

The Trun-Chambois Gap

This map, which is oriented to the south-east, depicts the situation on 20 August 1944. A small battlegroup of Canadian troops including the South Alberta Regiment (29th Canadian Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment) with, under command, two companies of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, one company of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment and 103rd Battery, 6th Anti-Tank Regiment, held part of St. Lambert and the high ground north of the village. **1** (You are here. ▲)

The rest of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division controlled the Trun-Magny sector with 4th Armoured Brigade astride the Trun-Vimoutiers road preparing to pursue the enemy to the Seine River. **2**

American troops controlled the area Bourg-St. Leonard to Chambois **3** and the artillery of the 2nd French Armoured Division controlled the roads east of Chambois. **4**

Polish units held positions on the "Maczuga" at Coudehard, Mont Ormel, les Champeaux and Chambois. **5**

On the night of 19-20 August the enemy, concentrated in the Forêt de Gouffern **6** organized a final attempt to break the encirclement, crossing the Dives River at Magny, St. Lambert and Moissy while elements of two Panzer Divisions attacked into the pocket to open an escape route. Units of 3rd and 4th Canadian divisions were unable to relieve those engaged in close combat with the enemy until the fighting died down on 21 August. Small groups of Polish, Canadian and American soldiers, supported by the medium and field artillery regiments, exacted a terrible price in enemy lives and equipment. More than 20,000 German soldiers surrendered in the last 72 hours of the battle but a substantial number of troops reached Vimoutiers and joined the retreat from Normandy. The gap was finally closed on the evening of 21 August 1944.



Major David Currie of the South Alberta Regiment was awarded the Victoria Cross for his inspired leadership while commanding the battlegroup at St. Lambert. (Major Currie stands at the left, holding a pistol.)

The Victoria Cross is the highest decoration in the British Commonwealth, awarded for most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy.

