The History of the Twentieth Century
Episode 445
"Breakout and Pursuit"
Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

The German position in France was getting worse by the day. It didn't help matters any that Hitler no longer trusted his field commanders.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century.*

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 445. Breakout and Pursuit.

Two episodes back, we talked about Operation Cobra, in which US forces in Normandy took advantage of the large numbers of tanks and armored units that had by this time been delivered across the Channel to begin an offensive south along the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula. It took them a week to reach the town of Avranches, which lies roughly at the point along the coast where the Cotentin Peninsula ends and Brittany begins. Even more important, they'd captured intact a bridge across the River Sélune just a bit farther south.

As soon as Patton began the offensive south from Avranches on August 1, the Wehrmacht command realized they had a huge problem. That evening, Hitler met with his senior commanders at the Wolf's Lair to consider their response. One of the ideas under consideration was a withdrawal to the River Seine and Paris, conceding most of France to the Allies. You might expect Hitler would react angrily so such a proposal and order his generals never to mention it again.

To their surprise, though, Hitler seemed willing to consider it, but he raised several objections. The lower Seine flows to the sea along a crazy twisted route that makes it less useful a defense than a river usually would be. Withdrawal would also mean the loss of Germany's submarine bases on the western coast of France, and it would mean the loss of access to valuable raw materials Germany imported from Spain and Portugal.

Hitler ordered one of his staff officers, General Walter Warlimont, to travel to France and assess the situation from the scene, although he gave Warlimont very specific instructions not to tell

Kluge or any other commander in the West that a withdrawal to the Seine was even under consideration. If they found out, Hitler said, they would "think of nothing but pulling back to that line."

Warlimont left the Wolf's Lair on the afternoon of August 2 and arrived at Seventh Army headquarters at the Chateau de Roche-Guyon, on the lower Seine, just before midnight. The Seventh Army staff he spoke with were more worried about Bernard Montgomery and the British Second Army pushing south unexpectedly farther east along the Normandy front. They expressed the fear that if Montgomery managed a breakthrough there, his advancing units would be able to meet up with Patton's and potentially encircle most of the Seventh Army.

Warlimont spent the following day, August 3, touring the front line in Normandy and talking with its commanders. They all told him the same thing: that their most serious problem was the overwhelming Allied air superiority. The sky was filled with Allied planes swooping to attack any exposed German unit they could find. Warlimont got a firsthand taste of this when his own car was strafed as he was traveling from unit to unit.

Warlimont returned to the chateau on August 4, where he learned that Hitler had already made a decision without waiting for his report. He'd ordered eight of the nine panzer divisions on the Normandy front to disengage and drive west, where they would knife into Patton's flank somewhere north of Avranches and push all the way to the sea, cutting off Patton and his army from the Normandy beachheads and rendering them out of supply. Hitler ordered all Luftwaffe units in France to participate in the attack; the Luftwaffe promised a thousand airplanes would support the ground offensive. Hitler ordered Warlimont to stay with Kluge to ensure he followed his orders.

Hitler had already suspected his generals of disloyalty, and the assassination attempt of July 20 was a clear sign of the hostility of at least some of them. Kluge was peripherally involved with the assassination plotters as we've seen; whether or not Hitler was aware of Kluge's involvement is not clear, but it may explain why he felt it necessary to keep an eye on him. Warlimont, on the other hand, was one of the officers in the room when the bomb went off, which would seem to exonerate him. Warlimont would soon ask for retirement due to lingering symptoms from the concussion he'd received that day. Hitler would grant it, and Warlimont would not be seen again, at least not until the war crimes trials.

Kluge had already considered a plan similar to what Hitler had ordered, but dropped the idea because he didn't believe he had enough units available to put together a force strong enough to successfully wage such a counterattack without fatally weakening the front line. Most subordinate commanders in the West agreed with him. They shared their concerns with Warlimont, who then told Hitler that his commanders on the Western Front were "confident of success." See, that's how you stay in the good graces of a dictator.

As for Hitler, he was on the opposite side of the Reich from the Western Front and yet presumed to create and implement a plan of counterattack without seeing the front for himself or listening to reports from commanders on the scene who had. Hitler always favored bold, dramatic military operations and was unafraid of the risks. In his distant meeting room, he pored over his map table, studying neat symbols of German and Allied divisions, but the map had nothing to say about Allied air supremacy, and behind those neat symbols was an invisible truth: the German formations were reduced to a fraction of their full complement and the soldiers weary from weeks of grinding warfare, while the Allied formations were at full strength, well equipped and well supplied, and new ones were arriving every day.

Hitler saw only the symbols. This was typical of Hitler's late-war leadership, and it's only going to get worse from here as he becomes increasingly delusional, ordering about military formations that existed mostly on the paper maps.

On the American side, George Patton was interested only in getting his units to move south as fast as possible. His supply dumps were still in Normandy, and the roads south were clogged with soldiers and supply trucks. That bridge Patton had taken south of Avranches was a logistical nightmare. It was the only route south under American control and thousands of tanks, jeeps, self-propelled artillery, and supply trucks were waiting in line to cross it.

On Patton's left flank, the US First Army was also pushing south, hoping to widen the bottleneck. On August 4, the US 1st Infantry Division captured the village of Mortain, a pleasant little place sited on a hill overlooking a ravine. French refugees escaping the fighting to the west had been flowing into Mortain, most of them on foot, as the Germans had seized all their bicycles. Mortain had escaped damage so far; only the numerous Allied airplanes buzzing overhead gave any sign that a war was near. A little farther east, French civilians watched at night as Germans retreated in the dark to avoid Allied air strikes. The retreating Germans rode horses or ponies, or just trudged along on foot, carrying bundles. The scene was not unlike that of refugees fleeing west from Paris in 1940.

Kluge was only able to muster four panzer divisions for this attack; the others were engaged with the Canadians and the British and would need more time to withdraw in good order. Although Hitler had ordered Kluge to wait until he had the entire force assembled before beginning, Patton's units were advancing so rapidly that Kluge concluded he had to strike as quickly as possible and couldn't afford to wait any longer. Reports showed the Americans approaching Nantes and the River Loire to the south, while other units of Patton's Third Army were advancing east toward Le Mans.

This was a serious concern, because the main supply dumps the German Seventh Army relied on were at Alençon, just fifty kilometers north of Le Mans. A captured American map indicated that after Le Mans, the Americans intended to continue eastward. They were apparently not looking

to encircle the Germans. Hitler wasn't worried; as he saw it, the more Americans there were south of Avranches, the more of them would be cut off and helpless when Kluge sprung his trap.

Kluge's panzers had succeeded in assembling in secret, as the lack of Allied air attacks on their positions indicated. In fact, Enigma intercepts decrypted at Bletchley Park on August 4 included references to redeployments of German panzer units in Normandy, which tipped off Allied commanders that some kind of German counterattack was in the works, but the intercepted messages did not indicate where it would take place.

That afternoon, the mayor of a French village, flagged down an American captain and told him there were German tanks hiding in a nearby wood. When the captain reported this to his superiors, he was told to "stop spreading rumors."

So Kluge began his attack the night of August 6, two days ahead of schedule. It began at night to avoid Allied air attacks and also catch the Americans by surprise. The Germans forewent the usual artillery barrage, choosing instead to move forward quietly, in the dark, hoping to infiltrate the American line, so that by morning, the Americans would wake up to discover enemy armor all around them.

The first combat began around 5:00 AM. It was a foggy morning and American soldiers could hear, but not see, the movement of German panzers. Eight German tanks rumbled into the village of Saint-Barthélemy, disturbing the sleep of an American colonel and his staff who had made a headquarters for themselves in the upper floor of a house. The colonel looked out of the front window and saw a Panther tank in the street in front of him. Then they heard a commotion behind the house, which proved to be SS soldiers marching two American prisoners out the back door. The officers on the second floor shot and killed the two Germans. Somehow, they all escaped the village.

Saint-Barthélemy lies just a few kilometers north of Mortain, which the US 1st Infantry Division had captured less than three days ago. The 1st had moved on and the village was now occupied by elements of the 30th Infantry Division. This was supposed to be their down time, their R&R, their rest and recuperation. The Army had promised to send in portable showers, coffee and doughnuts, movies, and V-records. For one unlucky battalion, these pleasant dreams were interrupted by the sound of small arms fire at 1:30 AM.

This battalion had been stationed atop what the Army called Hill 314, the highest point in the vicinity of Mortain. SS soldiers advancing on foot from the south were attempting to sneak past the roadblock the Americans had set up on the road into town; their path took them up Hill 314. Soon more German soldiers began approaching from the north. The Americans were surrounded.

In Mortain, once American officers began receiving reports of German advances, they began sending out soldiers to check and reinforce the roadblocks in the area. The soldiers soon

discovered the Germans had already taken the roadblocks and were entering town. The Americans withdrew, except for those trapped inside the village, who hid in cellars.

The Germans benefitted from a heavy fog that morning, but as noon approached, the mist began to clear and Allied airpower came into play. British and American air forces in Normandy had been warned to expect a German attack, and as soon as the sky brightened, Allied planes began to fill the sky. Since this was an armored attack, the Americans called upon RAF Hawker Typhoon fighter-bombers, generally agreed to be the best Allied plane for attacking tanks. Typhoons armed with anti-tank rockets began to blast away at German tanks, forcing them to scatter. American fighter-bombers were sent behind German lines to attack their support vehicles, while American fighters began engaging German warplanes as soon as they took off; despite their promises, the Luftwaffe never got anywhere near the ground offensive.

By the following day, August 8, the German offensive was already grinding to a halt. In the north, along the German right flank, British and American units advancing south from the Normandy beachheads made contact with the German 116th Panzer Division. The commander of this division had never had any faith in Hitler's offensive plan. His division advanced slowly on the 7th and was already falling back on the 8th. On the German left flank, to the south, American infantry had firmed up the line. There would be no further advance in that direction.

Omar Bradley ordered one of Patton's units, the 2nd Armored Division, to turn north and advance into the German rear, while most of Patton's Third Army was still moving east. That day they took Le Mans, against minimal German resistance. If that wasn't bad enough for the Germans, the Canadian Army began an offensive south from Caen toward Falaise.

The one sector of the front where the Germans could actually make progress was at the western end of their line, at Mortain. There panzers continued to drive toward their goal: Avranches and the seacoast. They managed a few kilometers, but that American battalion, still holding out on top of Hill 314, was proving a thorn in their flesh, as one German commander later put it. From their vantage point, the Americans could call down artillery fire with pinpoint accuracy on German positions all around them. But how long could the 700 soldiers up there hold out? The Americans tried dropping supplies to them from a Piper Cub reconnaissance plane, but German antiaircraft fire drove the small plane away.

At dusk, an SS officer climbed Hill 314, accompanied by a soldier waving a white flag. He told the Americans their situation was hopeless and their only choice was an honorable surrender. Otherwise, the Waffen-SS would blow them to bits. (His words.) They had until 10:00 tonight to make their decision. The Americans replied that so long as they had ammunition with which they could kill Germans, they would not surrender.

That night, German tanks assaulted Hill 314, but were driven back by bazookas and antitank guns.

Overall, the American defenders were holding their line far better than the Germans had anticipated, and as news trickled in of the fall of Le Mans, German commanders began to wonder how much longer their supply lines would remain secure. At least it gave them something to take their minds off of the constant American air and artillery barrages.

At headquarters in the rear, Günther von Kluge was in a state close to panic. The Canadian offensive to the north had forced him to deploy his remaining panzers to that sector, rather than send them to assist the breakthrough efforts at Mortain. And if he didn't have enough to worry about, the unenthusiastic performance of the 116th Panzer Division had led to accusations that its commander was a traitor. In the post-July 20 atmosphere, such accusations were serious business, and the division commander was relieved of duty. In the middle of a battle, no less.

Then came even worse news. Headquarters received a report that confirmed Kluge's worst fears: following the occupation of Le Mans, the US Third Army had sent one armored corps north along the road to Alençon.

The entire German Seventh Army was now in serious danger of becoming surrounded and isolated. This would be a Stalingrad-level disaster. It would mean the end of the Seventh Army and the end of the entire German Western Front.

And yet, in the face of all this bad news, the following day, August 9, another general from the OKW arrived to deliver the *Führer's* order personally. The drive westward toward Avranches and the sea was to be maintained at all costs . Both Kluge and the Seventh Army commander were summoned before him to answer a question: did they believe that Hitler's order would bring success? Neither of them believed it, but both answered yes, knowing that any other answer would lead to their being relieved of their commands.

By August 11, the most advanced panzer units had had to withdraw back to Mortain. American C-47 transport planes attempted to airdrop supplies to the weary and hungry battalion on Hill 314, but most of the supplies landed behind German lines. But by evening, the 2nd Armored Division was approaching their location.

That day, Kluge telephoned Hitler and was able to convince him that before the offensive toward Avranches could resume, some panzer units would have to be diverted to Alençon to drive off the approaching Americans. Hitler agreed. Kluge looked around the room at his commanders. They could all see in each others' eyes what each was thinking. This permission to redeploy a few units could be used as an excuse to withdraw the entire Army eastward before the Allies surrounded them.

The Germans used up the last of their artillery shells that night to cover their withdrawal. Small rearguard units kept up steady fire to obscure their dwindling numbers. It wasn't until the morning of August 12 that aerial reconnaissance revealed to the Americans the Germans were retreating.

The advancing Americans made their way to Hill 314 and rescued their comrades. Along the way, they found the supply canisters that had been meant for the lost battalion. They were empty. A few contained tongue-in-cheek notes from German soldiers, offering the Americans thanks for the chocolate and cigarettes.

Three hundred of the 700 American soldiers on Hill 314 were killed or wounded in the fight to hold their position. The battalion would receive a Presidential Unit Citation for its bravery and perseverance.

General Warlimont returned to the Wolf's Lair and gave Hitler an hour-long briefing on the failure of the German offensive. When the general finished his presentation, Hitler said, "Kluge did it deliberately."

[music: Lavallée, "O Canada."]

Let's turn now to the First Canadian Army, which as I said earlier, was beginning its own offensive southward from the Normandy beachheads toward Falaise. The First Canadian Army was a unit of the British 21st Army Group, commanded by Bernard Montgomery. For a country like Canada, with its relatively small population, just 12 million in 1944, to field an entire army was a considerable accomplishment. Even so, the First Canadian Army incorporated a British corps and a Polish armored division to bring it up to full strength.

Bernard Montgomery had a low opinion of some of the Canadian army's commanders and scarcely bothered to conceal his disdain. The Canadians felt it and resented it. This offensive, dubbed Operation Totalize, was the first to be planned and executed by Canadian commanders, which Montgomery took as an affront. Montgomery sent some of his staff officers to the Canadian headquarters to "supervise" the offensive; you can imagine how that went down with the Canadians.

The officer who planned the operation, General Guy Simonds, took pains to learn from the mistakes made during the earlier British-led offensives. He chose to begin the offensive at midnight on August 8; the dark of night would limit the threat from the German 88s, still dangerous anti-tank weapons. He also insisted that lead infantry units should advance in armored vehicles. The Canadians didn't have enough of these, so they removed the guns from their American-made self-propelled artillery vehicles and used them as personnel carriers.

The British had dubbed these American artillery vehicles "Priests" because the machine-gun post on the top of the vehicle resembled a pulpit. Soon everyone was calling the vehicles modified by the Canadians "defrocked Priests."

The nighttime combat was bitter, but the Canadian armored columns, proceeding south, one on either side of the road to Falaise, achieved their objectives by dawn. There they stopped, facing the Canadians' most hated enemy, the *Hitler Jugend* Division. Canadian commanders had issued

special orders before the beginning of the offensive, warning their soldiers not to succumb to the urge to inflict cruelties on their enemies in retribution.

The Canadian force had stopped because the next stage of the plan called for American B-17s to come in that morning and bomb the German line. Afterward, the Canadians would resume their advance. But on the other side of the front line, the Germans guessed the reason why the Canadians had stopped. Commanders gathered to consider the wisdom of attacking first to disrupt the Canadian plan.

As they spoke, a single American bomber flew across the sky and dropped a yellow smoke marker on the German position. Well, that clinched it. The American was obviously pointing them out for an upcoming bomber raid. The Germans got into their panzers, including some of the new, fearsome Tiger tanks, and began to advance. Soon the bombers came, hundreds of B-17s. One German soldier quipped that Churchill feared Waffen-SS soldiers so much that he sent one bomber to attack each of them.

But the Germans weren't at the target site, and that was only the beginning of the Canadians' problems. The German units were well-equipped with anti-aircraft guns and an early lucky shot hit a B-17. The damaged plane ditched its bombs and turned back toward England. The bombs landed on the Polish armored division. Other American bombers, seeing this, believed it to be intentional and began dropping their own ordnance on the Poles. The Poles set off smoke markers to alert the Americans that they were Allies. But in an appalling miscommunication, the Canadian-led force was given yellow smoke markers for this purpose—the same color the Americans were using to mark enemy targets.

The unexpected German counterattack, along with the own goal from the Americans, created confusion and disorganization among the Canadians, while the Germans had time to disengage, move south, and establish a new front line before the Canadians could resume their offensive. On August 11, the operation was called off.

One hundred kilometers to the south, George Patton and his US Third Army were experiencing no such challenges. There were no Tiger tanks, no 88s. Patton's biggest problem was getting enough gasoline to keep his tanks and his infantry moving east as rapidly as possible. He begged, borrowed, or stole fuel supplies. US Army units had more vehicles and were more mobile than any other force in the war, but that meant they consumed lots of fuel. A US armored division needed 60,000 gallons of fuel every day, if it was moving forward on a road against minimal opposition. Force it off the road, and its fuel consumption could reach twenty times that amount.

To support their highly motorized force, the Americans devised a complex system of logistics to keep the fuel and rations and ammunition flowing. Military police in jeeps escorted every truck convoy and decided who got priority. Reconnaissance planes gave early warnings of any developing traffic jams. And engineer units built Bailey bridges and maintained and improved the roads.

A large majority of the truck drivers and the bridge builders working behind the lines to keep Patton's tanks moving were African Americans. They labored with zeal. Two routes were designated from Normandy, one for supply convoys headed for the front, the other for empty trucks making the return journey.

The operation was nicknamed the "Red Ball Express." The term referred to a system used by American railway companies, which used red balls to designate rail cars and tracks reserved for high-priority express freight shipments. The Red Ball Express operated 6,000 trucks and delivered more than 12,000 tons of supplies every day. Remember that at this same time, the Wehrmacht still relied primarily on horses to transport supplies over roads.

One of the cargo checkers who supervised the loading of the trucks of the Red Ball Express in Normandy was a 19-year-old private from Decatur, Mississippi named Medgar Evers. While in France, Evers was befriended by a French family, who frequently invited him to their home for meals and relaxation. They were the first white people he had ever met who treated him with kindness. He began to wonder if he could ever return to Mississippi and considered staying in France after the war. Ultimately, he did return to Mississippi, and in a few years he became the NAACP field secretary for the state.

On August 10, the Germans received word that Patton had sent an armored corps north from Le Mans toward Alençon. This was their worst nightmare. Meanwhile, Adolf Hitler was still insisting the advance on Avranches be resumed. One of Kluge's subordinates kept asking his fellow commanders why OKW could not see this closing trap, even after Stalingrad and Tunis and Crimea.

On August 12, Patton's corps took Alençon, cutting the Germans off from their most important supply source. On August 13, they took Argentan. Patton asked Omar Bradley for permission to continue the advance northward to Falaise. To his dismay, Bradley refused and ordered Patton to have his corps hold their position and await the advance south of British and Canadian forces.

Patton always believed this was a critical mistake and blamed British jealousy in general and Montgomery's vanity in particular for this order. But in fairness, it is not clear that an American advance on Falaise at that moment would have succeeded, or if the Americans could have held Falaise against the large number of German units that were by now fleeing eastward to escape the pocket before it closed. There was also the danger that advancing British and American forces might surprise each other, leading to a potentially bloody friendly-fire incident.

British and American forces were at this moment only about 20 kilometers, or 14 miles, apart, but the gap between Argentan and Falaise would remain open for a few more days.

Speaking of Germans fleeing eastward, by this time Hitler's offensive westward to the sea had clearly failed, but Adolf Hitler was perhaps the only German left who didn't realize it. On August 14, a panzer group commander received an order from the *Führer*. Attack south and

recapture Alençon, then move the panzers to the west to resume the drive on Avranches. The commander replied with a report on the number of operational tanks remaining in each of his panzer divisions: the First SS had 30. The Second SS had 25. The 116th had fifteen, and the Ninth Panzer Division, the one that had been sent first to keep Patton away from Alençon, had five.

Morale among the German soldiers in the pocket was disastrously low. Commanders received numerous reports of soldiers throwing away their rifles and machine guns and fleeing east. Tank crews were abandoning their tanks at the first sight of an Allied airplane. Even the vaunted Waffen-SS soldiers were in flight. The Army had to set up rear guard units to intercept these deserters and send them back to their units.

Also on August 14, the Canadians began a fresh offensive south, in another effort to capture Falaise and then continue on to meet the Americans at Argentan. In spite of what happened last time, this offensive also began with an 800-bomber attack on the enemy front. This time they were the more accurate tactical bombers, and this time most of them actually struck the enemy, although about 80 of them bombed Canadian or Polish units by mistake. Again, the Canadians and the Poles used yellow smoke grenades to signal to the bombers that they were friendly units. Incredibly, the bombers didn't get the message because they were still using yellow smoke for their target markers, just like last time. No, I don't believe it either. But that's what happened.

And on that same day, an irritated and impatient George Patton flew to meet Omar Bradley and present a plan. If Bradley and Montgomery didn't want Patton's units moving any farther north, how about east? Patton proposed advancing on Dreaux, Chartres, and Orléans. This would put his units within striking distance of Paris. Bradley approved the plan, and Patton's tanks were rumbling forward by 8:30 that evening.

It appears Montgomery had his eye on Paris as well. He'd ordered the Polish armored division that was fighting with the Canadians to turn east. And while he might have sent the British 7th Armored Division south to assist the Canadians, he sent that one east as well, along the road from Normandy to Paris.

Patton's forces were moving fast. Three British war correspondents drove a jeep ahead toward Chartres, so they could cover the Americans' arrival. Unfortunately for them, they were captured by a German patrol. One of them, William Makin, was shot and later died of his injuries. The second, Paul Holt of the *London Daily Sketch* managed to escape, while Gault MacGowan, a Briton who was writing for the *New York Sun,* was taken prisoner. He later escaped.

Also, and again on August 14, Kluge ordered all German forces in the developing pocket to withdraw to the east. That evening, Kluge left his headquarters at the chateau on the Seine and headed into the pocket himself to meet with his commanders and assess the situation. On the morning of the 15th, as Kluge was headed west, riding in his *Kübelwagen*, the German answer to the American jeep, the convoy of vehicles with which he was traveling came under attack by

RAF Typhoons. One German was killed and several seriously wounded. Kluge himself escaped physical injury, but it appears the attack was a great emotional shock. He left the stopped vehicles, walked into a nearby wood and sat to rest in the shade of a tree.

Imagine what Kluge's mental state must have been. His army was collapsing, the *Führer* was issuing delusional orders, and he himself had just narrowly escaped death. Kluge insisted that he and the other survivors of his convoy hide in the woods until nightfall before proceeding west on foot.

Alfred Jodl telephoned Kluge's headquarters that day and was told what they knew: Kluge had begun journeying westward last night and had not been heard from since this morning. When this news was relayed to Hitler, he concluded that Kluge had set off to meet with Allied commanders and negotiate a surrender. Jodl ordered Army Group B to search for Kluge and send back hourly reports on their progress. At 9:00 that night, with Kluge still missing, Hitler sent an order relieving him of his command.

Kluge arrived at the command post inside the pocket an hour later, to learn that Marshal Keitel had left orders that Kluge contact him immediately. Kluge called Keitel and explained what had happened. Keitel believed him. Hitler did not. He was by now convinced that Kluge was another of those aristocratic Prussian officers secretly out to undermine him.

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd like to thank Kathleen for his kind donation, and thank you to Robert for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Cameron and Lukas help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone always, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, you are most welcome; just visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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And I hope you'll join me next week, here on *The History of the Twentieth Century*; as we continue the story of the fighting in France. That's next week, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. Hitler later called August 15, 1944 the worst day of his life. Besides the drama with Kluge, this was also the day three American divisions landed at the Cote d'Azure, on the Mediterranean coast of France.

But that is a story for next week's episode.

We'll have to stop there for today.

Oh, and one more thing. Dieppe?

[music: Closing War Theme]