



"Just gimme a couple  
of aspirin. I already got  
a Purple Heart."

*over here, or soldier, or officer I ever heard of who hasn't complete and utter faith in Gen. Bradley. If he felt we were ready for the push, that was good enough for us.*

*Ernie Pyle*

The block to an advance lay at the western end of Normandy, principally at St. Lô. Mid to late July harbored the endeavor to reach St. Lô, Normandy, which of all the places and cities in France is best remembered. It became embroiled in battles more difficult than Cherbourg. In the course of the bitter war Baron von Aufess, commanding an Abwehr brigade, was killed, as were Major Thomas D. Howie and Lt Col William Terry, commanding the U.S.

A breakout was planned from that little town of St. Lô, code-named Operation Cobra. In part this was to be an answer to the type of war about to be engaged in Europe, and in part it was to encircle toward the sea to try to entrap German units.

Cobra was the brainchild of Gen. Bradley. The land advancement would see the 4th, 9th, and 30th Inf Divisions jumping-off, followed by the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions and the 1st Motorized Division. They would reach the initial objective, Coutances, but were not to go beyond so as to leave the lanes open for the 8th, 79th, 83rd, 90th Inf Divisions and the 4th and 6th Armored.

Meanwhile, a whole new American army had the job of maintaining strong contact along the lines, bombing and thrusting and moving along as fast as they could. They were Patton's troops, but to an outside world they were kept away from the public's attention as much as possible, so as not to tip off to the Germans that they were not in the Pas de Calais. (The German leadership thought they were up north and not in Normandy. Had the news leaked out, they would have known their reserves in the Pas de Calais were standing guard against a ghost.) The British and Canadian furthermore were to push south and east, confusing the enemy and temporarily screening the location of the main push. This type of warfare would either be a slow painful one or a mad rush.

At 11 a.m., July 25, after twice postponed Cobra commenced, 1508 heavies dropped some 3300 tons of bombs and pounded the ground. To avoid excessive cratering like in Italy, light bombs were requested; a quick advance was expected; Bradley was under the impression no bombs heavier