STP152), #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1), and #1A (Unknown German Designation, scars of bombardment remain visible. Northwest of #7A. 500 yards west of WN149).

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Nevada Opens Fire

At 0547, U.S.S. *Nevada* fired her first Main Battery salvo of the bombardment. In the following pages, using Google Maps, I will show the present-day locations of her targets. The fire mission reports that were generated by her crew show what type of projectile was used, how many guns were fired for each salvo, spotting corrections from the Shore Parties, Aerial observers or the ship's own Directors and Rangefinders and the data entered into the fire control computer to make these corrections. This is followed by my analysis and any further information about these missions.



U.S.S. *Nevada*'s first three main battery missions and her first secondary battery mission were fired on these three targets: Target #3 (German designation STP 135), Target #9 (German designation STP 133), Target #66/#68 (German designation Wn-8).

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Main Battery Mission #1



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 1 on Target #3 (German designation STP 135) MKB Marcouf / Crisbecq, Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung 260, from 0547 to 0551.¹³ Ruins of the German emplacements are still visible and are part of *Musée Poste de Commandement des Batteries de Crisbecq* ([Crisbecq Battery Command Post Museum](#)). On this and the following maps, those German defenses like gun emplacements and the “Tobruks”¹⁴ that are still visible are labeled. *Nevada*’s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO368043 which equals Latitude: 49° 28’ 54” N, Longitude: 1° 17’ 48” W.

¹³ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 1, page 51 of full report.

¹⁴ A “Tobruk” is a one-man, reinforced concrete bunker, usually equipped with a machine gun, but some were topped by the turret from a captured French tank. See photograph on page 29.

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U.S.S. NEVADA

S-F-C-R-R-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 1 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 0547-10 to 0551-10

Target Coordinates 368043 Ship's Coordinates 532057

Target Navigational Range 17,100 Gun Range 17,600

True Bearing 261-45

Target Number and Description: #3 - Three 210 MM guns, two casemated and one not casemated, plus two 155 MM guns not casemated.

Spotting method: Air Spot.

<u>Salvos</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>No. of Guns</u>	<u>Spot Received</u>	<u>Spot Applied</u>
1	0547-10	1	2 o'clock - 100	U 100 L 2
2	0551-10	3	10 o'clock - 50	NC L 2
		4		

4 NC

RESULTS: Battery ceased firing. No results reported by plane spotter.

COMMENTS: First salvo this mission right gun of Turret I had a hang fire. (See Casualty section of report)

6 1665

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ENCLOSURE (B)

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Some explanations of this report:

- **Navigational Range** is the geometric distance between the firing ship and the target at the moment of firing. In these documents, this is the range to the target when *Nevada* opened fire. This range is measured by the ship's optical and/or radar rangefinders when firing at targets that those instruments can "see." When firing at a land target using aircraft or Shore Fire Control Parties for spotting, the Navigational Range is determined by the distance between the map coordinates of the target and the ship's location as calculated by the Navigator.¹⁵
- **Gun Range** is the range set on the gunsights to obtain a hit and is the output of the ship's fire control computer. As the movements of both the firing ship and the target affects the point of impact, the Gun Range and the Navigational Range are seldom the same.
- **True Bearing** is the angle (direction) in regards to True North from the ship to the target.¹⁶
- The total rounds expended in Mission 1 were 4 HC shells. For this mission the air spotter had difficulty in seeing the impacts of the shots or was under intense anti-aircraft fire, so this mission was abruptly stopped, and the spotter shifted to Azeville. The four rounds fired were insufficient to suppress this heavily fortified position and the Crisbecq battery remained fully operational.
- In looking at the spotting data, the first shell landed within 100 yards of the target and the second salvo of three shells landed within 50 yards of the target, which is within the blast radius of a 14-inch HC round. The spot correction received from the spotting aircraft after the first salvo of "2 o'clock 100 yards" was converted by the fire control team to an input into the fire control computer of "Up 100 yards and Left 2 mils". Assuming that the ship was stopped or moving slowly, this would increase the Navigational Range to 17,200 yards. A 2 mil correction would thus result in a movement of $17.2 \times 2 = 34.4$ yards to left of the impact point of the first salvo.

¹⁵ From "[Definitions and Information about Naval Guns – Part 3](#)" at NavWeaps.com

¹⁶ As *Nevada* was constantly moving during these fire missions, the Navigational Range, Gun Range and True Bearing given here – 17,100 yards, 17,600 yards and 261 degrees 45 minutes – would only be correct for the first salvo. Due to the ship's movements, the Navigational Range and True Bearing for the second salvo would be different and thus the Gun Range would also be different even if the first salvo was on target and no corrections were needed. The fire control computer "knows" the ship's course and speed and calculates the proper changes to the aim of the guns to compensate for these movements. The spot corrections tell the computer that the desired point of impact has moved. The computer will then calculate a new gun range and bearing based upon all of its inputs, not just the spot corrections. As an aside, this is exactly why effective battle ranges were 4,000 yards or less before fire control computers were invented.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

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- In this mission, *Nevada* experienced a hang fire on her first salvo.¹⁷ The usual procedure in the event of a hang fire is to first replace the igniter cartridge, which can be performed without opening the breech, and then try again. This was successful as it can be seen that she fired three shots in her second salvo rather than the normal two.



A Tobruk emplacement at the [Channel Islands Military Museum](#) on Jersey Island that used a turret from a captured French Renault R35 tank. This turret used a [37 mm L/21 SA 18 gun](#).

Photograph taken on 24 June 2013 and copyrighted by Acad Ronin.

¹⁷ Hang fire and Misfire - A hang fire is when there is an unexpected delay between when the trigger is pulled and the gun actually fires. This may be due to a slow burning primer, or, for bag guns, the powder bag may have been loaded backwards or it may have become crooked during loading, so there is a delay while the fire burns from the back of the bag to where the ignition pad is located. A misfire is when there is a complete failure to fire. It is impossible to tell a hang fire from a misfire until the gun breech is opened and the ammunition examined. For bag guns, an ember on the powder bag might smolder for a long time, so it is common practice to wait for 30 minutes before opening the breech. From "[Definitions and Information about Naval Guns – Part 3](#)" at NavWeaps.com

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U.S.S. *Nevada* opens fire on German defense's June 6, 1944, Normandy 80-G-252412. National Archives and Records Administration, Still Pictures Division, College Park, Md.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Secondary Battery Mission #1



U.S.S. Nevada Secondary Battery Mission 1 on Target #66 (German designation Wn-8) from 0547 to 0632.¹⁸ Elements of the 3rd Company of the 1st Grenadier-Regiment 919/ 709 Division occupied this position. Nevada's target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1 vT442982 which equals Latitude: 49° 25' 48" N, Longitude: 1° 11' 26" W.

¹⁸ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B pages 53a-53b, pages 108-109 of full report.

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Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECONDARY BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 1 Battery 5"/38 Cal. Date 6 June 1944
Time 0547 to 0632

Target Coordinates 442952 Ship's Coordinates 523057

Target Navigational Range 12,200 Gun Range 12,650

True Bearing 224°30'

Target Number and Description: #66 - Strongpoint with three concrete shelters. Seven machine gun positions.

Spotting method: Ship's spotter--until on sea wall--then applied in plot for pattern fire.

<u>Salvos</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>No. of Guns</u>	<u>Spot Received</u>	<u>Spot Applied</u>
---------------	-------------	--------------------	----------------------	---------------------

368 salvos (nearly all salvos were four gun salvos)

first spot UP 400	UP 400
sec. spot UP 300	UP 300

These two spots put MPI on sea wall at which time Secondary Battery Plot took over the application of spots to cover target area. Range spots were in 100 yd. increments and deflection spots in 60 yd. increments. Spots were applied to cover a target area of 350 yds. in deflection and 500 yds. in range.

Expended 1440 rounds.

RESULTS: Many hits were observed in target area before smoke and dust obscured the target area. No report on actual damage received on board.

COMMENTS: Fire was intentionally opened approximately 300 yds. short of the waters edge in order to assist the Control Officer in identifying his salvos. The Control Officer spotted the MPI onto the sea wall at which time Secondary Battery Plot took charge of applying spots. The four mounts of the port battery were switched to #2 Mk 37 Director in order that two standby mounts would be available. This enabled the Control Officer to rotate mounts and thus provide short periods for replenishment

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ENCLOSURE (B)

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U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECONDARY BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 1 (Continued)

COMMENTS: of ammunition, correction of casualties, and rest periods for the gun crews. In this manner a volume of fire of 32 rounds per minute was maintained with no difficulty. Parallax was set as received from the computer. Computer in control of elevation and train. Navigational range from chart set on computer.

Fire was scheduled to cease when a black smoke rocket was fired by the first assault wave (approximately "H" hour). Due to heavy smoke and dust the beach was obscured at this time and fire was ceased at scheduled H + 2 when it was thought the black smoke signal would not be seen.

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ENCLOSURE (B) 109

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Authors Note: Target #66 and #68 (German designations Wn-8) strongpoint, is located at the place known as La Redoute d'Audouville, on the site of a former French redoubt. Located near the seafront, it is protected along the dunes by an anti-tank wall and surrounded by several minefields and barbed wire. It is armed by two 50 mm guns in circular concrete pits, a casemate (Regelbau type H612) housing a 77 mm gun and another for a 47 mm gun, a position for a 50 mm mortar and seven positions for machine guns (two in concrete pits). The particularity of the Wn-8 strongpoint lies in the presence of two circular observation posts: one north of the site (Target #68) and the other in the southern part (Target #66). To assist in blasting a path through the beach obstacles and to neutralize local beach defense strong points, all fire support crafts and all heavy ships, not engaging enemy batteries, opened up at H minus 40 minutes, with all the fire power at their disposal, to drench the beach until H-hour with the maximum weight of naval bombardment. The object of beach drenching was to put down as heavy a barrage as possible with the object of numbing and demoralizing the defenders. Except in special cases, aimed fire, with the object of destroying specific enemy positions, was impracticable at that stage because the smoke and dust of war made accurate observation impossible.¹⁹

¹⁹ During this mission, the following casualties occurred:

- At 0547 when the main battery fired the first salvo, the HPP oil line from the control pressure pump to the brake valve was cracked in Mount #4 train unit. Because of this crack and resulting loss of pressure it was necessary for the trainer to shift to manual train for the remainder of the scheduled bombardment. This casualty did not affect the rate of fire of this mount. After the scheduled bombardment this line was removed, brazed, and replaced and the mount operated properly. It is believed that the concussion of the main battery firing caused this line to crack.
- At about 0552, sometime between the fifteenth and twentieth salvo from Mount #4, the starting relay of the left hoist power panel started to kick out after each 5-inch salvo. This necessitated the left projectile man pressing the hoist start button after each salvo before the next shell and cartridge was hoisted for the gun. After the scheduled bombardment, the mount electrician tightened the panel, and this casualty has not occurred again in Mount 4.
- At 0616, when the main battery fired its full salvo, the PXF oil line from the oil filter to the sump tank on the elevation unit of Mount #2 broke and all the oil was lost out of the elevation tank. The pointer immediately shifted to manual elevation and continued the scheduled bombardment, this line was removed, brazed, and replaced and the mount elevated properly in all types of power drive. It is believed that the concussion of the first full salvo from the main battery caused this line to break.
- During simultaneous firing of the main and secondary battery at about 0620, the shock of firing caused a loose piece of wire on the secondary battery fire control switchboard to fall and short across the own ships course leads. This in turn caused the fuses on the own ship's course panel in the gyro room to blow. The trouble was immediately isolated, and

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Part One

Main Battery Mission #2



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 2 on Azeville Battery, Target #9 (German designation STP 133), 2nd Company of the Marine Artillery Regiment 1261, from 0556-05 to 0612-25.²⁰ *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO360022 which equals Latitude: 49° 27' 45" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 22" W.

the loose wire removed. As soon as the fuses on the gyro panel were replaced normal operation resumed.

- At about 0620, on about the 100th salvo from the left gun of Mount #4, Barnes, G.D. Slc, lacerated the third and fourth fingers of his left hand while loading a projectile into the left gun of Mount #4. Barnes continued loading for about five salvos and was relieved.

²⁰ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 2, page 52 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 2 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 0556-05 to 0612-25

Target Coordinates 360022 Ship's Coordinates 523062

Target Navigational Range 18,570 Gun Range 19,120

True Bearing 254

Target Number and Description: #9 - Four 105 MM field gun howitzers all casedated.

Spotting method: Air Spot

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	0556-05	2	2 o'clock - 300	U 500 L 6
2	0556-30	2	10 o'clock - 300	D 300 L 11
3	0601-50	2	Straddle	NC NC
4	0604-00	2	5 o'clock - 100	NC R 06
5	0606-00	2	4 o'clock - 400	U 300 R 17
6	0608-10	2	10 o'clock - 200	D 200 L 8
7	0610-35	2	9 o'clock - 300	D 300 L 4
8	0612-25	2		

16

16 NC

RESULTS: Battery ceased firing. No results reported by plane spotter.

COMMENTS: None.

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U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Authors Note: Fire Mission 2 was completely aircraft spotted. Total ammo expended for this mission was 16 HC rounds. Four projectiles landed close to one of the casemates but the gun inside remained operational. The closest shells fell on salvos three and four and these were within 100 yards. The heavy concrete casemates were quite capable of resisting HC shells. This mission was cut short so that U.S.S. Nevada could begin main battery mission 3 on Target #68 (German designation Wn-8) and the sea wall.

Main Battery Mission #3



U.S.S. Nevada Main Battery Mission 3 on Target #68 (German designation Wn-8 (northern half with secondary battery engaging southern half Target #66) from 0616-40 to 0626-10.²¹ Elements of the 3rd Company of the 1st Grenadier-Regiment 919/ 709 Division occupied this position. Nevada's target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1 vT443983 which equals Latitude: 49° 25' 51" N, Longitude: 1° 11' 22" W.

²¹ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 3, page 53 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 3 Battery 1A"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944
Time 0616-40 to 0626-10
Target Coordinates 443983 Ship's Coordinates 525062
Target Navigational Range 12,500 Gun Range 12,800
True Bearing 224

Target Number and Description: 68 and sea wall - Strongpoint of three concrete shelters which may house light guns and five machine gun positions. Our principal mission was to breach the sea wall.

Spotting method: Unobserved

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	0616-40	7 AP		U 400 HC
2	0617-50	7 AP		D 800 HC
3	0619-35	7 AP		U 200 HC
4	0621-25	10 AP		U 200 HC
5	0622-45	10 AP		D 700 L 2
6	0624-15	5 HC		U 200 HC
7	0626-10	7 HC		
		<u>53</u>		
		12 HC		
		41 AP		

RESULTS: Target could not be seen due to smoke and dust. Results undetermined at time of firing. An Army Officer who went in with the first wave and came alongside later on in the morning reported that we breached the sea wall in four places, and that four breached openings were large enough for tanks to go through.

COMMENTS: Fifth salvo this mission casualty occurred to cradle on left shell hoist cradle of Turret IV.

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ENCLOSURE (3)

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U.S.S. *Nevada*

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Author's note: On the fourth and fifth²² salvos she fired full broadsides into Target #68 (German designation Wn 8) position.

The *Nevada* had fired on the correct targets, but the 4th Division would land closer to causeway two near Target #60 (German designation Wn 5) and significantly further to the south and this largely wasted her initial efforts. Target #60 (German designation Wn 5) was hit by U.S. bombers between 0600-0610 and then taken under fire from U.S. tanks that had successfully landed.

All of the naval bombardments were north of where the U.S. troops landed in front of Target #60 (German designation Wn 5). H.M.S. *Enterprise* was the first to fire on Target #60 (German designation Wn 5) at 0637-0705 with 201 rounds.

U.S.S. *Shubrick* shifted fire to Target #62 (German designation Wn-7) at 0630 only to have shore fire control parties tell her that her fire was landing on friendly troops at 0635. She stopped shifted to Target #60 (German designation Wn 5) and was told to immediately cease fire, so she shifted to Target #58 (German designation Wn 4) and was again told to immediately cease fire. After this U.S.S. *Shubrick* radioed Commander Bombardment group and notified to have other ships cease firing on this target. The location of our own troops was so uncertain that it was considered unsafe to fire on any regular beach targets and heavy smoke made it impossible to observe any enemy activity for targets of opportunity. Fire was therefore held awaiting a target from the shore fire control party.

8th Infantry, 4th Division

At 0630 H-hour U.S. troops started to land on the beach but were landing further south than they were supposed to. Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt jr. went in on the first wave with the 8th Infantry, 4th Division. He wrote in a letter to his wife on June 11, 1944: "*There was a house by the seawall where none should have been, are we in the right place? It was imperative that I should find out where we were to set the maneuver. I scrambled up the dunes and was lucky in finding that windmill which I recognized. We had been put ashore a mile too far south.*"²³

Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt jr., who was the eldest son of American President Theodore Roosevelt, had to make a crucial decision. At the time of the D-Day landings Roosevelt was a frail man, not in the best of health, needing the aid of a walking stick. His

²² During this mission, the following casualties occurred:

- At about 0622 on the fifth salvo of Mission three, the threads of the reach pin from foot pedal to cradle lock of the left shell hoist cradle in Turret 4 stripped, causing the cradle to jam in dumped position. The jam was cleared, and the reach pin tightened. Continual use of this pin was made until a lull occurred when a new pin was obtained and inserted.

²³ Utah Beach, Joseph Balkoski, page 192.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

health had suffered because of injuries received in the First World War. Despite his poor health, he proved to be a fine leader. One of the hallmarks of the U.S. Army on D-Day was its ability to adapt once the shooting started. Roosevelt consulted with Col. Van Fleet, commanding officer of the 8th infantry, and came to the decision to move directly inland from their current location. The priority at Utah beach was getting off the beach. The paratroopers would be waiting, and it was imperative that the 8th infantry make contact as soon as possible.

This decision, however, triggered significant consequences for the troops that were to follow the 8th infantry. U.S. Army engineers and U.S. Navy sailors whose job it was to manage the beachhead needed to know immediately where they should set up their beach installations and guide follow-on waves. The 1st Engineer Special Brigade, which was larger than a division, was responsible for ensuring the continuous movement of supplies and equipment across the beach. Luckily, Col. Eugene Caffey also came ashore with the first wave and met with Roosevelt and swiftly revised their plans.

The aerial bombardment in particular for Target #60 (German designation Wn 5) and the 5-inch gunfire provided by the destroyers, cruisers, and *Nevada*'s secondary have inflicted the majority of the damage to German defenses at Target #62 (German designation Wn-7), Targets #66 and #68 (German designation Wn-8), Targets #70 and #72 (German designation Wn-9), and Target #74 (German designation Wn-10) during this time. The battleships and cruisers main gun fire missions have not silenced or suppressed any of the major German fortifications such as the Target #3 Crisbecq (German designation STP 135), Target #9 Azeville (German designation STP133), Target # 14A Mont Coquerel (German designation Wn 22) or Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1) batteries in the initial bombardment. The battle with these fortifications was far from over. However, the 5-inch fire and *Nevada*'s main battery mission 3 right along the beach front were on target and this gunfire proved effective against the initial strongpoints along the beach.

The 8th Infantry moved quickly. As they moved north expecting heavy resistance what they encountered were German troops in shock. The naval and aerial bombardment had pulverized these defenders. Morale had collapsed knowing they were cut off by the nighttime paratroopers and utterly dejected by the absence of the Luftwaffe. Utah Beach was secured in less than an hour and casualties were remarkably light. The 8th Infantry had 29 killed and 110 wounded and this stood in stark contrast to Omaha Beach and what was occurring 27 miles to the east. At Utah Beach the beach drenching strategy worked largely due to the flat geography of the target beach. However, the huge bombardment likely led to other problems.

In hindsight it was likely the naval bombardment that resulted in the 8th Infantry landing in the wrong spot. The bombardment created a huge cloud of dust and smoke all along the beach and this did not dissipate quickly. The result was most of the navy coxswains steering the landing boats could not see the landmarks such as the windmill and mud fort they had been told

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

about and the Utah Beach geography being particularly flat revealed no landmarks that may have helped guide the sailors to the correct location. Causeway 2 would now be overloaded and getting off the beach would become the biggest obstacle for the troops following the first wave.



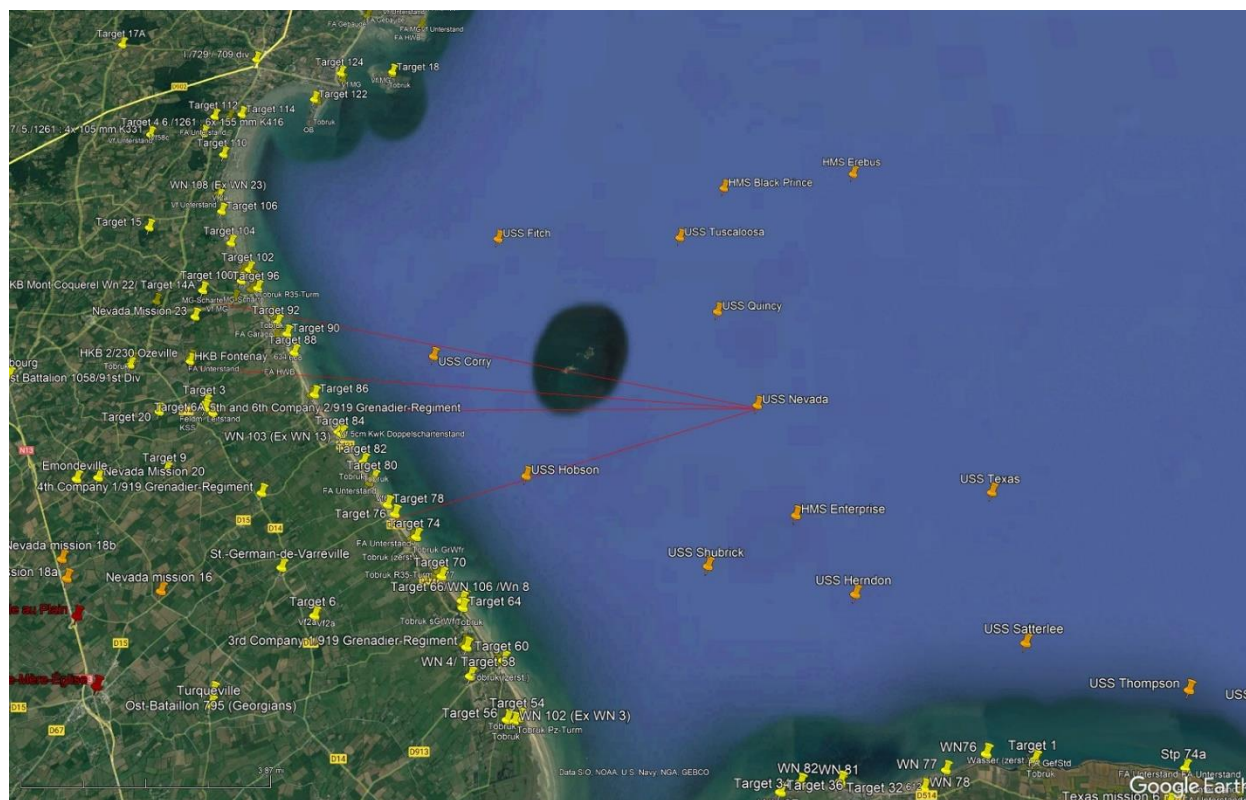
Initial landing at Utah Beach by the 8th Infantry 0630 June 6, 1944.

Photograph # 111-SC-190109-S National Archives and Records Administration, Still Pictures Division, College Park, Md.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

D-Day 0633 to 1014-15



U.S.S. Nevada's main battery missions 4, 5, and 6 with secondary battery mission 2 would be conducted during this time frame between 0633 and 1015. Her main battery targets were Target #3 (German designation STP 135), Target #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay), and Target #14A (German designation Wn 22) along with secondary battery Target #76 (Between Wn 10 to the south and Wn 11 to the north).

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Secondary Battery Mission #2



U.S.S. *Nevada*'s second fire mission for her secondary battery was Target #76 which was just north of Target #74 (German designation Wn 10) along the road D421.²⁴ Target #74 (German designation Wn 10) was being engaged by U.S.S. *Hobson* at this same time. *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO423009 which equals Latitude: 49° 27' 12" N, Longitude: 1° 13' 07" W.

²⁴ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B pages 54a-54b, pages 110-111 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECONDARY BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 2 Battery 5"/38 cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 0633 to 0810

Target Coordinates 423009 Ship's Coordinates 528063

Target Navigational Range 13,900 Gun Range 14,400

True Bearing 240° 15'

Target Number and Description: Strong point with three concrete shelters. Eight machine gun positions.

Spotting method: Ship's spotter, until on sea wall and then applied in plot for pattern.

<u>Salvos</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>No. of Guns</u>	<u>Spot Received</u>	<u>Spot Applied</u>
319 salvos (nearly all salvos were four gun salvos)				
	first spot	Up 200	L 5	Up 200 L 5
	second spot	Up 300	NC	Up 300 NC

These two spots put the NPI on the sea wall at which time Secondary Battery Plot took over the application of spots to cover target area. Range spots were applied in 50 yard increments and deflection spots in 60 yard increments. Spots were applied to cover a target area of 300 yards in deflection and 100 yards in range.

Expended 1,253 rounds.

RESULTS: Many hits were observed in target area. Many hits observed on building in vicinity of target. No report of actual damage received on board.

COMMENTS: Fire was intentionally opened short of the target so that salvos would fall at the water's edge and enable the Control Officer to identify his salvos. The Control Officer spotted the NPI onto the sea wall and then Secondary Battery Plot took charge of applying spots. After ceasing fire on target #66 the port battery was immediately shifted to #1 Mk. 37 Director

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ENCLOSURE (3)

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U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECONDARY BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 2 (continued)

COMMENTS: for firing on target #76. This director and computer had been set up for this target while the battery was firing on target #66 so that there would be no time wasted shifting targets. By having four mounts available for firing the Control Officer was able to keep two mounts firing at all times and yet allow the mounts to have short periods to replenish ammunition, correct casualties, and give the gun crews a short rest. In this manner a volume of fire of 16 rounds per minute was maintained without difficulty. Parallelism was set as received from the computer. Computer in control of elevation and train. Navigational range from chart set on computer.

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ENCLOSURE (B)

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U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Author's note: It is difficult to ascertain if this mission was successful as the coordinates provided in *Nevada*'s report for Target #76 are just to the north of Target #74 (German designation Wn10) which other ships had under direct fire at this time, specifically U.S.S. *Hobson*. I believe this area was targeted out of the strategy of beach drenching and the allied forces are simply saturating the immediate area.²⁵

²⁵ During this mission, the following casualties occurred:

- At about 0725, after the 133rd salvo from the right gun of Mount #6, the electrical firing lead came out of the firing lock terminal of the right gun of Mount #6. The round loaded and the next four rounds were fired by percussion and then the mount was given "check fire" and the lead repaired. This check fire did not slow up the rate of fire of the battery as a standby mount took up the fire immediately. It is believed that this casualty occurred because of poorly soldered connections.
- At about 0745, on approximately the 220th salvo from the right gun of Mount #6, this gun failed to fire either electrically or by percussion. After several attempts to fire by percussion the plug was opened, and the cartridge removed and thrown over the side. The gun was very hot, and a short case was immediately loaded, and the gun fired electrically on the first attempt to fire. This is the only casualty of this type that occurred on the secondary battery during the bombardment from 6 June through 11 June 1944.
- At about 0805, while the battery was firing scheduled bombardment on Target #76, McClintock C.C. Sle, had the tip of the fourth finger of his left hand cut off when it was caught between a projectile and the hoist while loading the projectile hoist in the handling room of Mount #4. The finger was mashed to such an extent that it had to be amputated at the first joint.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Main Battery Mission #4



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 4 on Target #3 (German designation STP 135) MKB Marcouf / Crisbecq, Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung 260, 0629-30 to 0657-25.²⁶ *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO368043 which equals Latitude: 49° 28' 54" N, Longitude: 1° 17' 48" W.

²⁶ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 4, page 54 of full report.

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Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 4 Battery 1A"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 0629-30 to 0657-25

Target Coordinates 368043 Ship's Coordinates 528063

Target Navigational Range 17,700 Gun Range 18,250

True Bearing 259-30

Target Number and Description: 3 - Three 210 MM guns, two casemated and one not casemated, plus two 155 MM guns not casemated.

Spotting method: Air Spot

Selves	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	0629-30	2	2 o'clock 200	U 400 R 03
2	0631-20	2	12 o'clock 200	U 200 L 5
3	0633-50	3 AP	9 o'clock 400	D 300 L 17
4	0636-15	3 AP	5 o'clock 100	MC R 06
5	0639-45	2	3 o'clock 500	U 400 R 19
6	0642-30	2	3 o'clock 300	U 200 R 11
7	0645-45	2	7 o'clock 600	D 600 R 10
8	0648-30	2	No Spot	
9	0657-25	2	Cease Fire	
		<u>20</u>		

14 HG
6 AP

RESULTS: No results reported by plane spotter. The plane spotter reported that he had been hit and communication with him was lost.

COMMENTS: None.

ENCLOSURE (D)

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U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Author's note: U.S.S. *Nevada* was firing on the Crisbecq battery when U.S.S. *Corry* was hit. None of her shells, however, scored any direct hits. Clearly the spotting plane was under fire and the loss of this plane hampered or cut short this mission. The closest shells landed at 0636-15 but for the most part the other salvos landed a significant distance off target. This may reflect that the spotting plane was under intense anti-aircraft fire.

At 0610 a smoke screen was laid by aircraft that completely covered all U.S. ships except U.S.S. *Corry*. The smoke screen laid to seaward and appeared to extend from Saint-Marcouf Island northward for several miles. This led to all German batteries to focus on U.S.S. *Corry*. From the allied perspective they believed the fire was mainly from Targets #3 (German designation STP 135), #9 (German designation STP 133), #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay), #14A (German designation Wn 22), and Target #86 (German designation Wn14) along the shore. These batteries were engaged by various ships in an attempt to protect U.S.S. *Corry*.

Oberleutnant Ohmsen at Crisbecq now directed his gunfire on the U.S.S. *Corry* which he identified as a cruiser. At 0635 he radioed a direct hit on cruiser. The *Corry* reported at 0633 she was hit believed to be a mine under the engineering spaces that caused the immediate flooding of the forward engine room, forward fire room and the flooding of the after-fire room very shortly thereafter, this was accompanied by the loss of all electrical power and lighting at the same time.²⁷ The 4/1261 at Target #14A (German designation Wn 22) Mont Coquerel reported direct hit on ship and apparently sinking. U.S.S. *Fitch* reported at 0635 *Corry* was seen to be hit by a salvo from the beach. At 0641, the *Corry* abandoned ship for at this time the main deck was under 2 feet of water and the ship was broken amidships. *Fitch* took Target #3 (German designation STP 135) under fire in response.

The loss of the U.S.S. *Corry* was a direct consequence of the initial failure of the heavy cruisers and *Nevada* to suppress the German fortifications such as Target #3 (German designation STP 135) Crisbecq, Target #9 (German designation STP 133) Azeville, Target #14A (German designation Wn 22) Mont Coquerel, Target #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay) and Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1). Over the next several hours the *Nevada* and cruisers would focus on silencing these batteries.

²⁷ I do not think she was hit by a mine but was instead hit by a projectile from Crisbecq battery that passed through her hull and detonated underneath her keel, thus giving the appearance of a mine. *Corry* was observed to take multiple hits at this time, and I believe the likely batteries responsible were Crisbecq and/or Mont Coquerel.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

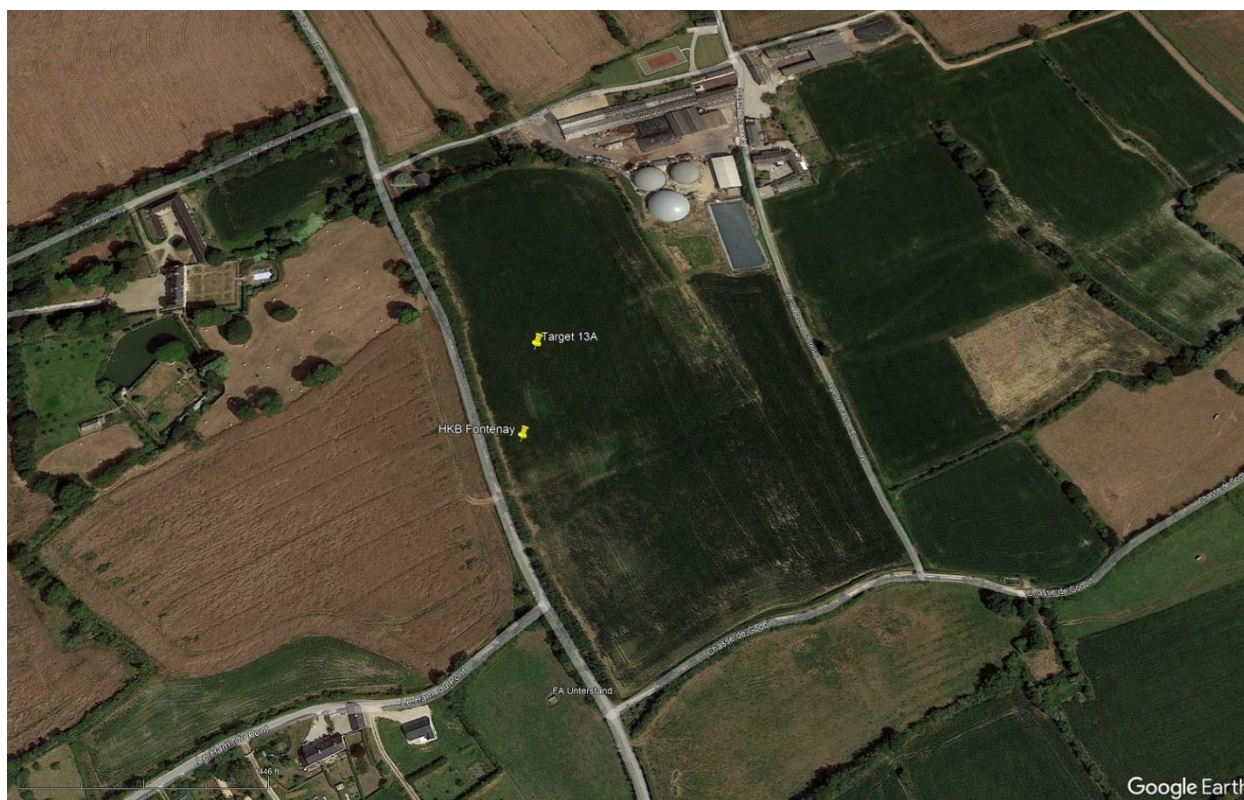


U.S.S. *Corry* sinking off Utah Beach, June 6, 1944.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Main Battery Mission #5



Today nothing remains other than a farmer's field where Target #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay) was in 1944.

U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 5 on Target #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay) from 0717-50 to 0745-35.²⁸ The 3rd Battalion, 1261 Marine Artillery Regiment. *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO361056 which equals Latitude: 49° 29' 35" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 26" W.

²⁸ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 5, page 55 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 5 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 0717-50 to 0745-53

Target Coordinates 361056 Ship's Coordinates 529060

Target Navigational Range 18,450 Gun Range 18,990

True Bearing 265-30

Target Number and description: #13A - Four 155 MM guns, casemates under construction.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter.

<u>Selvos</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>No. of Guns</u>	<u>Spot Received</u>	<u>Spot Applied</u>
1	0717-50	2 HC	D 500 NC	D 500 NC
2	0719-25	2 HC	NS L 5	NC L 5
3	0721-55	2 HC	U 500 NC	U 500 NC
4	0725-55	2 HC	U 500 NC	U 500 NC
5	0741-05	2 HC	D 200 NC	D 200 NC
6	0742-45	2 HC	NC NC	NC NC
7	0744-15	2 HC	NC NC	NC NC
8	0745-35	2 HC		
		<u>16</u>		
		16 HC		

RESULTS: Battery observed firing. Shots observed to fall close to target. Battery ceased firing. Results undetermined due to target being obscured by smoke.

COMMENTS: None.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Author's note: The *Nevada* was spotting from her own directors for this mission. She was firing a basic pattern to cover the area. The target was a battery of 15.5 cm guns of French origin located at a firing position near Fontenay. After opening fire against a ship, this battery received such a heavy return fire from Allied naval artillery that within a short time it looked as though the grounds around the battery had been plowed up. Two guns were damaged by this fire.²⁹ *Nevada* will return to this target for **Main Battery Mission #12** later in the day but I do believe that this mission temporarily suppressed this battery and possibly damaged two guns.

Crisbecq Battery

The Crisbecq battery lost their first 210 mm gun at 0800 when a shell hit the embrasure of No. 3 casemate and failed to detonate, but in passing through the structure caused enough damage to knock out the gun. This damage was reported to be from a 127 mm or 5-inch shell from the *Nevada*, however, her secondary guns never engaged the Crisbecq battery. I believe that U.S.S. *Fitch*, which was firing on Crisbecq battery and was much closer, is a better pick for this damage.

²⁹ Fighting the Invasion, The German Army at D-Day, 6 June: Cotentin Coast Artillery, David C Isby, page 187-188.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Main Battery Mission #6



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 6 on Target #14A (German designation Wn 22) Mont Coquerel, 4th Battalion of the 1261 Marine Artillery Regiment four, 155 mm guns casemated, from 0757-20 to 1014-15.³⁰ *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO361080 which equals Latitude: 49° 30' 52" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 31" W.

³⁰ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B pages 6 and 6b, pages 56-57 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

R-E-C-O-R-D

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 6 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 0757-20 to 1014-15

Target Coordinates 361080 Ship's Coordinates 528060

Target Navigational Range 18,400 Gun Range 18,935

True Bearing 274-10

Target Number and Description: #14A - Four 155 MM guns Casemated.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter and Air Spotter

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	0757-20	1	No spot	NC NC
2	0759-30	2	U 500 NS	U 500 NC
3	0803-40	2	D 1000 NC	D 1000 NC
4	0806-05	2	U 200 L 4	U 200 L 4
5	0809-30	2	No record	No Record
6	0820-25	2	No Record	No Record
7	0824-25	2	3 o'clock 600	U 1000 L 4
8	0828-45	2	5 o'clock 300	U 600 R014
9	0831-30	2	7 o'clock 600	D 300 R035
10	0846-05	2	9 o'clock 600	D 600 R 04
11	0849-20	2	3 o'clock 400	U 800 L 3
12	0852-00	2	9 o'clock 400	D 400 R 04
13	0854-30	2	10 o'clock 100	D 100 NC
14	0916-55	2	3 o'clock 200	U 300 NC
15	0920-40	2	5 o'clock 400	U 500 R07
16	0923-50	2	6 o'clock 400	NC R022
17	0926-35	2	6 o'clock 50	NC R 05
18	0928-55	2	HIT	NC L 2
19	0931-15	2	12 o'clock 100	NC L 8
20	0934-20	2 AP	1 o'clock 50	U 700 L 4
21	0937-55	2 AP	11 o'clock 100	NC L 12
22	0941-25	2 AP	9 o'clock 100	D 100 L 4
23	0943-55	2 AP	D 100 NC	D 100 NC
24	0946-10	2 AP	9 o'clock 50	NC NC
25	0956-50	2 AP	HIT	NC NC
26	1003-00	2 AP	U 100 NC	U 100 NC
27	1006-45	2 AP	HIT	NC R04
28	1008-30	2 AP	HIT	NC NC
29	1010-30	2 AP	6 o'clock 50	NC R06
30	1014-15	2 AP	6 o'clock 100	NC R010

59 NC & AP
37 NC
22 AP

56

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ENCLOSURE (B)

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

H-E-C-B-N-E-K

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 6 (Continued).

RESULTS: Battery observed firing and commenced firing with ship's spotter. After expending eleven rounds air spot became available and took over. Four hits. Target practically destroyed and all activity ceased reported by plane spotter.

COMMENTS: None.

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ENCLOSURE (B)

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U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Author's note: I have not been able to locate damage reports on target #14A (German designation Wn 22) Mont Coquerel to determine if any of the guns were destroyed at this time. At minimum this battery was temporarily suppressed. This target will be fired on again, so simply based on that, I would assume that this battery still had some working guns, but the German crews likely checked fire on their own in hopes this would lift the naval barrage. In this bombardment beginning with the salvo at 0926-35 every salvo is within 50 to 100 yards of target. At 0928-55 this was the first direct hit on an enemy casemate by U.S.S. *Nevada* on June 6, 1944. She then shifted to armor piercing ammunition at 0934-20 and will score three more direct hits.

Crisbecq Battery

At 0900 the target #3 (German designation STP135) Crisbecq battery lost their second 210 mm gun when a large caliber shell hit the embrasure killing the entire crew inside and completely wrecking the gun. This hit has been credited to the U.S.S. *Nevada* but likely came from U.S.S. *Quincy* as the *Nevada* was not firing on Target #3 (German designation STP135) Crisbecq battery at this time. *Quincy* claims a direct hit on Target #3 (German designation STP135) Crisbecq battery at 0830 and I believe this is a more accurate time for this hit. Oberleutnant Ohmsen's Crisbecq battery had now lost both 210 mm guns that faced the sea. He still had communication with Target #9 (German designation STP133) Azeville battery, and he still had one 210 mm gun, but its crew would be exposed as it was not protected by a casemate. He issued orders to scrap broken guns for parts to resurrect any gun that might be repairable. So, no later than 0900 and more likely by 0830 the Crisbecq battery had been reduced to a single 210 mm gun.

U.S.S. *Nevada*'s bombardment of Targets #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay) and #14A (German designation Wn 22) Mont Coquerel had at minimum rendered these batteries temporarily silenced or suppressed. The fire from the shore dropped off significantly. Bombardment Group U as a whole had begun to suppress the German fortifications in the Utah beach sector. There had been no contact with *Nevada*'s shore fire control parties. Until contact was made the *Nevada* would have to continue to fire on pre-arranged targets, targets she could see from her own directors, or targets spotted by aircraft.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One



U.S.S. *Nevada* firing on German defenses June 6, 1944. Note how she is firing a single turret which she did for the majority of her fire support missions. Photo 80-G-231961 National Archives and Records Administration, Still Pictures Division, College Park, Md.

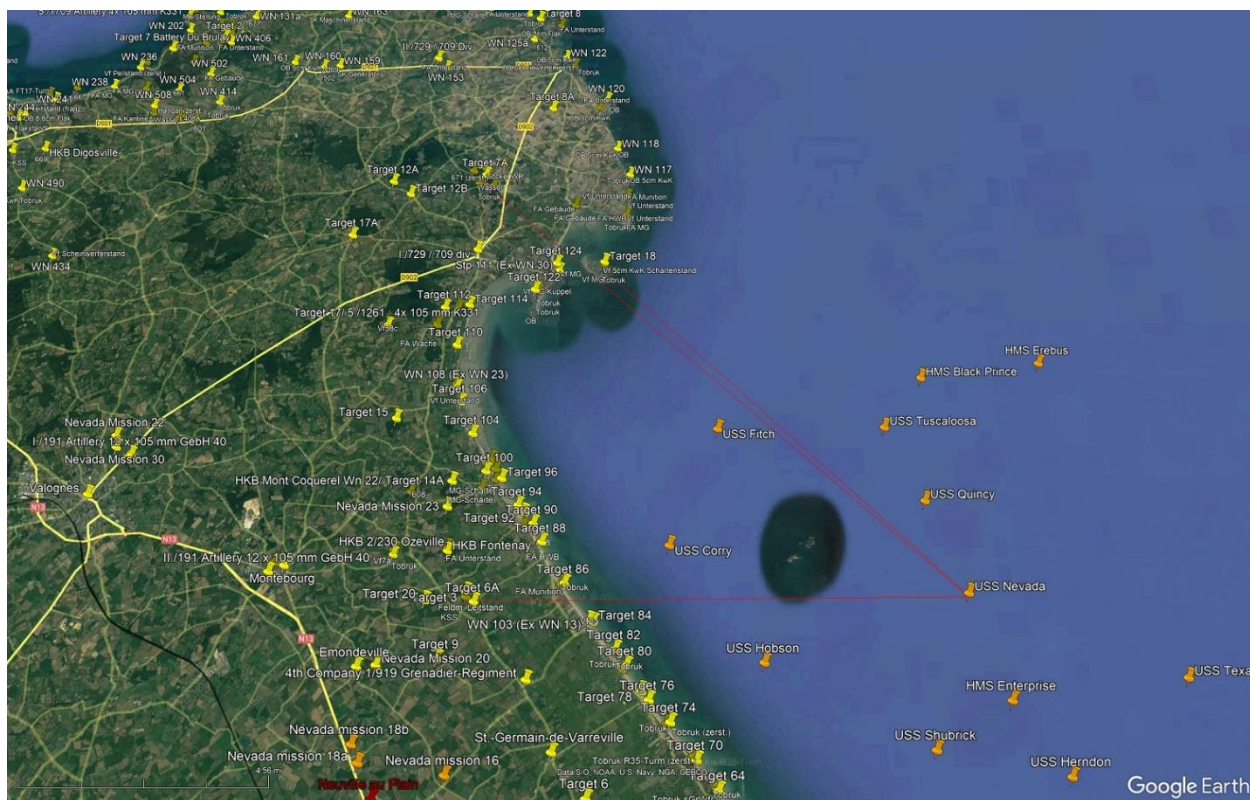
101st Airborne

In addition, the 101st Airborne achieved one of their primary objectives in taking Target #6 (German designation STP 108) the battery of Ste. Martin de Varreville. American paratroopers of the second battalion of the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Steve A. Chappuis took this position in the early hours of June 6. The Atlantic wall was beginning to break.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

D-Day 1056-05 to 1543-20



U.S.S. Nevada's main battery missions 7, 8, 9, and 10 are conducted during this time period. No more secondary missions are conducted on June 6th. Her main battery targets were #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1), #18 (German designation STP 112), #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1) again, and Target #6A (German designation Wn 134).

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Main Battery Mission #7



U.S.S. Nevada Main Battery Mission 7 on Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1), 9th Battalion of the 1261 Marine Artillery Regiment, from 1056-05 to 1109-30.³¹ Nevada's target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO372198 which equals Latitude: 49° 37' 16" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 05" W.

³¹ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 7, page 58 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

F-O-C-R-R-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 7 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 1056-05 to 1109-30

Target Coordinates 372198 Ship's Coordinates 536050

Target Navigational Range 24,200 Gun Range 25,000

True Bearing 305-20

Target Number and Description: #7A - Six 105 MM guns or howitzers,
all casemated.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter

<u>Salvos</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>No. of Guns</u>	<u>Spot Received</u>	<u>Spot Applied</u>
1	1056-05	2	U 1000 L 4	U 1000 L 4
2	1059-20	2	U 500 R 05	U 500 R 05
3	1102-20	2	NC L 6	NC L 6
4	1106-50	2	NC NC	NC NC
5	1109-30	2	D 300 R 04	D 300 R 04
		<u>10</u>		

10 NC

RESULTS: Battery observed firing. Shots observed to fall close
to target. Battery ceased firing. Results undetermined.

COMMENTS: On second salvo this mission broken powder bag jammed
the right powder hoist of Turret I.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1) battery would be by far the most stubborn German battery of the Utah beach sector. At best this mission only temporarily suppresses this battery as the Germans check fire to lift the naval barrage.³²

Main Battery Mission #8



U.S.S. Nevada Main Battery Mission 8 on Target #18 (German designation STP 112), Vauban's tower on Island of Tatihou, from 1125-20 to 1127-45.³³ Nevada's target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO410163 which equals Latitude: 49° 35' 28" N, Longitude: 1° 14' 48" W.

³² During Mission 7, the following casualties occurred:

- At about 1100, Turret 1 on the second salvo of Mission 7 had a powder bag broken in the right hoist, causing the hoist to jam. The hand passage was manned, and the casualty did not cause any delay in the firing of Turret 1. The broken bag was removed, loose grains picked up, and re-bagged in about ten minutes and normal operations resumed.

³³ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 8, page 59 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

U-S-C-N-R-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSILES FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 8 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 1125-20 to 1127-45

Target Coordinates 110163 Ship's Coordinates 539059

Target Navigational Range 18,400 Gun Range 18,935

True Bearing 309

Target Number and Description: Large concrete or stone structure near target #18. Believed to be observation post.

Spotting method: Ships spotter

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	1125-20	2	D 800 NC	D 800 NC
2	1127-45	2	NC NC	NC NC
		<u>4</u>		

A NC

RESULTS: Target straddled on second salvo. No visible damage to structure. Ceased fire to engage battery observed firing.

COMMENTS: None.

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ENCLOSURE (D)

59

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: I do not believe any significant damage was done to Target #18 (German designation STP 112) on this mission which was abruptly stopped to resume fire on Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1) again. That is what is meant by “*ceased fire to engage battery observed firing.*”

Main Battery Mission #9



U.S.S. Nevada Main Battery Mission 9 on Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1), 9th Battalion of the 1261 Marine Artillery Regiment, from 1132-55 to 1139.³⁴ Nevada's target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO372198 which equals Latitude: 49° 37' 16" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 05" W.

³⁴ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 9, page 60 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 9 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 1132-55 to 1139-35

Target Coordinates 372198 Ship's Coordinates 540062

Target Navigational Range 23,700 Gun Range 24,400

True Bearing 306-30

Target Number and Description: #7A - six 105 MM guns or howitzers, all casemated.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	1132-55	2	D 400 L 3	D 400 L 3
2	1136-35	2	U 1000 NC	U 1000 NC
3	1139-35	2		
		<u>6</u>		

6 NC

RESULTS: Battery observed firing. Battery was either #7A or one in near vicinity. Shots landed in vicinity of observed flashes. Battery ceased firing. Results undetermined.

COMMENTS: None

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ENCLOSURE (B)

60

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: With only six rounds expended I doubt any significant damage was done during this mission. Admiral Deyo wrote page 44 of Commander Cruiser Division 7 report, "*Actual destruction of properly constructed shore batteries by naval gunfire cannot be expected even with efficient spotting. The batteries can, however, be neutralized and silenced, and if the morale of the defenders is not too high the batteries will probably be abandoned.*"³⁵ I believe this mission along with her previous mission 7 on this same target are an example of what Admiral Deyo was talking about, temporarily suppressing the battery. The German crews check fire to stop the naval barrage, but this makes the battery combat ineffective.

On June 6th Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1) would endure 20 x 15-inch rounds from H.M.S. *Erebus*, 16 x 14-inch rounds from *Nevada*, 173 x 8-inch rounds from *Tuscaloosa* and *Quincy*, and 39 x 5-inch rounds from *Tuscaloosa* in an on-going effort to keep this battery suppressed. From June 6th to June 14th the total number of rounds expended on this target was 879 rounds of various calibers.³⁶ Despite being one of the more difficult batteries to silence, it was too far to the north to interfere with the troops landing on Utah beach.

³⁵ Commander Cruiser Division 7, A16-3 Serial 0061, Action Report Operation Neptune, July 10, 1944, page 44, M.L. Deyo.

³⁶ Commander Cruiser Division 7, A16-3 Serial 0061, Action Report Operation Neptune, July 10, 1944, pages 37-38, M.L. Deyo.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Main Battery Mission #10



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 10 on Target #6A (German designation Wn 134) Crisbecq AA section, from 1532-50 to 1543-20.³⁷ *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO369040 which equals Latitude: 49° 28' 44" N, Longitude: 1° 17' 42" W.

³⁷ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 10, page 61 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 10 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 1532-50 to 1543-20

Target Coordinates 369040 Ship's Coordinates 525068

Target Navigational Range 17,370 Gun Range 17,900

True Bearing 257

Target Number and Description: #6A - Six 88MM anti-aircraft guns.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received		Spot Applied	
			H.	O.	NC	HC
1	1532-50	3			NC	NC
2	1538-15	2	NC	NC	NC	NC
3	1541-40	2	NC	NC	NC	NC
4	1543-20	2	D 400	NC	D 400	NC
		<u>9</u>				

9 HC

RESULTS: Battery observed firing. Hits in target area and fires started observed by ship's spotters. Battery ceased firing.

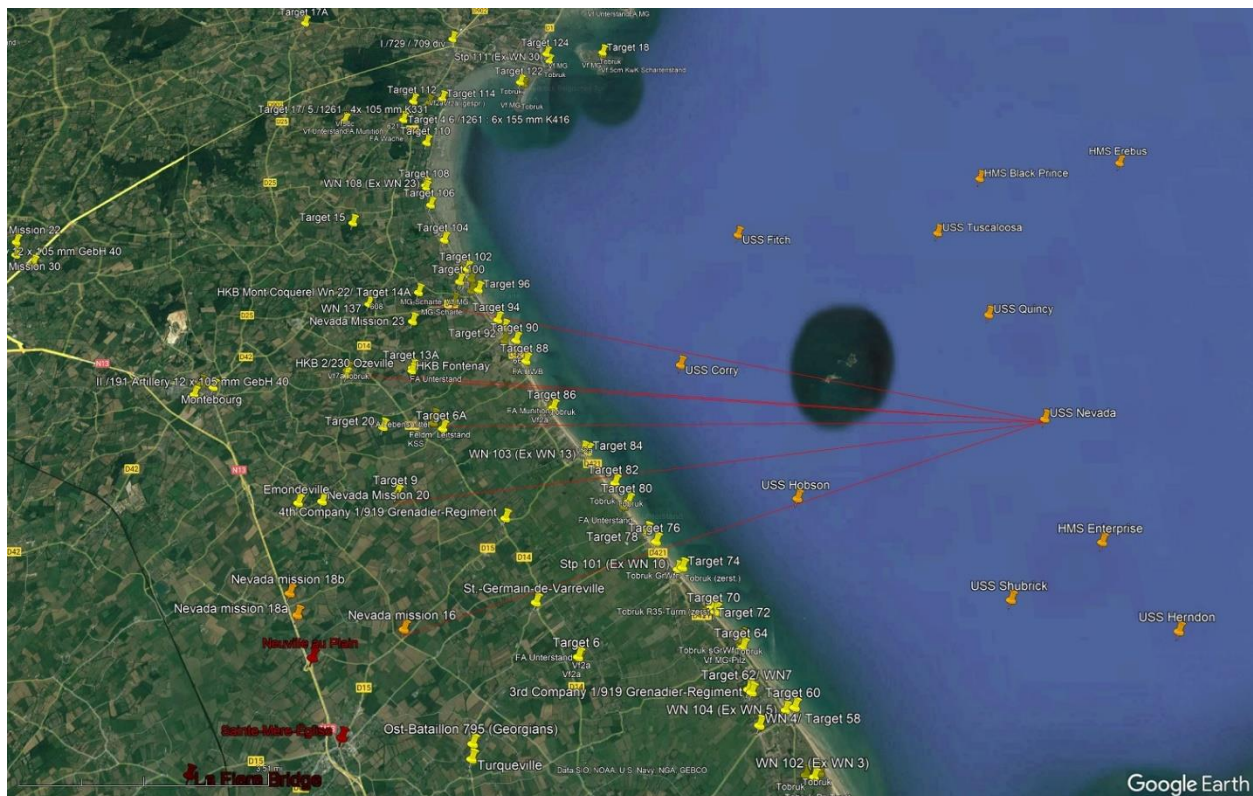
COMMENTS: None

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: There was a lull in the action until 1530 when *Nevada* received orders to take Target #6A under fire for Main Battery Mission #10. Target #6A (German designation Wn 134) was the southern half of the Crisbecq battery which was made up of six 88 mm anti-aircraft guns which were observed to be shooting. Oberleutnant Ohmsen reported that all of his AA guns were destroyed but does not give a time for this, so I am unable to confirm if it was due to *Nevada's* mission. However, no U.S. ships ever return to this target during the entire remainder of Operation Neptune so I will assume the spotter's observation was correct and this battery was destroyed.

D-Day 1547-20 to 2030



U.S.S. *Nevada's* main battery missions 11 through 16 were conducted during this time frame.

Her targets were #14A (German designation Wn22), #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay), #14 (German designation HKB 2/230 Ozeville), #9 (German designation STP133), #3 (German designation STP135), and on an unidentified battery near Baudienville, France.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Main Battery Mission #11



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 11 on Target #14A (German designation Wn 22), Mont Coquerel, 4th Battalion of the 1261 Marine Artillery Regiment, from 1547-20 to 1603-00.³⁸ *Nevada's* target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO361080 which equals Latitude: 49° 30' 52" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 31" W.

³⁸ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 11, page 62 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 11 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944
Time 1547-20 to 1603-00

Target Coordinates 361080 Ship's Coordinates 523063

Target Navigational Range 17,850 Gun Range 18,380

True Bearing 273-12

Target Number and Description #14A - Four 155 MM guns ceased.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received		Spot Applied	
1	1547-20	2	U 500	NO	U 500	NO
2	1552-30	2	NO	NO	NO	NO
3	1555-30	2	U 500	NO	U 500	NO
4	1600-15	2	NO	L 5	NO	L 5
5	1603-00	2				
		<u>10</u>				

10 NO

RESULTS: Battery observed firing. Shots observed in vicinity of target. Battery ceased firing. Results undetermined.

COMMENTS: None

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ENCLOSURE (B)

62

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Author's note: Compared to the 59 rounds in Main Battery Mission 6, Main Battery Mission 11 expended very few rounds to keep this German battery suppressed. This may indicate the battery was heavily damaged earlier and that the crews did not wish to endure another naval barrage, so they quickly checked their fire.

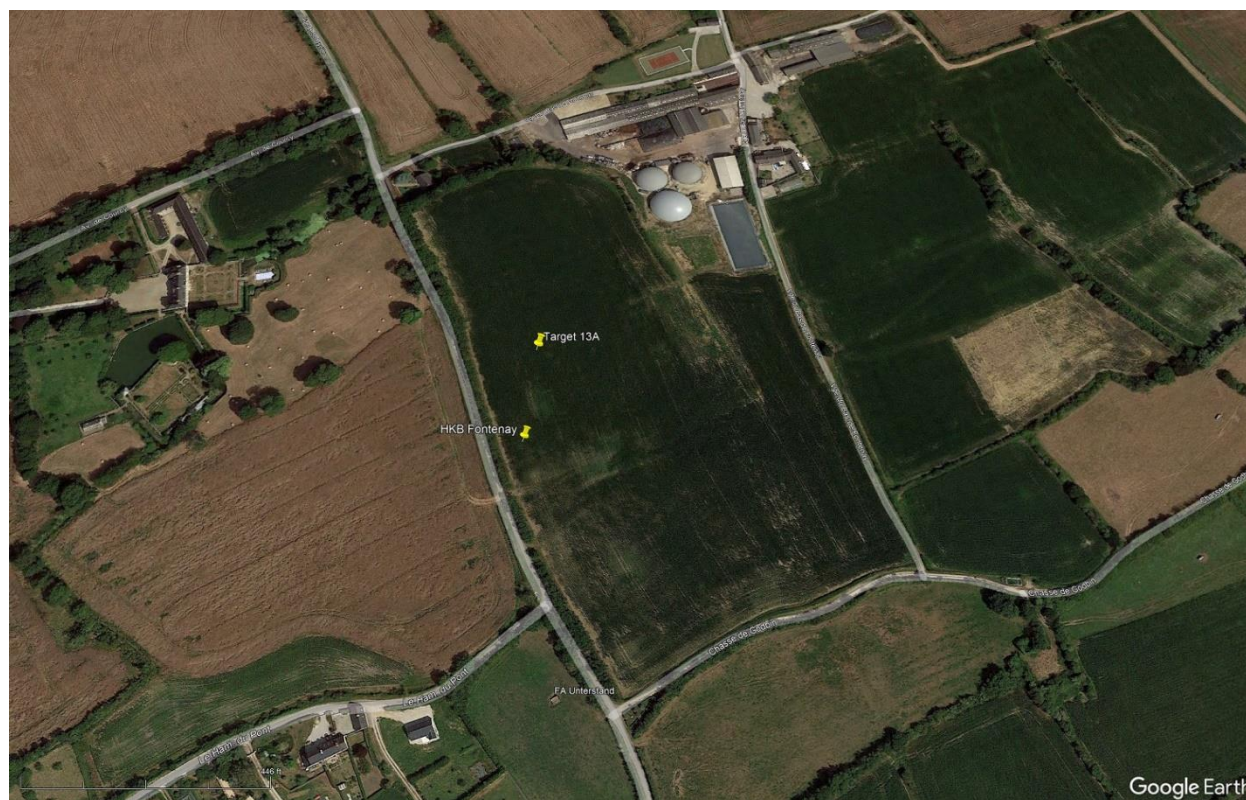


U.S.S. *Nevada* seen from U.S.S. *Quincy* firing on German defenses on June 6, 1944. Photo 80-G231957 National Archives and Records Administration, Still Pictures Division, College Park, Md.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Main Battery Mission #12



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 12 on Target #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay), from 1629-30 to 1642-08.³⁹ The 3rd Battalion, 1261 Marine Artillery Regiment. *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO361056 which equals Latitude: 49° 29' 35" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 26" W.

³⁹ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 12, page 63 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

R-E-C-R-E-I

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 12 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 1629-30 to 1642-05

Target Coordinates 361056 Ship's Coordinates 528061

Target Navigational Range 18,300 Gun Range 18,825

True Bearing 265-15

Target Number and Description: #13A - Four 155 MM guns, casemates under construction.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	1629-30	2	D 500 NC	D 500 NC
2	1631-05	2	U 200 NC	U 200 NC
3	1632-50	2	U 200 R 05	U 200 R 05
4	1635-45	1	U 200 NC	U 200 NC
5	1637-07	1	D 300 NC	D 300 NC
6	1639-50	2	NC NC	NC NC
7	1642-05	2		
		<u>12</u>		

12 NC

RESULTS: Battery observed firing. Shots observed to fall in vicinity of target. Battery ceased firing. Results undetermined.

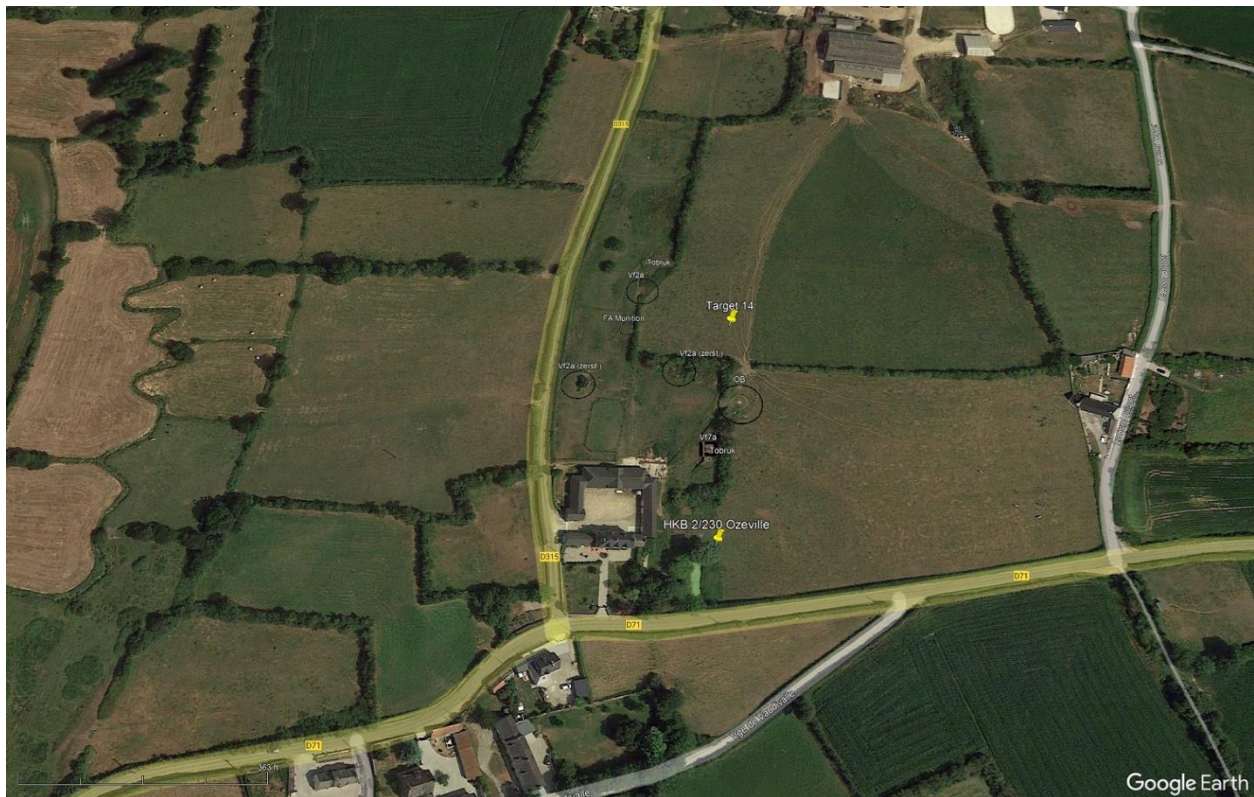
COMMENTS: None.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: The 3rd Battery, 1261 Regiment reported two guns damaged but I believe this occurred earlier from [Main Battery Mission 5](#). I was unable to uncover any further information, but this mission likely suppressed the battery if only temporarily.

Main Battery Mission #13



U.S.S. Nevada Main Battery Mission 13 on Target #14 (German designation HKB 2/230 Ozeville) just south of Village de l'Église near road D315 from 1700-15 to 1712-15.⁴⁰ Nevada's target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO344057 which equals Latitude: 49° 29' 35" N, Longitude: 1° 19' 50" W.

⁴⁰ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 13, page 64 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 13 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 1700-15 to 1712-15

Target Coordinates 344057 Ship's Coordinates 527065

Target Navigational Range 20,100 Gun Range 20,950

True Bearing 264-43

Target Number and Description: #14 - Unidentified battery firing.
Located near #14 which was listed as unoccupied.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	1700-15	2		U 500 NC
2	1703-10	2		D 1000 NC
3	1705-45	2		U 500 L 10
4	1707-50	2		FC R 20
5	1709-55	2		NC NC
6	1712-15	2		
		<u>12</u>		

12 NC

RESULTS: Gun flashes observed. Target not visible to ship
spotter.

Fired pattern to cover area. Battery ceased firing.
Results undetermined.

COMMENTS: None

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: Could not find any data on this target to determine what damage was inflicted.

Main Battery Mission #14



U.S.S. Nevada Main Battery Mission 14 on Target #9 (German designation STP 133) Azeville 2nd Battalion Marine Artillery Regiment 1261, from 1805-40 to 1813-45.⁴¹ Nevada's target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO360022 which equals Latitude: 49° 27' 45" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 22" W.

⁴¹ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 14, page 65 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-N-C-R-F-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 14 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 1805-40 to 1813-45

Target Coordinates 360022 Ship's Coordinates 536059

Target Navigational Range 19,700 Gun Range 20,390

True Bearing 255-15

Target Number and Description: 09 - Four 105 MM field gun howitzers, all casemated.

Spotting method: Unobserved fire

<u>Salvos</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>No. of Guns</u>	<u>Spot Received</u>	<u>Spot Applied</u>
1	1805-40	2		NC NC
2	1808-45	2		U 200 NC
3	1810-15	2		D 200 L 8
4	1811-50	2		NC R 16
5	1813-45	2		
		<u>10</u>		

10 NC

RESULTS: Coordinates of target given by Shore Fire Control Party who requested fire and stated that they could not observe firing. Fired pattern to cover area. Results undetermined.

COMMENTS: None.

-14-

ENCLOSURE (B)

65

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: While this mission may have temporarily suppressed Azeville battery, the battery would not lose its first gun until June 7.

Main Battery Mission #15



U.S.S. Nevada Main Battery Mission 15 on Target #3 (German designation STP 135) MKB Marcouf / Crisbecq, Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung 260, from 1819-50 to 1826-30.⁴² Nevada's target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vO368043 which equals Latitude: 49° 28' 54" N, Longitude: 1° 17' 48" W.

⁴² United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 15, page 66 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

R-E-C-O-R-D

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 15 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 1819-50 to 1826-30

Target Coordinates 368043 Ship's Coordinates 536059

Target Navigational Range 18,500 Gun Range 19,200

True Bearing 261

Target Number and Description: 3 - Three 210 MM guns, two casemated and one not casemated, plus two 155 MM guns not casemated.

Spotting method: Ships Spotter

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	1819-50	2	U 200 R 05	U 200 R 05
2	1821-20	2	NC NC	NC NC
3	1822-40	2	NC NC	NC NC
4	1824-20	2	NC NC	NC NC
5	1826-30	2	D 500 NC	
		<u>10</u>		

10 NC

RESULTS: Battery observed firing. Shots observed to fall near target. Battery ceased firing. Results undetermined.

COMMENTS: None.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: Steven J. Zaloga reported the loss of the last 210 mm open gun position at 1830 so I believe U.S.S. *Nevada* destroyed or damaged this gun during this mission.⁴³ The Crisbecq battery had now been silenced. I believe credit should go to *Fitch*, *Quincy*, and *Nevada* for silencing this fortification. Contact was made with the shore fire control parties at 1842 with them reporting that they were moving forward and would have targets soon. Azeville and Crisbecq batteries were first day objectives for the 4th division but landing so far to the south U.S. troops did not reach these objectives on June 6th.

Main Battery Mission #16



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 16 on unidentified battery near Baudienville, France located by plane, from 1958-55 to 2030-00.⁴⁴ *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vT362987 which equals Latitude: 49° 25' 52" N, Longitude: 1° 18' 04" W.

⁴³ D-Day Fortifications in Normandy, Steven J. Zaloga, page 39.

⁴⁴ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 16, page 67 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 16 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944
Time 1958-55 to 2030-00

Target Coordinates 362987 Ship's Coordinates 540051

Target Navigational Range 20,750 Gun Range 21,600

True Bearing 247-30

Target Number and Description: Unidentified battery located
by plane.

Spotting method: Air Spot

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	1958-55	2)		
2	1959-05	2))	Range Volley	No Observation
3	1959-15	2)		
4	2003-55	2)		
5	2004-05	2))	Range Volley	No Observation
6	2004-10	2)		
7	2029-50	2)		
8	2029-55	2)))	Range Volley	No Observation
9	2030-00	2)		
		18		
		18HC		

RESULTS: Fired three separate range volleys, each consisting
of three two gun salvos. Plane reported no observa-
tion on all three and shoot was discontinued.
Coordinates of target sent by plane were obviously
incorrect as plane later reported that he was over
Quineville.

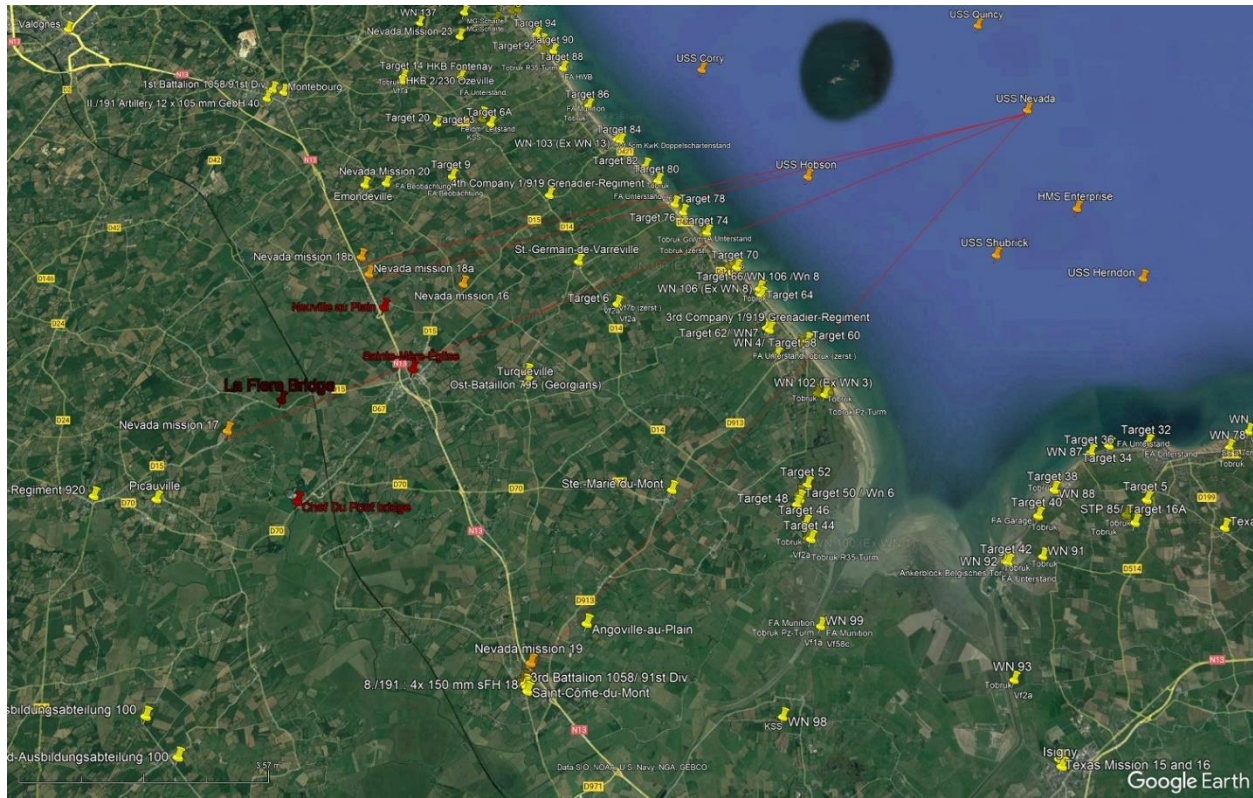
COMMENT: None

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Author's note: In this mission *Nevada* was clearly given the wrong coordinates. The plane was actually over Target #14A (German designation Wn 22) which is close to the town of Quinéville.

D-Day 2129-10 to 2318-05



As the sun went down the U.S.S. *Nevada* fired the most important missions on D-Day during this time period. She would stop a counterattack from the west which threatened the hold on the La Fiere bridge. She would stop two counterattacks north of Neuville-au-Plain along road N-13. She would assist U.S.S. *Quincy* in her support of troops of the 101st airborne near Ste. Côme du Mont church.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Main Battery Mission #17



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 17 on tank and troop concentration 1,645 yards from La Fiere Bridge bearing 235 degrees from bridge southwest along road D15 just north of town of Gueutteville. These were likely elements of the 3rd battalion 1057th Grenadier Regiment and the last two companies of light tanks of the 100th Panzer Replacement Battalion, of the 91st Infantry Division from 2129-10 to 2137-55.⁴⁵ *Nevada*'s target coordinates were French Lambert Zone 1, vT302948 which equals Latitude: 49° 23' 36" N, Longitude: 1° 22' 52" W.

⁴⁵ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 17, page 68 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 17 Battery 1A"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944.

Time 2129-10 to 2137-55

Target Coordinates 392948 Ship's Coordinates 540051

Target Navigational Range 26,700 Gun Range 27,790

True Bearing 245

Target Number and Description: Tank and artillery concentrations.

Spotting method: Shore Fire Control Party

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	2129-10	2	U 400	NC
2	2130-05	2	D 800	NC
3	2130-45	2	NC	R 12
4	2132-35	2	U 400	NC
5	2134-00	2	U 500	NC
6	2135-30	2	NC	L 24
7	2136-15	2	D 500	NC
8	2136-45	2	D 500	NC
9	2137-55	2		

18

18 NC

RESULTS: Shore Fire Control Party reported mission successful.
Ceased firing.

COMMENTS: As Shore Fire Control Party did not spot during the
firing, a pattern was fired to cover the area.

See Comment on Mission 19.

- 17 -

ENCLOSURE (3)

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U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

The shore fire control party radioed *Nevada* at 2129 that they had sighted an enemy tank and artillery concentration for Main Battery Mission 17. Lt. Richard C. Nash, who called in the sighting, describes what he saw: “*We worked out our first problem a few hours after we got down. A column of German tanks was driving in toward Ste. Mère Église from the west. Our paratroopers, who had taken the town were holding it, had no support from the rear because they did not join up until the following day with troops coming from the beaches. Those tanks would have cost us our grip on the town, but we had the good old Nevada on the other end of our line and in a matter of seconds we had given her the coordinates and she was on target.*”⁴⁶

Author’s note: The 2nd company of the 100th Panzer Replacement Battalion had the shortest distance to cover to reach the La Fiere bridge and was likely the company that attacked this bridge around 1400. The 1st and 3rd company of the 100th Panzer Replacement Battalion were likely destroyed by *Nevada* during this mission.

⁴⁶ U.S.S. *Nevada* 1916-1946, page 31.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Main Battery Mission #18a



U.S.S. Nevada Main Battery Mission 18a. Troop concentration, just north of Neuville au Plain, likely elements of 1st battalion 1058th Grenadier Regiment of the 91st Infantry Division and tanks of the 709th Panzerjäger-Abteilung, from 2144-40 to 2154-45.⁴⁷ Nevada's target coordinates for 18a were French Lambert Zone 1, vT337991 which equals Latitude: 49° 26' 01" N, Longitude: 1° 20' 09" W.

⁴⁷ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. Nevada, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 18a, page 69 of full report.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T-

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSIONS NO. 18a Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 2144-40 to 2154-45

Target Coordinates 337991 Ships' Coordinates 523043

Target Navigational Range 21,200 Gun Range 22,060

True Bearing 251-55

Target Number and Description: Troop concentration.

Spotting method: Shore Fire Control Party

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	2144-40	2		U 500 HC
2	2146-10	2		D 800 HC
3	2150-05	2		NC R 10
4	2150-25	2		U 300 HC
5	2151-20	2		U 300 HC
6	2152-45	2		NC L 20
7	2153-50	2		D 300 HC
8	2154-25	2		D 300 HC
9	2154-45	2		
		<u>18</u>		

18 HC

RESULTS: Shore Fire Control Party reported mission highly successful and ordered cease firing. Shifted to new coordinates (Mission 18b)

COMMENTS: As Shore Fire Control Party did not spot during the firing, a pattern was fired to cover the area.

See Comment on Mission 19

- 18a -

ENCLOSURE (B)

69

U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

Author's note: PFC Vernon Stanley of the 82nd Airborne Division called in both Mission 18a and 18b to disrupt the German troops assembling near Neuville.⁴⁸ *Nevada* fired several 14-inch salvos just before sunset at a range of over 11 miles to disrupt the enemy's alarming buildup. Capt. James Maness observed the fire missions and later remarked that the impact of *Nevada*'s shells reminded him of a "West Texas dust storm."⁴⁹



Photograph of destroyed German armor along the N-13 highway taken in the morning of June 7, 1944.

⁴⁸ U.S.S. *Nevada* 1916-1946, pgs. 31-32.

⁴⁹ A West Texas dust storm is a meteorological phenomenon that occurs when strong winds blow across arid or semi-arid regions of West Texas and pick up loose sand and dirt particles from the ground. These storms can be quite severe and can cause damage to property and infrastructure. They are also known as haboobs.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One



Another photograph taken June 7, 1944 of the destroyed German armor along the N-13 highway just north of Neuville-au-Plain.

U.S.S. Nevada

Part One

Main Battery Mission #18b



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 18b. Troop concentration, just north of Neuville au Plain, likely elements of 1st battalion 1058th Grenadier Regiment of the 91st Infantry Division and tanks of the 709th Panzerjäger-Abteilung, from 2144-40 to 2154-45.⁵⁰ *Nevada*'s target coordinates for 18b were French Lambert Zone 1, vT335997 which equals Latitude: 49° 26' 20" N, Longitude: 1° 20' 20" W.

⁵⁰ United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 18a, page 69 of full report.

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S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 18b Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 6 June 1944

Time 2202-10 to 2210-10

Target Coordinates 335997 Ship's Coordinates 523043

Target Navigational Range 21,230 Gun Range 22,095

True Bearing 253-18

Target Number and Description: Enemy concentration, tanks and field artillery.

Spotting method: Shore Fire Control Party

Salvos	Time	No of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	2202-10	2		U 300 NC
2	2203-25	2		D 500 NC
3	2205-45	2		NC R 10
4	2206-40	2		U 200 NC
5	2206-50	2		U 200 NC
6	2207-25	2		NC L 20
7	2208-45	2		NC R 30
8	2209-45	2		D 100 R 10
9	2210-10	2		
		<u>18</u>		

18 NC

RESULTS: Shore Fire Control Party reported fire very, very effective. Counter Attack destroyed. Ordered cease firing.

COMMENTS: As Shore Fire Control Party did not spot during the firing a pattern was fired to cover the area.

See comment on Mission 19

- 18b -

ENCLOSURE (B)

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U.S.S. *Nevada*

Part One

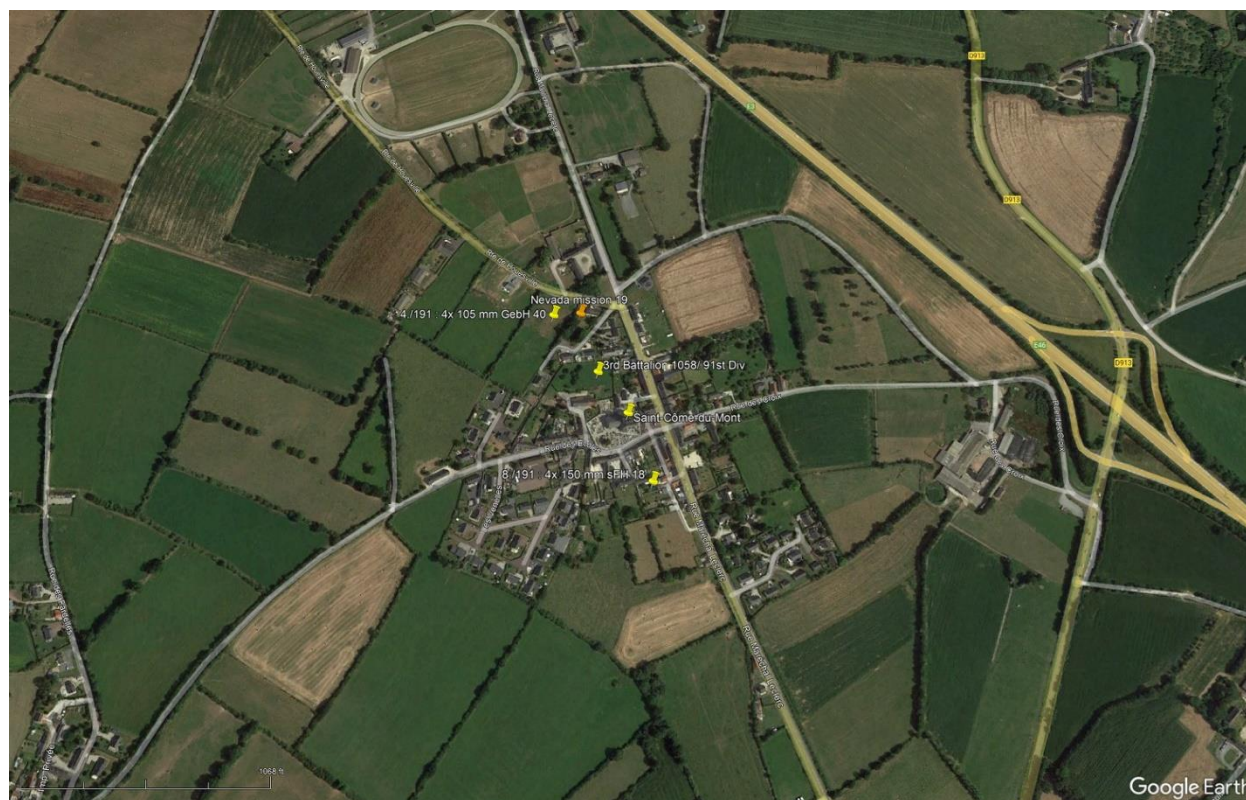
Author's note: Panzerjäger-Abteilung 709 along with 1st Battalion, 1058th Regiment of the 91st Division, along with three artillery units of the 191 launched the counterattack on Ste. Mère Église along with the N-13 highway from the north direction near Neuville-au-Plain.⁵¹

⁵¹ BATTLE OF SAINTE-MERE-EGLISE 1944, by Maxim Chorny, published: October 3, 2021, updated: 06 January 2023 reports the unit as Panzerjäger-Abteilung 243, but I have this unit near Cherbourg France on June 6th, 1944. Oberstleutnant Gunther Keil reported the Panzerjäger-Abteilung 709 was to join the assault battalion attacking Ste. Mère Eglise from the north, however against orders and without waiting they rode past Azeville where it was to advance as far as Beuzeville-au-Plain and there to have been destroyed by the enemy. Fighting The Invasion by David C Isby page 183. I believe Panzerjäger-Abteilung 243 is destroyed along with 206 Panzer Battalion of the 243rd Division on June 8th, 1944, during *Nevada's* Mission 39 where she destroyed 90 tanks and 20 trucks.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

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Main Battery Mission #19



U.S.S. *Nevada* Main Battery Mission 19 targeted a German troop assembly area near Ste. Côme du Mont church and likely engaged the 4th Battery of the 191st Artillery Regiment, 91st Division, from 2306-45 to 2318-45.⁵² *Nevada*'s target coordinates for mission 19 were French Lambert Zone 1, vT378882 which equals Latitude: 49° 20' 15" N, Longitude: 1° 16' 20" W.

⁵² United States Atlantic Fleet, Battleship Division Five, U.S.S. *Nevada*, BB-36/A16-3/A9 Serial 0060, June 23, 1944, Enclosure B page 19, page 71 of full report.

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Part One

U.S.S. NEVADA

S-E-C-R-E-T

MAIN BATTERY MISSIONS FIRED
JUNE 6 - 17, 1944.

MISSION NO. 19 Battery 14"/45 Cal. Date 5 June 1944

Time 2306-45 to 2318-45

Target Coordinates 378882 Ship's Coordinates 502066

Target Navigational Range 24,250 Gun Range 35,270

True Bearing 212

Target Number and Description: Assembly point

Spotting method: Shore Fire Control Party

Salvos	Time	No. of Guns	Spot Received	Spot Applied
1	2306-45	2		U 400 NC
2	2307-20	2		D 800 NC
3	2308-40	2		NC R 13
4	2310-40	2		U 1000 L 2 ⁰
5	2311-25	2		U 400 L 10
6	2311-45	2		D 400 NC
7	2312-40	1 MF		
8	2314-20	MF		
9	2316-15	MF		
10	2318-45	$\frac{1}{14}$		

14 NC

RESULTS: Shore Fire Control Party reported mission highly successful. Ordered cease firing.

COMMENTS: On seventh salvo this mission the left gun of Turret IV misfired. See Casualty Section Report. As Shore Fire Control Party did not spot during the firing a pattern was fired to cover the area.

The following message was received concerning Missions 17, 18, and 19.

From: CTG 125.8
To : NEVADA

INFORMATION FROM ARMY THAT YOUR THREE MISSIONS LAST NIGHT WERE OF MUCH VALUE AND BEAUTIFULLY EXECUTED X CONGRATULATIONS.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

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Author's note: On the evening of June 6th, the paratroopers received some help from an unexpected source. A U.S. Navy spotter, Lt. Farrell, who had jumped into Normandy with the 101st Airborne, managed to first contact U.S.S. *Quincy* and then later U.S.S. *Nevada* by radio, and reported German troops assembling near the Ste. Côme du Mont church. *Nevada* fired six 2-gun salvos plus a seventh 1-gun salvo to break up the attack. The seventh salvo also had a misfire which took three tries to clear.⁵³ The Army later sent a congratulatory message to *Nevada*, thanking them for helping stop the German attack.⁵⁴

As darkness came, the 1st Battalion of the 6th Fallschirm had lost the support of the 4th Battery of the 191st Artillery Regiment. A fire ambush of American naval artillery on the battery's position led to the loss of 27 men and caused the battery officers to issue an order to abandon the position. This was *Nevada*'s final mission of June 6th, 1944.

Summary for June 6th, 1944

In looking at the Utah Beach operational objectives, the 101st Airborne successfully seized the causeways behind the beach, captured the coastal battery of Ste. Martin de Varreville Barquette lock, and the bridges over the river Douve facing south but became pinned down in what would be called "Hell's Corner" near Ste. Côme du Mont by German artillery. The 82nd Airborne successfully captured Ste. Mère-Église, the bridges at La Fiere and Chef Du Pont, and the hamlet of Neuville au Plain in the initial hours of the invasion. However, the two airborne divisions were widely scattered, and they held these positions with minimal troops. What had started as an offensive mission quickly by necessity became a defensive operation to hold the important ground and wait for the 4th division to show up as relief. Bombardment Group U as a whole had too many German fortifications to suppress in too short a time to realistically accomplish that goal before the 4th Division landed at Utah Beach. If we compare *Texas*'s Main Battery Mission 1 where she was allowed to focus on one German fortification (which was Target #1 (German designation STP 75) at Point du Hoc, the *Texas* expended 155 AP and 100 HC 14-inch shells compared to *Nevada*'s Main Battery Mission 1 and 2 where she expended twenty 14-inch shells against Target #3 (German designation Wn 135) Crisbecq and Target #9

⁵³ During Mission 19, the following casualties occurred:

- At about 2312, the left gun of Turret 4 had a misfire on the seventh salvo. Two unsuccessful attempts were made to fire it electrically and it was found that the firing lead had parted from the firing terminal. The gun was fired by percussion on the next salvo and the firing lead reconnected and resoldered. Note: *Nevada*'s casualty report says that the misfire happened on the first salvo, but based upon the Fire Mission report, it seems that this actually happened on the seventh salvo as described above.

⁵⁴ Utah Beach, by Joseph Balkoski, page 275.

U.S.S. *Nevada*

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(German designation STP 133) Azeville. *Nevada*'s first successful missions was a combination of Main Battery Mission 3 and Secondary Battery Mission 1 because she was firing on the same target and unleashed 41 AP and 12 HC 14-inch shells and 1,440 5-inch shells which pulverized the defenders at Target #66/#68 (German designation Wn-8).

However, an unforeseen consequence of the bombardment likely resulted in the 8th Infantry landing in the wrong spot in front of Target #60 (German designation Wn-5) to the south. This meant the 4th division would need to travel farther than the original plan called for and initially the 4th division moved south taking Target #44 (German designation Wn 1) to Target #58 (German designation Wn 4) also delaying the movement north toward Crisbecq and Azeville which were their day one objectives. Causeway 2 was overloaded, and it became difficult for the troops landing by sea to push inland which was of paramount importance to the airborne divisions. Communication with shore fire control parties was also delayed. There had been no communication at all with the 82nd Airborne and no one knew if Ste. Mère-Église was even in American hands. Not knowing where U.S. troops were forced the *Nevada* to focus on silencing the German fortifications until contact was made. Bombardment group U over the next several hours systematically suppressed the German fortifications at Target #3 (German designation STP 135) Crisbecq, Target #13A (German designation HKB Fontenay), Target #14A (German designation Wn22) Mont Coquerel, and Target #7A (German designation HKB Pernelle 1) but at the cost of losing U.S.S. *Corry* in the battle with these fortifications. This took up the majority of *Nevada*'s June 6th missions from Main Battery Missions 4 to 15.

The Germans quickly learned from captured paratroopers that Ste. Mère-Église was the key to Utah Beach operations, however, communication between their various units was disrupted by the huge bombardment and by French resistance fighters. As a result, the German reactions were somewhat piecemeal due to these difficulties. The commander of the 6th Fallschirm, Major Friedrich August Freiherr von der Heydte, established his command post in a defile just south of Ste. Côme du Mont. He ordered the 2nd battalion to advance on Ste. Mère-Église on both sides of the Ste. Côme du Mont – Ste. Mère-Église road and to attack the Allied troops immediately upon contact and annihilate them. The 1st battalion was ordered to cover the regiment on the line to Ste. Marie du Mont against Allied troops who had landed from the sea. The 13th company was to cover the advance of both battalions. The 3rd battalion of the regiment remained in the Carentan area in order to protect the rear and the deep flanks of the regiment. Major Friedrich August Freiherr von der Heydte took command of the 4th and 8th Batteries of 191st Artillery Regiment along with the 3rd Battalion of the 1058th Grenadier Regiment, and the 3rd Battery of 243rd Anti-Aircraft Regiment at Ste. Marie du Mont. It was these forces that pinned down the 101st airborne troops near their landing areas.

100th Panzer Replacement and Training Battalion was to move north toward Picauville west of the La Fiere bridge on June 6th in support of the 3rd Battalion 1057 and attack Ste. Mère Eglise from the west. Panzerjäger-Abteilung 709 along with 1st Battalion of the 1058th

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Regiment of the 91st Division together with three artillery units of the 191 launched a counterattack on Ste. Mère Eglise alongside the N-13 highway from the north direction near Neuville-au-Plain.

The men of the 795th Ost Battalion, being stationed in Turqueville, 2 km to the East of Ste. Mère Eglise, launched several local counterattacks against the Americans. The soldiers of this 'Ost battalion' were backed by the remnants of the anti-aircraft garrison, who had previously managed to flee from Ste. Mère Eglise during the night.

From an overall perspective, Rommel believed that his forces could build up faster through land communication than Allied forces could build up through sea communication. On June 6th this concept was tested at Ste. Mère-Église. At approximately 1400 hours the 2nd company of the 100th Panzer Replacement and Training Battalion attacked the La Fiere bridge but the troops of the 82nd airborne held and destroyed 3 of the 4 tanks. The western prong of the German attack on La Fiere was hampered by the fact that rear elements from 3rd battalion 1057th Grenadier-Regiment were themselves attacked by other American paratroopers which had landed behind them, thus cutting the regiment in two.

To the north, troops of the 1st Battalion 1058 attacked Neuville-au-Plain. In a two-hour battle with 43 paratroopers led by 1stLt. Turner Turnbull the 1st Battalion 1058 successfully pushed the Americans out of Neuville-au-Plain but become disorganized in the process delaying their attack on Ste. Mère-Église which was being held by 550 men of the 2nd and 3rd battalion 505th. Turnbull suffered a loss of 27 men. Only about a dozen made it back to Ste. Mère-Église the rest being captured by the Germans.

By 1900 the 1st and 2nd battalion of the 6th Fallschirm had advanced from the area of the Ste. Côte du Mont to the battlefield. By evening the advance elements of the 1st battalion had arrived at Ste. Marie du Mont, while the 2nd battalion had reached a point about 500 meters from the southern edge of Ste. Mère-Église.⁵⁵

Task Force Raff landed on Utah Beach with seventeen Sherman tanks from Company C, 746 Tank Battalion and four six wheeled "greyhound" armored scout cars from Troop B, 4th Cavalry Squadron commanded by Col. Edson Raff. His orders were to link up with Maj. Gen. Matthew Ridgeway at Ste. Mère-Église. Forty-one-foot soldiers from Company F, 401st Glider Infantry would accompany Raff's task force by riding on the Sherman tanks. Task Force Raff upon reaching Ste. Marie du Mont turned right and headed for a road junction called Les Forges which was approximately three miles from Ste. Marie du Mont. Col. Raff had pushed inland farther than any American unit that had landed by sea on June 6th and was within two miles of

⁵⁵ Fighting the Invasion, The German Army at D-Day, David C Isby, page 229, taken from report the 6th Fallschirm Reacts by Oberleutnant Friedrich, Freiherr von der Heydte (B-839).

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his objective Ste. Mère-Église. A simple right turn and within ten minutes he could determine Gen Ridgeway's fate. This is where they met elements of the German 1st and 2nd battalion of the 6th Fallschirm. This stopped this force from reaching Ste. Mère-Église. So, the operational objective of reaching Ste. Mère-Église from forces landed by sea failed on June 6th.

Operation Detroit was scheduled in the evening to drop additional troops of the 82nd airborne by glider and these men were literally dropped in front of Col. Raff's position in the field of fire of the German 1st and 2nd battalion which opened fire on the gliders as they descended at approximately 2050 to 2115. Ten glider pilots died and 7 were unaccounted for with 29 more suffering wounds or injuries. Twenty-eight soldiers were killed with 106 wounded, about one third of the troops in this mission. None of the surviving reinforcements were in any shape to help the men at Ste. Mère-Église in the evening of June 6th. This operational objective to reinforce the troops at Ste. Mère-Église also failed, however it did result in confusion of the German forces who believed that they were being cut off to the rear, so the German southern attack on Ste. Mère-Église never materialized on D-Day.

The troops of the 2nd and 3rd battalion 505th would need to hold on their own at La Fiere and Ste. Mère-Église. As the sun set the threats would come from the west and north as elements of the 3rd battalion 1057th Grenadier Regiment and the last two companies of light tanks of the 100th Panzer Replacement Battalion approached the La Fiere bridge from the west and the elements of 1st battalion 1058th Grenadier Regiment and tanks of the 709th Panzerjäger-Abteilung moved south along road N-13 just north of Neuville-au-Plain.

The entire Utah Beach operation now hung in the balance. Tactical airpower was no longer available as the sun was setting. The German troops advancing on Ste. Mère-Église were out of range of all the ships except *Nevada*, *Quincy*, and *Tuscaloosa*. *Quincy* was attempting to suppress the German artillery pinning down the 101st airborne troops near Ste. Côme du Mont church which *Nevada* would join to assist for mission 19. *Tuscaloosa* was attempting to suppress Target #9 (German designation STP 133) Azeville and Target #84 (German designation Wn 13) along the coast. *Nevada* was literally the last weapon system the allies could use to prevent a direct assault on the forces holding the La Fiere bridge and Ste. Mère-Église. These were the stakes for the Allies and *Nevada* came through during Main Battery Missions 17, 18a, 18b, and 19 which saved the paratroopers at Ste. Mère-Église and kept the town under their control. *Nevada* was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for these missions.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ The Presidential Unit Citation (PUC), originally called the Distinguished Unit Citation, is awarded to units of the uniformed services of the United States, and those of allied countries, for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy on or after 7 December 1941 (the date of the Attack on Pearl Harbor and the start of American involvement in World War II). The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions so as to set it apart from and above other units participating in the same campaign.

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Mahan understood even in the age of sail that ships of the line or battleships rarely engaged in surface combat, but their greater strategic importance was in placing a geographical area under siege. This was accomplished by controlling traffic through a geographical territory. By denying the German Army access to Ste. Mère-Église and thus protecting the entire Utah beachhead on the operational level, *Nevada* accomplished this control. The Germans had no answer for the Allied Battleship fire support capability and would be pushed back consistently from June 7th through June 15th at which point U.S. forces had advanced beyond the range of *Nevada*'s guns. This is why Mahan in his third principle wrote that if you have a long-exposed coastline with no navy to protect it, then you are strategically weak. Mahan used this principle for his justification to build ships like *Nevada* to ensure that the United States was never strategically weak.

During June 6th *Nevada* expended a total of 69 14-inch AP shells, 268 14-inch HC shells, and 2,693 5-inch AA common shells. She had remaining on board 202 14-inch AP, 456 14-inch HC and 4,624 5-inch AA common shells. Not every individual mission was a success but overall, when we look at the 19 main battery missions and two secondary battery missions as a whole, *Nevada* was successful on D-Day.

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Appendix- Utah Beach Allied Target List and German Designations

Allied Target Number	Target Coordinate using the French Lambert zone 1 map	German Designation
Target 1	vT586938	Point Du Hoc STP 75
Target 2	vO266268	STP 234
Target 3	vO368043	Crisbecq STP 135
Target 4	vO355138	Morsalines battery – Stp 141
Target 5	vT533918	Maisy Battery STP 83
Target 6	vT405980	Ste. Martin de Varreville STP108
Target 7	vO246264	Battery Du Brulay
Target 8	vO391275	Battery de Gatteville STP 152 7./1261
Target 9	vO360022	Azeville STP 133
Target 10	vT792832	Unknown - North of Vaux-sur-Aure along road D104. North of Bayeux. 2000 yards west of Wn 46.
Target 11	vO353290	Battery de Caqueret STP 126
Target 12	vO378204	Wn 148
Target 13	vT848853	Unknown, along road D67 behind Wn 43 Omaha Beach sector
Target 14	vO344057	HKB 2/230 Ozeville, near Village de Leglise
Target 15	vO342102	Unknown, Wooded area north of Lestre and slightly southwest of Amerville-Lestre
Target 16	vT528916	STP84 near Maisy
Target 17	vO339138	Battery de Crasville STP 142
Target 18	vO413160	STP 112 ex WN31
Target 20	vO353040	Unknown, Near Ferme du Chateau de Fontenay. Ruins visible.
Target 1A	vO366201	Unknown, Scars of bombardment remain visible. Northwest of 7A. 500 yards west of WN149.
Target 5A	vT797871	Battery Longues-sur-Mer Wn 48
Target 6A	vO369040	Crisbecq Wn 134 AA section
Target 7A	vO372198	HKB Pernelle 1
Target 8A	vO396229	Unknown, South of town of Montfarville
Target 12A	vO336197	Unknown, Rt de Quettehou D26 Possibly targeting road itself.
Target 12B	vO343191	Unknown, along road D128 Possibly Targeting Road itself.
Target 13A	vO361056	HKB Fontenay
Target 14A	vO361080	HKB Mont Coquerel Wn22

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Allied Target Number	Target Coordinate using the French Lambert zone 1 map	German Designation
Target 16A	vT531914	STP 85
Target 17A	vO323174	Unknown, Near town of Coimbot. Possibly targeting road D25.
Target 32	vT537935	Wn81
Target 34	vT527935	Wn82
Target 36	vT541934	Wn87
Target 38	vT512924	Wn88
Target 40	vT505916	Wn90
Target 42	vT495905	Wn92
Target 44	vT447912	Wn100 ex Wn 1
Target 46	vT447918	Wn100 ex Wn 1
Target 48	vT447922	Wn101 ex Wn 2
Target 50	vT448926	Wn6
Target 52	vT448928	Wn2A
Target 54	vT458950	Wn102 ex Wn3
Target 56	vT452950	Wn102 ex Wn3
Target 58	vT444960	Wn4
Target 60	vT452967	Wn 104 ex Wn 5
Target 62	vT442970	Wn 7
Target 64	vT442980	Wn 106 ex Wn8 south
Target 66	vT442982	Wn 106 ex Wn8 north
Target 68	vT443983	Seawall in front of Wn 106 ex Wn8
Target 70	vT436992	Wn 100 ex Wn9
Target 72	vT438993	Wn 100 ex Wn9
Target 74	vT428999	STP 101 ex WN 10
Target 76	vT423009	Between STP 101 ex Wn10 and Wn 102 ex WN 11 & Wn12
Target 78	vO421009	South of Wn 102 ex WN 11 & Wn12 and
Target 80	vO420015	Wn 102 ex WN 11 & Wn12
Target 82	vO415024	Wn 102 ex WN 11 & Wn12
Target 84	vO407033	WN103 ex WN 13
Target 86	vO398045	WN104 ex WN 14
Target 88	vO392057	Church Eglise Notre Dame de bon secours
Target 90	vO398063	Wn 105 ex Wn 16 & Wn 17 (South WN16)
Target 92	vO390061	Wn 105 ex Wn 16 & Wn 17 (WN17)
Target 94	vO383069	Wn 105 ex Wn 16 & Wn 17 (WN17)
Target 96	vO379077	WN106 ex WN 18
Target 98	vO375082	WN106 ex WN 18
Target 100	vO373085	La Sinope Dam
Target 102	vO374086	WN 107 ex WN19

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Allied Target Number	Target Coordinate using the French Lambert zone 1 map	German Designation
Target 104	vO368096	WN 107 ex WN19
Target 106	vO364108	South of Wn 108 ex WN23
Target 108	vO362114	Wn 108 ex WN23
Target 110	vO362129	North of Wn 108 ex WN23
Target 112	vO357143	Road Ham de Beauvais close to WN 140
Target 114	vO366145	WN 109 ex WN 25
Target 122	vO389143	STP 110 ex WN29
Target 124	vO395156	STP 111 ex WN30

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Part One

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