



Pointe du Hoc



Seizure of Pointe du Hoc Critical to D-Day Success

KEY: † Military Cemetery 🪂 Parachute Drop



Utah Beach Monument

A red granite obelisk in a small park overlooks historic Utah Beach. It honors the achievements of U.S. VII Corps forces that fought to liberate the Cotentin Peninsula.



Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial

Located eight miles east of Pointe du Hoc, the 172.5-acre site contains the graves of 9,387 U.S. military dead and the names of 1,557 of the missing.



POINTE DU HOC:

COMPETENCE, COURAGE, AND SACRIFICE

By mid-1944, German forces manned formidable defenses along the French coast. Of concern to the Allies were German 155mm artillery positions on Pointe du Hoc. They could wreak havoc on Utah and Omaha Beaches.

Lt.Col. James E. Rudder, commanding the 2nd Ranger Battalion, received the mission to land at 0630 hours, scale the 100 foot cliffs, and disable the German positions. Lt.Col. Max F. Schneider's 5th Ranger Battalion would follow and reinforce them.

JUNE 6, 0550 HOURS: Naval bombardment of Pointe du Hoc began, including guns of the battleship USS Texas. Three companies (70 men per) of Rudder's 2nd Ranger Battalion were to land at Pointe du Hoc at 0630, but were delayed. Per plan, Schneider's command (plus three companies of the 2nd) joined the Omaha Beach assault.

JUNE 6, 0710: Two landing craft were lost, but the Rangers debarked and started up the cliffs. They pressed upward, supported by the destroyer USS Satterlee. One of the Rangers' DUKWs was disabled by enemy fire en route to Pointe du Hoc. The engine failed. Three Rangers were casualties, including one killed.

JUNE 6, 0740: Most of the remaining Rangers reached the top.

JUNE 6, 0930: The Germans had previously moved the guns southward from their initial prepared positions. Despite fierce resistance, Rangers found and destroyed the guns pushing onward to cut the highway south of Pointe du Hoc.

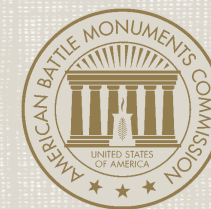
JUNE 6-8: After fighting two days, only about 90 Rangers stood when relieved by Schneider's Rangers and the 29th Infantry Division from Omaha Beach.

American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 26 American cemeteries and 30 memorials, monuments and markers in 17 countries. The Commission works to fulfill the vision of its first chairman, General of the Armies John J. Pershing. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I, promised that "time will not dim the glory of their deeds."

Pointe du Hoc

On June 6, 1944, elements of the 2nd Ranger Battalion scaled the cliffs, seizing German artillery hazardous to the landings on Omaha and Utah Beaches. They held on against fierce counterattacks. The French government transferred the area to the American Battle Monuments Commission on January 11, 1979 for perpetual care and maintenance.



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For more information on this site and other ABMC commemorative sites, please visit www.abmc.gov

Guide to Pointe du Hoc Walking Path



- A. From the Visitor Center, proceed to the Ceremonial Circle (#1 above).
- B. Continue north and northwest along the path, visiting the numbered items. Reach the Pointe du Hoc Ranger Monument (#14).
- C. Resume the tour, proceeding southward to the Sacrifice Gallery (#26).
- D. End the tour at the parking lot.

Numbered Features Along the Way

1 The Ceremonial Circle
At the Ceremonial Circle, bronze plaques presented by the local French government honor the D-Day exploits of U.S. Army Rangers.

2 Aerial and Naval Bombardment
Allied air and naval forces bombarded Pointe du Hoc before June 6. The craters at the site testify to the bombardment's intensity.

3 Antiaircraft Bunker and Ranger Command Post
The former Luftwaffe antiaircraft bunker became the Rangers' command post, medical aid station, and morgue.



4 Ten-Person Bunkers
20 These bunkers provided shelter for ten men, including the crews of nearby 155mm gun emplacements. Their walls and roofs are constructed of two meters of solid concrete.

5 Ammunition Bunkers
10 **22** Pointe du Hoc's three ammunition bunkers could be entered through communications trenches from nearby gun emplacements and personnel bunkers.

6 9 Casemates
15 21 Casemates were fortified positions under construction on D-Day. A 155mm gun could be fired through an embrasure in the front. Ammunition was stored in the rear.

7 11 155mm Gun Emplacements
16 18 23 These are five of six concrete emplacements that held 155mm guns before D-Day. At the center is the gun pin, which allowed the artillery piece to pivot.

8 20-Person Bunkers
19 These personnel bunkers held 20 soldiers. They were divided into crew quarters, an observation room, and an attached "Tobruk" defensive structure. The "Tobruk" was a reinforced concrete emplacement with an opening for an observer or gunner.

12 The Cliff Line
During the assault on Pointe du Hoc, the Rangers climbed these 100-foot cliffs under enemy fire. Some used ladders, rope ladders, or ropes with grappling hooks. Many used bayonets or knives to aid their ascent. Resupply actions on June 8 (D+2) are shown here.



13 Observation Bunker & Machine Gun Position
This bunker provided commanding views of the approaches to Omaha and Utah Beaches. On D-Day, machine gunners and riflemen inside fired at the advancing Rangers from narrow slits in the thick walls.

14 Pointe du Hoc Ranger Monument
The French government erected the symbolic granite dagger atop the bunker (#13) as a monument to the Rangers. The American Battle Monuments Commission assumed responsibility for it in 1979, recognizing the friendship between the two nations. From this spot you can view the scope of the D-Day landings.



17 Antiaircraft Gun Position
The German 37mm antiaircraft position threatened the attacking Rangers. Its fires killed several Rangers. The Rangers tried several times to destroy the position, but it was not taken until reinforcements arrived.

24 Hospital Bunker
The hospital bunker's rounded door design accommodated stretcher bearers entering the structure.

25 155mm Gun Position on D-Day
The Germans, after suffering bombardment before D-Day, moved the surviving 155mm guns from Pointe du Hoc and repositioned them in a hedgerow south of this location. They erected dummy guns made from wooden poles to fool Allied aircraft. Rangers found and destroyed the actual guns, positioned to fire at Utah Beach, on the morning of D-Day. This recaptured gun is similar to the guns destroyed that day.



26 The Sacrifice Gallery
The Sacrifice Gallery presents personal stories of the sacrifices that made the Allied victory possible. Of the initial attacking force of 225 men that participated in the Pointe du Hoc mission on June 6, only 90 were still able to bear arms when relieved on June 8.

*"Located Pointe du Hoc—mission accomplished—need ammunition and reinforcements—many casualties."
James Earl Rudder*