

History

OF THE

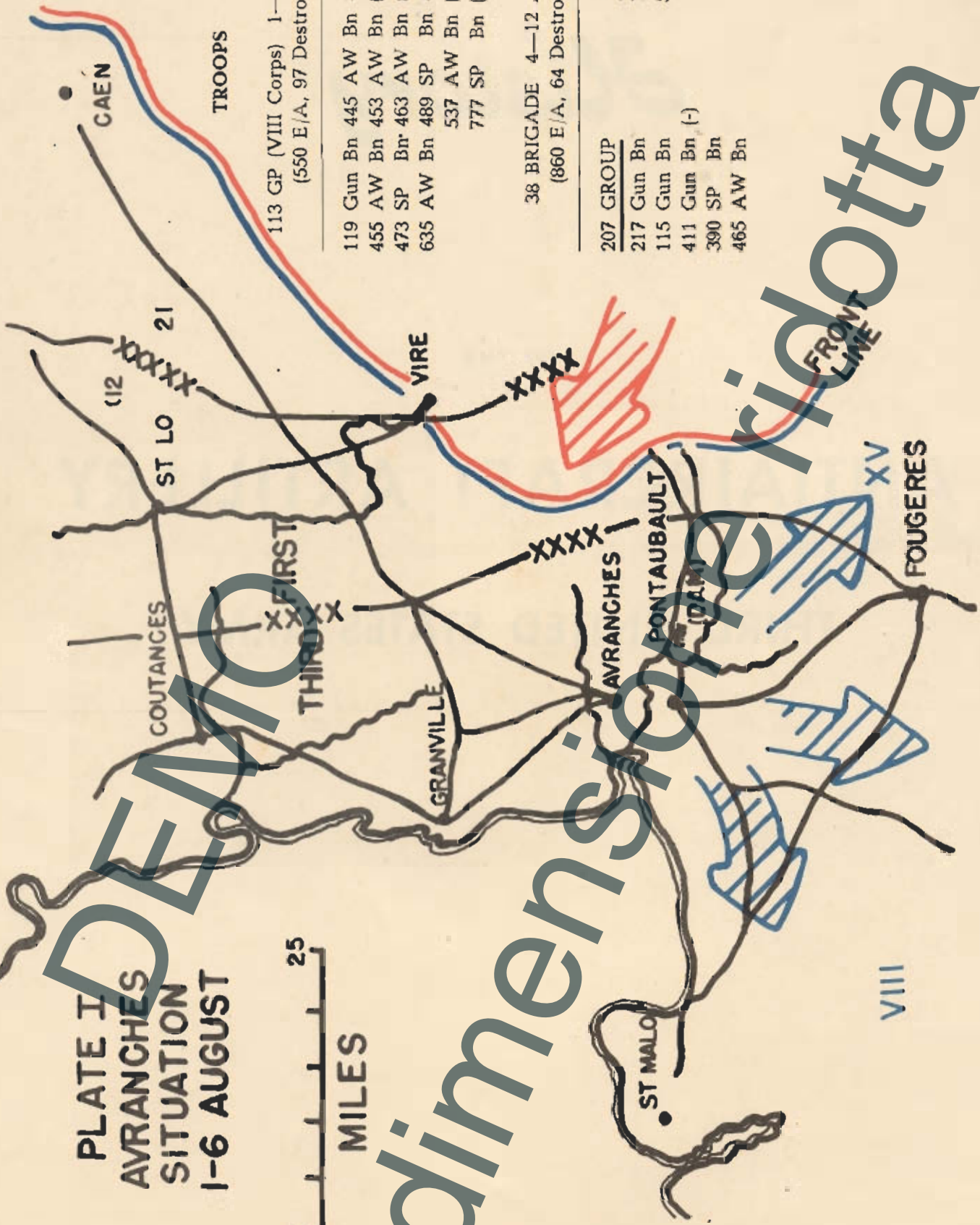
ANTIAIRCRAFT ARTILLERY

THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY

DEMO

dimensione ridotta

**PLATE I
AVRANCHES
SITUATION
1-6 AUGUST**



113 GP (VIII Corps) 1-4 August
(550 E/A, 97 Destroyed)

- 119 Gun Bn 445 AW Bn (8 Inf Div)
- 455 AW Bn 453 AW Bn (83 Inf Div)
- 473 SP Bn 463 AW Bn (79 Inf Div)
- 635 AW Bn 489 SP Bn (4 Armd)
- 537 AW Bn (90 Inf Div)
- 777 SP Bn (6 Armd)

38 BRIGADE 4-12 August
(860 E/A, 64 Destroyed)

- 207 GROUP
- 217 Gun Bn
- 115 Gun Bn
- 411 Gun Bn (-)
- 390 SP Bn
- 465 AW Bn

- 24 GROUP
- 120 Gun Bn
- 550 AW Bn

VIII

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PART A

CAMPAIGN OF FRANCE

1 August - 24 September 1944

1. The Third US Army became operational at noon, 1 August 1944. At that time a major breakthrough had been accomplished on the Normandy front. The VIII Corps, initially the only Corps operational in the Army, was driving south along the west side of the Cotentin Peninsula, and headed by the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions, was passing through Avranches.



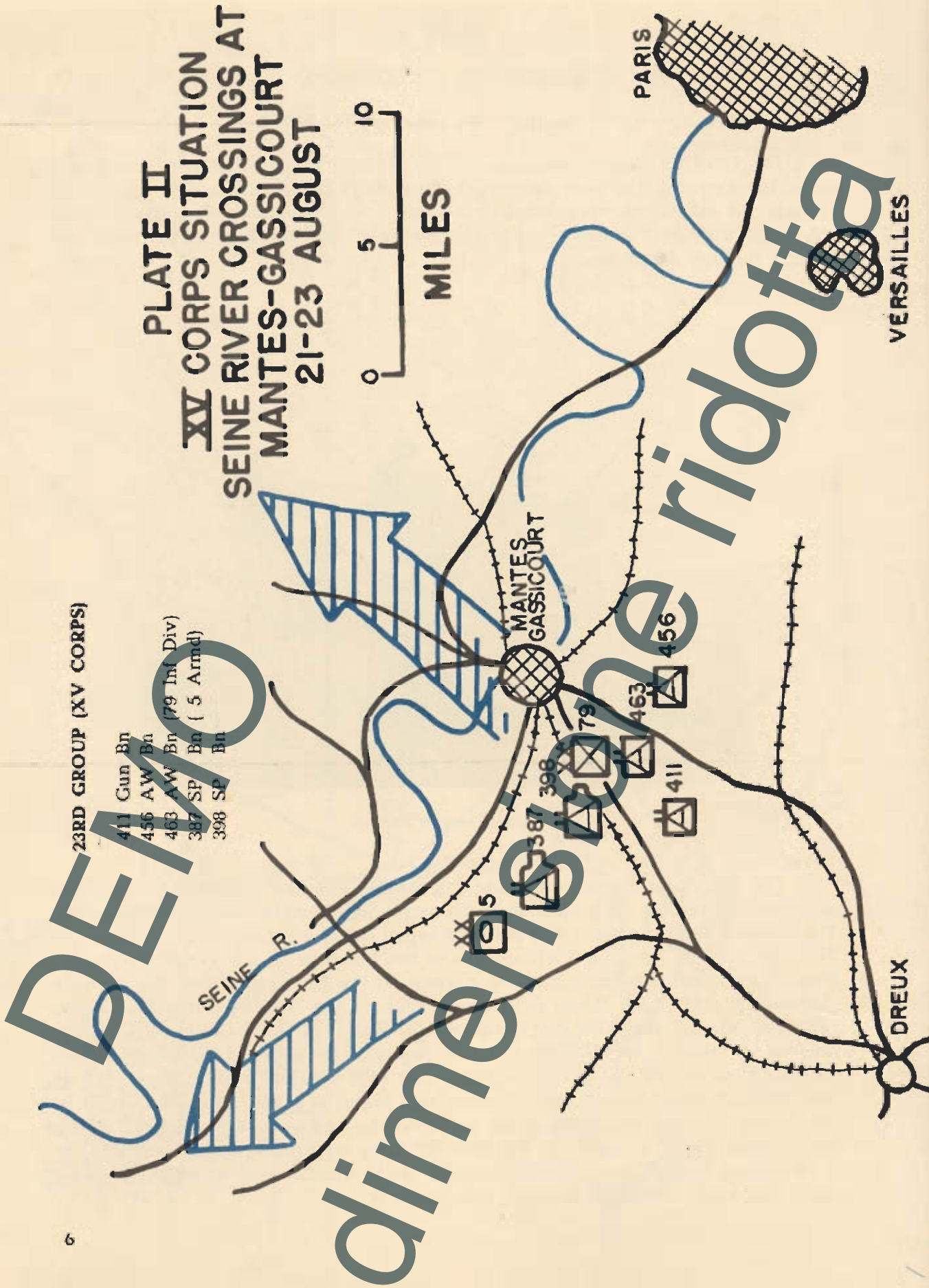
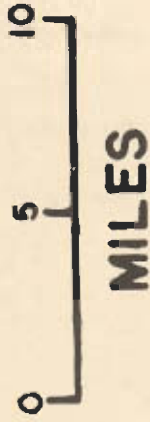
Somewhere in France

2. The VIII Corps Antiaircraft, including the AA attached to divisions, was given as its first major task the protection of the vitally important bottleneck at Avranches. The protection of Avranches had actually begun the day before, 31 July, when the 777th SP Bn (6th Armored Division) placed two batteries on the Avranches-Pontaubault bridges, and was protecting the passage of the Division. When the Division cleared, the 113th AAA Group (VIII Corps) relieved the 777th by Corps AA. In the two days, Aug 1-2, the 777th shot down 18 E/A. The 113th AAA Group was, in turn, relieved by the 38th AAA Brigade on 4 August, with the 24th and 207th Groups, and by the end of air activity 12 August, more than 1400 E/A had been engaged, and at least 160 shot down, but not once was any vital bridge or other installation seriously hit. It was the first major enemy air strike on the continent, and remained as the most intense enemy air effort in the Third US Army until the Ardennes campaign. It is interesting to note that a great majority of the attacks were at night, aided by bright moonlight and clear weather. (See plate I)

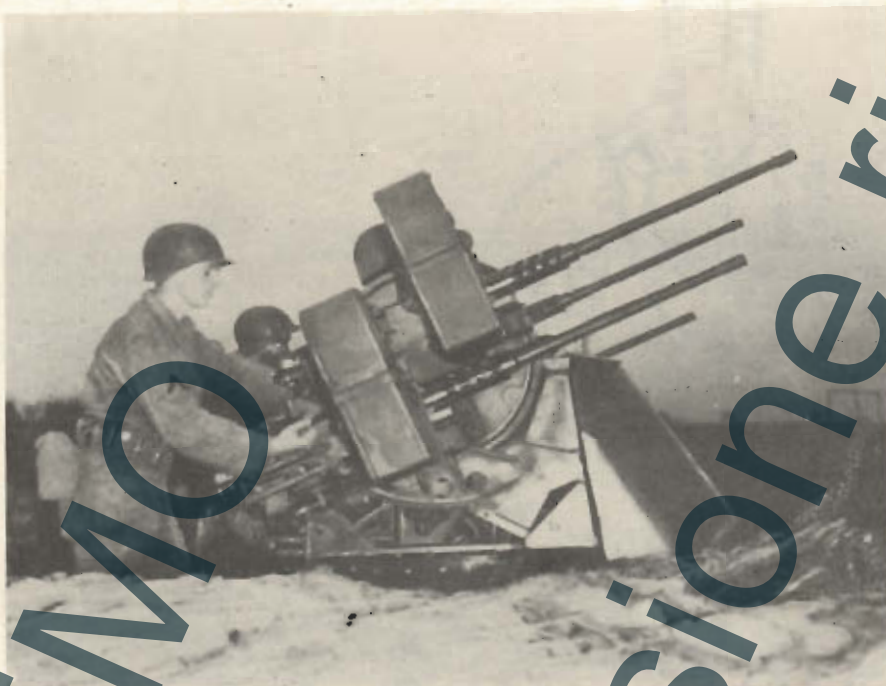
23RD GROUP (XV CORPS)

- 411 Gun Bn
- 456 AW Bn
- 463 AW Bn (79 Inf Div)
- 387 SP Bn (5 Armd)
- 398 SP Bn

PLATE II
XV CORPS SITUATION
SEINE RIVER CROSSINGS AT
MANTES-GASSICOURT
21-23 AUGUST



3. After most of the troops had passed through the Avranches bottleneck GAF activity declined rapidly, as the Luftwaffe moved their bases to the rear. The VIII Corps, after passing through, cut west and southwest, and overran the Brittany peninsula. The XV Corps followed the VIII Corps through Avranches, 4 August, drove southeast to Le Mans, and then swung sharply northeast towards Argentan and Dreux forming the southern arm of the pincers closing the Falaise gap. The XX Corps followed on 7 August, drove to the Loire River, then headed east, covering the Third Army south flank. On 15 August the XX Corps turned northeast and headed for Chartres, turning over the south flank to the XII Corps, which had become operational in the meantime and had received the 4th Armored from the VIII Corps. On 15 August the XV Corps also started a new push from Dreux, crossed the Seine River, and was north of Paris on 24 August, when the Corps was transferred to the First US Army. It was during the bridgehead operations at the Seine that the Luftwaffe struck a second time.



Dawn alert

4. The AA action at the Seine, while of a shorter duration, was, in some respects, more intense and spectacular than at Avranches. Here the GAF made most of their attacks by day, aided by a low ceiling that grounded Allied aircraft at their distant bases. In the three days of most activity, 21–23 August, more than 250 aircraft attacked the bridges and motorized columns, and at least 63 were shot down, with a peak of 24 on the second day. No significant damage was caused at any defended area. The 456th AW Bn shot down 23, and the 411th Gun Bn claimed 25, for the two days, 21–22 August. (See plate II)

5. The VIII Corps, in Brittany, less the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions which joined the XII Corps, was transferred to the Ninth US Army, 5 September, leaving only the

Army & Corps AA Battalions
 (All 38 Brigade except the
 407 and 480)

- 115th AAA Gn Bn
- 119th AAA Gn Bn
- 120th AAA Gn Bn
- 128th AAA Gn Bn
- 217th AAA Gn Bn
- 390th AAA SP Bn
- 398th AAA SP Bn
- 407th AAA Gn Bn
- 411th AAA Gn Bn
- 452d AAA AW Bn
- 455th AAA AW Bn
- 456th AAA AW Bn
- 457th AAA AW Bn
- 462d AAA AW Bn
- 465th AAA AW Bn
- 468th AAA SP Bn
- 473d AAA SP Bn
- 480th AAA AW Bn
- 546th AAA AW Bn
- 550th AAA AW Bn
- 551st AAA AW Bn
- 635th AAA AW Bn

- 38 AAA Brigade
- 50 AAA Brigade (No troops)
- 54 AAA Brigade
- 7th AAA Group (Initially XII Corps
later 38 Brigade)
- 19 AAA Group (54 Brigade)
- 23 AAA Group (XV Corps)
- 24 AAA Group (38 Brigade)
- 27 AAA Group (Initially 38 Brigade
later XII Corps)
- 112 AAA Group (XII Corps)
- 113 AAA Group (VIII Corps)
- 207 AAA Group (38 Brigade)

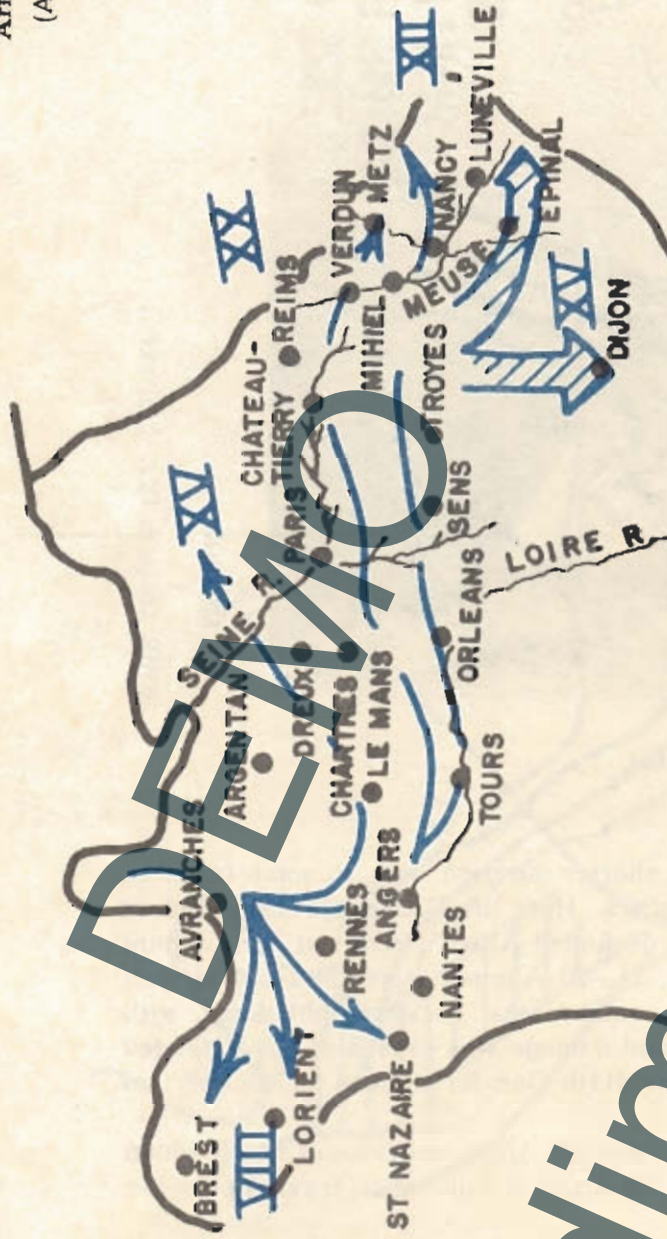


PLATE III
THE BIG PICTURE
CAMPAIGN OF FRANCE
1 AUGUST - 24 SEPT.

Divisional AA Battalions.

- 203d AAA SP Bn (7th Arm'd Div) (XX Corps)
- 387th AAA SP Bn (5th Arm'd Div) (XV Corps)
- 445th AAA AW Bn (8th Inf Div) (VIII Corps)
- 448th AAA AW Bn (35th Inf Div) (XII Corps)
- 449th AAA AW Bn (5th Inf Div) (XX Corps)
- 453d AAA AW Bn (83d Inf Div) (VIII & XV Corps)
- 463d AAA AW Bn (79th Inf Div) (XV Corps)
- 489th AAA SP Bn (4th Arm'd Div) (VIII & XII Corps)
- 537th AAA AW Bn (90th Inf Div) (XX Corps)
- 633d AAA AW Bn (80th Inf Div) (XII Corps)
- 777th AAA SP Bn (6th Arm'd Div) (VIII & XII Corps)
- 22d FTA Bn (2d French Arm'd Div) (XV Corps)