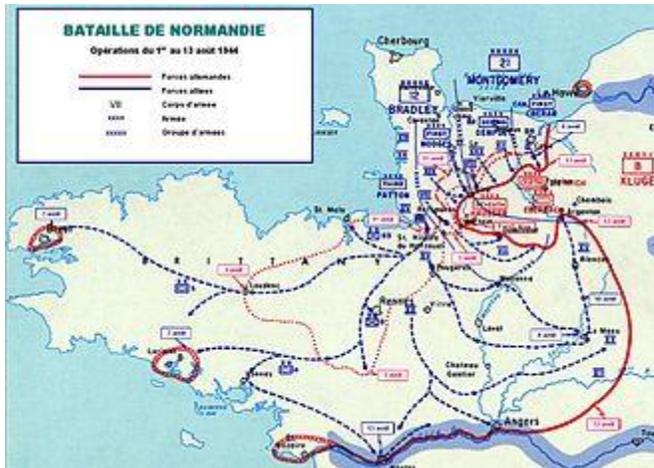


Tactical and historical studies

The first course us cadets did in Saint-Cyr was a tactical and historical studies course. The course was based on two parts – historical lessons in a classroom and a practical lessons and exercises on the field in Dangeul, Normandy. The historical part of the course focuses on the 2nd armored division during the second world war. The main focus was on the landing in Normandy



and the operation to close the pocket of Falaise.

During the lessons in a classroom we also studied the PROTERRE infantry platoon, which was the basic platoon model we would use during the practical exercises on our field trip.

The fieldtrip on the 22nd of September was the most interesting part of the course. We left for Normandy early in the morning. It took us about two hours by

bus to get to Dangeul. When we got there, we were in an idyllic French village surrounded by fields hedgerows. The hedgerows would prove to be a key terrain feature. Our first activity was breakfast in a nice local brasserie. After the breakfast we started the tactical exercises. The exercises were divided into four workshops. The first was located near the castle of Dangeul where the 2nd armored division had its first contact with the Germans. The cadets were given a company level operation order and 20 minutes to observe the terrain and to plan the execution



of the mission. The mission was to destroy the enemy group holding a crossroads. After the 20 minutes one of the cadets was asked to explain how he would fulfill the mission. One of the most interesting part about the workshops was that after our own planning we were explained how the real battles during the war were conducted. This gave us the opportunity to compare our own solutions to real situations in the same terrain.

The other workshops were similar to the first one. The missions for the others were ambush in a forest, mobile defence, and seizing of a bridge. The real terrain combined with historical examples taught us a lot. The teachers were

active duty officers and they provided us their advice on the situations at hand. The focus of the teachers was on coordination measures, weapon system positions, task organization of the units. In between the workshops the cadets were given the opportunity to enjoy the local food, having lunch in a brasserie in the center of town in Dangeul.

Overall, the day was excellent. We learned a lot during the workshops and in addition the weather was great, and the local food was tasty. From a professional viewpoint it was an opportunity to test our planning skills, while at the same time expand our tactical knowledge thanks to the international environment and the instructors.

Officer Cadet Forsman (Finland) and Officer Cadet Ragusi (Italy)