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# CURRENT NEWS SPECIAL EDITION



EXTRA  
EDITION

PART II of  
Six Parts

D-Day + 40 Years

24 JULY 1984

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WASHINGTON POST 1 June 1984 Pg. 17

## Normandy Braces Itself for Another Invasion

By Michael Dobbs  
Washington Post Foreign Service

UTAH BEACH, France—Forty years after D-Day, Normandy is bracing itself for a new invasion by a foreign army of 30,000 war veterans, journalists, television crews, tourists and secret service agents, with five monarchs, two presidents and a platoon of prime ministers in the vanguard.

But with just a week to go before the official ceremonies commemorating the allied landings which put an end to Hitler's dreams of a 1,000-year Nazi Reich, dissension has broken out in the ranks of the 1984 invading force.

In addition to logistical nightmares, the approach of the anniversary has uncovered delicate issues involving national and individual pride, notably over the decision not to invite West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who was 14 at the time of the landings.

Each of the participants has his own motives for taking part in the biggest commemorative ceremony ever staged in honor of the troops from the United States, Britain and Canada who waded ashore along a 60-mile stretch of Normandy beaches in the early hours of June 6, 1944, under withering German fire.

For the politicians, notably President Reagan, the 40th anniversary of the D-Day landings can be seen as a valuable public relations exercise at a time when election campaigns are in progress on both sides of the Atlantic. For the press and television, it represents one of the most colorful international news events since Britain's royal wedding three years ago.

For the veterans, most of them now well over 60, the ceremonies could turn out to be the last opportunity for rekindling memories about the most momentous day in their lives. According to officials at the U.S. cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, a surprising number are taking advantage of retirement to return for the first time with their wives and families.

"It's their last hurrah," said Philippe Jutras, a Normandy veteran and curator of the D-Day museum in nearby St. Mere Eglise, the first town in France to be liberated by American airborne troops. "In another 10 years, many of them will either be dead or too old to take part" in the 50th anniversary ceremonies.

The prospect of huge numbers of American and British veterans descending on what used to be a relatively quiet area of the Normandy countryside in northern France has been accompanied by a surge of commercialism, some of it in doubtful taste. At Omaha Beach near the American cemetery, where 9,386 servicemen lie buried, a hotel is

offering tiny bags of "sand from the invasion beaches" for \$3 each.

One Normandy businessman, to the fury of most of the local population, is selling scraps of gun metal and ammunition for \$15 apiece. Another is arranging five-minute helicopter trips around the artificial harbor at Arromanches (Port Winston) which was built out of dozens of concrete-filled barges towed across the English Channel.

The row over German participation in the D-Day anniversary was sparked off by newspaper reports alleging that Kohl was rebuffed by the French when he sought, through intermediaries, to receive an invitation to the ceremony. Both Kohl and French President Francois Mitterrand went out of their way at a press conference this week to deny that any such approach had been made by West Germany.

In an effort to still the controversy, Mitterrand praised Kohl for "the spirit of understanding and delicacy" with which West Germany had approached the anniversary ceremonies. He also announced that both he and Kohl will attend ceremonies in September to commemorate more than a million French and German dead at the Battle of Verdun in World War I.

Commentaries in the French press have pointed to the anomaly of excluding Kohl from the D-Day ceremonies while supporting the notion of Franco-German reconciliation which lies at the root of the European dream.

Opposition to an invitation for Kohl had been anticipated from veterans' organizations in France and elsewhere. Raymond Triboulet, president of the French committee to commemorate the landings, said that inviting the Germans to commemorate D-Day made about as much sense as asking the French to celebrate the Battle of Trafalgar.

"I am all for Franco-German reconciliation, but the sixth of June is a celebration of a victory. The Germans do not have a place in it," he said.

Conservative opposition leaders, including former president Valery Giscard d'Estaing and Simone Veil, who was an inmate of Auschwitz, have insisted that Kohl should have been invited.

A second, less public dispute has surrounded the arrangements for the ceremonies, which this year have been taken out of the hands of the French D-Day committee and taken over by the French government. Triboulet, a former resistance leader and the first local government official to be appointed in France by the late Gen. Charles de Gaulle, describes the timetable as disorderly and complicated.

With its gaze firmly fixed on the presidential elections in November, the White House has been anxious to see that photogenic ceremonies coin-

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# Again, he'll cover D-Day

By Michael Cordts

He was there when Gen. George S. Patton Jr. took on a German bomber with a pistol.

He was there when 34,250 American soldiers stormed a stretch of French beach that forever will be known as "Bloody Omaha."

And John H. Thompson, one of the most daring and dogged reporters to cover World War II, is going back to be our man in Normandy on the 40th anniversary of D-Day.

Thompson, known to a generation of generals as "The Beard" when he was the Chicago Tribune's chief war correspondent, will file daily reports for the Sun-Times. His reports begin in this Sunday's Sun-Times in a 12-page special section titled "D-Day Plus 40."

He will take us back 40 years, when he huddled in the numbing cold and fear inside a landing craft as it churned towards the Easy

Red sector of Omaha Beach with soldiers of the 16th Regiment of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division.

Thompson will retrace the steps of the greatest invasion force ever assembled, from the bunkers of London to the combat in the hedgerows around Ste. Mere-Eglise.

He will be there on June 6 when President Reagan, Queen Elizabeth II and four other heads of state pay their respects at the beachheads.

"The worst experience of the war for me was on those beaches," Thompson said. "They were so bloody, so awful. Anybody who survived was just damn lucky."

Thompson, now 75, knows something of war.

He covered every major campaign in Europe. He reported for six months on the Korean War, made four trips to Vietnam, and chronicled Castro's revolution.

As a war correspondent

and then editor, he visited 46 countries before retiring from the Tribune in 1973. He and his wife now operate the Erna E. Thompson Associates real estate firm in Evanston.

The son of a coffee buyer for Montgomery Ward & Co., Thompson was born on the North Side. He attended Williams College in Massachusetts, returning to Chicago intent on a newspaper career.

His first job was with the City News Bureau in 1931, and three years later he joined the Tribune. He covered America's preparation for war after Pearl Harbor, and was sent to England in 1942. He was 33 years old.

Thompson quickly established a reputation—first with his beard.

He grew the whiskers aboard a transport ship awaiting the invasion of North Africa. He was the soldier or correspondent in the Army with whiskers and they soon became his

trademark.

He was known as "The Beard," "Beaver," "The Mobile Hedgerow" and "Gen. Electric Whiskers."

It was his boldness, and a touch for the human interest story, that led to his selection as president of the press corps attached to the 1st Army.

In Algeria, he became the first correspondent to make a combat jump with paratroopers. It was while in Africa that he met Patton and witnessed the general's famous confrontation with the bomber.

"Patton was free and easy with the correspondents," Thompson said. "He talked a lot, cursed even more."

He made a second parachute jump, at night behind enemy lines with the 82nd Airborne in Sicily. That jump earned him a Purple Heart for a cracked rib and a twisted knee.

His unit was scattered in the jump, blown miles off course by high winds. At one point during the two-day battle, Thompson buried his notes and typewriter when it appeared Germans would overrun his position.

For assisting the wounded during the battle, Thompson became the

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## NORMANDY...Continued

cide with breakfast-time television back home. A speech by Reagan at the Pointe du Hoc, scene of a heroic assault by 225 U.S. Rangers to seize a gun emplacement at the top of a 100-foot cliff, will be beamed back live by all major U.S. networks Wednesday morning.

Pool arrangements between U.S., French and British television stations will provide live coverage by over 30 camera crews of ceremonies at the American cemetery above Omaha Beach and at Utah Beach. In addition to Reagan, the international ceremony at Utah Beach will be attended by President Mitterrand, Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, Kings Olav of Norway and Baudouin of Belgium, the Grand Duke of Luxembourg and Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

Each network is planning to deploy its big guns,

LOS ANGELES TIMES  
1 June 1984 Pg. 4

## Dole to Attend Ceremonies in Italy

From Reuters

WASHINGTON—Sen. Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.), a decorated veteran who was severely wounded during World War II, left Thursday for Italy, where he will attend ceremonies marking the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Rome. Dole was named by President Reagan to head a 16-member U.S. delegation to the June 2 activities.

from Walter Cronkite broadcasting live from Pointe du Hoc for CBS to Ted Koppel hosting a one-hour reconstruction of the D-Day events on ABC's Nightline. The biggest effort is being mounted by NBC, which has hired its own satellite ground station and is fielding 12 camera crews.

## D-Day remains a dominant symbol for the Western world

There is one image above all that shapes the nature of the modern world: D-Day.

As dawn began to break on the English Channel on June 6, 1944, the dim outline of dark vessels could be seen. When the light grew, an incredible sight loomed—ships as far as the eye could see, literally as far as the eye could see. Five thousand ships in all, the largest armada in the history of the world!

What happened after that was brutal, fascinating, heroic and bloody—but was foreordained. Scared and brave soldiers stormed the Normandy beaches—Americans, Canadians, Brits, Poles, Dutchmen, Frenchmen. Some of them were torn to bits. Heavy artillery pulverized the verdant countryside.

Thousands of planes covered the sky like a horde of thrumming locusts. The beachhead was secured, then expanded. Artificial harbors were floated into place. Ultimately, millions of men played a role in reconquering Europe and in winning World War II.

But it was foreordained at dawn on D-Day. For a message went out that morning that was as clear as if it had been sent out in Morse code blinker by the battleship USS Arkansas. It is a message that still reverberates today, even as it is regularly challenged.

The message is this: There is a free world. It is led by the United States. It stands for a moral idea. When pushed too far, the nations of that free world—nations always thought of as a little decadent, always thought of as indecisive and self-delusory—can act. When they act they can act with an industrial potency and technological wizardry beyond belief. And they can prevail in the cause of human liberty.

That picture—freedom's mighty armada in a stormy sea—remains with us yet. It is still the root of the modern equation. It energizes what today we call the Western Alliance, which includes, interestingly enough, all of our enemies on D-Day: Germany, Japan and Italy. It is an alliance, which, despite all the talk of economic and political problems, is still the greatest, mightiest, most prosperous, freest collection of nations the world has ever seen. And we Western allies remain together because in our mind's eye we remember what dawn looked like on June 6, 1944. We still believe we can get our act together if we must.

The same image sets the modern stage for our adversaries. The Soviets—our allies against the Nazis—know that for all the silliness and vacillation and demagoguery that the democratic world can produce, it also will produce a Franklin Roosevelt and a Winston Churchill and such leaders will use steel if they have to. Truth be told, that is why we have had peace between the big powers for four decades.

The images of D-Day even shape our arguments these days. It is said by some that World War II was the last just war. It is said that the world's not like that anymore, that Americans shouldn't be so involved anymore, that maybe we're not the good guys anymore, and, most important, it is said that we and our allies can't act like that again, even if we wanted to.

It was that argument that split the Democratic Party over Vietnam, and it splits many of us still. I know that when Gary Hart said that we couldn't even assert ourselves to help out in Central America, he lost me. It splits conservatives, too: There are "global unilateralists" who say we can't count on the Europeans anymore and we have to go it alone.

But for the moment at least—and probably for more than just the moment—the image of D-Day still prevails and serves as our linchpin. We argue among ourselves, and the allies argue among themselves, about this policy or that, often nastily, as democratic societies will do. But when all is said and done, we still usually act in some broad concert, as with the missile deployment last year.

We do this because in the back of our minds is a picture we have seen so many times in stock film footage. It is a picture of ships as far as the eye can see blinking out a message saying there is a free world, that it is led by the United



**Ben  
Wattenberg**

### D-DAY...Continued

first war correspondent to be awarded the Medal of Freedom. He also vowed he'd never make another parachute jump.

With two invasions under his belt, Thompson requested to be stationed aboard a command ship on D-Day "because you can't get the word out to the world when you're pinned down on a beach."

The Army thought it would be safer to send combat-tested correspondents in with the troops, a decision Thompson later appreciated. He went ashore with the third wave of troops 60 minutes into D-Day, the first reporter on Omaha Beach, the site of 90 percent of American casualties on D-Day.

It would be two days before he could file his first story from Normandy—one paragraph over the radio. Of the six reporters who hit Omaha Beach that day, only Thompson survives.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to the cause was a ruse by which he and other correspondents bypassed Army restrictions on their travel. They wrote their own travel orders, signed by an imagi-

nary Lt. Harry Zombs (short for Zombie).

Like all reporters, Thompson likes to tell the story about the big one that got away.

It was one of the top scoops of the war; the long-awaited coming together of American and Russian armies on German soil. It happened on April 26, 1945 and Thompson was there.

When scouts reported the first contact with the Russians, Thompson rode through 25 miles of uncharted territory to be the first correspondent to witness a link up.

He was ferried across the Elbe River by a Russian. In the middle of toasts all around, in walked United Press Correspondent Annie Stringer, whose husband, also a reporter, had been killed in Normandy.

She had persuaded a young artillery spotter pilot to fly her to meet the Russians.

"It was unbelievable," Thompson said. "She took a couple of pictures and flew off to Paris. I went back to camp and the [military] censors wouldn't let me file the story."

States, that it will be involved, and that it will go to steel if it must.

Because we still see that, we probably won't have to do it again, and over the sweep of time, human liberty will survive on this planet.

## Row over D-Day town's medal for ex-SS general

Paris (Reuter) - A row erupted yesterday, on the eve of celebrations for the fortieth anniversary of D-Day, over the presentation of a medal by a French official to a former general of Hitler's elite Waffen SS troops.

M Bernard Roquet, a member of the centre-right UDF party and Deputy Mayor of Bayeux, presented the town's honorary medal to Herr Heinz Harmel, ex-commander of the 10th SS Panzer Division, at a discreet ceremony during a pilgrimage to Normandy by a group of German veterans on May 22.

News of the presentation, which has just emerged, provoked angry protests yesterday, six days before allied heads of state are due in Normandy to commemorate the D-Day landings.

M Yves Jouffa, president of the French Human Rights League, who was deported during the war for his part in the Resistance, said the presentation was scandalous and the person responsible was "either a villain or an idiot".

M Jouffa told a television

interviewer: "Of course there must be reconciliation between French and Germans. But it has to be clear that no reconciliation is possible with former Nazis."

The medal shows, on one side, Bayeux Cathedral; on the other an impression of the Allied landings.

Herr Harmel said later in an interview that he had not committed any war crime and that he looked upon the medal as a token of friendship between France and Germany.

"I had nothing to do with the SS troops who were guarding concentration camps," he told a French radio station. "Had I committed a single war crime, I would certainly have been asked to account for it at the Nuremberg trial."

He had always behaved as a regular soldier and deplored that all SS troops were viewed indiscriminately.

M Roquet faced a demonstration by local communist representatives at the town hall yesterday.

"When I handed over this medal, I was unaware that a former SS man was involved,"

he told journalists. He had earlier described the presentation as aimed at "forgetting what happened in 1944" and strengthening Franco-German reconciliation.

But the ceremony in Bayeux, the first major French town to be liberated by the Allies, provoked caustic press comment.

*Le Monde* recalled that the 10th SS Panzer Division had fought in Poland and was sent to Normandy on June 23 to contain the British advance towards Caen. Welcoming former SS men was an act that would impede reconciliation.

"There are some blood stains that one cannot remove, even if it's to promote tourism on the battlefields."

The Communist *L'Humanité* headlined its report: "Assassins at the scene of their crimes" and said of the German visitors: "They weren't weaving a tapestry in Bayeux 40 years ago. They were there with guns blazing."

*Le Quotidien*, a right-wing daily, thought the medal presentation was a moral error and a political mistake.

### AFGHANISTAN

#### Normandy Ceremonies Aimed at Minimizing Soviet Role LD010540 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0427 GMT 1 Jun 84

[Text] Kabul, May 31, BAKHTAR — A BIA commentator writes: The 40th anniversary of the landing of the forces of the Western allies in Normandy harbor during World War II is to be celebrated in France in the near future.

A number of leaders of the Western countries are to be gathered on that occasion. Along with other leaders, Ronald Reagan, Francois Mitterrand, and Queen Elizabeth also would [as received] participate in this celebration.

The main objective of this gathering is to minimize the unforgettable Soviet heroic victories over fascism, and instead declare that it was the Western countries who caused the Hitler forces to be defeated on the western front.

However, it is impossible to hide historical events to fit selfish wishes, especially such victories as the Red Army of the Soviet Union [word indistinct] upon the Nazi forces.

What is more interesting is that before departing for Europe, Reagan, bragging on his four years of administration, said that during this period the Western allies were able to raise their power to a secure and mighty level needed for the so-called European security, and called the deployment of the US nuclear missiles in Western Europe a security umbrella for his NATO allies.

Ronald Reagan has not learned anything from Hitler's experience, who also used to roar in the same manner that "might is right." Humanity was fortunate that nuclear weapons were not invented at that time.

Never can there be more destructive a mistake than that a US president perceive that to put Europe under the shadow of nuclear missiles is equivalent of securing the NATO allies.

The Soviet Union, who proved to be the hero and a true defender of peace during World War II, today has become the mightiest fortress of peace, not only for the Soviets but also for all peace-loving and working people as well as all the forces of peace and socialism and the national liberation movements of our planet.

## Forty years later, the message of D-Day reverberates today

WASHINGTON.

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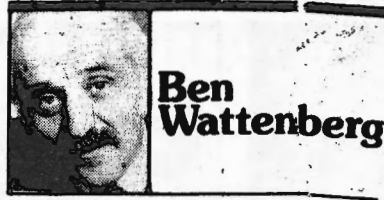
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self-delusionary — can act. When they act they can act with an industrial potency and technological wizardry beyond belief. And they can prevail in the cause of human liberty.

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We do this because in the back of our minds is a picture we have seen so many times in stock film footage. It is a picture of ships as far as the eye can see blinking out a message saying there is a Free World, that it is led by the United States, that it will be involved and that it will go to steel if it must.

Because we still see that we probably won't have to do it again, and over the sweep of time, human liberty will survive on this planet.

NEW YORK TIMES 8 June 1984

### Two Roosevelt Sons In Normandy Graves

The cemetery at Colville in Normandy that President and Mrs. Reagan visited Wednesday is the resting place for more than 9,300 Americans, including Quentin Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt Jr., sons of President Theodore Roosevelt who were killed in the two world wars.

Quentin Roosevelt, the youngest of the President's six children, was a United States Army flyer. He was

killed in aerial combat on July 14, 1918, at the age of 20. He was buried by the German Army in the town of Chamery, where his plane crashed.

Theodore Roosevelt Jr., the President's oldest son, served as an infantry officer in World War I. In the years between the wars, he was elected to the New York Legislature and ran unsuccessfully in 1924 for Governor against the Democratic incumbent, Alfred E. Smith. He also served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Governor of Puerto Rico and later as Governor of the Philippines. In 1934, he left Government service to

became chairman of the Board of the American Express Company.

In April 1941, the Army recalled Mr. Roosevelt, who had remained in the Reserves, to active duty. As a brigadier general, he participated in the Tunisian and Italian campaigns, and on June 6, 1944, he led the Fourth Infantry Division's landing on Utah Beach. On July 12, while serving as military governor of Cherbourg, he died of a heart attack. He was 56 years old. After the war, his widow had Quentin's body moved to the Normandy cemetery to lie near his brother's grave.

SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS NEWS 2 June 1984

# WWII's fateful decisions

Forty years ago on June 6, a momentous event in world history occurred.

The Allied forces in World War II conducted the largest military operation ever known — the cross-channel invasion of Europe from England.

There were many decisions having a bearing on that unprecedented amphibious and airborne assault. In addition to the world famous heads of state, there were many others, including military and naval commanders, who played critically important parts in the drama.

The names Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin already have taken prominent places in history. In addition, U.S. citizens of note included Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Generals George Marshall, Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley and Henry Arnold, Admirals Ernest King and William Leahy and many others.

In reviewing the preparations for, and launching of, Operation Overlord, three American decision-makers stand out especially in the success of the action and subsequent victory.



Glen W.  
Martin

President Franklin Roosevelt not only bridged many gaps between Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin but also held steadfastly to the cross-channel concept in the face of Churchill's long-standing preference for a Mediterranean approach.

But perhaps one of Roosevelt's greatest contributions to Overlord was his decision on the eventual assignment of Marshall and Eisenhower.

That was a difficult decision. Both men were highly respected by American and Allied associates, political and military. Each had unique strengths.

Marshall had displayed genius in gaining government support for and then organizing the gigantic U.S. military and industrial establishment. As Stalin was to say later: "World War II was a war of

production."

Eisenhower also had displayed genius. He had acted successfully at the highest command level in the Mediterranean with complicated Allied relationships.

Both were considered exceptionally well qualified and deserving of supreme command in Overlord and conducting the war to a successful conclusion afterward.

Eisenhower was quoted in later years as saying the quality of "selflessness," in his opinion, was the most important attribute of a commander. "Selflessness" epitomized Marshall's habitual approach to any problem.

In late 1943, when a selection had to be made in the interest of orderly final preparations, Marshall refused to advance himself for the post of supreme commander. He considered that decision to be solely for the commander-in-chief.

As Roosevelt's right hand in the global war effort, Marshall would be missed sorely in Washington but his spectacular performance shouldn't be the basis for penalizing him. At stake was the biggest and most difficult military job yet to

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COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE-TELEGRAPH 2 June 1984 Pg. 8B

## Soldiers to lead ceremony marking D-day anniversary

Fort Carson soldiers will mark the 40th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy with a ceremony in Memorial Park and a banquet.

The memorial service and parade will begin at 10 a.m. Wednesday in the park, and will feature the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry. That was the first unit of the 4th Infantry Division, now based at Fort Carson, to hit Utah Beach during the invasion.

The service will include a cannon salute, music by the 4th Infantry Division Band and review of troops by former soldiers who participated in the D-day assault. At 10:10 a.m. as Maj. Gen. Gerald Bartlett, Fort Carson commander, lays the wreath on the base of the memorial in Memorial Park, church bells throughout Colorado Springs are scheduled to be rung.

The dinner, hosted by the post and the Association of the U.S. Army, will begin at

6:30 p.m. at the Clarion Hotel. Gen. Bartlett will speak at the banquet.

Two persons who were with the 4th Infantry Division during the invasion of Normandy will be honored at the banquet. They are retired Col. Lawson Magruder Jr. of Austin, Texas, who was with the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry, and Virgil Radtke, a veteran from Loveland, who was assigned to the same unit.

Also being honored is retired 1st Sgt. David H. McNerney of Crosby, Texas, a Medal of Honor recipient, who was with the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, in Vietnam.

Fort Carson will be represented in France on Wednesday by a five-person color guard and Sgt. 1st Class George Balthazor and Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Meyers.

The color guard will participate in ceremonies Sunday in Luxembourg to dedicate a 4th Infantry Division war monument.

# Return to Normandy brings back memories

My father and his friends used to talk about World War I when I was growing up in the 1930s. World War I was barely 15 years past, but the battles at Chateau Thierry and Vimy Ridge seemed like ancient history to me then. Now D-Day, June 6, 1944, seems like only yesterday.

The talk of World War I bored me as a child. I can only guess that those of us who took part in World War II and are talking so much about it these days are boring a lot of young people to whom World War II seems as World War I did to me, ancient history. But maybe not.

Is it my imagination because I've lived through it, or have we really aged less in the 40 years since 1944 than we did in the 15 years between 1920 and 1935? I'm almost certain my children know more about my war than I knew about my father's.

Is that possible? I think it is. We criticize modern communications, and television in particular, but television has made more information readily available to more people than ever before. Sixteen-year-old kids today know the movie stars of my movie-going days as well as I do. My mother talked of Vilma Banky



**Andy  
Rooney**

and Pola Negri, but they were just names out of Hollywood's medieval days to me. On the other hand, Spencer Tracy, John Wayne and Ingrid Bergman are as well known to my children as they are to me. They've seen every movie any of them ever made.

They've seen all the pictures and read all the magazine stories about my war, too. They've seen television shows about it.

It seems as though there are more concrete things about the two wars you can point to that also suggest less change in the past 40 years than in the 15 before World War II. The vehicles of World War I were of the horse-and-buggy vintage, having been designed only a few years before and just after the automobile itself was invented. The trucks, jeeps and tanks are more sophisticated today, but they don't look dramati-

cally different from those used in World War II. When it comes to some of them, there's evidence the new ones aren't even as good.

Aircraft today are bigger and faster, but the average person couldn't date an airplane within 20 years. A B-17 flying over any city in the U.S. wouldn't bring any attention to itself because of its appearance. Certainly, there was a greater difference between the open cockpit biplane of Eddie Rickenbacker and the P-51 Mustang than there is between the P-51 and the F-14.

The appearance of the ordinary soldier changed more between World War I and World War II than it has since then. In World War I, the soldiers, called doughboys, wore leggings wrapped around their calves to their knees. Their helmets were shallow, saucer-like tin hats with a narrow brim on them that wouldn't have protected a man from a slingshot. Today's GIs wear the same helmets used by the soldiers in World War II and call by the same name, GIs.

I'm going back to the beaches I knew as a young reporter for The Stars and Stripes for the D-Day Anniversary events. I'm nervous about going back to Omaha Beach. The place holds a haunted house full of memories for me. I saw everything great and terrible that one man can do for and to another. I never got

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

## DECISIONS...Continued

come along in history. It was the ultimate duty and challenge — the reason for being of any senior military citizen.

On the other hand, Eisenhower's earlier success in the Mediterranean could provide priceless continuity to the Allied effort — hard to achieve at best.

Finally, in Cairo after earlier conferences with Allies in both Cairo and Tehran, Roosevelt made the decision. He kept Marshall in Washington for the global effort and chose Eisenhower as supreme commander of Overlord.

The second key decision-maker was Marshall himself. It is probable that Overlord would never have been sustained as the main Allied thrust against Germany if it had not been for Marshall's force of will and articulation.

An unmatched example occurred during the Cairo conference in November, 1943. Churchill, with the

backing of the British Combined Chiefs of Staff, was pressing heatedly and oratorically for an Allied assault against Rhodes.

Marshall, knowing that such a move would detract from Overlord and either delay or weaken that major thrust, said:

"... Not one American soldier is going to die on that (expletive deleted) beach."

That was an unequivocal statement that prevailed. It is possible also that it may have been a factor in Roosevelt's later decision, although Churchill was thought not to have held a grudge against Marshall.

Eisenhower, of the three American decision-makers under consideration here, had the toughest job of all. He could not rely on Canute-like powers but his decisions had to be framed by the relentless movement of moon, cloud and sea plus the vagaries of wind and rain.

Enemy reaction was another un-

certainly. Although the Allied deception plan was believed to be successful, and aerial reconnaissance seemed to confirm that, perhaps the Axis powers had their own deception plan not yet discerned.

To make the situation more complex, Eisenhower was hearing conflicting recommendations from his staff and commanders. Those were on vital aspects of the operation.

The window for a successful launch of Overlord was narrow. Weeks could pass before another suitable combination of darkness, weather conditions and sea state might permit a second try.

As it turned out, Eisenhower made two critical and correct decisions. The first was to delay the invasion 24 hours because of the poor weather outlook. The second was to launch the next day without further delay.

Ike earned his pay on June 6, 1944.

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# Presidential timing

COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE-  
TELEGRAPH

2 June 1984 Pg. 8A

## D-day commemoration, Olympic festivities well-timed for Reagan

KNT News Wire

WASHINGTON — One of the top officials of the president's re-election campaign wondered jokingly whether the political gods had somehow timed the June 6, 1944, Allied invasion of Europe for Ronald Reagan's benefit 40 years later.

This Wednesday, when the exhausted Democratic contenders have finished slogging through the final primaries, morning television is to beam live to the nation President Reagan at Normandy's beaches and cemetery, emotionally commemorating the anniversary of D-day.

"We didn't plan it that way," another campaign strategist said with a smile. "But it is a happy accident."

The date, of course, could not have been planned. But taking advantage of the five-hour time difference between Europe and the U.S. East Coast, White House image director Michael Deaver carefully timed Reagan's appearance for the widely watched morning television shows.

The contrast between the reports of the Democratic wars in California and New Jersey and the president's speech on the cliff at Point du Hoc, France, where 225 U.S. Rangers captured a vital German gun emplacement, won't be lost on the voters, campaign officials hope.

Indeed, seeking that contrast has been at the heart of the president's campaign so far, as White House officials have deftly planned Reagan's travels, speeches and appearances as a counterpoint to the Democratic primary race since early this year.

Another high point for the president's strategists is scheduled for nine days after what promises to be a raucous national convention in San

Francisco, when the Democrats will choose their nominee. On July 28, on live television, the president is to open the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

As one of Reagan's top managers put it, "We have provided a good contrast in this race: Everybody is running for president. Reagan IS the president. Everybody wants to be the leader. He IS a leader."

Reagan's finely tuned political instincts, his ideology and consistency on the basic issues, his optimism and conviviality and his well-known television mastery have contributed to the contrast with the battling, often bickering Democrats.

Detroit pollster Robert Teeter, who consults for Republicans, has said that beside the president, the Democrats look like "kids fighting." And North Carolina pollster and campaign consultant Walter DeVries, who works for Democrats, says Reagan "sort of stands above it all."

But in addition to Reagan's personal ability to assert his leadership, his lieutenants in the White House and his re-election organization have deployed the president at crucial times and places this year to neutralize the Democrats and escape the fallout of their campaign.

On his first trip of 1984, three days before his formal re-election announcement, Reagan headed to Atlanta, where the Amway Corp. helped put on a rousingly patriotic "Spirit of America" rally tailored to the president's candidacy. And while there he spoke to southern Republican leaders.

Because the president is the first incumbent since Dwight Eisenhower who has had no primary opposition, his trips have been considered non-political and have been largely paid

for by taxpayers, except for those small portions paid for by the Republicans when he appeared before their groups. Only two of his nine trips this year — to Iowa and to Colorado Springs, Colo. — have been financed by his re-election committee. The White House has taken the position that a "political trip" is one in which he speaks for his own re-election.

As Democrats opened the 1984 battles, Reagan stole some of their thunder with a superbly delivered State of the Union address on Jan. 25, when he sounded his re-election theme: "America is back, standing tall." And on a Sunday evening, Jan. 29, his five-minute re-election declaration was seen on prime-time television just before the late news.

In early February, White House and campaign officials staged another made-for-television scene, when the president journeyed to his home town, Dixon, Ill., to celebrate his 73rd birthday.

On the day of the Iowa Democratic caucuses, Feb. 20, the president made what has been his only wholly political trip of the year. He journeyed to Waterloo, Iowa, and Des Moines, where he began his career as a radio broadcaster.

Some officials have criticized the decision to make that trip because they argued that it "lowered the president to the level of the Democrats who were fighting in the mud."

On March 1 Reagan spoke in Washington to a conference of American Legion women, on March 2 to a meeting of conservatives and on March 6, the Tuesday after the New Hampshire primary, Reagan journeyed to Columbus, Ohio, to speak to evangelicals, and to New York, to speak to Republicans.

### MEMORIES...Continued

over learning that war was not all bad. If you lived through it, there were things about it that were better than anything else you might ever experience. The relationship between men depending on each other for their lives and dedicated to a single purpose was the unique experience of a lifetime.

Now, I'm pleased that we're all

remembering those men who stormed ashore 40 years ago June 6th, but all the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony Wednesday worries me. I think it's proper that the president go there, but he should take every care to go as president and not as a candidate for re-election.

We all like to associate with great events ... as I'm doing by writing this column. It must have occurred to

both Senator Hart and Senator Mondale that it would be to their political advantage to make an appearance in Normandy on the D-Day Anniversary, too. We don't have much to thank them for. We can thank them for having the taste and judgment not to go.

■ Rooney is a syndicated columnist, author and a television personality.

## 'Overlord': Beginning of the end for Hitler's world

By PAUL VARIAN

For the United States and its allies, it was the beginning of the end of World War II.

Two generations have passed since the D-Day invasion of Europe — a staggering sea and air assault of the heavily fortified, crescent-shaped Normandy beachfront of German-occupied France that led to the fall of Adolf Hitler's Nazi empire.

The Allied offensive that began June 6, 1944, shattered Hitler's "Atlantic Wall" and was the first big step in a bloody march to Berlin that ended 11 months later with Germany's surrender.

Code named "Overlord" and involving nearly 3 million soldiers — mostly American, British and Canadian — fighting under the unified command of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, D-Day began with the bombing of German coastal batteries at 12:15 a.m.

By 1:30 a.m., the first of the "Screaming Eagles" paratroopers from the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division — their faces blackened with burnt coal — began dropping down behind Utah Beach through a thick cover of clouds. Some were shot from the sky during routine German anti-aircraft exercises.

The 154,000-man landing force, aided by an ingenious network of artificial harbors and protective breakwaters, struck in waves at five beachheads under a veil of naval and aerial bombardment from 600 warships and 11,000 fighter planes.

The first stormed Omaha Beach at 6:30 a.m. and met vicious resistance from well-entrenched German positions in the bluffs above.

Scores drowned or were cut down by machine gun and mortar fire before they reached shore, creating a floating obstacle course for the men behind them.

The bodies of more dead and wounded quickly littered the flat, barbed-wired and heavily mined beach.

"With the excitement, the fear, our knees buckled," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Turner of the 116th Infantry, who was wounded. His brother was killed.

"After some shots were fired, though, we were over that. We had confidence. We felt we could beat anyone, anyone. The first German division we met, we demolished them."

It was the first actual combat for the 116th, made up of National Guard units from Maryland and Virginia, and a quarter of its men died. It was attached to the 1st Infantry Division, "The Big Red One" of recent Hollywood fame that had fought valiantly in North Africa and Sicily.

The battle "was won by the initiative and courage of corporals and sergeants and second lieutenants and captains on the beach who took the attitude, 'We can stay here and get killed or move forward and get killed,'" said D-Day historian Ray Skates, a professor at Southern Mississippi University.

The two units suffered an estimated 3,000 casualties in a desperate advance from the beachfront that took until noon. The casualty count was almost identical for the paratroopers from the 101st and 82nd Airborne.

"You are about to embark on a great crusade," Eisenhower told his invasion force before it sailed across the English Channel in 4,000 troop transports buffeted by heavy seas and powerful winds. "Good luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking."

When he was handed command of Overlord in London on Jan. 14, 1944, Eisenhower was assigned a mission striking in its single-minded simplicity:

"Enter the continent of Europe and . . . undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces."

But strategy for D-Day evolved from months of incredibly intricate planning that first required convincing the British that invading southern France was preferable to beginning the march on Germany from the distant Balkan Peninsula.

The invasion site was the most heavily fortified coastal entry point of Hitler's "Fortress Europe" and the Nazi dictator had declared: "No power on Earth can drive us out of this region against our will."

The attack initially was planned for June 5, but had to be postponed because of extremely severe weather, a factor that wound up working in the Allies' favor.

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, the scourge of the British in North Africa and now the commander of Germany's

Channel defenses, had returned home to Obersalburg June 5 for his wife's birthday, convinced weather conditions would delay the invasion for at least two weeks.

He was informed of the attack at 7:30 a.m. by telephone, an hour after the first landing and immediately headed back to Normandy. It was another two hours before word got to a still-slumbering Hitler.

By the time Rommel got the German high command to agree to his plan for a Panzer tank counterattack while the invaders were still pinned down on the beaches of Normandy, it was too late for the advance to be stopped.

The invaders managed to clear the beaches in small groups and, backed by naval gunfire, were able to move on the elevated German bunkers — only to find that their big guns, in many cases, already had been moved inland.

In some of the fiercest fighting, Army Rangers scaled sheer cliffs at Pointe-du-Hoc while being pummeled by the Germans with rocks and grenades.

Total D-Day casualties for the Allies amounted to an estimated 10,000, including about 2,500 dead, which was lighter than had been expected.

In the sunrise-to-sunset fighting in subsequent days, the Allies moved slowly forward through Normandy's thick inland hedgerows, amassing a steadily climbing list of casualties on the road to Paris and, ultimately, Berlin.

In the first week, said historian Skates, 1,816 Americans were killed, 9,450 wounded and 7,688 were listed as missing — many of them later determined to have died.

# Marshall: The general who swayed Churchill

By ROBERT McNEILL

WASHINGTON — Had it not been for one hard-headed American general, Wednesday's events commemorating the 40th anniversary of D-Day might be on some Aegean or Adriatic beach in the Balkan peninsula instead of on the Normandy coast of France.

It was Gen. George C. Marshall, a career soldier who later served as secretary of defense and state, who insisted the Allies drive into Nazi Germany with a massive smash across the English Channel, across France, and across the Rhine River.

Marshall, U.S. chief of staff throughout World War II, convinced President Franklin Roosevelt that a cross-Channel invasion was the shortest and cheapest route because it was the most direct route — a straight stab for the jugular.

Then Marshall and FDR persuaded Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his British military chiefs to drop their search for an alternative to "Overlord," the frontal assault against Hitler's Atlantic Wall that some considered an intolerable gamble.

And so it was that American, British and Canadian troops fought their way ashore on the Normandy beaches, across France and Belgium and into Germany, ending the war in Europe 11 months later.

Research by Forrest C. Pogue, Marshall's biographer and a U.S. Army combat historian in World War II, indicates that had it not been for Marshall, the Western Allies might have taken a southern route through the Balkans — "the soft underbelly of Europe" — and thus prolonged the war.

At meetings with Roosevelt and his military leaders, Churchill and Gen. Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the British Imperial General Staff, spoke of landing troops in the Eastern Mediterranean, then driving north into Germany via Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

But Marshall, said Pogue, rejected all alternatives to a cross-Channel attack and persevered at every opportunity for a straightforward assault on the French coast by an Allied army based in England.

"It was Marshall who, day in and day out, kept hammering away at the cross-Channel concept," Pogue said in an interview at his office at the Smithsonian Institution, where he is director of the Eisenhower Institute of Historical Research. "He knew that was the quickest way to get at the main German power."

The casualty-conscious British were wary of invading across the Channel. Every able-bodied Englishman was involved in the war effort. There was no reserve manpower pool such as existed in the United States. Casualties could not be replaced.

When World War II began, Britons still were recovering from World War I in which a generation of English manhood was mangled in prolonged trench warfare.

Churchill feared the English Channel would be turned into "a river of blood."

"The British had an argument" said Pogue, "a good argument from their standpoint."

Pogue said Churchill and his military chiefs considered not only a smaller operation in the Eastern Mediterranean, but also wearing down Germany by attrition — bombing it to bits with the hope the German people would end the war themselves by revolting against Hitler.

Marshall had first sought to cross the Channel with a small force in 1942 but could not, for lack of men and equipment. Instead, the Western Allies undertook a lesser challenge and invaded North Africa in 1942. In 1943, Washington and London opted to invade Sicily and Italy instead of a cross-Channel operation.

Churchill stubbornly plugged away with proposals for more troop landings in the Mediterranean theater. Even Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, Allied commander in the Mediterranean at the time, became sympathetic, "but Ike's attitude changed enormously once he was named to command Overlord," Pogue said.

Marshall and his people in the War Department, including Secretary Henry Stimson, a strong backer of a cross-Channel attack, feared Churchill would



UPI file photo

**GEORGE MARSHALL**  
...rejected Balkans invasion

undermine them at the White House, Pogue said.

"They were never sure that Roosevelt would not, in a private conference with Churchill, give away part of what they had won.

Churchill also toyed with the notion of invading Norway. Then, as the November 1943 Cairo conference approached, Pogue said, "Marshall could see what was coming up," that Churchill was going to continue urging more Mediterranean pushes.

"That's when Marshall called a halt. Absolutely."

The move was prompted by Churchill's Cairo proposal that the Allies invade the Greek island of Rhodes, in the Eastern Mediterranean at the foot of Turkey, presumably as a stepping-stone toward a southern entry into Europe.

"I have a tape of my interview with Marshall where he recalls what he and Churchill said to each other," Pogue said, quoting Marshall:

"I remember Churchill standing up with his hands on his lapels, and he says, 'Muskets must flame.' All kinds of oratory like that. I just said to him; 'You can do whatever you like with the British, but not one American soldier is going to die on that goddamn beach.'"

And thus ended any thought of the Allies invading Rhodes.

# Soviets Say Reagan Exploiting D-Day Ceremony for Votes

## Russian Historians Maintain 1944 Invasion Is Overrated

By Dusko Doder  
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, June 1—In their all-out propaganda war against President Reagan, the Russians have opened yet another front.

On the heels of its Olympic boycott, the announcements of new Soviet nuclear missile deployments, the beating up of a U.S. diplomat and other manifestations of hostility, Moscow is assailing Reagan over western plans to celebrate the 40th anniversary of allied landings in Normandy.

The gist of the Soviet argument is that the ceremonies are a part of Reagan's reelection campaign and an "American show" designed to demonstrate that the United States had saved Europe from Hitler and was now protecting it from communism.

Over the past two months, the Russians have been hitting the president at every opportunity and at all fronts with a level of hostility clearly designed to discredit him.

The unifying theme of all these actions appears to reflect a Soviet effort to show the president as an incompetent politician unable to manage Soviet-American relations. By implication, Moscow seems to be suggesting that an American leader capable of dealing with the crucial issues between two nuclear superpowers should not be given another term in office.

A flurry of articles analyzing the importance of the Normandy invasion on the outcome of World War II constitutes more than an exercise in historical revisionism.

One of the commentaries departed from the main theme to the extent of making a comparison between Hitler and Reagan. The two men were shown to be similar because both allegedly displayed the attitudes of a "maniac killer."

As if to underscore the importance attached to the historical arguments, the authorities here organized a press conference with senior Soviet historians today on the subject of the World War II "Second Front."

The main themes that emerged were that western leaders delayed the offensive against Nazi Germany for three years to let Germany inflict maximum damage on the Soviet Union. The Normandy invasion was decided upon only when the West became afraid that the Russians would beat Hitler by themselves.

"In 1944 it became clear to the ruling circles of the United States and England that the Soviet Union was in a position to defeat the fascist German forces by itself and liberate the nations of Europe," historian Yuri Plotnikov wrote.

The West, he continued, exaggerates the importance of the Normandy invasion. "In scale, size and achievement, the military actions of the allies in France in summer of 1944 bear absolutely no comparison with the offensive of Soviet forces."

That summer, he said, the Soviet forces destroyed 96 German divisions and killed 917,000 troops. The allies destroyed 35 divisions and killed 294,000 Germans.

Another Soviet commentary, in the weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, said the Normandy invasion was carried out "in easy conditions and without any real resistance from the German forces on the coast." The U.S., British and Canadian forces were said to have suffered relatively light casualties. The commentary said about 50,000 allied troops were killed during 70 days of fighting. That total was less than the number of persons annihilated in the bombing raids on the German city of Dresden the next year, it added.

Soviet historian D.F. Kramenov, who covered the invasion as a Soviet war correspondent, said today that the allied move was a significant one because it shortened the war. But he made it clear that he thought the Soviet Union would have defeated Hitler without the invasion.

He criticized the West for consistently diminishing the role of the Soviet Army in World War II and said that "with each passing decade the anti-Soviet tone of these arguments has increased."

Such western assessments, he continued, are part of an "ideological war" against the Soviet Union which, he said, played the decisive role in World War II. He and other historians dismissed western offensives against the Germans in Africa and Italy as minor operations.

A military historian, Major Gen. Ivan Krupchenko, said that of Nazi Germany's 13 million casualties, 10 million were on the eastern front with the Soviet Union.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

# As Allies Recall D-Day, Russians Say It Was Just a Sideshow to Their War

By JOHN F. BURNS

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, June 1 — As Western Allies prepare to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the D-day landings in Normandy, the Soviet Union is pressing a counteroffensive aimed at showing that the invasion was of relatively minor significance when compared with the Red Army's battles against the Germans and the Soviet drive to Berlin.

Defense Minister Dmitri F. Ustinov has been joined by Soviet generals and military historians to assert that the "historical truth" is the war was decided on the Soviet-German front — at a cost in casualties that made Western losses seem light by comparison.

Soviet officers and writers have long contended that the Normandy landings were intentionally delayed by Western intrigues aimed at pushing a still greater burden onto the Russians, and that Allied commanders, including Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, botched the planning and execution.

## Soviet Sees Propaganda Show

The commemorations in Normandy next week, at which President Reagan, Queen Elizabeth II and President François Mitterrand of France will preside, have been mocked here as an American propaganda show designed to drum into Western Europeans their dependence on United States military might and to further American plans for nuclear war in Europe.

A Soviet delegation headed by a general will be in Normandy for the ceremonies. Four others will be in the delegation, including Daniil F. Kraminov, an editor who was a Soviet correspondent with the invasion forces, and a retired general who flew with a Soviet-French fighter squadron.

Mr. Reagan has been accused of using the Normandy ceremony to increase his political standing for the November elections.

"Washington plans a noisy international pageant starring the U.S. President to celebrate the anniversary," Mr. Kraminov wrote this week in Pravda, the Communist Party newspaper.

"Having weathered the war far from the front line, in the rear," Mr. Kraminov wrote, "Reagan suddenly decides four decades later to travel to the scene of fighting, seeking with the studied smile of a showman, and before the television cameras, not so much to dramatize the turmoil of war as to exploit the glory of the dead."

The insistence that the Soviet forces carried most of the burden has been recurrent in Soviet propaganda almost since 1945. But it has rarely been pursued with such intensity.

## 3 Years of Warfare by 1944

By the time the Allies landed in Normandy, the Russians had been fighting Germany for three years and had driven the invaders back to the western frontiers from Moscow, Stalingrad and the Caucasus. By the fall of 1944 the Russians were in Budapest, Warsaw, Bucharest and Belgrade, preparing for the final drive against Berlin.

At a news conference today, Mr. Kraminov and military historians stressed the Soviet role in the war and came under a barrage of questions from American, British and West German reporters.

The conference was accompanied by publication here of a 46-page booklet, "Operation Overlord," summarizing the Soviet standpoint.

Questions at the news conference were unusually pointed. An American correspondent asked if those behind the Soviet campaign were not concerned that they might offend relatives of soldiers who died in Normandy and survivors of the battle.

A reporter for The Daily Telegraph of London asked if it was the official Soviet position that only the Soviet Union could celebrate its victories and commemorate its dead.

A West German reporter asked if Soviet historians could shed any new light on the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 1939, which opened the way to Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland that fall.

The historians, including a major general in uniform with several rows of ribbons, seemed to take pains to

## SOVIETS...Continued

He said the size of the front itself should demonstrate the scope of the battles. On the western front, the Allies were fighting along a line less than 500 miles long. The eastern front extended over nearly 5,000 miles.

The historians paid tribute to the soldiers who died on the western front. They asserted, however, that "tendentious" western assessments "defame" the memory of Soviet soldiers who died in battles.

Krupchenko quoted Stalin as saying that the D-Day operation was one of the greatest in history. But, Krupchenko said, it took place three years after the outbreak of the war and after "fundamental decisions" had been taken on the eastern front, where the Russians defeated Germans at Stalingrad and Kurak.

The Soviet Union recently protested to the Japanese government over celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the Japanese victory in the 1905 Russo-Japanese war.

In the past, Soviet specialists have tended to play down the role of the Normandy invasion, but have nevertheless given a credible picture of western efforts against Hitler. The latest revisionist view seems to be designed to discredit western military operations and reflects the present poor state of East-West relations.

The historians today also played down the importance of U.S. and British weapons and supplies delivered to the Soviet Union during the war.

The Soviet accounts also appear designed to offer a contemporary lesson to the nations of Europe. They allege that the D-Day celebrations are intended to obscure Washington's true aims in World War II and its intention of dominating Western Europe.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

## SIDESHOW...Continued

soothe Western sensitivities. Mr. Kraminov, whose Pravda article was considered by many Westerners here to be one of the least tasteful products of the current campaign, emphasized that it had not been his intention, nor that of any other participant, to denigrate D-day.

"You have a false impression," he said. "There has not been a single remark in the Soviet press that conveyed any chagrin whatever that they are celebrating in Normandy and paying tribute to the soldiers who died."

"We have always underlined the great importance of the D-day operation, and we have never sought to offend the memory of those who died."

The prevailing opinion among diplomats is that the campaign reflects the extreme bitterness here against President Reagan's policies.

The campaign, they say, has to be put in context with the pullout from the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, withdrawal from nuclear weapons negotiations in Geneva and behavior toward several recent Western official visitors that bordered on rudeness.

The theme of the campaign has been that the Western Allies, in planning the Normandy commemorations, engaged in "malicious fabrications," in Mr. Kraminov's words, which exaggerated the importance of the Western military effort and "played down" the role of the Red

Army and Communist-led Partisans in German-occupied countries.

Mr. Kraminov found a purpose behind the Western effort. "The immediate past of the European Continent, tragic as it was," he wrote, "is being exploited to stir hatred and hostility and to vindicate preparations for a new war, a nuclear one, that would doom European civilization to ruin."

At the news conference, the historians cited figures that they said put the landings into perspective. They noted that the first 15 days of fighting after June 6, 1944, cost the Western forces 122,000 soldiers killed and the Germans 113,000. They compared this with a single tank battle, at Prokhorovka during the Kursk battle of 1943. They said 150,000 Germans died in that one battle.

One of the historians, Maj. Gen. Ivan Krupchenko, noted that the total of American dead in World War II was 405,000 and the total of British dead 370,000. He compared those figures with Soviet losses of 20 million, a figure usually used by Moscow to include total Soviet military and civilian dead.

Marshal Ustinov said in a Victory Day article May 9, the anniversary of the capitulation of Germany, that "bourgeois falsifiers will never succeed in denying the irrefutable facts" about the war. The facts, he added, are that nearly 95 percent of all Ger-

man troops were engaged against the Russians until the 1944 invasion, and thereafter the figure never fell below 65 percent.

In an article in Literaturnaya Gazeta, a weekly for intellectuals, Genadi Gerasimov, an editor who has often visited the United States, struck a more balanced tone, saying that Russians had always had mixed feelings about the D-day landings, "The joy and gratitude was mixed with the bitterness of long anticipation," he wrote.

At the news conference, Mr. Kraminov described the Normandy landings as "an operation of local significance" that could scarcely be said to have made any difference to the outcome of the war.

In his Pravda piece Mr. Kraminov contended that Britain and the United States, far from deterring Hitler's conquest of much of Europe, had encouraged him with huge bank loans while blocking Soviet efforts up to 1939 for a defensive pact against the Nazis.

"Every effort," he wrote, "is being made to hide from this generation the fact that the Nazis were able to create a vast military machine thanks to enormous financial and material assistance from American banks and monopolies, while Chamberlain's appeasement policies thwarted Soviet attempts to forge a system of collective defense in Europe against the Fascists."

NEW YORK TIMES

2 June 1984

Pg. 1

Return to Normandy*On Omaha Beach, Memories of 1944*

*The writer of this dispatch covered the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944 for The New York Times and has been military correspondent for The Times since 1970.*

By DREW MIDDLETON

Special to The New York Times

ST.-LAURENT-SUR-MER, France, June 1 — "It wasn't anything like this, Emily, nothing at all," a Canadian veteran of the battle of Normandy shouted to his wife today over the wind that swept in from the Channel.

The beaches of Normandy lie mostly empty now. From the beaches on the east, where the British landed, to Omaha, below this hamlet, and Utah on the west, where Americans battled their way ashore, there are few scars of war. There is little to bear witness to the largest and most successful amphibious invasion in history — the Allied landings of June 6, 1944, under the command of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Today there were tourists in droves — British, Canadians, a few Americans, three busloads of Germans from the Rhineland and hordes of curious

French. They wandered through the cemeteries and thronged the shops that sell souvenirs, among other items small bags of sand said to be from the beaches and priced at the equivalent of a dollar.

On Wednesday the visitors will be headed by President Reagan, Queen Elizabeth II, President François Mitterrand and other heads of state and government. These leaders will be joining in ceremonies to mark the 40th anniversary of the landings.

An elderly German veteran gazed today at the rows upon rows of crosses and Stars of David at the American Cemetery close to Omaha Beach. He declined to give his name or his unit, possibly because he had been in an SS division, one of Hitler's Elite Guard units that remain unpopular in France and elsewhere in Europe. But he did shake his head and say repeatedly: "Brave men. Brave men."

Beyond him stood the memorial hall that broods over the graves. The inscription reads: "This embat-

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

OMAHA BEACH...Continued

tled shore, portal of freedom is forever hallowed by the ideals, the valor and the sacrifices of our fellow countrymen."

The German again shook his head, took his wife's hand and started back to the bus that brought him from the Rhineland.

On the bluff at Arromanches, overlooking the British beaches, there stands a huge figure of Christ.

On Omaha Beach, below this village, a large brown stone monument perpetuates the memory of the 16th Regimental Combat Team of the 29th Division.

On that June day 40 years ago, it seemed as though the entire Allied world was standing on tiptoe.

In London, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Cabinet knew that the British Second Army was the last that Britain had. In Washington, American leaders understood that the United States First Army that was being thrown into the invasion attempt was a largely amateur fighting force that would be facing the toughest professionals in Europe.

After months of planning it was decided to land 58,000 men of the United States First Army on Omaha and Utah beaches and 75,000 soldiers of the British Second Army — including a Canadian division and French, Polish and Dutch contingents — on Sword, Juneau and Gold beaches.

In addition, 16,000 men of the American 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions were dropped inland to secure the American flank. Six thousand paratroopers of the British Sixth Airborne Division were to be landed to secure the British flank.

The Allied air forces flew thousands of sorties over the beachhead. More than 4,000 ships, ranging from battleships to infantry landing craft, got the men ashore and provided the firepower that supported their scrambles across the beaches.

Hitler's Germany had half a million men deployed from the Netherlands to Brittany. Perhaps 70,000 well-trenched soldiers were defending the landing areas or in positions of close support. Three seasoned armored divisions were in reserve, controlled by Hitler.

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, one of Germany's most distinguished battlefield leaders, was in command.

#### German Were Weak in Air

The German weakness was in the air. The Luftwaffe's defeat in the Bat-

tle of Britain four years before and subsequent losses on the Russian front had wrecked what was once the most powerful air force in the world. On D-day, the Luftwaffe provided only token coverage for the troops defending the beaches.

Allied intelligence also had misled the German high command. The German leaders believed for some weeks after the landings that the major blow would be dealt by an imaginary American Army located in East Anglia in England.

Still, nowhere along the beaches of Normandy did the Germans exact a higher toll than on the sands of Omaha Beach down the winding road from this hamlet.

#### Bodies Floated on Waves

On June 6, 1944, bodies rose and fell with the waves, landing craft afire drifted aimlessly and the beach was swept by machine-gun and mortar fire. Omaha Beach accounted for roughly 90 percent of American casualties that day, and it was not until evening that weary troops seized this village of Saint-Laurent.

Men of the 29th and First Infantry Divisions landed at Omaha. This was the first combat experience for the 29th. The First had been blooded in North Africa and Sicily.

They fought well but they made so little progress and the German resistance was so strong that at one point Gen. Omar N. Bradley, commanding the First United States Army, contemplated shifting the attack to Utah Beach, where resistance had been less.

But someone — accounts differ, but it was probably Brig. Gen. Norman Cota of the 29th — said: "Gentlemen, we are being killed on the beaches. Let's go inland and be killed."

They went inland.

United States losses on D-day totaled 1,465 killed, 3,184 wounded and 1,928 missing in action.

#### Up on the Bluffs by Nightfall

By nightfall the survivors had struggled up from the beaches and driven the German forces out of their positions on the bluffs.

To the east, on the British beaches, the landings went better. Perhaps one reason for this was that the British Army had equipped tanks with rollers to which flails were attached to explode German mines. Other tanks armed with flame throwers burned the Germans in their pillboxes.

By nightfall the British had secured their three beaches and were three miles inland with infantry at the gates of Bayeux. The Allies, in hard fighting plus logistical imagination and support, had landed 154,000 men.

When the British drove inland from the beaches, they found the fertile fields of Normandy that had fed the German Army in the west for nearly four years. Cattle and horses abounded, as they do today, and one young tank officer never forgot his colonel's voice as a squadron advanced to attack.

"You may open fire, Taylor," the colonel said. "But be careful of those horses over on the left."

From the air and the sea, two elements in which the Allies were virtually unchallenged, came constant support. The United States Air Force and the Royal Air Force drove marauding Germans from the skies above the beachheads. The guns of American and British battleships and cruisers and destroyers demolished German strongpoints.

#### Germans Counterattacked

Yet despite this air and naval superiority, the Germans fought doggedly to hold their positions. Customarily their withdrawals were preceded by well-organized local counterattacks that cost the invaders heavily.

The Allied mission that day was to get ashore. Although many generals, most vociferously Field Marshal Montgomery, said later that they had a plan, the postlanding operations were chaotic.

The Allies finally did get out when General Bradley broke the German lines at St. Lô and Field Marshal Montgomery held the German armor in front of Caen. The battle for Normandy turned out to be a turning point in the war.

Above Arromanches today, an excited, elderly Englishman said to his wife and grandchildren, who seemed uninterested: "That's it, that strip down there. That's where we came in. But it's different now somehow. No confusion, no noise."

At the base of the bluffs of Omaha, new villas are being built. On the beach itself, the sands were littered with empty beer and wine bottles, a woman's compact, a sodden loaf of bread, a broken umbrella.

## RADIO - TV

CBS SATURDAY EVENING NEWS  
CBS TV 6:00 PM JUNE 2  
Soviet Version of D-Day

BOB SCHIEFFER: The Soviet Union is using the upcoming 40th anniversary of D-Day to intensify its attacks on President Reagan, the United States and U. S. allies. Moscow charges that the U. S. led invasion was only a side show to the main event on Soviet soil.

David Andelman has that story.

DAVID ANDELMAN: This is the Byelorussian front where 500,000 of Hitler's crack troops died before the allies ever set foot in Normandy. This is the offensive that won the war, from the Soviet point of view.

Here they call Normandy the second front. The first front was thousands of miles to the east on the icy plains of the Soviet Union.

Soviet historians point out that their troops were facing down 235 Nazi divisions while the allies battled nearly 65 on the Western front, that Normandy was a success only because the Soviets forced Hitler to divert 46 divisions from the West.

GENNAY GERASIMOV: It could be more helpful if it came earlier. But even without this particular Normandy invasion, Hitler was already doomed by June, 1944.

ANDELMAN: This is the message the Soviets are getting across this year in newspapers and magazines, on innumerable television broadcasts, and in full-dress press conferences where historians and army generals talk about how the allies for two years dragged their feet, delaying the Normandy offensive, hoping Soviet forces would be devastated by the Nazis, at the same time holding down allied casualties.

The Second World War is still very much alive in the Soviet Union in films like "The Living

and the Dead," broadcast the year-round, conveying the lesson that war can be won at sacrifices heroic.

In a nation where a viable history is molded to serve the interests of the state, the Soviets are celebrating this year their own heroic offensive and their victory over the Nazis.

The theme, of course, has a modern refrain: the U. S. dragged its heels for two years before the Normandy invasion, hoping to bleed the Soviet Union white. In Russia, they think the U. S. is still trying.

David Andelman, CBS News, Moscow.

### Rome Ceremony

SCHIEFFER: There was a ceremony today in Rome commemorating an event that took place two days before D-Day. A plaque was unveiled in front of the American consulate, the same building that served as headquarters for the allied force that swept into Rome. And for hundreds of men who were commandos then, today was a day to remember.

Bert Quint was on hand.

BERT QUINT: From the beach at Anzio to the gates of Rome, the road was a bloody one, but they made it. Forty years ago, two days before the Normandy invasion, the allies liberated the Eternal City.

The advance unit for General Mark Clarke's 5th Army was a U. S.-Canadian commando outfit called the 1st Special Service Force. One hundred and twenty-eight of that 1500 man force were killed, more than 500 wounded on the way.

In Rome itself there was little resistance. The Germans were retreating.

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## 40th ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Some of the commandos returned for today's anniversary ceremony.

GENERAL JOHN VESSEY: And I want to say they look as good and tough today as they did forty years ago.

QUINT: For a moment, immersed in their memories, the veterans could almost believe it.

The allies' task on that 4th of June, 1944 was made easier by the action of Italian resistance fighters. Some of those partisans joined them today.

For the Americans and the Canadians, it was a time for the renewal of that special kind of friendship forged under fire.

More than the pain of battle, they remembered the joy of victory.

UNIDENTIFIED VET: I came in with my gun over my shoulder and a loaf of bread in one hand and a jug of wine in the other.

UNIDENTIFIED VET: People in the middle of Rome -- it was unbelievable. They just crowded in on us and threw flowers at us.

UNIDENTIFIED VET: They were happy, and we were happy. And there were a few kisses, and some vino and some love.

QUINT: Bert Quint, CBS News, Rome.

NBC SATURDAY NIGHT NEWS  
NBC TV 6:30 PM JUNE 2  
D-Day Anniversary ✓

CONNIE CHUNG: Next Wednesday is the 40th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of Normandy. One of the heroes of that longest day was Major General Matthew Ridgeway. As John Dancy reports, he led his airborne forces in a dramatic mission behind the German lines.

JOHN DANCY: It was a chilling assignment: thousands of men to drop out of the night sky, lightly armed, and seize rivers and bridges immediately behind Utah Beach to head off German reinforcements.

The commander of the 82nd was a steely eyed Major General named Matthew Ridgeway, who, at the age of 49, would jump with his men.

Forty years have gone by, but the memories of that night have not dimmed for the 89 year old retired general, who lives in a gracious Tudor style house outside Pittsburgh with his wife Penny.

He recalled the spirit of his men.

GENERAL MATTHEW RIDGEWAY: They looked facts in the face. They had trained hard; they knew what they were up against. But the time had come to put all of that aside.

Just before the green light went on -- that's when the jump

master goes "Are we downhearted?" "Hell, no."

DANCY: They might have been if they had known what awaited them below. Some fell into swamps that aerial photos failed to show.

GENERAL RIDGEWAY: We lost a good many men in the swamp in there that was about six feet deep with water. And with the heavy loads they had on, we had quite a few men drown.

DANCY: They were armed only with bazookas, grenades, rifles and machine guns. No artillery. Fighting raged all day and into the next night. The 82nd was exhausted. But somehow they held out and prevented the German counterattack that could have pinned the Americans on Utah Beach.

Looking back from a distance of 40 years, Ridgeway believes it was divine providence that made the attack succeed.

GENERAL RIDGEWAY: In addition to that, of course, was the spirit of the allied troops. They all went in there with no other idea but to make a success of it.

DANCY: For his role in leading the assault that helped D-Day succeed, General Ridgeway was awarded the French Legion of Honor, the country's highest military decoration.

John Dancy, NBC News, Pittsburgh.

KANSAS CITY STAR 3 June 1984 Pg. 1F

# 'OK, let's go,' were Ike's historic words

## D-day led to triumph in 'just war'

By James W. Scott

editorial page editor

**T**he night of June 3, 1944, Capt. J.M. Stagg, a Royal Air Force meteorologist, told Dwight D. Eisenhower that June 5, the designated day of the invasion of Normandy, would be overcast with high winds and clouds too low for flying.

Many of the 5,000 ships of the Allied armada were already assembling. The convoys could be called back. But Stagg said there was a reasonable chance for a break in the weather June 6. It would be rough, but at least the bombers might fly. Eisenhower asked the opinions of his subordinates. He thought for a moment and said, "OK, let's go," and then prepared a message:

*Our landings in the Cherbourg area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time was based on the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion could do. If any blame attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.*

Of course the landings did not fail and the message was not sent. The invasion of France 40 years ago was a great military triumph of the West, of American, British and Canadian arms and of the men and women who used and produced them. The attack on the German Atlantic Wall was an operation of unparalleled magnitude, not at all like "crossing a wide river" as the Russians later insisted. Aside from the assault itself, the planning, logistics and coordination required immense preparation and involved terrible unknowns.

Airborne troops were dropped shortly after midnight June 6, 1944. It was still dark when Allied tactical bombers flew low up and down the northern coast of France, blasting German positions and communications, cutting off roads and reinforcements. Through the day 13,000 U.S. planes alone ranged the area. At 5:30 the massive naval bombardment be-

gan; among the assailants were the 14-inch guns of the old battleship *Nevada*, commissioned in 1916, smashed and beached at Pearl Harbor, raised and returned to sea in 1943.

At Utah Beach the U.S. 4th Infantry Division led the way, and 23,000 men were landed with only 210 casualties. It was different at Omaha Beach for the U.S. 1st Infantry under high bluffs and heavy artillery and machine gun fire from one of the best German divisions. More than 2,500 men were killed and wounded that day, but 34,000 got ashore. To the east British and Canadian troops were landing at Gold, Juno and Sword beaches against slightly lighter opposition but still with total casualties of about 4,000.

All the while the Germans were uncertain whether this was the main assault. Elaborate deceptions had been carried on for months with the Allies (thanks to the British feat of breaking the German code early in the war) aware of German moves and able to plant much false information. Even when papers of the genuine order of battle were captured, the Germans thought they were fake.

The *Wehrmacht* high command wavered, believing that Normandy was a diversion and that the main attack would come around Pas de Calais. Hitler's intuition told him that Normandy was the main show, but his generals held out against him. When the truth dawned and reserves were ordered up, it was too late.

Once the decision had been made to proceed, there was little for Eisenhower to do immediately. He waited for news, accepted good wishes, met with De Gaulle and Churchill and sent the Russians a congratulatory message on their offensive at Leningrad. He was a courageous commander and a lucky one. If D-day had not gone June 6, the next and possibly last chance for the year would have been June 19 when the tides were right again. On that day the worst channel storm in 20 years struck the coast of France.

Operation Overlord was the first and

probably the last of its kind. Nothing had approached its extent in the past. Surveillance and modern remote weapons would not let it happen today. In 1944 it was the culmination of experience gained in landings and fighting in the Pacific and in the Mediterranean, and it sealed the fate of Adolf Hitler.

Forty years ago there was no question in the West about the need for victory and the merit of the cause. What a totalitarian, expansive military power could do was evident in the conquest of Europe and the broad regions of the Pacific by Nazi Germany and Japan. What was happening to the people in captive nations behind the walls of bristling armies was the reality of life in the 1930s and '40s, although the full horror of the extermination camps was yet to be known.

There was little doubt that Europe and Asia had to be rescued or that Hitler and imperial Japan could and would swallow up the rest of the world if not stopped and beaten. Everyone knew that the people who would save the world were the soldiers, sailors and airmen at Orel and Stalingrad, in the Coral Sea and at Midway, on Guadalcanal, over Berlin, Ploesti and Tokyo, and at Anzio and Normandy. It was a just war. Today, none but the demented would argue the consummate evil of Adolf Hitler.

Forty years later the military is under a blurred focus. There is no unanimity in the West that military power is what stands between freedom and enslavement. Instead, it seems to threaten extinction. Nuclear weapons have made total war unthinkable but not impossible. Even the value of deterrence as the best guarantor of peace is weighed by some against the peace of unilateral disarmament which would mean surrender. The disappointments and discouragements of the Cold War and the divisions of Vietnam years have colored the thinking of a generation.

The size of the defense budget and the deficit, not the power of Soviet Russia, sometimes seem to be the clear and present danger. More often than not, television and Hollywood portray the American military as a cabal of corrupt, venal fascists at worst and unfit bumblerers at best. The CIA is equated with the KGB as the enemy.

It is too simple to say, as some angry voices do, that the producers of these scripts and dramas are patricidal America-haters or Vietnam draft dodgers 15 years later, still determined to justify their fadeouts or activism of the 1960s. Times have changed as they have always changed.

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**Editorial notebook**

KANSAS CITY STAR 3 June 1984 Pg. 1

# KC 1944: Work stopped as they cheered on D-day

By Mike Anton

staff writer

**T**he Navy was frantic. It was January 1944 and where the Kaw and Missouri rivers meet, Harry Darby had 60 LCTs—troop landing craft built by his Kansas City, Kan., company—tied up on the docks because of low water.

But the Navy didn't care about low water. It needed those ships.

So water was released through a dam in Montana to deepen the Missouri River. But the river rose only an inch. That wasn't enough.

Then put those 150-foot boats on wheels and take them out on the highway, the Navy said. Mr. Darby was told that if the superstructures on bridges along U.S. 40 got in the way, the industrialist recalled in a post-war interview with The Kansas City Star. Tear them out!

Plans to do that were made. A day

## "OK, LET'S GO"...Cont.

The disillusionment after the sickening slaughter of millions (and for what?) in World War I brought the pacifist resolution of the Students' Union at Oxford and a widespread climate of resistance to military preparation and weapons dealing. It was fertile ground for illusions of conciliation and the era of appeasement. Germany, Italy and Japan armed, and war came. When it ended, the victory was complete. World War II had a beginning and an end. The good guys won. The bad guys lost. At least for a while.

Nothing since has seemed so clear, and of course it is not. The dialectics of World War II success led to postwar failures. The vision of a row of mushroom clouds, hanging like parasols over some distant horizon, is in the collective consciousness.

The rise of xenophobic nationalism and tribalism, disguised as self-determination, has diluted notions of representative government. The mistrust of institutions is pervasive in every society and will not subside under even the most iron-booted regimes. Fear and uncertainty are in the air. This is an age of doubt, equivocation and deliberate ambiguity.

But on a windy night in England in another age Dwight Eisenhower said, "OK, let's go." And they went.

before demolition was to start, rain began to fall. Ice blocking the river thawed. The river rose 4 feet. The ships got out.

On June 6 Mr. Darby found out what all the fuss had been about.

D-day had begun. Allied troops were pouring into France.

And they were using his LCTs.

☆☆☆

Wednesday is the 40th anniversary of D-day, and as always the armies and men who fought and died in the Allied invasion of Europe will be remembered.

But 40 years ago, while American troops were parachuting into France and landing on Utah and Omaha beaches, there was another army of Americans in the struggle.

They weren't dodging bullets. They were making them.

It was called the home front, and the army of workers who manned the production lines—a mix of men, women, some of them handicapped—spent their war years building the "great arsenal of democracy" that the president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had advocated a year before Pearl Harbor.

"It was a minor miracle," said Donald McCoy, professor of history at the University of Kansas. "I can't think of anything more important to the American role in winning the war than this country's industrial output."

The transition boggles the mind.

In 1939, two years before the United States entered the war, only 2 percent of the nation's gross national output was in armaments.

Between July 1940 and July 1945, U.S. workers built 296,429 aircraft, 71,062 naval ships, 102,351 tanks, 5.8 million tons of aircraft bombs and 41.6 billion rounds of small-arms ammunition.

The Kansas City area played a vital role.

Not since the 1860s, when the railroads made the area a center of commerce, had an industrial explosion of this magnitude taken place.

What follows is a story about some of the people who, while they may have never seen the enemy, nevertheless had a part in the fight.

☆☆☆

Helen Dick was busy inspecting B-25 bombers at the North American Aviation plant in the Fairfax District of Kansas City, Kan., when the voice came over the intercom announcing D-day was under way.

"I'll never forget it when they announced it," said Mrs. Dick, now 68 years old. "We all laid down our tools and we cheered. You never saw so many people cheer in all your life."

"Then we went back to work. We knew it wasn't over."

In August 1941, Mrs. Dick was an accountant for an auto parts manufacturer. One Friday her boss told her she was scheduled for a job interview the next day at the North American plant. To this day Mrs. Dick doesn't know how the bomber plant got her name, or why they wanted her.

But she went for the interview. Two days later, she was handed a riveting gun and began working on the outer-wing sections of the B-25s.

During the war North American employed as many as 20,000 workers who put together 13 bombers a day at peak production. After the war General Motors Corp. converted the plant to making cars.

Mrs. Dick, whose husband was a gunner on a B-29 in the Pacific, literally became a "Rosie the Riveter"—the mythical name attached to the women who were enlisted to work in wartime factories.

"I'm an old farm girl," the Kansas Citian said. "Worked with my father. I knew about cows, pigs, machinery and hard work. The B-25? That was just another thing in life."

Mrs. Dick rose rapidly, from production worker to supervisor to inspector of the final product.

"You'd think of your loved ones and the other men who were fighting and giving their lives for your country," she said. "And if I was a dedicated American, I felt I had to give them my best, too. To try to get them all back."

That concern, Mrs. Dick said, went beyond just doing your job.

She tells the story of an inspector who found \$5 inside a plane wing. He didn't know whose it was and no one claimed it. So he taped it to the wing, thinking that somewhere down the line the

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

## KC 1944...Continued

worker who lost it would take it back.

That's not what happened.

By the time the wing was fastened to a plane, \$1,000 in small bills and change had been taped to it. The entire wing was covered with money.

Management donated the money to the Salvation Army to buy cigarettes for troops overseas.

☆☆☆

Bill Mansell sits back in an easy chair in his Raytown home and rubs his tired eyes.

Mr. Mansell, 62, is retired. In December he sold his auto radiator and air-conditioning business and put more than four decades of welding behind him.

Two and one-half of those years were spent at the North American Aviation plant. There, Mr. Mansell welded engine mounts for B-25 bombers.

Thinking back on it, Mr. Mansell sees his work at North American as being simply that—work. Nothing less, nothing more.

"It was just another job," Mr. Mansell said. "We had so many engine mounts that we had to get out in a day and that's what was on my mind."

It did pay well, though. Especially for a man who had lived through the Depression.

Mr. Mansell said he was better paid than most people he knew at the time. His basic wage: 85 cents an hour, working 10 and 11 hour days, six and seven days a week.

He mentions that signs were plastered around the plant exhorting workers to maintain security off the job. "Loose lips sink ships," some of the posters warned.

Mr. Mansell said he always followed that rule, but it still made him chuckle.

"I mean, how secret can you get about an engine mount?"

☆☆☆

*On the home front, news of what was happening in battle came from a variety of sources.*

*When this letter, written by a Kansas City soldier in the Southwest Pacific Theater of Operations to his wife finally made its way to a newspaper reporter, the pages were dogeared. It had passed through many hands at the factory where the woman worked assembling airplane en-*

*gines.*

*"To men out here war is not glittering. It is not glorious... To these men war is kicking a lonely shoe under a shell-torn palm and recoiling as the bones of some warrior's foot clatter into view. It is a tousle-haired youngster lifted bleeding from the cockpit of his bullet-ridden fighter...."*

*"It is the dry mouth, contracted stomach and pounding heart as you wait in the barge for the signal to hit the beach...."*

*"Something has come to plague me in these moments of thought. How shall I ever again move in a world composed of all things now practically forgotten? How shall I observe the barest of social amenities? Will a police whistle or a siren cause me to run for cover?"*

☆☆☆

Harry Darby remembers the heat.

During World War II he would walk through his Kansas City, Kan., factory and feel the hot air as it rolled from the blast furnaces where men, bare above the waist, fashioned steel into the articles of war.

"Aw, it was pretty," said Mr. Darby, now 89 years old and still at the helm of the Darby Corporation.

But there was another type of heat—the kind that came from Washington.

We need more bombs. More ships. Send us more.

"The military, they put real pressure on us," said Mr. Darby, whose factory produced, among other things, shells for 4,000-pound "block-buster" bombs that were dropped from heavy bombers, and they made the invasion ships for the Navy.

"No matter how good we were doing, we had to do better. No matter how fast we were producing, we had to do it faster," he said. "At the time, it shocked me how much we could put out. It still does."

Mr. Darby, a veteran of World War I who served two years as a U.S. senator after the war, began producing war materials in 1938. At the time, though, military contracts were just another part of his business. His 200 employees continued to make water tanks, refinery tanks and rail cars.

It all changed when the Japa-

nese bombed Pearl Harbor.

Overnight, raw material shipments to private industry were halted. The military needed everything.

Some smaller businesses in the area went under because they couldn't get raw materials, while at least a score of others, including Mr. Darby's, began producing for the war at top speed. The working force at The Darby Corporation increased sixfold.

"We had never made ships before, never made bombs," Mr. Darby said. "We went from one production shift to three shifts overnight. I was concerned about whether I was going to make good or not. It was bigger than anything else I'd done in business.

"We put everything we had on the table—our pants, our shirts and everything we had in our pockets. We made a guarantee that we could do the job and do it the way the government wanted."

And if Mr. Darby didn't deliver a quality product, he wouldn't get paid.

At one point he owed \$30 to \$40 million to the Federal Reserve System, which provided credit to war industries.

"I had never owed that kind of money (before)," he said.

But the debts were paid. The plaques that still hang on the walls of Mr. Darby's office explain why.

They are Army-Navy "E" awards for excellent production—accolades set in bronze, an industrialist's version of battlefield medals.

For four decades Mr. Darby has kept those plaques where he can see them. They represent history, and the part he played in it.

"It's nice to walk by them every day and think about the good job we did," he said.

☆☆☆

What did Pansy Penner do in the war?

"I baby-sat," the 79-year-old De Soto woman said.

Actually, Mrs. Penner did more than that. She taught second grade at a school on the grounds of the Sunflower Ordnance Plant near her home in Johnson County.

The students were the children of the 12,000 workers who made

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## The boy-soldiers remember their longest day

For these men, the sands of Normandy beach will always be bloody, the air full of war's fury

By Edvins Beitiks

Examiner staff writer

WALNUT CREEK — "You looked to the right, to the left, and all you saw was ships. Mile after mile of ships. Then you saw the C-47s going over, wave after wave of paratroopers and glider planes. And then came the announcement over the speakers:

"Gentlemen, this is it. Your country is proud of you. It made your hair stand straight on end."

Bill Arruda of Orinda told the story against a backdrop of memories, as he prepared for his return trip to Normandy. A radio behind the bar at the Vets Memorial Hall in Walnut Creek was playing Glenn Miller tunes as gray-haired veterans sat at the counter, moving their drinks in small circles, listening to the music.

Most of them had just returned from a Memorial Day ceremony at the Pleasant Hill cemetery, and talk turned to World War II.

A large picture on one wall, dated Febru-

ary 1945, showed three bundled-up GIs, the one on the left from Danville, standing beside a sign that read: "You are now entering Germany — through courtesy of the U.S. 6th Armored Division."

At one of the tables, Arruda and Van Williams were planning their trip to England and France this week, a return for the 40th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. President Reagan will be there; so will Queen Elizabeth and French President Francois Mitterrand and thousands of French, English and American veterans.

D-Day on the Sixth of June in 1944 was the largest amphibious invasion ever undertaken. Six Allied infantry divisions attacked along five beaches at 6:30 a.m., backed up by three British and American paratroop divisions. Eleven months later, on May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered.

Code-named "Overlord," the invasion drew on nearly 3 million soldiers — mostly American, British and Canadian — fighting

under the unified command of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. It began with the bombing of German coastal batteries at 12:15 a.m. and involved more than 9,000 ships and landing craft.

By 1:30 a.m., the first of the "Screaming Eagles" paratroopers from the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division — their faces blackened with burnt coal — began dropping behind Utah Beach through a thick cover of clouds. Some were shot from the sky during routine German anti-aircraft exercises.

The 156,000-man landing force, aided by a network of artificial harbors and protective breakwaters, struck in waves at five beachheads under a veil of naval and aerial bombardment from 600 warships and 11,000 fighter planes.

Before the day was over, 9,000 Allied soldiers, sailors and airmen would be killed or wounded.

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### KC 1944...Continued

fuel for rocket ammunition. Many of them lived in a temporary housing area where the school was located. It was known then as Sunflower Village.

Today the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant is technically inactive. It is maintained by a skeleton crew should it be needed again someday. It has been reactivated twice.

Back then, Mrs. Penner said: "They didn't know what to do about teachers out there. People were coming in so fast to take jobs, so I thought I guess I have to go back to teach."

She had left teaching in 1926 when she married L.R. Penner, a farmer and former Johnson County commissioner. When she returned, she found teaching on a military installation was at times difficult.

"The children were so different. They came from everywhere. Some of them had nothing in terms of an education. Others were quite advanced," she said.

"At one point I had 42 students. You could hardly get down the aisles. It was terrible. We had so many kids, they had to come to school in shifts.

"The children never knew when their mother or father was going to be home. Sometimes

they wouldn't see them for several days.

"The parents tried, but they were working around the clock. It wasn't their fault. It was just the times."

☆☆☆

In the days leading up to World War II, it is said that American troops in training had to use brooms as rifles, and trucks with signs that read "Tank" attached to them to simulate the real thing.

There weren't enough of the real things to go around.

The speed with which war materials were built still amazes Gale Baker, now 70 years old and a semi-retired mechanical engineer.

Before the war he was designing dams and spillways for the Army Corps of Engineers. When the nation entered the war, all projects were put on hold. He went to work as an engineer for the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Corp., which in 1942 began to build a big engine production plant in southern Kansas City. Some of the buildings now are occupied by the Bendix Corp.

There the R-2800-C Double Wasp engine was made. Known then as "the most powerful (engine) used in combat," the Double Wasp was used in several types of planes, including the P-

47 Thunderbolt and the F6F-3, the Navy's Hellcat fighters.

"Us fellows buckled down and went to work. More seriously than they would do now," said Mr. Baker, who lives in Mission. "The only way to win (the war) was to give our boys in the field something to work with. We had a cause."

The factory was built at an urgent pace.

In December 1943, the first locally produced engine rolled from the plant. By May 1945, 24,000 persons—11,000 of them women—worked there.

Churn them out fast. That was the name of the game. Peak production was reached in the summer of 1945 when 60 engines a day came off the line.

Then it stopped.

There was no warning.

One night in August 1945 Mr. Baker went to bed. When he awoke the next day, he learned that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima in Japan.

He went to work. Engines hung in the plant in mid-production. They would never be completed. Soon after Pratt & Whitney announced that 17,000 employees were being laid off and that the plant would shut down.

The explanation given to workers was blunt, Mr. Baker said.

The war was over.

## BOY-SOLDIERS...Continued

Arruda, 59, who lives in the Amador County town of Lone, has recently undergone bypass surgery but is still tan and trim. As an 18-year-old private with the 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division, he was in the first wave that hit Utah Beach. He watched the aerial attack from the ship in pre-dawn hours and later clambered over the side of the ship into landing boats with the rest of his company.

"The boat was bouncing all over the place," he remembered. "We lost a couple of guys who landed in the water with their combat packs. Went straight down.

"I was sick as hell. Some guy would be talking and he'd vomit on you and you'd turn around and try to say something and vomit on him. Planes were going over, the Navy was bombarding the shore. The noise was terrific."

Williams, 61, a veterans' hospital counselor from Walnut Creek, was with the 49th Combat Engineers in the second wave at Utah. One ship was shot out from under him in midchannel, said Williams, when a German E-boat "planted three shells in the engine room and left us dead in the water."

A destroyer came alongside to pick up survivors, but "then the klaxon sounded, this loud aWHOOpaWHOOpaWHOO, and the destroyer left." By the time another ship pulled up to take off the soldiers, "we were standing on the deck with water up to our waist. . . . I was the last one to get off, and when I looked back the craft had turned turtle." The engineers were wrapped in blankets, fed and sent out again in time for the start of the invasion.

Arruda and Williams remembered the months of training before D-Day, weeks of simulated landings against deserted English beaches under sporadic German air attacks. During those dry runs, the landing boats would go right up to the shore. But off Normandy, with shells blowing the water apart and machine guns raking the shoreline, the boats pulled up short.

"I'll tell you how deep it was on D-Day," said Arruda. "I went down off the ramp and just that quick the water was over my head. I had to swim to the beach — sick and swallowing water and everything else."

Williams, on the other hand, came into Utah Beach riding in the .50-caliber machine gun turret on top of a truck. "I looked down at my driver, Bob Bogue from Reno, Nev., and he was in water up to his waist," said Williams. "But I didn't even get my feet wet."

A few yards onto the beach, though, the truck was hit by German artillery: "Picked off a set of duals on the right side and I went out of that gun ring in a dive and as soon as I hit the sand Bogue came slamming into the top of me."

Hours after the invasion, things were in wild confusion, said Williams. Soldiers were fighting for 50 yards of Utah while "some guys would sit there and stare and stare. Some lost their rifles. Some ran right back into the water."

Arruda remembered men spilling out with the surf, men cut in half by artillery shells, men lying face-down in the sand. "I went to get this one guy, tell him to keep going — kept kicking him and kicking him before I realized he was dead."

The 4th Division got past the beach on the first day, but German traps were waiting inland.

"There were these pools of water beyond the beach," said Arruda. "The Germans anchored ducks in these pools, anchored them down with stones, so whenever our troops came around, the ducks started squawking — and the Germans would call artillery in on the sound."

There were other traps, like sharpened sticks and cut-off trees that killed paratroopers and smashed gliders as they drifted down to earth. Days after the invasion, Arruda's company was still coming across gliders filled with dead men.

When American troops hit the hedgerows behind the beach, the invasion bogged down, as Germans hid heavy weapons behind the hedges and ambushed infantry along the roads. "They used 50mm anti-aircraft guns as anti-personnel weapons," said Arruda, shaking his head, touching his neck in the spot where a buddy caught a round and was killed.

Outside St. Lo, resistance stiffened and Arruda's company spent 47 straight days on the front line. The fighting for St. Lo itself was hand-to-hand, Arruda said.

"We'd push them out in the daytime and they'd come and push us out at night."

Williams was moving inland, too, past "these long lines of German prisoners who couldn't believe what we were doing, because they'd been told an invasion like this would never happen." Others "had blood coming out of their noses and ears" after weeks of bombardment by American bombers.

Arruda, who won the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star and the Croix de Guerre and received seven Purple Hearts in the Normandy campaign, said the sights and smells of the war come back as sharp as they did the day he left Utah Beach and

moved toward Ste. Mere Eglise. ("Guys killed in a tank — that's one of the worst smells you can ever smell.")

He took a green paper napkin and drew out a map of no-man's land between St. Lo and Cherbourg, marking the place where he won the Silver Star for pulling a wounded lieutenant to safety and the Distinguished Service Cross for capturing a German major general in a tunnel beneath the enemy artillery positions.

There were other memories for both men: the German bullet that hit Arruda between the helmet and helmet liner, spinning the helmet around and leaving "a dime-sized scar you can still see when I get my hair cut short." The time Williams' engineers "butchered a couple of cows and laid out a table with a white tablecloth, right in the middle of a field, when a German mortar shell came in and blew the table apart."

There were those now-forgotten cigarettes in K-Rations, like Fleetwoods and Spuds, and the chocolate D-bars. Williams shook his head, saying, "The first few days after the invasion we were off the map, out of gasoline, out of ammunition, out of food. My unit made it through on D-bars. I got so I didn't even want to look at a chocolate, even 10 years after the war."

Williams fought to the border of Germany before a shell sent him, unconscious, to an English hospital. Arruda never made it that far, shrapnel blowing a hole in his stomach east of St. Lo. Arruda, who was awarded a battlefield commission, received a medical discharge and became an FBI agent back in the States.

Now they'll return to Utah Beach and try to retrace their steps. "I don't know if I can find the exact spot on the beach where I came in," said Williams, "but the square at St. Mere Eglise, I can still visualize that."

Arruda nodded, his hands touching the green napkin with its rough map of a 40-year-old battlefield. "I'd like to go back to the places I landed, the places I fought," he said, "to see the city of Cherbourg . . ."

And maybe he could find the spot in a field outside St. Lo where he stood up at the same time as a German officer who was only a few feet away.

"We looked at each other for the longest time, just staring," said Arruda. "I knew he had his troops behind him and he knew my people were back there. I was thinking, 'Hey, this son of a bitch is just like me.' And we both of us turned around very slowly and walked away from each other."

He closed his eyes and seemed to fall back 40 years. "God — what a hell of a feeling."

# D-Day: Images of a test of will and body

*Editor's note: This essay, printed in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the D-Day landings of Allied forces in Normandy, is excerpted from a major article appearing in the June issue of Reader's Digest. The landings, which marked the beginning of the liberation of Nazi-occupied Europe, will be celebrated at Omaha Beach this Wednesday with special ceremonies involving President Reagan and other world leaders.*

By Lawrence Elliott

June 6, 1944: D-Day. The beginning of the end of Nazi Germany. "Every man who set foot on Omaha Beach that day was a hero," said invasion commander Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley afterwards.

I went back to Normandy last November, the 40th winter since the landings, and I took my little boy. As we walked the lonely beach I held onto his hand, for he was my connection to present reality.

The guns up in those gray bluffs are harmless now, or gone, and most of the bunkers torn open by the naval bombardment of D-Day are overgrown. But I could see how they commanded that dark crescent of shore, still called by the wartime code name, Omaha Beach. And sometimes the sounds of the surf and the relentless channel wind turned into the bedlam of machine guns and shellfire, and in the shadows cast by clouds I saw the ghosts of American fighting men splashing ashore.

"How many soldiers landed here that day?" Nicholas asked.

"At Omaha, 35,000. But there were four other beaches under attack, and paratroopers, too, up there behind the cliffs. Altogether, the Allies — GIs, British and Canadians — put about 150,000 troops ashore that first day."

I went on, telling Nicholas how the fate of the free world hung on what happened here, and how thousands of good men never left this strip of sand. I wanted him to understand, but he was only 9 years old.

Whenever I remember D-Day, I visualize that vast armada crossing the English Channel, and I feel proud of my country, proud of her Allies. On that day, all Americans knew we were doing what was right and necessary. It is one of the hallmarks of what went wrong in the years to come that we have never felt the same way about anything again.

The first American foot soldiers to reach the British Isles in preparation for the invasion arrived early in 1942, just 50 days after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Britain had never seen the likes of these breezy, long-legged Yanks, eventually to be 1.5 million strong. They came with swarms of planes, parked their Sherman tanks in rows 10 miles long, and stockpiled 6 million tons of bombs, guns and ammunition — threatening, the English said, to sink their island.

To the husky, well-fed GIs, the British looked threadbare, worn out by war — which, for them, had begun in 1939. The Americans gave away whatever they had: Hershey bars, cigarettes, oranges. But perceptive GIs saw that the local people gave back even more than they received, that every door in every village was open to American servicemen and, as one put it, "You could always get a bean sandwich and a cup of tea."

At 9:45 Sunday night, June 4, 1944, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander, was briefed on the possibility of a 36-hour break in the worst gales to sweep the English Channel in 20 years. It would be a month before the moon would again be high enough for the paratroopers, at the same time as the dawn tide was

expected to be low enough to expose "Rommel's asparagus" — the mined stakes and obstructions implanted along the Normandy coast between high and low water. "Okay," Ike told his staff. "Let's go."

On the evening of June 5, Eisenhower was driven to the airfield where the 101st Airborne Division was loading up. Along with the U.S. 82nd and the British 6th, it

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*That cemetery is a hymn to America. It memorializes the triumph of decency over evil, liberty over tyranny — the communion of the Western democracies when they were pushed to the wall. It is stark testimony to the desperate price we once paid for an intangible called freedom.*

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was going in behind German lines by parachute and glider, starting at D-minus-8 hours. The mission of some 20,000 men: to seize the key bridges and roads that would assure the seaborne troops an exit from the beaches.

At Sainte-Mere-Eglise, a town astride the key crossroads behind Utah Beach, paratroopers were coming down like confetti. German soldiers sprayed the sky with rifle and machine-gun fire, but the Germans could not hold out. At 4:30 a.m., the American flag was flying outside the town hall; Sainte-Mere-Eglise had become the first town in France to be liberated.

For those landing by sea, the battle had not yet begun. Aboard the transports, 130,000 Allied soldiers, jammed bulkhead to bulkhead, passed the long night waiting. Toward morning the channel grew choppy, and men who came topside in a misery of seasickness gaped at the dark shapes of ships, 5,000 of them — battleships, destroyers, transports — the greatest fleet ever assembled. "It looked," said one Canadian, "as if you could walk across the channel and not get your feet wet." Shortly before 6 a.m., rolling thunder from the battleships shook the earth and sea.

With the Allied navy pounding inland targets and landing craft going for shore, an astounding air umbrella flew overhead — more than 10,000 planes, wingtip to wingtip. But 329 bombardiers, unable to see through a haze of cloud and gun smoke, delayed the drop, afraid of hitting their own men — and dumped 13,000 bombs as far as three miles behind the beach. They hardly dented the enemy's defense.

Assault boats foundered. Many dropped their ramps hundreds of yards offshore, forcing the heavily laden infantrymen to step armpit-deep into the hard surf. Then the German machine guns opened up. Some men were cut down before they ever cleared the boats. Those who made it to shore pressed their noses against the sand and sought invisibility. But somehow they found the courage

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# D-Day: Brotherhood in midst of invasion

By W.R. Higginbotham

**Y**ou can try telling me that, after all, it's been 40 years, and if some people know the word "D-Day," few will know what "H-hour" means. Mere fragments out of history. Well, I know better. Though 40 years have passed, the date June 6, 1944, feels like yesterday — certainly no longer than the day before yesterday.

D-Day, when at a dirty, windy hour, Allied soldiers by sea and air invaded Normandy in France to begin liberating Europe from Hitler's grip.

The world spun on "H-hour," that hour when the boys were scheduled to hit the beaches, those beaches code-named and still called Omaha and Utah, where the Americans landed, and Gold, Sword and Juno, where the British and Canadians went ashore. And the world still spins on that day and that hour, when our future was fixed for good and for all.

I was a war correspondent for the United Press, the outfit now called United Press International. I was assigned to the Navy aboard the USS *Bayfield*, which was the command ship for the U.S. Navy in the invasion.

I can still recall the big picture — thousands of large and little ships choking the English Channel, aerial fleets above, gliders unhooking from tow planes to slip silently down to the hell of the Normandy hedgerows, incendiary shells cutting red and white streaks in a dark sky, guns blasting from battlewagons.

But within the big picture is my own personal memory. Of Gen. J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins running me through the huge shelf of secret logistics and plans, so detailed that they spotted the names of French residents in farmhouses and villages; a fat boy lining up with his platoon on the deck of Adm. D.P. Moon's flagship, the USS *Bayfield*, headed for Utah Beach, 90 miles from England across the open water.

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*The writer is a veteran journalist from Missouri who was a United Press war correspondent assigned to the Navy during World War II.*

Fat boy has a long, metal tube weighing down his right shoulder.

"What's that thing, soldier?" I ask.

"Hell, Mack. I dunno. Belongs to my little buddy here," nodding to the soldier next to him. "I'm lugging it for him. He's got a bellyache thinking of what's ahead."

I notice that the tube is the barrel of a hand-held, shoulder-shot, anti-tank weapon.

In a smelly latrine below decks, a sergeant, pants bunched at his ankles, perches on a metal commode. His men are squatting in a semicircle in front of him. He is making each man recite instructions for his turn going against a concrete pillbox filled with the enemy, this man with covering fire, the next man with grenades to lob into the entrance. They recite, knowing their lives depend one upon the other.

These boys are from the 4th Division. I knew they are green to war. (All war correspondents attached to the Navy had been briefed before we started out.) This division will go into Utah Beach.

Over the 4th's back will move the veterans of the 9th, who were bloodied in North Africa and the Mediterranean. The British and Canadians are on the left flank of the broad invasion front, eastward along the Normandy coast.

How many guys are on the water and in the air that day? Tens of thousands. Some have lived in the British Isles for months, even years, waiting for this to happen.

No one who was there will forget the delay of 24 hours. The invasion is dated for June 5. At the last moment the weather worsens and Gen. Dwight Eisenhower has to call off the Marine movement. The minesweepers already are out there working. There is silence on the radio. You watch small ships go blasting out after the sweeps to tell them to come in. Could it all have been given away?

Luckily not, and on June 6, in the dark eight miles off Utah Beach, the *Bayfield* rolls in a 22 mph wind that roils

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## IMAGES...Continued

to stand up and push off. "Come on you dumb bastards!" yelled a buck sergeant. "Don't you want to see France before you die?"

Today, the American military cemetery overlooking Omaha is green and beautiful, but the brooding memories of the invasion are ineradicable. They are inscribed in the 9,079 names of those who were buried under flawless rows of marble crosses and Stars of David, on a memorial with the names of the 1,557 missing, and in the 307 graves of men whose names are known only to God. Nearly all, plus 14,000 other soldiers whose bodies were sent home, died between D-Day and the Allied breakout from Normandy on August 1.

That cemetery is a hymn to America. It memorializes the triumph of decency over evil, liberty over tyranny — the communion of the Western democracies when they were pushed to the wall. It is stark testimony to the desperate price we once paid for an intangible called freedom.

But the years pass. Europeans with personal recollections of how the Americans sent the best of their young men are passing from center stage. Successor generations, having come of age in a world where affluence, freedom and peace were taken for granted, have no emotional commitment to D-Day. Their faith in the United States and the Western alliance cannot be presumed. And, sadly, there are West Europeans who today regard America as a greater danger than the Soviet Union to world peace.

Today, confronted with another tyranny, the West seems unable to find the resolve that united the free world on that June morning 40 years ago. Last year, when NATO responded to the Soviet military buildup by bolstering its nuclear arsenal, bitter anti-American demonstrations rocked Europe.

One could feel their fears, yet know that those who put the United States and the Soviet Union on the same moral plane are ignorant of history.



BROTHERHOOD...Continued

the sea. Landing craft are loosened and eased down, and heavy cargo nets flop down the ship's sides where they swing out, thumping back hard against the iron hull with each roll.

Suddenly, out of the dark and through the swirl of thin mist clinging wetly to your ears, you hear a ship's officer bawl through a bullhorn: "Now, now, now, fill the nets, fill the nets, fill the nets."

The heavily laden boys move, shifting packs and weapons. Sailors in the landing craft below nang onto the cargo nets, trying to steady the rocking craft. Two soldiers crawl over the gunwales and, at the first roll, they lose their hand grips on the cargo net ropes and they fall — whump! whump! — into the boats below. One can't get up.

Some boys vomit. Some need help but they are willing, and they keep moving. One by one the boats fill and the cargo nets with the gear go down, and the boats pull from the ship and circle; and the circle grows and the motors of the landing craft go louder and louder until they roar; and Fred Sondern — he was a writer for *Reader's Digest* — says, "Oh, God, the little guys."

All you can do is swallow hard.

Navy Lts. Johnny Tripson and Mike Halperin will lead the landing craft to the beaches. They are talking in low voices.

"Nobody goes with me except my coxswain," Halperin says, "nobody else, because we're not coming back."

We finish off the bottle passing among us, and the man to empty it pitches it over the side. We shake hands and Halperin is ready.

Halperin, the main scout at Utah Beach, was from Chicago and had played halfback at Notre Dame in 1931. He also played briefly with the Brooklyn Dodgers football team. Tripson, from Big Mission, Texas, played football at Mississippi State in the late '30s and was briefly with the Detroit Lions in 1941 — I am reading from the notes I took that day, on June 6, 1944.

Halperin missed his mapped landing point by half a mile. Good thing he did, too. The place where he struck the beach and signaled in the invaders lay just out of reach of heavy guns protected by thick concrete.

A few days later, Gen. Omar Bradley heard the story and laughed over how Halperin insisted that he had hit the right place. And yes, Halperin came back.

By daylight Tripson takes a cavalry unit — with no horses — to the tiny Isle de St. Marcouf before going in to the beach. It is no refuge. It is a solid

minefield. Soldiers find a place to step or sit by spading the ground with long knives. Two men jab too hard and the war ends for them.

Just off the island, an American minesweeper makes one too many passes over a clock mine. The mine blows and the sweep explodes in a great spout of water, listing heavily, its ports one side running blood. Big Johnny grabs the landing craft tiller from his coxswain and turns the landing craft to speed toward the stricken vessel.

Men tumble over the side of the sinking minesweeper and, as we haul up next to it, we see a tall boy walking calmly, stark naked. He is blowing up a rubber float and, at the side, he pauses to tie off the rubber nozzle, and he dives with the float held above his head.

We pick up the naked man, who has turned almost blue from the water's chill, and a dozen other sailors, all dazed and shaken.

Utah Beach is going very well. I hear differently about Omaha Beach. Then I'm back on the *Bayfield* and I bump into an Army colonel with a medical insignia on his collar. He has just come aboard from another ship. I collar the colonel.

"You know a doctor, a major, named James M. Higginbotham?"

"Know him?" the colonel says, "I'm damned well looking for him. Medics from the invasion teams are okay on Utah. I've got to check out Omaha Beach. Jim is supposed to be there with two teams from the 3rd Auxiliary surgical unit. I'm told they've given up the beach where he landed. Why?"

"He's my brother."

"Brother," the colonel says. "Let's shake down a boat from the admiral and see if we can find him."

So together we go to see if we can find my only brother, a major in the medical corps, who is supposed to have landed with his surgical team on a part of Omaha Beach given up to enemy fire in the early hours of the invasion.

We go to Admiral Moon, in command of the Navy off Utah Beach, and ask for a landing craft and a coxswain to run it. We intend to cross eight miles of open water, never swept for explosive mines, and scout Easy Red, the far left flank of Omaha Beach. Only later would we learn that our invading forces lost 1,700 men there in the first assault.

Moon looks skeptical and waves a shaking hand east and south, saying, "You mean there?"

"Yes, sir," the medical colonel says.

"Go," Moon says, shaking his head. (Weeks later I heard that Moon shot himself in his bunk aboard the USS *Bayfield* en route to a Navy command of the later invasion of the South of

France. His death was recorded as battle fatigue.)

Somehow we reach Easy Red. There is sheer cliff all along Omaha Beach, and right under the bluff top we find some men. The first man out is my brother Jim. He has a shrapnel cut on his forehead, but otherwise he seems okay. He puts out a hand.

"What the hell are you doing here, Bill? Don't you know any by God better?"

All I can do is grin and offer my hand.

Like all men who landed that June 6, from the sea and from the air, Jim has a story, which he recalls to me: The medic teams go in unarmed on three landing craft. The Navy lieutenant in command of their little flotilla calls Jim back to his bridge as the ranking Army officer aboard and says, "Major, just got a signal. This place is gone, given up. What do you want to do?"

There is a destroyer behind them sending continuous fire toward the beach, and the beach is answering, some of the shells falling in the water.

Jim is 15 years older than the sailor. Jim puts a hand on the youth's hand and says, "Son, you see that lead hitting the water ahead of us and behind us?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, get our asses in there," he said, pointing to a spot on the beach, "where we can at least dig into the ground. Go, dammit, go, go."

The three little ships fall in line racing at top speed. And just as shells find the lead, ship officers and men jump and splash, some going in over their heads. Surgical gear is smashed and lost in the surf, but the men crawl to the bluff and start climbing. Halfway up they dig in with shovels and hands. Some are middle-aged surgeons. One is a Hollywood society doctor. Another is a university professor. Here they are simply bodies hoping to survive. Some of them do.

Now, after Jim and I meet, the medical colonel satisfies himself about the condition of the teams, and arranges for replacement of lost gear. Then an officer in one team takes me aside to say, "Bill, we're going to cite your brother Jim for at least the Silver Star, and all of us are going to sign it. Will you help us write the citation?"

I help and later, over a strong drink out of a tin canteen that Jim has found, I say to him, "They say you're a hero. What about that?"

"That's crap, Bill," Jim says. "Those guys, they're not country boys like we are. They're damned soft city boys who can't swim or are too old to be here and I had to haul them out of the water

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*'The bullets were flying everywhere. The action was there. Right there.'*

# Witnesses to a triumph called D-Day

By Sal Paolantonio  
Staff Writer

The weather had been miserable. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower waited a day.

The Germans knew the invasion was coming. But where? The commander of Adolf Hitler's Atlantic front, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, fooled by American decoys, thought it might come at Pas de Calais — a spot on the coast of France only 20 miles across the choppy English Channel from Dover.

On the evening of June 5, 1944, the general and his aides drove to Newbury, England, where 16,000 paratroopers from the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions loaded C-

47 transport planes. There were fears that the 101st — the Screaming Eagles — would suffer 70 percent casualties. Eisenhower wandered among the men, stepping over packs, guns and other equipment. A group recognized the general and gathered around. It was the eve of D-Day.

*"He came right up and shook my hand," remembers Gilford Murray, one of those Screaming Eagles, now retired and living in Glenmont. "He wished us luck."*

They were going to the coast of Normandy — in the greatest amphibious invasion of modern warfare — to save a continent in distress.

As the Screaming Eagles prepared, a distant roar echoed across the channel and orange fires ignited the sky. More than 1,300 Royal Air Force bombers were swarming over the French coastline from the Seine to Cherbourg.

The Allies hoped to soften some of Rommel's 500,000 troops poised along an 800-mile front from Holland to Brittany. It was a vulnerable force, ripe for attack. For many of the Allied soldiers, this would be their first taste of live action.

*"I scare pretty easy," said Oscar Brundige, 64, a former member of the 82nd Airborne who now lives in Glens Falls. "It was my first combat. We didn't think we were going to go. You know you hope you would be in on it, but you wouldn't mind if something happened and they pulled you out. But we were ready."*

At about 8 p.m., in tight formation, 822 C-47s began roaring across the English Channel. But air turbulence spoiled the flight plans. Thousands of paratroopers from the 101st Airborne dropped right into German hands in

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## BROTHERHOOD...Continued

and kick their butts to keep them moving. That's all."

Jim is about half the size of some of his fellows, and that isn't the story they tell. The story is this: that at the peak of the firefight on the beach, Jim collects the few medic kits they've salvaged and goes man to man among the wounded strewn along the waterfront, patching them where he can, moving those who can be moved. (Jim finally did receive the Silver Star for his bravery on the beachhead.)

All the while, I write stories. Two never did come out of the censors' hands. One was particularly intriguing. It was a yarn about the ingenious way the military collected men of the 101st Airborne in Cherbourg who, by the time that city was taken, were scattered throughout Normandy.

The military reopened a whorehouse there that had formerly catered to German soldiers. An old movie theater in the middle of a single block of row houses, it could be quickly isolated by military police standing across both ends of the street.

Word had spread that a soldier who

wanted a woman could buy a ticket at the box office of the old theater. Then, when the soldier emerged, he was grabbed by an M.P. who took his name and outfit and gave him orders on where to report. As a collection point, the whorehouse got results.

I catch up with Jim again as the battle for St. Lo, a Normandy hinge-point, is developing, and we ride a few miles together in a weapons carrier loaded with hospital gear. I ask if he has heard from our mother in Bowling Green, Mo. She is the only other living member of our family. She has five battle stars in her window at home — one for each of her family in the service. (That custom of putting a flag in the window showing a star for each member of the household serving in the armed forces seems to have been unique to World War II.)

Our mother's stars were for Jim and other kids she raised — orphaned relatives — but none for me, because I'm only a war correspondent.

Jim says, "Yeah, one letter. She saw the piece you wrote in a St. Louis paper. She said, 'Oh, I'm so glad your father is not alive to go through this, because with both you boys there together he simply couldn't have taken

it.'"

"Of course," I say, "she can."

(Mother's letters to Jim were lost when he had to abandon a hospital, taking out his patients, in the Battle of the Bulge during the following winter. Jim died a few years ago in Chattanooga, Tenn., after a distinguished career as a surgeon.)

No, 40 years doesn't begin to dim the memory. On the first few anniversaries of D-Day, every person could remember exactly where they were and what they were doing that day, whether they were in the midst of battle or hearing of it from afar. By now, D-Day has passed into folklore.

Experts separate World War II from later wars by saying, "They knew what they were fighting for." Of course, that belittles the dogfaces who took it in Korea and Vietnam and elsewhere.

Still, J.R.R. Tolkien, who wrote the books about the Hobbit, remarked that it is well to take it into account if there is a dragon in the neighborhood. Well, there was one, and on June 6, 1944, many little guys went for the dragon, and from that day, the dragon was doomed. Who can forget it?

## WITNESSES...Continued

the town of Ste. Mere-Eglise.

Just before midnight, Gilford Murray landed up to his neck in swampwater, hundreds of yards from the drop point. On his way down, the Germans lighted the way — with machine-gun fire and flares.

*"The bullets were flying everywhere. The action was there. Right there," Murray remembers. "It was the greatest Fourth of July you'd ever want to see. It was almost like daylight. Anti-aircraft fire everywhere; 138 men in the company. Wasn't too many got back to England."*

About two hours later, the 82nd Airborne — following the 101st into France — jettisoned their chutes and gathered on deserted railroad tracks for a mid-morning stroll to a nearby village. There, Brundige says, the Germans, realizing the Allies were on the continent to stay, engaged his regiment in a vicious firefight.

*"We just dug in and held on until we got reinforcements," he said. "Finally, the Germans just pulled out. Hey, it was our job to keep them from coming up to help out on the assault on the beach. We held them."*

The western flank of Normandy was secured and ready for the morning's invasion. But it was costly. Of the 2,200 in Brundige's regiment, only 770 made it.

Sunrise, June 6, 1944. The Germans on the beach woke up to an awesome horizon: 5,000 ships — landing craft, battleships, frigates, destroyers, corvettes.

The oldest ship in the U.S. fleet, the battleship *Arkansas*, — it was commissioned in 1912 — delivered a relentless, deafening assault on Omaha Beach, a salute to the amphibious forces about to land.

*"We fired the 12-inchers," said Paul Sheehan, also of Stillwater, a gunner on the *Arkansas*. "That thing really pumped them out there. They were shooting those V-2 rockets at us and that new bomber, the *JU-88*. And they really came at you at night. We were taking shells left and right from the beach. You didn't go below decks. Not for 13 days. You ate in your helmet, drank from your helmet, did everything in your goddamn helmet."*

PT boats at full throttle bounced from rogue wave to rogue wave through a blinding spray. Fastened firmly to the deck, lookouts peered over the side, performing the impossible task of human minesweeper.

*"It was like riding on eggs out there," remembers Anthony Conte, a radioman on PT 508. He lives in Hudson. "Our boat was going over too fast to make solid contact. But the*

*explosions just lifted us out of the water. The *USS Rich* (a destroyer escort) was hit dead center. These poor guys were flying all over. My skipper dove over the side to help drag some of them on board. They had legs blown off them. They were in pieces. It was awful."*

Under Gen. Omar Bradley, 58,000 men from the U.S. 1st Army attacked the western beaches: Omaha and Utah. French, British, Polish, Canadian and Dutch troops — a force of 75,000 men — invaded the three adjoining beaches to the east: Juno, Gold and Sword.

Every man belonged to one of 200 individual units — ranging from a division of 14,000 men to a photographic team of two. Every individual had become part of an enormous jigsaw puzzle that was disassembled and ferried across the channel and reassembled on the French shore.

The Germans played havoc with those plans. Shellbursts, bullets, mines, the deep, cruel surf, sea sickness, concrete and steel barriers — these were some of the unfathomable odds tormenting the troops as they assaulted Hitler's Atlantic Wall. At least 10 of the 1,500 landing craft were lost before they hit the beach.

*"We lived on those boats. It was wet and miserable," said retired Schenectady resident Arthur Bertini. He served in Field Artillery Battalion of the 4th Infantry. "Our landing craft jumped about a foot from the 14-inch guns. One of our boats hit a mine. When we saw that, all we wanted to do was get on land. You felt sort of helpless. At least on land, you were a soldier. You knew how to survive. We wanted to hit the beach and get it over with."*

The Allies had plenty of surprises for the Germans: a variety of specialized tanks designed to overcome the minefields, ingenious armored vehicles, amphibious tanks, flame-throwing tanks, bulldozing tanks — enough vehicles to form a double column from Pittsburgh to Chicago. The equipment included everything from materials to make 120-foot steel span bridges to sulfa pills and fresh drinking water: 300,500 gallons for the first three days ashore.

But none of this hardware and support meant a thing without the swift action of the thousands of foot-soldiers who waded ashore and clung to the beach with their fingernails.

*"I was in the first wave," said Vincent Agneta, an explosives engineer with the 29th Infantry Division. He is now 61, retired and living in Albany. "I had 30 blocks of TNT with me. We had to blow up everything in sight to get the other troops in. I was on the beach almost all day blowing things up. In the afternoon, it looked good. It looked*

*like it was going to clear. I went to clear a minefield with a guy from Buffalo. A friend of mine. I can't remember the guy's name now. We heard somebody yell and a big explosion and I hit the ground. They must have thrown a grenade, because when I looked up, he was gone."*

1,465 Americans killed. 3,184 wounded. 1,928 missing. More than 90 percent of the American casualties that day came at Omaha Beach.

*"About 11 in the morning, we landed," said Albany resident Patrick Vardabash, a medic with the 4th Infantry Division. "Bodies were laying all over the place when we landed. We treated gunshot wounds, guys who stepped on mines. Them Germans were down so far in the ground, it was pitiful. They had to blast them out of their holes. Little by little, we got up the beach. Lot of guys lost. A lot of guys."*

Later, when it was over, General Bradley would say, "Every man who set foot on Omaha Beach that day was a hero."

On Utah, and the beaches to the east, the Allies landed with little resistance.

*"We had it easy," remembers Leroy C. Bird, now 65, a retired state office worker living in Schenectady. He landed on Utah Beach with the 8th Infantry. "Hell, we just walked in. And we waltzed across the peninsula."*

At Ste. Marie Eglise, the paratroopers met up with the U.S. 4th Division. By nightfall, the British and Canadian units had advanced three miles inland toward Caen. Still, for days the Germans continued to knock out Allied artillery batteries on the beach. Reinforcements were called in.

*"We were on pass in a town in southern England and they sent the MPs to get us," said John Filipello, of the 230th Field Artillery, who now is 63 and works for Albany County. He hit the beach three days after the initial invasion. "We heard the artillery was taking a beating. So, we were next. As soon as we hit the beachhead, we started fighting right there. Even though it was three days later."*

The Battle of Normandy claimed 10,000 Allied lives. It would mean the beginning of the end for the Germans. By the end of July, 800,000 Americans were in France. When D-Day came, Hitler refused to believe it was more than a bluff. When D-Day was over, the Nazis refused to communicate the long-range implications of the defeat to the German people and troops.

*"We didn't hear much about D-Day," remembers Fred Baye, who served in the German Navy. He's 60 now and lives and works in Colonie. "When you're in the army, any army, it*

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# Victory at 'Atlantic Wall'

By G. K. Hodenfield

**T**he fear began to subside and excitement mounted at 4:05 a.m., June 6, 1944. That's when 2,225 men of the 2nd U.S. Ranger Battalion left their landing ships, the HMS Ben Machree and HMS Amsterdam, in their LCAs to begin the assault on Hitler's Atlantic Wall.

It was D-Day, the long-awaited opening of the Second Front.

A couple of hours earlier we had been served a hearty breakfast of pancakes and coffee, a meal designed to reduce the possibility of seasickness.

The Ben Machree and Amsterdam were former Channel Steamers, and quite comfortable. The LCAs (landing craft, assault) were built to carry 20-30 men or one vehicle, and were not built for comfort.

The LCAs were loaded at deck level, then lowered into the black and choppy waters of the English Channel. As a correspondent for the Army's Stars & Stripes, I was assigned to LCA No. 883, commanded by Capt. Otto (Big Stoop) Masney of Company F and Pewaukee, Wis. The Rangers had been briefed and "sealed" aboard the Ben Machree and Amsterdam on June 1.

We had gone through the false alarm of June 5. D-Day had been originally scheduled for that day, but had been postponed because of horrible weather. The weather didn't seem much better now, but there was a subtle change in the Rangers. Their attitude now was, "Come on, let's get this thing over with."

The seas were high and wild, the wind strong and biting cold. The Ranger plan was vital to the success of the entire invasion, but it was basically simple.

Their target was Pointe du Hoc, a comparatively small tableland that jutted into the English Channel like the letter "V," between the main American landing sites on Omaha and Utah beaches.

The Germans had six 155mm guns on Pointe du Hoc, all capable of pouring murderous fire onto either Utah or Omaha. Invasion planners called Pointe du Hoc "Target No. 1."

The sides of the "V" of Pointe du Hoc were sheer cliffs, most more than 100 feet high, which is why one Allied officer said, "Three old women with brooms could keep the Rangers from climbing those cliffs."

The LCAs were equipped with rocket launchers that would hurl grapnel hooks over the cliff tops, trailing rope ladders. The Rangers would land on the narrow beach below the cliffs, pull the ropes tight to set the grapnel hooks firmly into the earth, scamper up the rope ladders, spike those 155mm guns with thermite grenades, and move about one mile inland to meet reinforcements from Omaha Beach at noon on D-Day.

A good plan, a basically simple plan. But . . .

As the 11 loaded LCAs formed up and began their slow approach to the Normandy coast, about 100 miles ahead, one of the supply boats swamped and sank. There was one survivor. A short while later, another LCA swamped and sank in the heavy seas. This one carried Capt. Harold (Duke) Slater and some of his D Company men. Rangers in the other LCAs could see Slater and his men threshing about in the freezing water, trying to stay afloat, but there was no thought of stopping to help them. Those big guns on Pointe du Hoc were still there, and they were the sole purpose of this operation. In any event, all of the Rangers knew they were expendable. (Slater and some of his men were picked up later and returned — protesting bitterly — to England. They wanted to be taken to Pointe du Hoc.)

Just before dawn, the big ships lying offshore opened fire all along the invasion coast. The sky was aflame with the flashes and flares of hundreds of big guns.

We knew there were about 5,000 ships out there in the darkness, carrying almost 200,000 men and their fighting gear to the French beaches.

But came the dawn, and we saw that things were not going according to plan.

The winds of at least 15 knots and the four-foot waves had pushed the Ranger flotilla far off course. We were headed for land at least three miles east of Pointe du Hoc.

The mistake in navigation was quickly corrected, but valuable time had been lost. So had the element of surprise.

Instead of coming ashore directly from the north at H-hour, the Rangers found themselves headed west parallel to the beaches, more than half an hour late.

You make friends quickly in combat, and lose them just as quickly. I had spent much of the trip in the LCA kidding with a Ranger who said he would never understand why a reporter, who really didn't have to, would go along on what was certain to be a suicide mission for about half the Rangers. He was a great guy, and I wish I had learned his name. Shortly after our LCA turned west and headed for Pointe du Hoc, a German rifleman on the cliffs shot him through the head. He toppled over quietly at my feet.

The casualties in the other LCA were higher. The naval fire had, indeed, driven the Germans to cover. But they had recovered when the bombardment stopped and had come out to see what was going on. What they saw were slow-moving LCAs loaded with soldiers — perfect targets for sharpshooters less than 200 yards away.

The loss of two LCAs had reduced the Ranger fighting force to fewer than 200 men. Also in the Ranger flotilla were four DUKWs (pronounced "Ducks"). The DUKW was a 2½-ton truck chassis with a hull, rudder and propeller to make it amphibious. The Rangers

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## WITNESSES...Continued

*doesn't matter which one you're in. You're trained for fighting. I don't know how German spirits would have been if we were told about D-Day."*

Later in the summer of '44, the French Underground, its efforts buoyed by the D-Day victory, captured a number of German troops, including Baye, who was on a shore assignment in the mountains of southern France. He spent five years in Allied prisons.

Shortly after D-Day, Vincent Agneta was captured and spent 11 months in several German POW camps.

Three weeks later, near Cherbourg,

France, Leroy Bird's chest was ripped open by German machine-gun fire. He spent three weeks in an English hospital.

In the fall of 1944, Gil Murray and the 101st Airborne unit jumped into Holland.

In December, John Filipello fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

PT 508, Tony Conte on board, went to the Pacific to engage Japanese submarines.

Pat Vardabash, the medic, treated bleeding, dying Americans right up to the gates of Berlin.

**"ATLANTIC WALL"...Cont.**

had equipped their four DUKWs with extension ladders from the London Fire Brigade. The DUKWs were to run aground, raise their ladders, and provide a fast and relatively easy means of getting over the clifftops.

Just before reaching the narrow Pointe du Hoc beaches, one of the DUKWs was hit by 20mm fire and sunk. The other three were never truly effective.

The nine LCAs touched down at about 7:10 a.m. — a good 40 minutes late. A welcoming committee was at the top of the cliffs, shooting directly down at the Rangers and dropping hand grenades on them.

Some of the LCAs fired their rockets before hitting the beach and the rockets failed to reach the clifftops. All had other rocket launchers which could be carried ashore and fired from there.

Captain Masney saw the other LCAs stop too soon and fire their rockets ineffectively. He ordered the boatswain on his LCA to keep driving toward the beach, and warned against shooting the rockets prematurely because, "We've got plenty of time." Thus it was that LCA 883 made the only dry landing of the group, and five of our six rockets went sailing over the cliff tops.

The sight and sound of the rockets drove the Germans back from the clifftops just about long enough for some of the Rangers to start up the rope ladders.

The first LCA to touch down had brought Lt. Col. James Earl Rudder of Brady, Texas, to the shores of France. Rudder set up his command post on the narrow beach.

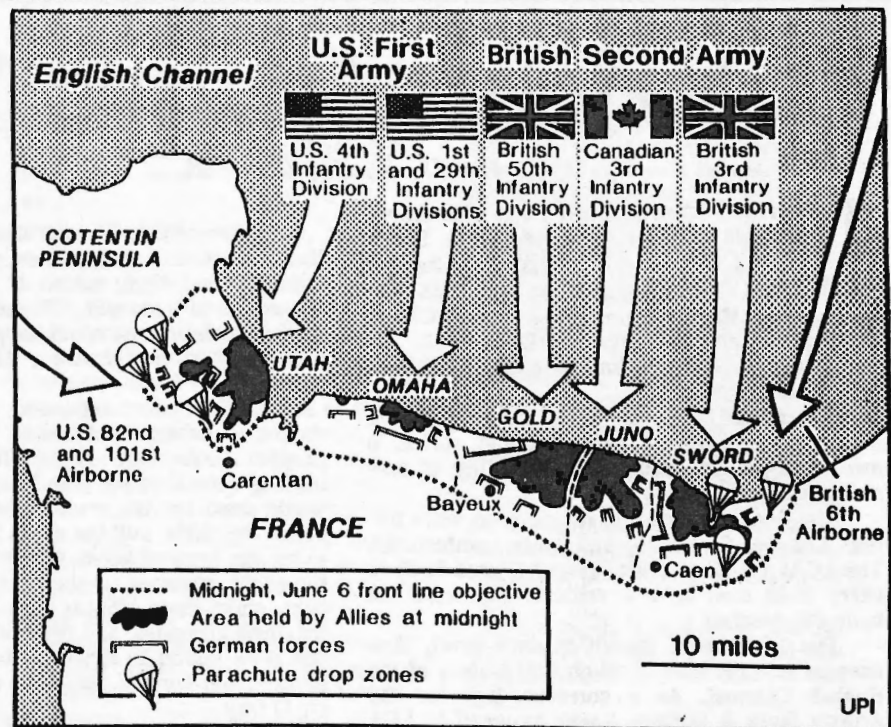
Snipers and machine gunners were on the cliffs all around us, so we scrambled to the safety of the cliff base. Sgt. Bob Youso and Pvt. Alvin White of our LCA had already started up the ladders and others lined up awaiting their turn.

Despite the opposition, the Rangers got to the top of the cliffs and began pushing the Germans back. I'll never know how they did it.

As each group of Rangers reached the clifftops they set about their assigned mission — find those German guns and spike them with thermite grenades.

But the guns weren't where they were supposed to be.

First Sgt. Leonard Lomell (now a successful attorney in Toms River, N.J.) knew the guns couldn't be far away. Although he had been



shot in the side just as he left his LCA on the beach below, he was one of the first Rangers up the cliffs, and he was determined to find those guns.

He did.

At the place where his target gun was supposed to be, Lomell could see tracks leaving the gun position. Along with Staff Sgt. Jack E. Kuhn, he followed the tracks down a narrow lane and sure enough, they found five of the guns. Incredibly, the guns were set up to fire on Utah Beach from a well camouflaged position. There were piles of ammunition ready to be fired and fuses on the shells.

But there wasn't a German soldier anywhere in the immediate area.

With Kuhn covering him, Lomell climbed over a hedgerow and set off thermite grenades in the recoil and traversing mechanism of two of the guns, and used his gun butt to smash the sight on all five guns. Then Lomell and Kuhn went back for more thermite grenades and put the remaining three guns out of action. The grenades melted the mechanisms and rendered the guns useless.

The Rangers had been scheduled to break out of Pointe du Hoc and advance eastward toward Grandcamp and Omaha Beach by noon of D-Day. In fact, they didn't leave Pointe du Hoc until about noon on D-plus-2, about 48 hours late.

It was about 1 a.m. on June 7 that the Germans launched their

first counterattack. That was thrown back, but they regrouped and hit us again about dawn. That counterattack, too, was thrown back with a heavy loss of Ranger lives.

The next day was an anticlimax, as the end of a battle always is.

The reinforcements, after bloody, bitter fighting, moved up from the east, and the Germans took off. But those guys coming from Omaha beach heard the sound of our captured German weapons. Since they believed the original striking force had been wiped out, they assumed we were Germans, and they opened fire on us.

Colonel Rudder had an American flag displayed, and ordered our firing to stop. But we already had lost several men to "friendly fire."

About noon on D-plus-2 the remnants of Companies D, E and F walked off Pointe du Hoc. Of the original force, there were only about 50 who could walk under their own power. Some of those were badly wounded, including Rudder and Masney, both wounded twice.

Some of the survivors will meet again at Pointe du Hoc on Wednesday, the 40th anniversary of D-Day. Masney and Lomell will be there, among others. We'll all miss Rudder, who became president of Texas A&M before he died at age 60 in 1970.

# The Shadow of D-Day

Forty years ago Wednesday, the Allies invaded Normandy. For those who were surrounded by death that morning and survived, the sights and terror of battle have not faded.

By George DeWan

**T**HE WAY John J. Murphy of Bay Shore remembers it, he hit the beach at Normandy with the rest of G Company about 9:30 in the morning, three hours after the first waves of bloodied soldiers had left their crimson imprint in the sands of Omaha Beach. Murphy had fought in North Africa, and had been in the invasion of Sicily, but that was merely prologue to a disaster.

"Sicily was a little tough, but it was nothing compared to this," Murphy, now 64, says. He pushed his memory back to that day 40 years ago, when he was a private first class, a rifleman in the 18th Regimental Combat Team of the First Infantry Division, the Big Red One.

D-Day. June 6, 1944. Forty years ago Wednesday. Murphy was part of the massive Allied force that, with the Normandy invasion, began the final push to defeat Nazi Germany in World War II. Paris would fall in August, and the offensive would drive deep into central Europe by the following winter. The German surrender would come on May 7, 1945.

"This here, you didn't think you were going to make it," Murphy says. "When we came in, the beach was literally piled with stuff. Stuff at the edge of the water, tanks that were knocked out, boats that were knocked out. And there were bodies floating all over the place. You go in and see that, you say, 'Jesus, what the hell!' And you couldn't move. They [the Germans]

*George DeWan is a Newsday staff writer.*

were actually looking down at you. They held the high ground and were looking down at you. You really had no place to move. 'Bloody Omaha,' they called it."

It was bloody, indeed. Of the five beaches attacked on D-Day by allied forces along a 60-mile stretch of land midway between Cherbourg and Le Havre, the one with the code name Omaha saw the most death and destruction. In the first 24 hours, the American forces at Omaha suffered 3,000 casualties, either dead, wounded or missing.

Total first-day casualties were between 10,000 and 12,000 men. This included Americans on Omaha and Utah beaches, Canadians on Juno Beach, British on Gold and Sword beaches as well as American and British airborne units who landed behind enemy lines.

Associated Press correspondent Don Whitehead, armed with only pencils and notepads, went in right behind the first wave. "The enemy on the right flank was pouring direct fire on the beach," he wrote. "Hundreds of troops, pinned to the cover of the embankment, burrowed shallow trenches in the loose gravel. No one was moving forward. The congestion was growing dangerous as more troops piled in. Snipers and machine gunners were picking off our troops as they they came ashore."

No unit was more devastated on Omaha than the 197 men of A Company of the 116th Infantry, which landed soon after 6:30 AM, which was H-Hour, the beginning of the seaborne assault. Close to 190 of them were killed or wounded. Two of the company's six landing craft never made it to the beach. The other four disgorged their men into water six feet deep.

Here is the official Army report: "Some were hit in the water and wounded. Some drowned then and there . . . Within 10 minutes of the ramps being lowered, A Company had become inert, leaderless and almost incapable of action. Every officer and sergeant had been killed or wounded . . . Within 20 minutes of striking the beach A Company had ceased to be an assault company and had become a forlorn little rescue party bent upon survival and the saving of lives."

\* \* \*

Thaddeus Lombarski of Wyandanch was with the other regimental combat team in the initial assault on Omaha Beach, the 16th Infantry. The first sergeant in F Company, Lombarski had won a Silver Star in Sicily and was about to earn another one on Omaha Beach. Later, he received a battlefield commission.

"We knew it was going to be hell," says Lombarski, now 65. "My job was to get off that boat as fast as I could. That saved my life, because about half of the boat emptied out and then they got a direct hit, and the rest of them died. I think we lost 110 men that day. I don't think anybody was surprised. I think we expected the worst. We got what we expected."

Lombarski's commanding officer was Maj. John Finke, now a 73-year-old retired colonel who lives in Snedens Landing, in Rockland County, N. Y. The first thing Finke did when he hit the beach, as the mortars exploded and the bullets flew around him, was to look at his watch. It was 6:42 AM.

"I don't think anyone went down into those small landing craft that

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## SHADOW...Continued

figured he had much better than a 50-50 chance," Finke says. "And we lost a helluva lot of them. We debarked about 2 o'clock in the morning and went into the landing craft. Then we circled while everything was going on. We being the first, we were in the craft the longest, three or four hours, waiting for the word to go.

"We landed about a quarter of a mile from high-water mark, on a rising tide," Finke recalls. "So we had to get our ass up the beach as fast as we could. There was a tremendous amount of fire — rifle, machine gun and artillery. I hadn't been able to carry a carbine because I had to use a stick to walk [because of an earlier sprained ankle]. I used it to good advantage, because I hit people to get them off the ground and moving. Soldiers just like to hide behind something so they can start shooting. Once they got down there, it was hard to get them up. You just had to kick them to get them up the beach."

By early afternoon, Finke had received mortar shrapnel in an elbow and leg. He was the seventh — and last — officer in his company to be put out of action on that first day.

"I lasted a lot longer than some of those poor bastards," Finke says.

\* \* \*

Michael J. Perillo, now 60, of Levittown, trained as a combat engineer, went into Normandy as a sergeant with the third wave of assault troops, around 8:30 AM.

"What we had to do was to bring explosives up so they could get rid of the obstacles in the water and on the beach," he says. "You don't even see what you're firing at. You just look for a flash and maybe fire in that direction."

\* \* \*

Some say the planning for the Normandy invasion began in June of 1940, when 330,000 British soldiers had to be evacuated from Dunkirk to avoid being killed or captured by advancing German soldiers. Later, in a stirring speech to the House of Commons, Prime Minister Winston Churchill made a promise: "We shall go back." It took four years, almost to the day.

By the spring of 1944, the war in Europe had turned around for the Allies. The Russians were on the of-

fensive on the Eastern Front. Allied forces had taken North Africa and Sicily and were moving up the Italian boot. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had been in overall command of the Allied forces in the Mediterranean, had been sent to London to take supreme command of the invasion of Europe, the beginning of the so-called Second Front. He was to have 1.7 million American soldiers, sailors, airmen and coast guardsmen under his command, as well as a million British and Canadians and 300,000 Free French, Poles, Czechs, Belgians, Norwegians and Dutch.

**T**HROUGH the early months of 1944, Eisenhower and his top aides planned the immense and complicated details of the invasion. It was to involve a fleet of 5,333 ships and landing craft, as well as 9,210 aircraft. It was to involve the dropping of 23,000 airborne troops behind the beaches just after midnight, and the landing on D-Day of 58,000 American soldiers and 75,000 Britons and Canadians.

Operation Overlord, it was called. As masses of men and materiel moved into England starting in the fall of 1943, it became a more and more difficult secret to keep. The secrecy produced some intriguing sidelights, and those in charge of security received a few scares:

In March, 1944, a bulky envelope burst open on a sorting table in Chicago's main post office, and a number of people noticed that documents inside said something about Operation Overlord. Government intelligence officers quickly investigated and told the clerks to forget what they had seen. It seems that an American sergeant in London had mistakenly addressed the package to his sister in Chicago.

On a warm May morning in London's War Office, a dozen copies of a top-secret memorandum detailing the Overlord plan blew out an open window. Distraught aides could find only 11 copies on the ground. The 12th turned up later when an unidentified man gave it to a security guard in another building, apparently unread.

At a cocktail party at Clar-

idge's Hotel in London, an American general — a classmate of Eisenhower — mentioned to some fellow officers that the invasion would take place before June 15. He was demoted to colonel and sent home.

The strangest incident occurred in the pages of the Daily Telegraph. For five weeks before D-Day, the newspaper's crossword puzzle, composed by a physics teacher, Leonard Dawe, had included secret Normandy invasion code words: Utah, Omaha, Mulberry, Neptune and Overlord. Scotland Yard investigators confronted Dawe with the evidence, but could conclude only that the whole thing was coincidental.

When the evening of June 5 came, Eisenhower had made the decision to commit his forces to the invasion. There was no more planning for him to do. At 6 PM he had his driver, Kay Summersby, take him out to the airfield where the 101st Airborne was loading up. He chatted easily with the men, talking about their jobs and their hometowns. In a recent biography of Eisenhower, historian Stephen Ambrose recorded the final moment:

"As the last plane roared into the sky, Eisenhower turned to Kay, who was his driver that night, with a visible sagging in his shoulders. She saw tears in his eyes. He began to walk slowly toward his car. 'Well,' he said quietly, 'it's on.'"

He got back to his trailer after 1 AM and went to bed, Ambrose wrote, then got up again shortly before 7 AM. When an aide looked in on him, Eisenhower was sitting up in bed, smoking a cigarette and reading a western novel.

\* \* \*

Frank Mannix, now 64, of Huntington, was a staff sergeant in an anti-aircraft machine-gun battalion attached

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## SHADOW...Continued

to the First Infantry Division. Within two hours of landing on Omaha Beach, he was hit by shrapnel in the hands and a leg, for which he received a Purple Heart.

He recalls: "Nobody went over the top there until some time in the afternoon, 2 o'clock or so. If it wasn't for some goddamned officer, who I didn't know — it wasn't any of ours, because we didn't find any of ours. This guy was cursing and swearing, puffing a cigar. He was the first one to gather them and come up and curse at someone, like myself, and say, 'What the hell you doing, laying there for?' Someone said, 'He's hit already.' He said, 'Well, get him a god-damned rifle and put him up on the hill.'"

\* \* \*

The general plan for the invasion included landings behind the beaches by paratroopers and airborne troops in gliders just after midnight. Then the Royal Air Force would bomb the beaches during the night, followed by a sea bombardment by a fleet of warships made up of more than 600 destroyers, cruisers and battleships. Finally, there would be a full-scale bombing by the U. S. Army Air Corps at daybreak, just before the seaborne troops went in.

The first in were those who were carried by 1,200 transport aircraft and 700 gliders, the U. S. 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and the British 6th Airborne Division. It was the largest airborne assault in history, and it began at a little past midnight on June 6. One of the major tasks was to seize rivers and bridges, forestalling the German counterattack that was considered inevitable. A key strategic objective for the 82nd was the crossroads town of Ste. Mere-Eglise, not far from Utah Beach, and at 4 AM Ste. Mere-Eglise gained

the distinction of being the first village to be liberated in France.

Although ultimately successful, the airdrops were chaotic. Because of navigational problems caused by bad weather and intense German fire, the men were scattered widely, often far from their objectives. Many drowned in heavily flooded fields, dragged down by their 100-pound loads of gear. Others were lost for weeks, and still others were dropped so deeply into enemy territory that they were never heard from again. The dead, wounded and missing among the airborne troops numbered about 2,500 on the first day.

"From the beginning, the Americans worked against staggering odds," wrote Cornelius Ryan in "The Longest Day." "Like the British, the U. S. divisions were critically scattered. Only one regiment fell accurately. Sixty per cent of all equipment was lost, including most of the radios, mortars and ammunition. Worse still, many of the men were lost, too. They came down miles from any recognizable landmarks, confused and alone."

\* \* \*

At daylight, a vast armada of ships brought in its human cargo. Opposing the invasion force was the Atlantic Wall devised by Hitler and strengthened by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, the Desert Fox, who had been appointed to defend the coast. Gun emplacements of concrete and armor were protected by extensive minefields. Underwater obstacles, exposed at low tide, had been constructed in the surf to stop landing craft. Land mines were everywhere. And

behind this was the coastal artillery.

There was also the German Army, ragtag in spots, superb in others. One reason that the Omaha Beach invasion was so bloody was that — unknown to the Allies — the expert 352nd German Division had

been moved into the area for defensive maneuvers. But many of Hitler's best troops were trying to hold the 2,000-mile Eastern Front against the Russians, and many others were pinned down in Italy.

Cornelius Ryan wrote: "So, by 1944, Hitler was forced to bolster his garrisons in the west with a strange conglomeration of replacements — old men and young boys, the remnants of divisions shattered on the Russian front, impressed 'volunteers' from occupied countries (there were units of Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, Romanians and Yugoslavs, to mention just a few) and even two Russian divisions composed of men who preferred fighting for the Nazis to remaining in prison camps. Questionable as these troops might prove to be in combat, they filled out the gaps. He still had a hard core of battle-hardened troops and panzers."

An especially poignant story is told by the Comptess de Maupertuis, a pseudonymous Frenchwoman from Bayeux who wrote about life in Normandy during the war.

The Germans had requisitioned her chateau, though she still lived there. In November, 1943, she looked out the window and saw a new contingent of German soldiers, all of 14 years old, earnestly practicing hand-to-hand combat in a grassy park. A little later, she looked out again, and the soldiers, during a rest period, were dancing and playing tag.

\* \*

Howard Cirkl, now 61, of Wantagh, was a sergeant heading a mortar platoon in the Ninth Infantry Division. He went into Utah Beach in mid-morning on D-Day. But before that, he had waited.

"We left Liverpool on the 3rd," Cirkl says. "We were on one of these Liberty Ships, sitting in the channel for three days waiting to land. We played cards, that's all we had to do. Half of the men in the boat were sick. I was seasick, too. That boat stunk. All we knew was that we were waiting for the invasion."

"Everybody speculated, sure. Most of the men were worried who was going to get killed, because they knew the Germans were prepared for the invasion. That, I think, was foremost in everybody's mind — whether or not you were going to survive. I think you have to be optimistic. I think you have to feel that God is on your side . . ."

"I ran. Believe me, I ran. Because that beach, there's maybe a couple hundred yards from the water's edge, then you got sheer cliffs, which we had to scale. You

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# A glimpse of fire and brimstone

By Edward D. Ball

Special to The Journal-Constitution

It was the eve of D-day and impatient crews of U.S. Navy PT boats were sealed on the dock at the British Portland Bill Naval Base near Weymouth on the south coast of England.

The date was June 4, 1944. Across the English Channel, the Normandy beaches waited.

Weymouth Harbor was clogged with ships of every size and description. GIs streamed aboard and disappeared below deck. Tanks, self-propelled guns, halftrack personnel carriers, two-by-four trucks and jeeps clattered over lowered front-end ramps into the cavernous bellies of shallow-draft, rounded-bottom landing craft. The whole scene was one of organized bedlam.

Cmdr. John D. Bulkeley of the PT boat group reluctantly made room aboard the Stratus for two newsmen, Bob Miller of United Press and me.

Bulkeley called a final briefing, and that didn't set well with high-spirited skippers who felt there had been too many briefings and too little action. Some of them, sensing that something big was about to happen, had gone out and gotten themselves hung over.

The commander said, "Gentlemen, no one has ever sunk a German E-boat in surface combat. Their hulls are steel, ours wooden. They have us outmanned and outgunned. So when you engage him, ram him!"

There was a moment of deep silence, then from the back off the room came a voice, slowly, distinctly and very audibly: "Like hell we will!" That was the

*Edward D. Ball, 79, retired from The Associated Press after 31 years in 1958. He later served as editor of the Nashville Tennessean. He is an Athens resident.*

end of the briefing.

The PT boats left Weymouth Harbor shortly after midnight June 6 and took up positions along columns of blacked-out mine sweepers.

At daybreak, the immensity of the mine sweeper force was apparent. They filled the horizon as far as the eye could see in every direction.

The PT boats were to ward off submarine and air attacks (none occurred during the invasion), and to use their deck guns to sink mines brought up by the mine sweepers.

When we neared the beaches on the morning of June 6, the British and American fleets opened up, hurling shells at the rate of 200 tons a minute. Big shells passing overhead had the sound of a soft, gentle swish, but the angry flash of the propellant charges from the ships, and the fire and brimstone they created ashore, were something else.

About midmorning, a PT was detached to go back to Weymouth. Miller and I tossed a coin to determine who would go and take the other's copy. It fell my lot to go, and D-day ended for me.

Competition among the three American news services was furious, and frankly, I was not reluctant to get out of there while the getting was good. But did I win or lose? Forty years later, there still is no satisfactory answer

## SHADOW...Continued

know how they did it? They fired grappling hooks up on the top of the cliffs, and we had to climb up on the ropes — carrying the mortars and the ammunition and your full pack. Don't ask me how we did it, but we did it . . . Once we got over there, up on the top of the cliff, then we had to clean out the pillboxes. This was a matter of doing it by hand, with hand grenades. And somebody running up there and throwing the hand grenade through the window to kill the Germans. It was all sheer guts, period. You didn't have any choice. Either you did it, or else."

\* \* \*

Perhaps those who died the most gruesome deaths were those in the amphibious tanks, especially at Omaha, where high winds had caused waves from four to six feet high. These supposedly seaworthy tanks were a new invention, essentially a conventional 30-ton Sherman tank surrounded by a canvas screen that had inflatable tubes inside. The tanks were to be let

out of the landing crafts in deep water and then proceed to shore. But they had not been designed to operate in such rough seas.

"Each of the landing craft dropped its ramp, and on each of them the four tanks moved forward to enter the water from which they could not possibly return," wrote David Howarth in "D-Day: The 6th of June, 1944." "Some of them went off the ramps successfully and traveled a hundred yards or so before they abruptly vanished below the waves. Some never floated at all . . . Within two or three minutes, 27 of the 32 tanks were at the bottom of the channel; 135 men were drowned or swimming for their lives."

Ernie Pyle, one of the best, and best-known, of the World War II war correspondents, landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day Plus 1, June 7, when the fighting had moved a bit inland. His description of the aftermath of D-Day is unmatched.

"I took a walk along the historic coast of Normandy in the country of France. It was  
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# Just as German meteorologists had predicted, conditions along the French coastline were miserable on June 6, 1944. . .

By Fred Bruning

Dense clouds masked the early morning sky. Gale-force winds seemed to be carrying away hunks of the English Channel.

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel had been assured that inclement weather would make a long-expected Allied invasion impossible for at least two weeks. With nature cooperating so nicely, the Nazi commander decided on a quick trip to Germany. His wife's birthday was June 6. Rommel would be home to celebrate.

While Rommel relaxed in Obersalburg, Dwight Eisenhower, the supreme allied commander, was in Britain considering another forecast. Fierce as the storm seemed, Eisenhower was told, there would be a break in the clouds over the next 24 hours, a slight calming of the seas.

Poor weather already had occasioned one postponement of the assault known to military planners as Operation Overlord. Eisenhower thought for a while — less than a minute, he said later — and announced his decision. "OK," he said. "We'll go."

This week, Normandy is bracing itself for an anniversary invasion by veterans, journalists, tourists and heads of state.

A speech by President Reagan at the Pointe-du-Hoc,

**D-DAY  
Plus 40**

## SHADOW...Continued

a lovely day for strolling along the seashore. Men were sleeping on the sand, some of them sleeping forever. Men were floating in the water, but they didn't know they were in the water, for they were dead . . .

"In this shore-line museum of carnage there were abandoned rolls of barbed wire and smashed bulldozers and big stacks of thrown-away life belts and piles of shells still waiting to be moved. In the water floated empty life rafts and soldiers' packs and ration boxes, and mysterious oranges. On the beach lay snarled rolls of telephone wire and big rolls of steel matting and stacks of broken, rusting rifles.

"On the beach lay, expended, sufficient men and mechanism for a small war."

About 2,500 men from the Allied forces died in Normandy on D-Day. As Pyle continued his walk down the beach, he saw many of them.

"The strong, swirling tides of the Normandy coastline shifted the contours of the sandy beach as they moved in and out. They carried soldiers' bodies out to sea, and later they returned them. They covered the corpses of heroes with sand, and then, in their whims, they uncovered them." ◊

scene of a heroic assault by 225 U.S. Rangers to seize a gun emplacement at the top of a 100-foot cliff, will be beamed back live by the major U.S. networks Wednesday morning. Some 30 U.S., French and British television crews will provide live coverage from the American cemetery above Omaha Beach and at Utah Beach, where Reagan will be joined by French President Francois Mitterrand, Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, Kings Olav of Norway and Baudouin of Belgium, the Grand Duke of Luxembourg and Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

The daylight stage and worldwide audience will be a far cry from the setting in which the invasion began, at 10 PM, June 5, 1944. At that hour, the first C-47 transports carrying members of the 82nd and 101st Airborne took off from a British base. More than 800 planes made the three-hour trip across the channel. More than 16,000 paratroopers jumped into blinding darkness near the French village of Ste. Mere-Eglise.

Many were shot by German defenders while still in the air. Others drowned in flooded fields. Some became tangled in trees or hooked to church spires — easy targets for enemy riflemen. But most survived, regrouped and prepared for what soon was to come. An hour before the paratroopers arrived, German shore positions had been hit by U.S. bombers. In the sea, warships and troop transports were grinding toward Normandy. D-Day, at last, had begun.

Before it was over, Allied troops — mainly U.S., British and Canadian — had penetrated Hitler's "Atlantic Wall," the Nazi defense line that stretched from Holland to Brittany. Assault forces took the bluffs above Omaha Beach, site of the bloodiest fighting. U.S. troops captured Utah Beach to the west; British and Canadians overwhelmed defenders at the other battlegrounds — Gold, Juno, Sword.

Rommel rushed back to the front and asked permission to send highly regarded Panzer tank units into action. However, Nazi strategists, including Hitler, were reluctant and when, finally, the Panzer units rolled it was too late. For the brilliant commander of Germany's campaign in Africa, it was a devastating setback made even worse by his ill-timed holiday. "How stupid of me," he is supposed to have said. "How stupid of me."

As Rommel knew, a turning point had been reached. Though German soldiers fought intensely, the Nazis never regained the initiative. By securing a piece of the European mainland, the Allies had undertaken the long march toward liberation — one that would culminate 11 months later with the fall of Berlin and Germany's surrender. The thousand year Reich was running out of time.

But for the Allies, the success of D-Day demanded extraordinary sacrifice. There were approximately 10,000 Allied casualties. More than 1,400 Americans lost their lives; more than 3,000 were wounded. At one point, U.S. Gen. Omar Bradley feared his men were taking part in an "irreversible catastrophe." Losses

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

# D-DAY: THE WORLD REMEMBERS

## June 6, 1944, was a turning point

### **NORMANDY INVASION**

#### *The Allies prepare*

*D-Day is a military term noting the date an operation is implemented — by land assault, air strike, naval bombardment, parachute assault or amphibious assault — or all of those methods. The most famous D-Day was June 6, 1944, when the Allies landed in Normandy in Operation Overlord.*

*This is the first in a series of articles reflecting the personal side of that D-Day.*

**By Allen Pusey**

*Staff Writer of The News*

Two and a half years after Pearl Harbor. Nearly five years after the Nazi invasion of Poland. June 3, 1944.

Each day's news was a bloody lesson in geography, each worker a self-conscious cog in an awesome war machine. Home-front America had settled into the routine of war.

Newspaper advertisements toasted allies, reviled enemies. Movies channeled history and hu-

mor to help carry the fight. Popular songs salved the matchless misery of love scattered across continents, or filled the frightful void left by those who would never return.

But this was also an America emerging from the Depression. It was an America poised for the greatest economic leap the world had ever seen. It was an America arrogant in its optimism that the war would soon be over, that the fascists would be ground to unconditional surrender and that America could soon retool its energies to create a new kind of

(SIL) Stromberg-Carlson advertised home radios it couldn't manufacture under war production restrictions. General Electric advertised televisions to receive programs that did not yet exist. "After the War" there would be automobiles, electric washers and vacuum cleaners, the ads suggested — a whole new life placed on hold by the Germans and the Japanese.

Rubber-tire and new-auto allotments, gasoline and shoe rationing, price controls, rent controls, censorship, blood drives, bond drives, internment camps, newsreels, uniforms on every street corner, in every bus station, in every Pullman car.

Ipana toothpaste, Old Gold cigarettes, Kelvintones, Shinola and Air Step shoes.

Fighting men were replaced stateside by working women who built the airplanes and launched the ships as well as a new consciousness about their own possibilities as full partners in postwar America.

The Japanese had Tokyo Rose, the Germans had Axis Sally, but the homefront in America had Rosie the Riveter.

Still the news this first week of June was a near-steady diet of death.

In Italy, Allied forces were driving within sight of Rome. In a special message from the Vatican, Pope Pius XII pleaded with both sides to keep destruction to a minimum inside the holy city's ancient gates.

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### D-DAY PLUS 40...Cont.

were enormous on the German side, as well. Perhaps as many as 9,000 enemy troops were killed or wounded.

Despite the bloodshed, Eisenhower showed no signs of wavering. He sent 154,000 infantrymen into action against 70,000 German defenders at Normandy — the most extensive sea landing in military history. In all, the general had 3 million troops at his disposal. "You are about to embark on a great crusade," Eisenhower called to his troops as they left Portsmouth. "Good luck! And let us beseech the blessing of the almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking."

From the outset, Allied forces needed all the luck they could get. At 6:30 AM, infantrymen piled out of transport ships and into troop carriers. Seas were churning, and soldiers drowned as they struggled toward shore lugging 70-pound packs. Tanks that were supposed to float bubbled to the bottom, crews still inside. Troops who gained Omaha Beach fell before the enemy's automatic rifle fire or in the midst of exploding mines. Bodies were buried in sand and snagged by barbed wire. Many floated in the tide.

Despite a vicious pounding from German soldiers in the bluffs, GIs persisted. "With the excitement, the fear, our knees buckled," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Turner of the 116th Infantry. "After some shots were fired, though, we were over that. We had confidence. We felt we could beat

anyone, anyone. The first German division we met, we demolished them."

Backed by gunfire from U.S. battleships, invaders pushed toward the high ground. Army Rangers scaled the sheer cliffs at Pointe-du-Hoc while German troops tried to beat them back with hand grenades. When the grenades ran out, the Germans threw rocks.

Hour after hour, the fighting wore on. More troops and supplies were brought to shore by landing vessels. Naval bombardment reached extraordinary levels.

In the weeks that followed, 800,000 Americans were committed to the Normandy assault. Still, progress came slowly and sometimes not at all. Invasion forces bogged down and German soldiers counterattacked although without much success.

Finally, GIs secured a pivotal road in the area of St. Lo. Gen. George Patton marched into Brittany, the Germans were routed at Falaise. On Aug. 24, Paris was liberated.

The Reich was disintegrating. What began on the beaches of Normandy ended with the siege of Berlin. Hitler's lieutenants had warned for some time that Nazi forces were vulnerable, that a break in the Atlantic Wall could be fatal. Yet their leader held stubbornly to his illusions. "No power on earth can drive us out of this region against our will," Hitler boasted. Forty years ago, allied invaders proved him wrong.

## REMEMBERS...Cont.

Having pushed back a German invasion, the Soviet allies were pressing Hitler from the East. Hand-picked Soviet technicians were servicing U.S. heavy bombers landing at secret bases inside Russia after bombing runs deep inside Germany.

American collaboration with the Soviets was celebrated in Hollywood. Robert Taylor was starred in *Song of Russia*, Ginger Rogers in *Tender Comrade*. Trum-peted a major ad campaign: "Coca-Cola wins a welcome from those who come from Moscow or Manchester. Have a Coke *Eto Zdorovo* (How Grand!)."

But France and much of Eastern Europe were still held by the Germans. Japan still held much of Indochina, large blocks of Manchuria and the Philippines. In the South Pacific, Allied forces were only inching their way westward in battle after bloody battle for the tiny islands of Midway, Guadalcanal and Guam. And the massive German concentration camps in Poland, Austria and Germany were still rumors too horrible to imagine, too evil to believe.

On Broadway, playwright Lillian Hellman drew favorable reviews for her scathing look at appeasement in *The Searching Wind*. At the Belmont, Bounding Home ended Pensive's quest for horse racing's Triple Crown.

In Hollywood, Bing Crosby's *Going My Way* and Walt Disney's *Snow White* were just being released.

The House Currency and Banking Committee voted an extension of price and rent controls. The War Production Board announced a new program for the production of knit-goods, mostly baby clothes and work socks.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull lobbied Congress for the formation of a postwar peace agency to promulgate the ideals of liberty "for aspiring peoples everywhere." An official of the Petroleum Industry War Council warned that racketeers might gain control of the gasoline industry through counterfeit rationing coupons and black-market supplies. And the Army announced that Maj. Clark Gable

would be discharged to civilian life.

Many of Texas' 6.4 million people were farmers who aspired to something other than farming. Despite farm deferments, Texas was losing its rural population — to the cities. But it was also developing its share of wartime industry. Between 1940 and 1944, the state's farm population dropped from 2.1 million to 1.7 million. Its \$1.3 billion farm business was dwarfed by \$7.7 billion in wartime facility payrolls and supply contracts.

Accordingly, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt carried the April Democratic primary in Texas with more than 71 percent of the vote. Half-formed and half-paved, Texas was serving notice that it was ready to explode when the postwar era of consumption hit.

Some people in the United States continued to behave as if there were no war: At New York's Sing Sing prison, Louis Parisi, 24, was electrocuted for the murder of Vincent Rappa. In Clairfield, Tenn., Mrs. Marion Teague gave birth to a healthy 21-pound boy.

*Life* magazine's weekly cover recounted the stepped-up Allied bombing of Europe, *Invasion by Air*. But letters to *Life's* editors still raged over pictures weeks before of 12 black ensigns commissioned into the U.S. Navy. An April Supreme Court ruling upheld the right of a black Houston man to vote in Texas elections. Across the South, a debate raged as to whether the law would be obeyed.

In New England, a Liberty Ship was launched in memory of Harriet Tubman, a black abolitionist.

If there was an optimism, there was also a growing impatience. Workers were tired of the long, relentless hours. Consumers were tired of the shortages and the rationing. Everywhere there were signals that something was about to break.

In St. Louis, where the Browns led the American League and the Cardinals led the National League, 3,500 transportation workers went on a 37-hour strike.

In California, the War Department canceled a major contract for fighters with Brewster Aeronautical Corp. because of restlessness among workers protesting long hours of forced overtime.

As the war wearied American spirits that first week of June 1944, Charles E. Wilson of the War Production Board broadcast a special appeal to all workers to "stay on their jobs at this critical period of the war."

"We need tremendous quantities of all types of materials in order to start and sustain a successful European invasion," Wilson said.

*A European invasion.* On the south coast of England, preparations for an Allied invasion of Europe had been proceeding in open secrecy for a year. Ships and soldiers were being massed and trained for the assault. Freight trains backed up for miles carrying munitions and equipment to the shore. The inevitability of an invasion was freely speculated about in the press, and finally there were tangible signs that the time was near.

For weeks, U.S. heavy bombers and fighters had been hammering the Calais and Boulogne areas of the French coast in an effort to deceive the Germans about the real site of the invasion. Complaints about delays in mail coming out of the British Isles brought official concerns for needed "pre-invasion censorship."

Inexplicably, this day, a young clerk for The Associated Press released a "flash" message announcing that the invasion force had landed. Two minutes later, the wire service followed with news that it was a false alarm.

But the response, in those two minutes, had been immediate and electric. At the Polo Grounds, for instance, the New York Giants were tied with the Pittsburgh Pirates. Just before the 10th inning, the fans roared as the invasion announcement was made over the public address system. The 9,171 in attendance then stood for a moment of silent prayer.

Despite the false alarm and a triple-play by the Giants, the Pirates won, 7-6.

## What D-Day means to Europe's Pepsi Generation

### In England, a house again is home to invasion nerve center

By Sheila Taylor

Staff Writer of The News

SOUTHWICK, England — Southwick House, a handsome white building atop a hill near Portsmouth, stands in the middle of HMS Dryad, Royal Naval School of Maritime Operations.

Nowadays it's usually used as an officers' mess. But this summer the house is open to visitors.

Unlike most tourists who annually collect at famous English houses, the visitors to this building are not interested in the architecture, history or its owners' genealogy. They come to see the wall map.

Southwick House was operations center for Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower and headquarters for Admiral Bertram Home Ramsay, the commander of naval operations for D-Day.

"The map was made by a toy firm," says a guide. "They made the map of the entire European coast line. Then when it came, just the Normandy area was kept. They tell me that a lieutenant commander and two chippies put it on the wall (in April 1944); then they weren't allowed to leave the house until D-Day was under way."

A tape welcomes visitors and explains details of the huge glassed-in map. Today a school group of teenagers were on a field trip. One of the students, Patrick Beggs, 15, saw an ad about Southwick House and asked his teacher if the class could go.

"We were studying the 17th century and everyone said that's boring," said teacher Lynda Butt, 27. "So I asked what they wanted to do." Neither Butt who grew up in Yorkshire or fellow teacher John Pearson, 36, also of Yorkshire, learned about D-Day in school.

Butt said she didn't know about D-Day until as a teen-ager she moved to Germany with her parents.

"The older people there were very hostile toward us," she said. "They wouldn't let their children

### In France, an appreciation for things American

By Sheila Taylor

Staff Writer of The News

PORT-EN-BESSIN, France — The College de Port-en-Bessin is a flashy new building — only three weeks old this first week of June 1984 — and it houses 200 students, ages 11-16.

They drink Pepsi, eat Kellogg's Corn Flakes and chew Hollywood bubblegum. "Almost everything they use or like is American," teacher Michel Deserable said. "Oh, that reminds me. We've been wondering what a certain phrase means. Jean Philippe, show us your shirt."

On the front of the 15-year-old's shirt is a large red logo reading: "Fruit of the Loom."

"We don't understand that significance," says Deserable.

They have grown up around the remnants of a war that raged before their birth.

A few concrete pillboxes and black, iron guns, armored cars and rusting tanks remain, scattered like children's toys on the sand and pebbles of Normandy's beaches.

To the children of France, D-Day lies not in memory but in a school book, listed with the many military episodes of their land and World War II, just another battle in their country's long history of war.

The Invasion, to them, is Germany's march into France and D-Day refers to the "landing" of Allied troops.

On field trips to battle sites and museums, they giggle, sneak cigarettes, hold hands and run off from their teachers — like U.S. students on a class trip.

Michel and Guillemette Deserable teach English and history. The students begin English lessons when they are 11, but do not study U.S. history until the end

of their fourth year at the school.

Out of courtesy, the students try to answer the American reporter in English, but as their enthusiasm for the conversation grows, they slip back into French.

Deserable's students, like the young everywhere, have the knack of simplifying.

"France was occupied by German forces," says Achard Picolonne, 16. "Occupation meant hard times for the French people and Gen. DeGaulle, who was in England, called for the people to fight the Germans. America, England and Canada all helped the French Resistance beat the Germans.

"The Americans helped because they had been attacked, themselves, at Pearl Harbor."

These students of Port-en-Bessin do not take organized field trips into the war sites or museums. "We've all been independently with our families," said Anne Lefevre, 15. The landing sites are only miles from the town.

The students want to come to the United States. They want to see the White House, the Statue of Liberty (a gift from France), Fifth Avenue in New York City, the Empire State Building and, especially, the Epcot Center at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla. They want to ride in a yellow taxi, see the space shuttle and talk to astronauts. They hope to become scientists, language teachers and electronic engineers.

But only one expressed concern about the future.

Cristelle Rousseville, 16, worries

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play with me. And that's when I learned about the war and D-Day."

Lt. Cmdr. Ron Collins says he serves as "decoration" in the map room. He said most visitors are school classes, but this week he had a group of veterans, British officers, on a D-Day reunion trip. "They were humming about to one another: 'Hey, Bob, where were you?' 'I was right here on this corner of this ship' — things like that," he said.

When Collins learned the group was going on to Normandy, he said, "I bet it'll be quieter for you this time. 'Except for all the beer that's drunk,' one answered."

Southwick House was where Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, serving as supreme commander of the Allied forces, made the decision that the Allies would risk making the Normandy invasion during a slight break in the bad weather that had plagued the English Channel.

# Invasion brought freedom

By Sheila Taylor

Staff Writer of The News

NORMANDY, France — In 1940, as the German army occupied Normandy, the residents lost property through requisition, privacy through billeting of soldiers in their homes and personal independence through forced labor.

They did not lose hope.

As they went about their lives, they grew accustomed to the presence of the invaders, but not to the loss of freedom.

In Ste.-Mere-Eglise, Antoinette Castel, a clothing store operator, says occupation meant she and her infant son shared a pork chop a week instead of one a day. A cup of coffee became a rare treat to be enjoyed only at gatherings of the closest friends.

One day the Germans took a string of horses owned by Odile Hebert's grandfather, a farmer. The next night, he searched the village until he found them. Clicking his tongue softly in the dark, he called his horses and they fol-

lowed him home.

People were requisitioned, too. They built bunkers, assembled obstructions on beaches and worked in fields. Some merely rode trains — an easy job, but dangerous. Their presence was supposed to keep the Allies from bombing the trains. There was no pay. And sometimes the ploy did not work.

Not all the Nazis were cruel; their attitudes and behavior depended on the temperament of the officers in charge. But most Normans knew that a request was a command.

It was a Thursday in 1940 when the Germans arrived in Le Molay Littry. Although she was only 12 and cannot recall the month, Jeanine Massey remembers the day because Thursday was always market day, an especially busy time at her father's cafe.

She was scrubbing floors when a waitress yelled, "Look! Out there!"

An armored truck moved slowly into the square and stopped at the cafe. Its occupants demanded water.

"We had seen German soldiers in the movies," Jeanine recalled. "And we were all scared."

"They will rape us," whispered a waitress. She hustled the other women into a bathroom and locked the door.

At first, the German soldiers gathered nightly in the cafe, getting drunk and loud. Jeanine's father, Jean, kept his family upstairs.

"After a while, a German officer came to live with us because we had modern facilities. When he was there, the soldiers were more orderly and we relaxed a bit," Jeanine recalls.

One afternoon as Jeanine did her homework in the cafe, a soldier grabbed her marker and drew a swastika on her paper. A waitress spit on it. The German became furious, and Jean rushed the waitress out of sight.

Once, as her family sat down to dinner, the soldiers shoved them aside and ate the meal.

"But by 1944," Jeanine recalls. "All that was left of that beautifully trained army were 54-year-old men. The younger ones had died on the Russian front. The older men didn't get drunk. They came to the cafe and drank coffee and talked about being homesick."

During those four years, she says, the villagers sustained the belief that the English would free them. Then, on June 1 at a church festival, a man took her father aside.

"Prepare for a big day," he told her father.

In the next few nights, bombs hit so close that plaster was knocked off the walls of their home, so the family moved into the fields for safety.

From the fields the families heard explosions to the west. Her father climbed a mound and could see the coast, eight miles away, lit up like fireworks.

"That's it," he said. "The English have come."

Although the town was freed June 10, the Germans continued nightly bombing. So the 200 villagers spent their nights amid the hedgerows and walked into the village each morning to conduct business. The routine lasted three months, until the Nazis were driven out of range.

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## IN FRANCE...Continued

about a war with Russia. "We've learned about the Russian economic system and politics," she said. "And that they have no freedom or democracy."

Achard puzzles over President Reagan. "He was successfully elected because he was an actor and now he has a lot of power. That couldn't happen in France. Yves Montand president?!"

And the class laughs loudly at the suggestion.

"Always when we see President Reagan on TV; he's on his ranches," Achard said.

Earlier in the week, several of the students had seen President Reagan on TV. "He said he and the Americans do not regret what they have done for France and they would do the same thing again," Cristelle recalled.

But she quickly points out that if there were another war, "it would be atomic and there would be nothing to be done. Nobody could help anybody."

Blaie Karine, 15, said that although France is "sort of under" the American umbrella, she would be opposed to allowing U.S. missile bases in France. "We French want

to keep our privacy and independence," she said. "But maybe if it were absolutely necessary, we would allow the missiles here. We are right in the middle between Russia and United States. And when both of you are quarreling, that scares us. Having U.S. missiles here would be one more reason to worry."

Achard said he wants to be a scientist when he finishes school, but if he cannot do that, he would like to be a policeman.

Last night most of the group watched *Yentl* on television and in recent months they have seen *Footloose*, *Flashdance*, *Rocky Trois (III)*, *E.T.*, *Alien*, *The Shining* and *Staying Alive*.

They are crazy about "Michel Jaisson" (yes, Michael Jackson) and the Star Sisters, an American group specializing in early post-war music. And they respectfully refer to Elvis Presley as "The King."

Only one of the group, Achard, had a question about the United States: "How did you survive those terrible snowstorms last year in Dallas?"

# The staging area

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

3 June 1984 Pg. 22A

## Southampton residents recall invasion of U.S. military before D-Day

By Sheila Taylor

Staff Writer of The News

SOUTHAMPTON, England — This is a plain-vanilla town, looking much like it belongs in Midwest America. Except Southampton has a harbor. And that is where, for centuries, ships have set sail for monumental destinies.

In 1662, John Alden left for America on the Mayflower. In 1912, the Titanic was launched toward its fateful meeting with an iceberg.

And on D-Day, 176,000 Allied troops sailed on more than 4,000 vessels from Southampton to Normandy.

By that day — June 6, 1944 — the 120,000 residents of Southampton were used to life under seige.

During daylight, they went about their business. After dark, they hid in air-raid shelters. Despite the blackout, the town was a highly visible guidepost for German bombers on their way to other parts of England. About 4 a.m., the planes would return and drop any leftovers on Southampton.

"Frequently, they wouldn't have found their northern targets, so we'd get double loads of bombs," recalled Geoff Golding, the local historian who was a 20-year-old British sailor in 1944.

Douglas Hopkins remembers going to the edge of town to stay all night in the air-raid shelters — sturdy buildings or storm shelters. Now a teacher in South Molton, Hopkins was 5 when the war started in 1939. In 1940, about half

the parents of the Southampton evacuated their children to rural areas. Hopkins stayed.

"I was very frightened," he said. "The longer the bombs whistled, the nearer you knew it was going to hit. One evening I remember looking outside and in every direction it looked like everything was on fire."

The last sizable air raid on Southampton occurred in May 1943. By then, the Germans had turned their efforts toward the Eastern Front, where the Soviets' Red Army, despite great losses, were exhausting the Nazi war machine.

But residents of Southampton continued to maintain vigilance, as if the Nazis could invade tomorrow.

Drivers removed carburetor pieces from their cars so German agents parachuting in couldn't drive off to sabotage factories or military installations. Farmers stuck saplings in fields to foil Nazi glider landings.

Residents saved glass and pieces of junk to ruin the treads of enemy vehicles. They turned road signs to confuse the enemy — "although they mostly confused the residents and us," said James O'Donald Mays, a U.S. Army first lieutenant from Lewisville, Ga., stationed with military planners in Southampton at the time.

"We were waiting for a German invasion," recalled Golding. "But by 1943, that invasion hadn't come, so many of us were ready to invade."

Southampton's most obvious clue that D-Day was imminent came in early spring 1944 as 50,000 troops assembled there. The city was sealed; only military personnel could come and go at will.

The first Allies to arrive were military police, nicknamed "snowdrops" by the British because of their white, round helmets. One of their first tasks, in what has become an American tradition, was to create parking lots. Bulldozers leveled blitzed areas to make room for military vehicles.

On and on they came — trucks, tanks, tents and troops filling every lane, meadow, street and park. Children excitedly watched as jeeps zoomed about; houses shook when tanks rolled past.

Neighborhoods in strategic areas were sealed from civilians. Hotels and civic buildings became military headquarters and lodging.

But, there was ample opportunity for Brit to meet Yank. When the pubs opened, "everyone would mingle," said John Savage, then a porter at the Polygon Hotel, headquarters of the Americans' 14th Major Port (Transportation Corps).

The Britons were astonished by the Yanks' capacity for drink and their odd mixes, such as whiskey with beer. The Americans shared canned fruit, fresh coffee and ice cream, goods not found in British shops.

Dance bands learned American jazz and boogie-woogie. Children learned to say, "Got any gum, chum?" and GIs learned to say, "Got a sister, mister?" They were looking for a date in a town where single men suddenly, dramatically outnumbered single women.

The locals joked, "Yanks are overpaid, oversexed and over here." Historian Golding said there was no real resentment toward the Americans.

"What I remember right before D-Day was that a gay old time

### FREEDOM...Continued

One of the first villagers to see the liberators ran to Jeanine's father. "We have seen some men," he said. "They're not Germans, but they're not English."

"My father said, 'Just look at them. They're chewing gum — they are Americans.'"

The gum-snapping saviors were dirty, smelly and bone-weary, but Jeanine and her teen-age friends hugged and kissed them. "We were so happy to be free."

Le Molay Littry changed quickly with

the arrival of the Americans.

Each village family decided to "adopt" the GIs. The Masseys, for a while, hosted an infantryman from Iowa, Tech Sgt. Howard Gillingham.

Howard went home after the war, but he couldn't forget the French teen-ager. She couldn't forget him, either. They married and lived for 13 years in Iowa, then returned to Normandy in the late '50s.

Howard now wears a beret and owns the cafe and newsstand *La Presse*, founded by his late father-in-law.

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# NORMANDY INVASION: THE ALLIES PREPARE

## DALLAS-AREA WWII VETERANS RECALL DRAMA, TRAGEDY OF D-DAY INVASION

### HAL PARFITT

■ Hal Parfitt, now 62, went on to retire from the Corps of Engineers with the rank of major general. But on the morning of June 6, the 22-year-old West Point graduate was not sure he was going to go on to become anything at all.

He was a first lieutenant in charge of the first platoon of Company A, 147th Combat Engineer Battalion, Sixth Amphibious Brigade and as seasick as everyone else aboard the little landing boats circling in the choppy channel as they waited their turn to land.

"I couldn't wait to get off the boat, because we were all seasick. That's the fastest I ever was cured of seasickness. The fear and the survival instinct took over, when everybody dropped off the front. We had to traverse about 20 yards of water. All along the beach, other craft were landing at the same time. I have a memory of a little larger craft, an LCI, landing nearby and attracting artillery fire away from us. They got some direct hits, you could see that, and in a way I was thankful they were attracting the fire."

Parfitt thought he was safe when he made it to the scant protection offered by an elevated roadway. It

was there that a shell exploded. It blew his helmet off and took a chunk out of his thumb.

But Parfitt, who later served in Korea and Vietnam, and now lives in Dallas, knows he got off light. He lost two or three men out of his platoon during mine-sweeps that day, and countless men out of his battalion.

"My strongest impression was seeing the bodies on the beach, and the havoc that was created by the defensive fire. It was shocking, appalling, to see all the bodies lying on the beach. Really, there wasn't time to do much for the wounded except get them to high ground."

### VERNON CHAFFIN

■ Vernon Chaffin, 59, now retired from the construction contracting business, still sometimes could kick himself for not realizing the importance of where he was flying off to shortly before dawn, June 6, 1944. He was too young, he said, to think of it as anything but just a job.

"The only thing I can tell you is that I was a 19-year-old kid. When you're 19, you really don't understand the big picture. I feel like I missed something by not being excited."

It may have been the easiest of the 19 missions tail-gunner Chaffin flew over Europe.

Though the German 88 anti-aircraft emplacements below were delivering some irritating ack-ack, the Luftwaffe was not there in any appreciable number, having been pulled back. Chaffin never fired the tail-guns.

About 18,000 feet above Omaha Beach, the bombs started to fall.

In a way, he and the men aboard the other 400 or so bombers were among the first to "hit" that beach: The B-17 on which Chaffin was flying as a technical sergeant dropped 10,000 pounds of 250- and 500-pound bombs on the white sands below, "softening" the beach defenses for the massive invasion to come moments later.

The Allied landing craft were headed for the beaches even as the bombs fell. From the ground, Chaffin said, "it must have looked like rain . . . It was just one solid damn explosion and smoke, solid down there. Sand, dirt, black stuff."

From the air, Chaffin had a peculiar view of the beginning of history's greatest invasion.

"You know what it looked like? You ever seen a bed of ants? It looked like someone had stirred up an antbed down there. Just thousands of little dots, like someone had disturbed an antbed."

### STAGING AREA . . . Cont.

was had by all," said Savage, now ballroom bartender at the Polygon.

For Golding, the giveaway that the invasion was imminent came in the form of the hollow concrete blocks floating in the harbor. Later, these caissons would be assembled off the Norman coast as Mulberry A and Mulberry B, artificial harbors onto which soldiers would be deposited before scrambling onto landing craft.

Pointing to a nearby six-story building, Golding said, "They were *that* big. When you saw dozens of those being pulled around the harbor, you knew something was going on."

Southampton's harbor filled with almost every kind of craft capable of the nearly 85-mile voyage to Normandy.

A sailor was quoted in the local press at the time as saying, "It looked like you could go from deck to deck and walk all the way to France."

To hide harbor activity, Golding recalled, machines manufactured thick blue smoke that also choked the residents.

At about 1 a.m. on June 6, the familiar droning roar of aircraft awakened First Lt. Mays in his room at the Polygon.

But this was different. "You couldn't see them because of the blackout," recalled Mays, who married a Southampton woman in 1945 and now lives there. "But the sound was absolutely overwhelming and lasted just on and on. My roommate and I looked at each other and knew this was it. . . . Everyone had been living for this moment. It wasn't jubilation or glee, but hope. Prayerful hope."

Mays said, "The one question everyone asked was: 'How are those men going to get on these beaches?'"

How. Not if.

His wife, Mary, cited only one reason for their total confidence.

"There was Churchill," she said. "He had such charisma. . . . He'd come through with those critical lines and that wonderful voice. That's what kept everyone going."

After D-Day, the town continued to bustle with military activity. By VE Day — May 7, 1946 — 2 million American soldiers had passed through Southampton on their way to the war in Europe.

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## ALLIES PREPARE...Continued

**WELDON DOWIS**

■ **Weldon Dowis** was 40 when he parachuted into the marshy lands between Carentan and Utah Beach. He was a major in the headquarters company of the 101st Airborne Division. He remembers a nice day, a relatively safe landing and a sense of anticipation that left him "scared as hell." In the fields where he landed, there was hedgerow after hedgerow, behind

**RAY GALBRAITH**

■ **Ray Galbraith** was a 20-year-old infantry sergeant from Hartford, Conn., when D-Day came. Galbraith, a cigar store manager turned paratrooper, learned a week before the invasion that he would be hitting Utah Beach by boat. He remembers watching the white cliffs over Utah Beach in the minutes before he landed. "I thought to myself: 'I'm a young man. What am I here for? I'll be wasting my life if I lose it,'" Galbraith said.

He remembers chaos. "It was hectic," he said. Machine gun and mortar fire was coming from those beautiful white cliffs above him, but he could not see the enemy. The GIs dug into the sand and covered themselves before receiving word to move on.

"We heard the order to fix bayonets and grenade launchers. The 88mm fire was coming in along with the machine gun fire, and our job was to shoot out that damn (machine) gun. There had been 80 of us, but not more than a dozen made it by the time we took the crest of the hill," Galbraith said.

At St. Lo six weeks later, on July 22, Galbraith took a German bayonet in the throat.

The fighting, the bayonet and a German bombing raid in Paris took their toll on Galbraith. He was discharged from the Army with combat fatigue. For a time, when he wasn't in the hospital, he was unemployed. Later, he became a photographer and program manager for a television station.

**AUSTIN MULLINEX**

■ **Austin Mullinex**, a private with the 502nd paratroopers, turned 25 on June 4, 1944, just in time to pack his equipment for the invasion of the Normandy Coast. It was, of course, a false alarm. But two days later, shortly after 1 a.m., Mullinex was dropping into a field near St. Martin de Varreville. As he fell toward the ground, suddenly there were tracer bullets all around from a German machine gun. Mullinex, powerless to return fire, went limp as though dead, and the tracers looked elsewhere.

Unlike many others of his unit, Mullinex landed safely near target. His objective was a coastal artillery battery near Utah Beach. With other chutists in the area, Mullinex gravitated toward the coast, only to find out that the objective had been hit and destroyed by a bombing strike the day before.

Mullinex was not wounded on D-Day. Nor was he wounded in the rest of the war, despite another dangerous drop in Holland and heavy, cold combat at Bastogne. He is now retired from the U.S. Postal Service and lives in Garland.

which small bands of Allied and German soldiers exchanged small-arms fire.

His unit's objective was to secure or destroy the bridges connected to the flooded plains in order to keep a waiting German Panzer division from reinforcing the coast.

"My object was the same as everyone's — to survive. But it wasn't really something that you thought about, until later," Dowis said.

**WALTER MARLOWE**

■ **Walter Marlowe**, a 21-year-old first lieutenant from near Rock Springs in the Texas Hill Country, was assigned to the 502nd paratroopers. Before dawn on D-Day, strapped to 40 pounds of TNT cut into quarter-pound blocks, Marlowe jumped into an area behind Utah Beach. His company's task was to knock out German gun emplacements before the GIs hit the beach.

He remembers the masking tape on the door of the airplane, and how his mouth went completely dry. He remembers the rumble of the drop plane, the crack of artillery fire and the seductive beauty of a nighttime battle of lights.

"The German tracers were silver, ours were purple," Marlowe said. It was not until he hit the ground and the pounding became more personal, said Marlowe, that he realized there was no evacuation plan in case the mission failed.

Marlowe stayed with the airborne unit until it crossed the Rhine. He won a Silver Star and a Bronze Star.

When Marlowe returned to the United States, he married a woman from Dallas. He earned a degree in electrical engineering at Southern Methodist University and now works at Siemens-Allis Corp.

But what he still remembers best was the simplicity of his feelings. "I was scared," Marlowe said.

**PAT CRAWFORD**

■ **Pat Crawford**, now 73, was 33 on D-Day. Older than his contemporaries on Utah Beach, he says, "I only got scared once: I got scared when I got there, and I stayed scared until I got out."

He hit the beach off an LCI (Landing-Craft Infantry).

"Loud? You bet. You could feel the heat off the gunfire. We'd move and then stop, move and then stop, trying to do what we could. I don't think the krauts were expecting us in that area. If they'd had them like in other places, nobody would have got out alive. We happened to be in an area where it wasn't that thick. But I didn't sleep at all that night, or the next day, or the next night — no way. But I had a drink or two. We'd kill them and drink what they had."

Crawford has a camera that he took out of the pocket of a decapitated German soldier.

The first picture he took was a shot of the soldier.

Crawford came home to Garland and his old job, at Hollywood Door Co., retiring in 1972 and receiving a disability pension for his injuries in the Battle of the Bulge.

He still has the picture.

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## ALLIES PREPARE...Continued

## VALTON BRAY

■ Valton Bray was a 33-year-old flight officer. Bray, one of a handful of glider pilots who penetrated German lines during D-Day, was called "Pops" by his colleagues. Two days before the invasion, he was interviewed for the *Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands* on Armed Forces radio. Asked what it would be like to land in enemy territory, he answered that there would be no enemy territory. Wherever Allied troops landed, he said, they would make it their own.

"I was kind of arrogant," Bray said.

Bray had been a barnstormer in the years before the war. He parachuted and walked wings in airshows across Texas but was too old to become an air cadet when war came, he said. So he was trained in navigation in North Dakota and glider flight in North Carolina. "They'd set down two smudge pots in a clearing and tell us to land after one and stop before the other. That's about the extent of it," Bray said.

Just after dawn on D-Day, Bray flew a British Horsa carrying a jeep, a 75mm Howitzer, a gunnery crew and ammunition five miles behind Omaha Beach. The landing went, essentially without mishap. The mission did not. "Our job was to harass the Germans while our men hit the beaches and to keep them from being reinforced. But things got a little more confused than that. At one point, our guys

(from the beachhead) drove the Germans right back through us. Then German reinforcements came and drove them the other way. Things were so spread out, I spent the first night with some sailors who turned out to be gunnery spotters from the Battleship Texas," Bray said.

But Bray's most vivid memory is of something he didn't do. "I was watching 200 or 300 German prisoners and was asked to take one of them to pump water for the hospital. It was the third day after the invasion, and I guess I was really tired. Well, I started to whistle and this German started to whistle, too. For some reason I started to shoot. I guess he just seemed so arrogant. I often thought how I might have felt later if I actually had."

Bray had married when he was in North Dakota. He brought his wife to Texas after the war. He went to work for Texas and Pacific Motor Transport and retired from there eight years ago. Bray continued to parachute until he was in his mid-60s. He continued flying until a flight surgeon stopped him a couple of years ago. He had joined the Army, he says, less for patriotism than for adventure. But being part of the D-Day invasion, his first combat action, was something more.

"I was proud to be a part of it," Bray said.

*These reports were compiled by Brad Bailey and Ailen Pusey.*

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

4 June 1984

Pg. 8A

## Woman recalls American visitors to 1st liberated town

By Sheila Taylor  
Staff Writer of The News

STE-MERE-EGLISE, France — "Oh, I know you are my friends because you are Americans," she says in the formal English she learned as a girl, extending her smile and thin arms. Her expansive gestures ring an effusive welcome.

Madame Simone Renaud is 85 now, almost crippled by time and arthritis.

"Sometimes she forgets things," her son, Henri, says, "but she wants to see you because you are Americans and come from Texas. She's an honorary citizen of Houston, you know."

Mme. Renaud's husband, Alexandre, who died in 1966, was mayor of Ste-Mere-Eglise for more than four decades. During the German occupation he became a hero to American forces. He filed crucial reports on German movements, carried

messages and helped rescue downed pilots and lost soldiers.

In the peace that followed, Americans offered recognition and appreciation — including honorary citizenships — to the Renauds of Ste-Mere-Eglise, the first French town to be liberated.

"When the Americans came, it was absolutely wonderful," remembers Mme. Renaud. "We knew one day the Americans would come. They would not forget us. During the war, we had received letters from friends in America, and they said, 'Be very patient.' We did not despair."

Mme. Renaud's living room, behind the pharmacy her husband bought in 1923 and handed down to their son, is crowded with delicate period furniture, knickknacks, paintings and photographs. One large, ornately framed portrait

shows Mme. Renaud as a young, dark-eyed beauty wearing the towering white headdress that is native to Normandy.

Because of the mayor's clout, the Renauds were one of the few families in Ste-Mere-Eglise who were not forced to house German soldiers.

The Americans occupied Ste-Mere-Eglise for only a few days, but beginning that June 6, many passed through the town, stopping to pay respects to the Renauds. On July 31, 1944, Mme. Renaud began keeping a scrapbook of signatures of her American visitors. Hundreds have signed her book, from the famous — Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, Francis Cardinal Spellman and, of course, Cornelius Ryan (author of *The Longest Day*) — to Bob Murphy of Boston, who simply wrote

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

# Those in extermination camps played deadly waiting game

*"Allies, get here as quick as possible. Come on. Come on. I want to live to hear a beautiful song of freedom."*

*— remembered prayer of Mike Jacobs, Auschwitz extermination camp, tattoo: B-4990.*

**By Kent Biffle**

*Staff Writer of The News*

When?

Around the world the question rode the wind. The question was as obvious as smoke over the battlefields of Italy. But the wind also carried the stench of death from Nazi concentration and extermination camps.

In the British Isles were massed Allied troops and machines whose target would be the Nazis' vaunted Atlantic Wall. Waiting, the invasion force was a poised and powerful triphammer.

On June 4, 1944, Sunday newspapers around the world published Berlin's latest prediction — bolstered by lousy weather in the English Channel and, perhaps, some madness — "that the invasion is nowhere near. . . ." In France, some countrymen clandestinely monitored BBC broadcasts, listening for any word about the planned attack. In Germany, the defenders of Fortress Europe commonly exchanged a daily assurance: "They will not come tonight."

But within Fortress Europe lay Dungeon Europe. Here were the people who did not have access to radio or newspapers or the Nazi propaganda machine, because they were trapped by another Nazi machine — the death machine: the concentration camps, the extermination camps.

The prospect of an invasion of France by the Allies offered distant hope to some prisoners, but many realized that they were beyond help, that they would surely

die before they could be rescued.

Auschwitz and other concentration camps concealed their horrors. After enduring the brutality of the ghetto in Ostrowiec, Poland, Mike Jacobs, a teen-age Jew, liked the looks of Auschwitz when he was first herded from the boxcar.

"We have come to a paradise. It's clean and there is music playing." When he noticed four chimneys smoking, he thought: "When they ask my profession, I shall say I am a baker."

As he neared the chimneys, he had noted, "But it doesn't smell like bread. It smells like skin."

Jacobs lost his parents, two brothers and two sisters to the death machine at the Treblinka concentration camp in Poland. Jacobs was perhaps lucky to become a slave laborer, salvaging aluminum parts from destroyed aircraft. He prayed to be saved by the Allies before he starved or

was exterminated at the whim of the Nazis. His index to the direction of the war was the number of Allied planes that he stripped and the amount of bombing and strafing in the area.

One day at Birkenau, a satellite camp of Auschwitz, he overheard two black-uniformed men who wore caps with the death's head of the SS — the *Schutzstaffel* — Hitler's "protection detachment." They were talking of the Allies and a place called Normandy.

Jacobs prayed for the Allies but doubted that they could reach him in time. His man-sized frame weighed only 70 pounds. "Where is Normandy?" he wondered.

Another young Polish Jew, Max Glauben, in addition to his concentration camp tattoo, carried a scar on his left leg from a .50-caliber machine gun bullet. He had been wounded when a train hauling prisoners was strafed by

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

## WOMAN RECALLS VISITORS

### ...Continued

"Captain 505" and "I am home again to my second family."

Murphy, a paratrooper in the early hours of D-Day, was one of many who found a temporary home with the Renauds.

"This book is so precious to me," Mme. Renaud says. "I shall give it to my son to keep as a holy book."

Through the years, she has received thousands of letters from Americans. Her eyes flashing, she shows a recent note that begins, "You are my little butterfly."

Soon after D-Day, letters addressed to the mayor began arriving. "My son died near your village," a typical plea read. "Please — tell me something about where he died. What does the place look like? What about his grave? Can you describe it to me?"

The mayor passed these requests to his wife, who as a mother and wife, understood the despair. With each request she searched for the grave of the lost soldier. She then mailed a photograph and some remembrance from the grave — petals from nearby flowers, sprigs of plants or dried apple blossoms — to the mother or wife.

Mme. Renaud keeps the letters, the photographs and the plaques and her autograph book because they bring memories not of the destruction of war but of the lives that continued and of the gift the Allies brought.

Today, she takes care to remove an old woman's afghan from her lap while offering a girl's coquettish pose to a photographer. "If I smile now that means I love you and you won't mind that I'm not young," she says. "You have done more than even my family has done. You have brought me freedom."

WAITING...Continued

an Allied plane. The pilot had spotted the German guards and apparently assumed it was a military train.

Allied warplanes were bombing and strafing the rails and rolling stock in France, as well. But they didn't stop Hitler's SS from shipping from France cattle cars loaded with Jews and political prisoners. Unknown to Anglo-

**WORLD WAR II  
DEATH CAMPS**

■ Deliberate extermination by the Nazis accounted for about one-fifth of the estimated 55 million deaths during World War II throughout the world.

More than 5 million of the 8.3 million European Jews were exterminated in the camps and ghettos or as a result of Action Group (extermination commando) operations.

In Auschwitz-Birkenau, 3 million died, including 100,000 German Jews, 400,000 Hungarian Jews and 20,000 Russian prisoners of war.

■ The Russians claimed losses of 13 million in the armed services; 3.5 million Russians died in captivity, and 7 million civilians (including 700,000 Jews) died "through occupation and deportation," some of them at the hands of the Action Groups.

■ The Poles lost 6 million, more than 5 million (including 3 million Jews) as a result of occupation; the Czechs lost about 360,000 total; the Hungarians, though an ally of Germany, lost about 300,000 of their 400,000 Jews in the 1944 deportations.

■ The Germans lost about 6 million dead, of whom 170,000 were Jews.

SOURCE: The Simon and Schuster Encyclopedia of World War II (1978).

*The Dallas Morning News*

American correspondents and wire services were Nazi communications that moved across France like this one:

*Subject: The Jewish children's home in Izieu. In the early morning hours the Jewish children's home "The Children's Colony" in Izieu was terminated. A total of 41 children from three to 13 in age were removed. ... Cash or any*

*other kind of possessions could not be secured. Transport to Drancy is arranged on April 7, 1944.*

*Barbie, S.S. Obersturmfuhrer.*

The children, in this instance, were sent to the gas chambers of Auschwitz in Nazi-held Poland. All died in the gas chamber.

Max Glauben's brother also died in a Nazi gas chamber. His father, a former newspaper publisher, had been beaten to death by Germans. Glauben was one of the rare survivors of Treblinka. Because he was mechanically skilled, he was transferred to the Flossenburg camp in Germany. He was working as a pattern-maker in the manufacture of German warplanes when he heard talk among the prisoners of an Allied drive into France. He discounted such talk among the isolated prisoners as no more than rumor. "Even if it's true, I won't be alive when they get here," he thought. "If it takes a month or maybe even three days, it won't do me any good."

A fellow Polish Jew, Leon Zetley, was "surviving on hate" at Birkenau. He was closely guarded as he worked loading and unloading German rations, and he felt he was starving in the midst of

plenty. His father, once a merchant, was one of the prisoners commanded to haul from the crematorium the human ashes — including those of his own son, Zetley's brother.

Zetley had heard loose talk of an Allied push. But he also had heard the German guards announce that if the Allies came close, the prisoners would be killed.

He decided, "If the Allies come and if they kill the Germans, I will die with a smile on my face."

*Another year of the nightmare would continue before American soldiers, fighting their way across Europe, reached three walking skeletons named Zetley, Jacobs and Glauben. The GIs brought food, medicine, and — most importantly — freedom. Glauben and Zetley were rescued in April 1945. Jacobs was liberated the following month.*

*By various routes, the three would arrive in Dallas. Each would succeed in business — Glauben in plastics, Zetley in appliances and Jacobs, as fate would dictate, in scrap metal. Today they are leaders in the Jewish community. And they are supports of the Dallas Center for Holocaust Studies, a memorial to the evil of political extremism.*



Mike Jacobs



Leon Zetley



Max Glauben

LEADERS...Continued



**Bernard Law Montgomery**

Bernard Law Montgomery, the quirky and eminently successful British field commander, was placed in charge of land forces on D-Day. Although he was not Eisenhower's first choice for the job, Montgomery had been credited with the defeat of Rommel in North Africa and with successful campaigns in Italy and Sicily. A quirky, charismatic commander, Montgomery often demanded too much deference from his colleagues. A careful and meticulous field general, he was accused of being too cautious on the battlefield. However, his straightforward, uncomplicated sense of battle gained him the most sustained streak of victories among Allied leaders and the respect of his men. He died in 1976.



**Sir Arthur William Tedder**

Air-Chief Marshal Sir Arthur William Tedder, deputy supreme commander for Operation Overlord, was a master of air tactical support for ground operations. Concentrating on communications and supply lines, Tedder's air support during the invasion immobilized German reinforcements. An influential strategist, Tedder held a common touch with his units. He died in 1967.



**Sir Bertram Home Ramsay**

Rear Adm. Sir Bertram Home Ramsay, commander in chief of the Allied Naval Expeditionary Force, was a critical figure in the planning of the Allied invasion flotilla. Ramsay had engineered the dramatic evacuation of British forces at Dunkirk in 1940 and had been responsible for the control of the English Channel against the German threat of invasion. In the days after D-Day, Ramsay supervised the continued invasion naval operations. He died in a plane crash in France six months after D-Day.



**Karl von Rundstedt**

Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt was commander-in-chief West at the time of the Allied invasion. A general of great stature, von Rundstedt was placed in charge of the German anti-invasion forces in July 1942, a position made redundant by the appointment of Erwin Rommel to a similar post the following year. Von Rundstedt was impeded by Hitler's command restrictions, German air inferiority and strategic disagreements with Rommel. D-Day was the only blemish on von Rundstedt's exemplary military record, in the minds of many. Three weeks after D-Day, von Rundstedt was asked by one of Hitler's subordinates what could be done. The general replied, "Make peace, you fools. What else can you do?" Shortly thereafter, Hitler politely removed von Rundstedt from his command. He died in 1953.



**Erwin Rommel**

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, one of the German army's most creative tacticians, was assigned to the German anti-invasion forces in late 1943. Rommel designed and implemented many of the obstacles that impeded the Allied invasion, including the intricate meshed fields of mines, posts and barbed wire designed to halt the flow of incoming landing craft. Rommel is most noted for his absence on D-Day. While the Allies landed, Rommel was in Germany for his wife's birthday and a secret meeting with Hitler. In October 1944, Rommel, implicated in the July 20, 1944, bombing attempt on Hitler's life, swallowed cyanide provided to him by the SS.



**Hugo Sperrle**

Hugo Sperrle, commander of the famous German Condor Legion in Spain, was commander-in-chief of all the air forces against the invasion of Normandy. His forces, like Rommel's, were most notable for their absence on D-Day. Sperrle was tried for war crimes following the Allied victory, but was acquitted. He died in 1953.



*Compiled by Allen Pusey*

# DALLAS REMEMBERS D-DAY

## Sirens in night signaled attack was under way

*D-Day is a military term noting the date an operation is implemented — by land assault, air strike, naval bombardment, parachute assault or amphibious assault — or all of those methods. The most famous D-Day was June 6, 1944, when the Allies landed in Normandy in Operation Overlord.*

*This is the fourth in a series of articles reflecting the personal side of that D-Day.*

By Brad Bailey

Staff Writer of The News

It was dark in Dallas, daylight in Normandy.

The news that morning of June 6, 1944, had flashed from London across the Atlantic to New York and reached Dallas at 2:47 a.m.

It was news the nation was waiting for, news of agonizing interest for sleeping mothers and

### NORMANDY INVASION

#### The liberation

fathers, sisters and brothers, wives and children of soldiers.

News that *mattered*.

Gene Martin, WFAA Radio news director, and Ralph Nimmons, the program director who would give the word to set off the city's "invasion sirens," were waiting by their telephones as the news came from the Teletypes, keys clacking out the priceless words on cheap paper:

**SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, Allied Expeditionary Force, June 6 (Tuesday) (AP) — American, British and Canadian troops landed in Northern France Tuesday morning, launching the greatest overseas military operation in history with word from their supreme commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, that "we will accept nothing except full victory" over the German masters of the Continent.**

The invasion, which Eisenhower called "a great crusade," was announced at 7:32 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time (2:32 a.m., Dallas Time) in this one-sentence Communique No. 1:

"Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces supported by strong air forces began landing Allied armies Tuesday morning on the northern coast of France."

Nimmons gave the word to the civil defense. A switch was thrown. And now, in the middle of

the night, they were wailing. In London, that sound had meant that a blitz of man-made hell would fall.

In Dallas, it meant the long-awaited beginning of the end, the enormous high-stakes gamble taken by Eisenhower on that particular day because of a lucky break in the weather.

And before the day was over, everyone in Dallas and the nation — little man or big — would have heard of the risks taken by the men at Normandy.

Lights in the blacked-out city blinked on.

Dallas Power & Light Co. showed an increase in the use of power from the 47,000 kilowatts being used shortly before 3 a.m. to 53,000 kilowatts.

Switchboards at police stations, firehouses, newspapers and radio stations went wild: Telephone usage for the 24 hours of Tuesday, June 6, 1944, was 13 percent above normal.

Radio stations — on the air since unconfirmed Berlin Radio reports of an invasion at about midnight — were hastily tuned-in by residents listening for word from the brand-new "Second Front."

Other things were happening.

Young men little more than boys were fighting and dying on the beaches of Omaha, Utah, Sword, Juno and Gold, but at home, their battles against a previously unstoppable tyranny brought hope that children would have a future.

So, people were thinking of their children:

■ Gene Martin, who had the idea of using the air raid sirens to announce the invasion, lived one of those snapshot moments.

"As the sirens were wailing, I went to the bed of my sleeping 18-month-old daughter, Nancy, woke her up and carried her out on the front porch to hear the uproar.

"It was a great event the sirens were signaling, and I had the thought that perhaps I was giving her what would be her ear-

liest memory. . . . I tried to explain to her about all the noise. She listened very carefully to all I said, stuck her thumb back in her mouth and went back to sleep. I suspect she didn't care that she was missing out on history in the making."

(She grew up to be Dr. Nancy Steel. She is 41. Gene Martin, the week before the D-Day anniversary, was at her home in Minnesota, playing with his four grandchildren. He is 72.)

■ Mrs. Lester Renfrow was being rolled out of the Parkland Memorial Hospital delivery room when she was told that the invasion was finally under way.

In the euphoria of the moment, she named her daughter, Invasia Mae.

■ Another mother, perhaps with a son in Europe, heard the sirens and hubbub and called *The Dallas Morning News* for further information. She was told that D-Day had begun. Before hanging up, she sobbed, "God bless General Ike."

■ An elderly woman began crying and praying when Sheriff's Department Secretary W.E. Thomas told her the invasion had begun. "I have two grandsons overseas," she wept.

John W. "Preacher" Hays, who for two years had been kept from joining the armed services because of a perforated eardrum, was working as a part-time pressman.

He had the job of loading huge rolls of paper onto the presses.

When he loaded the rolls before midnight on June 5, 1944, he had no idea of what was going to come out the other end on June 6.

"People had been anticipating it, saying, 'Maybe it will happen tomorrow, or the next day, or might not happen yet.' People really didn't have anything definite to go on; sometimes people would stay up late at night listening to

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

DALLAS...Continued

their radios, waiting to hear something. When people would come into town, they'd buy the newspapers because they were away from their radios. There weren't many cars, and not many of them had radios."

Hays grabbed a paper as it came off the press.

"We didn't know about it until it rolled off the press. . . . Some of the pressmen tried to get home, some tried to call their wives," Hays said.

"I was real thankful; the invasion meant winning or losing the war," Hays said. "Several people I knew were in the service, and we had a fellow from the pressroom (by the) name of J. D. McCall who was in Europe. That was all we knew; there were no names available except as casualties. . . ."

Nothing was invasion-proof that day:

■ Ernest Tutt, district manager for the Social Security Administration, told a YWCA group he addressed:

"I got very little sleep last night, and I feel dull and unqualified to talk. I heard the sirens and then I fell off to sleep and saw a lot of bombs falling on Dallas and then I woke up again. This was repeated most of the sleeping hours, so if I don't make much sense, you'll know why."

■ Fred Grimes of Hillsboro, past director of Lions International, told his group at the Adolphus Hotel, "If I'd had any speech, I've forgotten it now. All I've done is listen to the radio and read the invasion news."

■ Adolphus Hotel assistant manager Sam Hanna said he awoke (he didn't know why) just before 3 a.m. and "just when I was wondering when I'd go back to sleep, those sirens knocked me out of bed."

■ One Dallas family got some good news that morning 40 years ago when the newspaper landed in the yard:

Emmy Gulick Brooks will always have two reasons to remember June 6 as a happy day: First, it was D-Day. Second, on the front of the local news section that day

was a photo from Europe of her brother, Lt. John A. Gulick, with his longtime friend, Maj. J.G. Ellis. The two were with a 2,000-pound blockbuster bomb on which had been painted, "G.B. Dealey Special." Dealey was the publisher of *The News* at the time.

That bomb was taken "special delivery" by Ellis and Gulick to a Vienna, Austria, munitions factory, said Ellis, who now works for Delta Steel in Dallas. It was, he said, "a message from home."

Ellis and Gulick, with the 20th Squadron's 2nd Bomb Group, made raids on D-Day, too. They hit the German shipping yards in southern France "in case we invaded there, too," Ellis said.

"Of course, the family was excited," Mrs. Brooks recalled. "My mother was ecstatic. She had worried so about him. See, he and J.G. flew the bombers out of Italy, and some perfectly gruesome things were happening over there. She was real excited to hear that he was OK. . . ."

Neither man's luck deserted him. They survived the war.

(Gulick, Ellis' friend from their high school days in Highland Park, died in Corpus Christi in 1981.)

The presses, churning out "extras," rolled faster than the tense hours.

At the end of the shift, Hays and a now-deceased pressman named John Shoemaker stepped out into the streets of Dallas.

A weather system had dumped 4 inches of rain on Longview the day before, and forecasts for Dallas promised thunder-showers.

But there were people in the streets, crowding around newsstands and the Red Cross blood donor center at Titcher-Goettinger Department store at 1912 Elm St.

Only the day before, newspapers had complained that blood drives were meeting with unenthusiastic response — but the invasion changed that.

Hays said people were "stopping and talking and wanting to know if each other had heard anything." They clustered in coffee shops and restaurants, straining to hear the radios.

"I would say things were on a solemn note for a while, until they got further news about

whether or not the soldiers were getting off that beach," Hays said.

William "Toughie" Barnett was at his newsstand at Elm and St. Paul Street, selling "extras" like hotcakes.

Toughie never got to read the news that day. He was too busy selling it. "I was in such a hurry and there was so much business . . . they sold good, very good. People were all hollering different things . . . there was a big bunch of folks. . . ."

History in the making was converted to black and white headlines:

INVASION OF EUROPE STARTS  
*Eisenhower Announces  
Landings on Coast of France*

And down near the right-hand corner at the bottom of the front page: *Let Us Pray*

Hays did not feel unlucky about not being with the men he had been reading about.

"I was thankful I hadn't been in any tight spots. I'd had a charmed life, and I didn't want to press my luck."

Hays and Shoemaker didn't stop at a newsstand but walked on to Ross and Harwood streets, to First United Methodist Church.

"All the churches were open," Hays said. "People were praying. You just went down and kneeled at the altar and prayed. We did that, he and I both. I was thanking God and praying for the best that we could get. People were coming and going all day, praying."

After the prayers, Hays did what everybody else seemed to be doing.

He caught the bus, went to his house, turned on the radio, and waited some more.

*In seven months, with the war still raging, Hays' exempt status would be waived by the Marines who were taking "anyone" to refill their ranks, he said.*

*Hays would be sent to the South Pacific, where, he said, "I tried my best to go to church every Sunday. I'd write letters home to my wife and about all I ever said was that I had gone to church and I had gotten a bath. She wrote me back saying all I ever did is wash and pray."*

*His luck stayed with him, and he came home.*

# Once again, Americans invade Normandy

## D-Day anniversary rites re-create aura of landing

*D-Day is a military term noting the date an operation is implemented — by land assault, air strike, naval bombardment, parachute assault or amphibious assault — or all of those methods. The most famous D-Day was June 6, 1944, when the Allies landed in Normandy in Operation Overlord.*

*This is the fifth in a series of articles reflecting the personal side of that D-Day.*

**By Sheila Taylor**  
Staff Writer of The News

NORMANDY — Once again Normandy teems with jeeps, amphibious vehicles, trucks and men in khaki maneuvering through the narrow streets.

Convoys wind down poplar-lined lanes and helicopters clatter overhead. Almost every farmhouse has a sign of welcome. One features a GI scarecrow, peeking over the hedgerows. And many of the houses still have bullet holes in their stone walls.

Passers-by can tell who landed where merely by observing the flags and bunting.

Villages along Sword, Juno and Gold beaches display the Mapleleaf and Union Jack of Canada and England.

And near Omaha and Utah beaches, the villages look like the Fourth of July on Main Street, U.S.A.

The banners and flags express appreciation to the Americans — Army Rangers, GIs, airmen, sailors and military specialists, such as the Navy Combat Demolition Unit, the men who volunteered to come ashore first to blow open landing areas for their comrades.

The villagers honor the men who worked in concert to establish a foothold for freedom on the western edge of Europe.

Villagers, especially children, wave flags and hands at passing cars as though the cars were real World War II vehicles filled with

the young liberators.

Up and down the Normandy beaches 29 official ceremonies were scheduled Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. "And there's an unofficial ceremony, every half-hour," said Charles Barbier, director of tourism for Calvados, *departement* of Normandy. "It's our way of saying thank you."

The serenity of the American cemetery at Omaha Beach gradually decreased during the past few days as the suited men with walkie-talkies took charge for the Wednesday ceremony that President Reagan attended.

"We're running late. See if you can resolve the issue with the trailers," squawked one of the Secret Service walkie-talkies.

A few minutes earlier a cemetery employee on a three-wheeled motor scooter dumped a large bouquet of carnations and Dutch iris beside a tombstone reading:

S. Sgt. John Van Nort, Jr.  
120 Inf. 30 Div.  
New York, July 16, 1944.

There is no signature on the card. And the cemetery worker did not bother to remove the plastic wrapping from the flowers.

The Allies landing in Normandy now are older, but many remain slim enough to wear their drab, faded uniforms with spots of color from the firmly attached medals they earned four decades ago.

Many of them, disembarking from huge tour buses, came armed with video cameras slung across their shoulders. Their closest buddies on this landing are their wives.

Some carry small bouquets and many stop at the visitors center to learn where fallen comrades are buried

Frank Jackson, wearing a black

and gold satin jacket with "Dixie Chapter, 83rd Infantry Division" on the back, and his wife, Florine, of Oliver Springs, Tenn., burst into tears minutes after leaving their bus.

They had brought a small bouquet of red flowers to place on the grave of Frank's brother-in-law.

"We grew up together. We landed here together," Frank said. "My sister asked me to put some flowers on his grave, but we had no idea we'd be able to find it. We had already decided that if we couldn't, we'd leave them on some other Tennessee boy's grave."

Between sobs, they took each other's picture with their arms draped over the cross. They are taking the pictures home to Frank's sister, the widow of Pvt. Mack Riggs.

George Spears, a Fort Worth accountant, landed on Omaha Beach about an hour after the initial assault.

He hadn't seen the beach in 40 years. And this trip was made reluctantly, at the urging of his wife.

"I had no desire to return," he said. "It's brought back a lot of memories — some pleasant, some not. It's a deal you don't want to talk about."

But he has brought his grandson, Mike Heatt, 16, a Paschal High School student, to show him that "everything hasn't always been peaches and cream in the world."

From here the Spears and Heatt plan to follow the same route Spears took 40 years ago to get to Belgium. This time travel will be easier.

Another youngster, Blane Johnson, wears the snappy green, gold and white Damascus, Md., High School band uniform. The 154-member band raised money to make the trip. These students, two generations removed from the 9,386 young men buried here, bring tears to spectators' eyes as they play *Amazing Grace* and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

Although they haven't been

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## AURA OF LANDING... Continued

taught much about D-Day in school, Blane already knows the story.

His grandfather is buried beneath one of the crosses.

The veterans tell war stories to each other and their wives. One tells a joke: "Do you know how you can tell an Italian military vehicle?" he asks, then answers. "It has one forward gear and six reverse gears."

"Yeah, they were terrible soldiers," agrees his companion with a British accent.

And a German reporter approached a D-Day veteran who was crying. Suspecting her accent, he asked, "Where are you from?"

"Germany," she replied.

He turned away.

At nearby Ste-Mere-Eglise, 85-year-old Madame Simone Renaud, widow of Alexandre Renaud, mayor of the village when the Allies came, holds vivid memories of the liberation.

But she won't attend any of the festivities. "I will go to Mass and pray. That is all."

A few miles inland, out of viewing distance from the sea and adjacent to a busy highway, the Ger-

man military cemetery contains 12,000 graves. This cemetery, with its dark, squat granite crosses rising in groups of five, makes a gloomy picture, illustrating in tone the sadness of death for no just cause.

It is a somber cemetery and few visitors leave without a sense of overwhelming sadness. While the pristine white crosses and small red, white and blue flags in the American cemetery tell of victory, the overpowering feeling here is defeat.

The German cemetery, guarded by gendarmes, was closed to visitors throughout D-Day 1984.

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## Cross-covered piece of America in France a costly gift

By Kent Biffle

Staff Writer of The News

NORMANDY, U.S.A. — Back of Omaha Beach is 172 acres of land that will be forever a piece of America.

The land is a gift from the French nation. It is beautiful but costly.

Here lie 9,386 of the war dead, most of them young GIs who fell 40 years ago while storming Adolf Hitler's Europe.

Survivors of that war have been returning for the 40th anniversary of the Allied invasion. For many this will be their last reunion.

William G. ("Call me Izzy") Isenberg, 77, a captain at Utah Beach on D-Day, said, "I won't likely be coming this way again." But, unlike many of the veterans, he was not there for a reunion of comrades returning to a battleground.

Standing among the immaculate rows of marble crosses, Izzy was wet from the rain that had strafed the English Channel all morning. He was angry because U.S. officials had given him erroneous directions to his brother's grave.

But there it was. He had found it. Section C, Row 2, Grave 30. Finally, a Star of David.

Robert I. Isenberg, First Lieutenant, 358th Infantry, 90th Division, Pennsylvania.

Robert I. Isenberg — born on the Fourth of July 1914. Born dur-

ing the War to End All Wars.

Izzy's little brother was going on 30 when he died on D-Day, 1944.

And Izzy Isenberg wants people to know that "I didn't come back here as some kind of returning hero." His voice breaking from a loss suffered 40 years ago, he explained, "I just wanted to come back to see my brother's grave."

There were tears in Izzy's blue eyes after he prayed at the grave. He explained, "I came over here because my brother and I were very close although we used to clobber the hell out of each other every once in a while."

Izzy wasn't typical of the Americans who waded ashore on D-Day. He was 37 years old then. Most of the others were 21. He had joined the U.S. Army on Sept. 3, 1940. He was a seasick captain in charge of 190 men in a landing barge that dropped its gate on Utah Beach on D-Day.

"There was direct fire coming down at us. We suffered heavy casualties. There were a helluva lot of flashes, a lot of noise, a lot of people on the beach yelling. We were all scared and trying not to show it.

"I've tried to wash it all out of my mind. I saw a lot of people murdered that day. But I didn't come back to remember that. I came back to visit my brother's grave.

"I last saw my brother somewhere in the middle of England. I

was stationed at Ipswich. I got a pass and went over and visited him a couple of days."

Izzy today is a retired army colonel who is a social worker. His back is spattered with shrapnel from D-Day. He suffered a bayonet wound while a prisoner of war for three months in Belgium.

"During the Battle of the Bulge my driver made a wrong turn. The 6th Panzer Division picked us up." But all that came later.

Izzy walked away from the grave, ducked out of the rain and reflected. "Patriotism is an overused word. But, of course, I am a patriot. I hang the flag out every day at my house in Tampa, Fla."

He's insistent: "There were a lot of guys" who were heroes at D-Day. He misses his brother. And there is not one thing likeable about war.

On D-Day Jim Wilson was a 19-year-old buck sergeant in charge of a squad of 13 combat engineers. They bobbed around in a landing craft for a full day before hitting Omaha Beach. Shells dropped around them — the boat next to Wilson's "bought it."

"We were all scared in the boat. For some reason I wanted to die on land."

What awaited them on land was

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# D-Day in Dallas

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## Veterans commemorate 40th anniversary with reverence, tears

By Stephen G. Bloom

Staff Writer of The News

The red, white and blue flower wreath was made of crinkled paper. A squeaky rendition of taps came from a pocket tape recorder. The appearance of a squadron of jet fighters performing flips and rollovers had been canceled.

All that made no difference though. For members of Dallas' American Legion Post 511, the 40th anniversary of D-Day was commemorated with pomp, reverence and an occasional tear.

Twenty-eight veterans, ranging in age from 50 to 73, gathered at the lodge hours before the service began. Some drank beer, others sipped gin and tonics. All reminisced about June 6, 1944.

Johnny Klein, a Dallas retired upholsterer, couldn't make the trip but called to offer condolences.

"I saw too many people die that day," he said. "People glorify these things, but, believe me, D-day was awful. There was too much death on that beach."

He paused, and then broke down and cried softly. "After Normandy, we liberated German concentration camps. I saw people with bones sticking out of their skin. There are certain memories you can never forget, no matter how long ago they happened."

For Poncie Montalvo, who had been sta-

tioned at Maideiñead, England, during the War, confronting German troops on shore wasn't as frightful as what came before — storming the beaches. Montalvo did not know how to swim.

"As we were crossing the English Channel, all I could think about was the water," he recalled. "I was terrified of it."

"Fortunately when we arrived at the beach, the water went up just to my chest. After that, I could have handled anything."

The oldest veteran at the ceremony, Cecil Hallmark, wasn't at Normandy on D-Day. Instead, he had taken 10 days of R&R and was walking the streets of Sidney, Australia, when he heard the news of the invasion.

"I don't have any regrets about not being there on the beach," he said. "I was just damn glad that it took place and was successful."

Promptly at 4 p.m., the veterans filed out of the white brick lodge. They assembled in front of a shaky flag pole and stood at attention.

A trio of Marines from Grand Prairie ceremoniously raised the flag. District Cmdr. Carl Flanery, a rotund man who walked with a limp, welcomed the color guard as well as the band of former soldiers. The cars whizzing on nearby R.L. Thornton Freeway almost drowned out the prayer that followed.

A veteran's wife held the tape recorder that played taps. By 4:12 p.m., Cmdr. Flanery ordered the close of the service.

"At ease," he told the assembled members.

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## Soldiers loved liberty, Reagan says in ceremonies at Omaha Beach

By Anne Swardson

Washington Bureau of The News

OMAHA BEACH, France — With praise for the living and honor for the dead, President Reagan and the leaders of Europe paid a vivid, emotional tribute Wednesday to the Allied soldiers who invaded Normandy 40 years ago.

In a helicopter sweep across the beaches of Normandy, where 176,000 men from 11 nations stormed ashore on June 6, 1944, Reagan spoke movingly of those who battled and died on D-Day.

"Here the Allies stood, and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history," said Reagan at craggy Pointe du Hoc, where 225 American Rangers scaled 100-foot cliffs to knock out German artillery.

"They knew some things are worth dying for: One's country is worth dying for, and democracy is worth dying for, because it is the

most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. They loved liberty; they were willing to fight tyranny; they knew the people of their countries were behind them."

Thousands of American veterans traveled across the Atlantic to watch ceremonies at the three principal landing spots for the American invaders. At Pointe du Hoc, Omaha Beach and Utah Beach, they saw Reagan place flowers, make speeches and salute American allies. More important, they heard the catch in his voice and saw the moistness in his eyes. Even more important, they remembered for whom they had really come to Normandy.

"We feel lucky we're here," said Collier Chaney, 71, a rancher from Iola, Texas, whose own voice was not all that steady. "We have a real deep feeling in our hearts for the ones that didn't make it."

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## REAGAN...Continued

The ceremonies featured guests ranging from a flight attendant from northern California to the senior surviving D-Day commander to Queen Elizabeth II.

Reagan's 10-day tour of Europe, now in its sixth day, has prompted protest demonstrations and political oppositions at other times, but Wednesday, all in Normandy were united in a common purpose.

The celebrations were not confined to officialdom. In towns with such names as St.-Lo, Ste.-Mere-Eglise, Grandcamp-Maisy and Carentan, across the northwestern tip of France, American and British flags fluttered from the city halls and the cottage flower-boxes along with the French tricolor.

But there was color, pageantry and majesty at the official commemorations. At Pointe du Hoc, Reagan's first stop, Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan held hands as they peered down a 20-foot-deep bomb crater, climbed into a German bunker and saw the now-rusty grappling hooks the Rangers had shot up from the bottom of the cliffs 40 years before.

Sixty-two of the 90 Rangers who survived the 2½-day assault, as well as a thousand other veterans, their families and retired U.S. Army Gen. J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins, who commanded the operation at Utah Beach, were present.

In his speech, Reagan cited other heroes of D-Day: Bill Millin of the 51st Highlanders, who played his bagpipe to lead the reinforcements, the Polish troops, who showed "impossible valor," and the Canadians with their "unsurpassed courage."

"All of these men were part of a roll call of honor, with names that spoke of pride as bright as the colors they wore," said Reagan, who spent the war in the Army making training films in Hollywood. A vision problem kept him out of combat duty.

Standing with his back to the sea and the 15-foot-high, dagger-shaped rock Ranger memorial, Reagan reeled off the honor roll: "The Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Poland's 24th Lancers, the Royal Scots Fusiliers, the Screaming Eagles, the Yeomen of England's armored divisions, the forces of Free France, the Coast Guard's "Matchbox Fleet" . . . and you, the American Rangers."

As he has during every speech on this trip, Reagan brought up the Soviet Union, but in a way more consistent with the mood of the oc-

casian than some of his past rhetoric has been.

"There is no reconciliation we would welcome more than a reconciliation with the Soviet Union," Reagan said, noting that that nation lost 20 million people during the World War II. "I tell you from my heart that we in the United States do not want war. . . . We look for some sign from the Soviet Union that they are willing to move forward."

Reagan then flew by helicopter to Omaha Beach, where he met French President Francois Mitterrand at the American cemetery, which has been ceded to the United States by the French government. There, 9,386 American war dead — including 33 sets of brothers — are buried, many of them killed during the Normandy invasion.

Omaha was one of the toughest landings of the invasion, and several of the veterans recalled at the ceremony being pinned down on the beaches or seeing their tanks paralyzed by the stiff hedgerows in this rolling, fertile land.

To tell the story of the Omaha assault, Reagan used the words of 28-year-old Lisa Zanatta Henn. She had written and sent to the president the story of her father, Peter Robert Zanatta, one of the first troops to hit the beach.

Reagan quoted, "He made me feel the fear of being on that boat waiting to land. I can smell the ocean and feel the sea-sickness. I can see the looks on his fellow soldiers' faces, the fear, the anguish, the uncertainty of what lay ahead."

Reagan's voice was thick and husky by the time he finished his speech with: "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared so we may be always free."

Zanatta died of cancer eight years ago without ever returning to Normandy, but Ms. Henn, a flight attendant from San Francisco, said she had always wanted to go to Normandy.

The Reagans walked among the white crosses in the cemetery, each one decorated with small French and American flags. They also prayed at a chapel on the grounds and laid a wreath on the grave of Theodore Roosevelt Jr., son of President Teddy Roosevelt.

Reagan and Mitterrand each placed a wreath at a memorial for U.S. soldiers, then both went on to

the joint ceremony at Utah Beach.

There, on a flat strip of beach in the middle of nowhere, 11 nations commemorated their participation under the American, British and Canadian commands. Dignitaries included Queen Elizabeth, King Olav V of Norway, Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg, who himself was in the landing forces on D-Day.

In his speech, Mitterrand mentioned indirectly one of the biggest controversies surrounding the official ceremonies: the decision not to invite West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

"The enemy of the time was not Germany but the system, the power, the ideology that had Germany in its grip," said Mitterrand, who was in the French Resistance during the war and escaped from a prisoners' camp twice. "Their sons, like ours, demand that a new era dawn. The enemies of yesterday have now been reconciled and are building an era of freedom."

Mitterrand also called for reconciliation between East and West, and acknowledged the "great debt" that France owes the Allied forces.

He, Kohl, Trudeau and Reagan will join the leaders of other industrialized nations in London Thursday at the opening of the 10th annual economic summit.

Reagan flew by helicopter back to London at the end of the ceremony, telephoning a message to the crew of the aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower on the way, but the veterans at Omaha stayed to look over their beach.

James Drumright, 61, a Richardson oilfield equipment salesman, had come with his wife, Amy, 52, a week ago. He and other members of the 29th division had been feted by members of the Free French forces with whom they had fought and had been guests at a party in their honor given by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, England.

But the visit wasn't all good times.

"The big memory is seeing the bodies on the beach," said Drumright, who also remembered being wounded in the leg at St. Lo. "This is the first time I've been back, and I've got mixed emotions. When you were there, you never thought you'd get home alive."

# HITTING THE BEACH!

## Chicago war correspondent recalls the hell of D-Day

By John H. Thompson

**"T**ake us in, Coast-guardman! Take us in! Regardless! Damn the bullets! Take us in!"

The time was about 8 o'clock on that dreadful morning, June 6, 1944.

The words were sharp, incisive. The order, unmistakable. It came from Col. George A. Taylor. The invasion of Omaha Beach was on, and he wanted to get ashore with his men of the 16th Infantry Regiment.

Murderous machinegun fire that flayed the whole landing craft had just impelled our young Coast Guard coxswain to back off from bloody Omaha. On an exposed perch at the wheel, the coxswain was more aware of zinging bullets than the rest of us.

Even as Taylor shouted his orders to reverse course, German artillery shells exploded on either side of our high-sided flat-bottom steel landing craft. A hail of bullets thudded against the up-raised square landing ramp or rattled harmlessly off the steel sides.

Most of us were cold and drenched from the 12-mile ride in through five-foot

waves from our transport, the Samuel Chase. A few of the 1st Division troops in our craft had been violently seasick.

On the long run in we drew comfort and confidence from the "varoom" and crack of the Navy's heaviest guns firing at targets inland. Even though they set the nerves twanging, the fearsome screech of high-velocity rockets gave cheer.

But where were the bombers? Where, oh where, were the bombers that were supposed to have blasted German strongpoints atop the 200-foot-high bluffs and the concrete pillboxes on the beach?

Their made-in-America bombs were also intended to crater the beach with fighting holes to shelter the oncoming GIs, who would have no other protection before they stormed the bluffs. No one heard any plane engine—friend or foe. We were on our own.

Now our boat was again pointed toward the Norman shore. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's formidable beach obstacles loomed up through the haze and smoke of battle.

Some were crosses of wooden timbers and iron

pillings lashed together and scattered like so many giant jackstraws over the 300-yard-wide tidal flats.

Others, called "Belgian gates," resembled monstrous medieval castle gates of iron pipes, welded together on rollers and imbedded deeply in the sandy bottom.

"The Plan" called for our combat engineers to sneak in early and blow up the obstacles before the GIs started landing at "H-Hour"—6.30. A few brave men succeeded. Most of the others were blown out of the water by German gunners.

As we passed, a few soldiers from the early waves clung to these obstacles, as if for protection. The machinegun fire seemed to pick up. Shells burst up and down the beach ahead of us.

We were about 50 yards offshore when the skipper dropped his landing ramp. It hung straight down to the bottom. So, off we jumped into shoulder-high water.

In an instinctive gut reaction, I held my Swiss Hermes portable typewriter in front of my face as a shield. Better it should take a bullet than me. Miraculously, though, none of our party was hit.

Struggling through the water in our heavy combat gear, we could see shells bursting on the beach beyond a low ridge of loose stones carried there at high tide. To the sea side of this protective ridge lay the living, the dead, the wounded.

Bodies washed back and forth in the water as we picked our way to the beach sector, code name Easy Red. I grabbed a live one by his web harness and hauled him up to the shale ridge. Then I dropped my typewriter and went back into the water for another.

So far as we could tell, only a few soldiers had advanced beyond the protective ridge of shale. Yet everyone knew we had to crush through the coils of barbed wire, disarm the mine fields and attack toward the trenches along the

cliff tops.

We had to open up at least some of the five natural exits from the beach area to prepare for massive reinforcements. Any effort to land heavy equipment was being smashed by 88-mm. guns in two pill boxes guarding two beach exits. Each gun covered the other's position. So far, none had been knocked out.

For what seemed like an hour or more, Taylor had been trying to round up his company commanders and get the attack moving. (Half the regiment had been landed at the wrong place or lost at sea in their landing boats. Their supporting artillery was still afloat.)

Gathering his captains together, the soft-spoken combat veteran of North Africa and Sicily told them: "Gentlemen—we are being killed on the beaches. Let us go inland—and be killed."

Those, at least, were the words I recall hearing, and I stood next to Col. Taylor at the time. (Others have attributed this scene to another commander.)

Did these words light a fire? No one knows. But small units began moving toward the bluff. Others blew holes through the barbed wire with "Bangalore torpedoes," long tubes filled with high explosives.

Still others began probing for mines while trying to avoid being hit or blown up. Down the beach, toward the exit known as "Les Moulins" by the French, an armored bulldozer plowed through a rain of bullets and mortar shells to open an approach to the exit.

About this time, I spotted another war correspondent friend, Life magazine's celebrated photographer Bob Capa, shooting pictures up and down the beach and of the oncoming troops. Seeing him pause beside the wreck of an ill-fated amphibious tank, I ran over to join him.

"We better get away from this tank, and fast," shouted

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*Chicagoan John H. Thompson was one of the war's most respected and veteran correspondents when June 6, 1944, rolled around. He was 35 and had*



Thompson

*covered the invasions of Africa and Sicily. But even Thompson wasn't prepared for what lay ahead as his landing craft approached the beachhead that became known as "Bloody Omaha." Said Thompson: "Anybody who survived was just damn lucky."*

# THE BLOODY CRUSADE THAT CHANGED HISTORY

*Sun-Times reporter Michael Cordts sets the scene for the great invasion.*

**By Michael  
Cordts**

**T**he day the world was waiting for came on a Tuesday.

There was little doubt it was coming. By the spring of 1944, Hitler's armies were grappling to hold on to what ambition backed by armor had seized.

Despite a growing capability to kill at long distance—whether by saturation bombing or V-2 rockets—the generals and politicians on both sides knew it would be decided by infantry at close range.

It was as simple as that. So like two bloodied prizefighters standing toe-to-toe, the armies slugged it

out 40 years ago this Wednesday. It became World War II's most celebrated D-Day: June 6, 1944, the day the Allies invaded France.

By midnight, about 10,000 soldiers on each side had been killed, wounded or were missing. American casualties: 6,577.

It was a day that will forever evoke superlatives: the great crusade by the mightiest invasion armada the world had ever known. It was, in a nutshell, the ultimate showdown between good and evil.

"There was a wonderful unity in those days," said Al Rubin of Naperville, whose unit assaulted an island off the coast a few hours before the main landings. "Every-

one felt there was a purpose to the war. There was no hesitation to do anything to help, no matter how dangerous."

"I didn't get the impression most of the men realized the significance of what they were about to do, that it would have such an impact on Europe and history," said John H. Thompson, a Chicago Tribune war correspondent who waded ashore at Omaha Beach. "To them, it was another job to do."

"But you had to sense the importance of it all," said Rubin. "There was electricity in the air, wall-to-wall ships, barrage balloons all over the place."

Within five weeks, German officers botched an assassination attempt of Hitler. Within 11 months, Germany surrendered, crushed by the American and British

advance from the west and the Russian attack from the east. Within 15 months, the world war had ended.

Four decades later, the machinations of D-Day are as intriguing as ever:

How could the Germans be surprised when Hitler himself predicted where the invasion forces would land?

And why did Franklin Roosevelt side with the British instead of his Army chief of staff over when to invade France?

The strategy that led to an invasion of France in June, 1944, was a compromise of competing Allied interests hashed out at summit meetings between Churchill and Roosevelt.

The pivotal meeting was in January, 1943, as German resistance in North Africa

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

## BEACH...Continued

Capa, loud enough to be heard above the explosive sounds of battle. "The Krauts are zeroed in on it."

Sure enough, no sooner had I rejoined Col. Taylor—still on the beach—than an artillery shell made a direct hit on the tank. Capa by then was farther down the beach, where the bulldozer was making history.

(Capa later managed to get a ride back from the beach with a bag full of splendid film that he brought to his Life office in London. Unfortunately, an inexperienced 17-year-old lab technician was allowed to develop the historic prints and ruined all but a handful. Capa was killed by a mine in Vietnam in 1954.)

By this time, a path outlined by white tape had been marked up the bluff, just West of the German blockhouse and outside its view. Up I went, stopping near the crest to dig a foxhole, where I spent a noisy night.

Hundreds of boats still crashed back and forth off the beach, trying to come

ashore whenever the beach master through a bullhorn ordered one in. Great barges, called Rhino ferries, floundered about with decks full of trucks, guns and other heavy gear.

Naval guns had begun to score heavily inland against some of the 60 gun batteries of the German 352nd division, which unexpectedly was on maneuvers in the beach area.

Still, it was a lethal trip to the beach for many. Just as I watched troops start down the two folding stairways lowered on either side of an LSI, a German shell smashed one of the ramps.

Soldiers were flung like rag dolls over the handholds along the stairways. Others pushed down and around them, eager to jump off the target ship before it could back off to safety.

As Col. Taylor had told his men the night before in a last-minute pep-talk, the fate of Omaha would rest with the 800 riflemen due to land there on D-Day—despite all the air and sea and land power that was coming.

Yet, as the colonel told a few of us war correspon-

dents in a briefing the night before, this was a power play, all the way. "No tricks. No gimmicks. Nothing cute. No deception. We are coming straight at them with everything we have.

"The 16th goes in first. If we fail, the 26th Regiment is coming right behind us. And if they are stopped, too, why the 18th will come right behind them.

"And behind them out there is the 2nd Division. And the 9th Division. And the 2nd Armored Division. And still more to come.

"This is power, power and more power."

But it wasn't until late in the afternoon that the Navy put in the clincher that allowed my old friends of the 26th Regiment to come ashore safely and climb the bluffs—through the positions of the 16th.

All day the blockhouse at the east end of the beach had held out, its guns making a shambles of the landing area, particularly where the beach master was trying to build a supply dump.

A call had gone out to the Navy for help. And suddenly, late in the day, one of

our little destroyers had ventured within 300 yards of the enemy fort, trained its 5-inch guns on target and fired one shot.

End of gun, gunners and blockhouse. We on the bluff cheered like football fanatics. I was particularly pleased. If the destroyer had missed, it might have hit my foxhole. I was that close to the enemy.

(NOTE: There were six war correspondents assigned to the Big Red One for D-Day. So far as I can calculate, I seem to have been the first to get ashore—by the luck of the draw. I am also the sole survivor of the group, which included: Don Whitehead of the AP; John "Tex" O'Reilly of the former New York Herald Tribune; John McVane of NBC; Bob Capa of Life magazine and Bert Brandt of Acme News Service.

(None of us got any stories off the beach that day. On June 7, I and other correspondents did manage to get stories off with a PR officer who found us at the advance division HQ. Mine did not appear in print until June 9.)

CRUSADE...Cont.

was fading. The agenda was on where to strike next. Against Germany or Japan? And if Germany, where?

American military leaders, led by Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, pushed for an invasion of France by year's end. The mauled Russians agreed, hoping the long-promised second front would drain the German offensive.

Some U.S. Army officers had another motivation for pushing an early invasion—they were wary of a Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe. But the British balked, in part because of a political disagreement with the Soviets over the future of Poland.

Churchill had previously persuaded Roosevelt to invade North Africa instead of France. Now, Churchill again pressed the case that there wasn't enough time to plan and stockpile an invasion of France before 1944.

Roosevelt once again relented. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was sent to England to plan D-Day while the Allies attacked Sicily and then mainland Italy.

By the spring of 1944, the Allies were clearly in control. The Battle of the North Atlantic had been won, the Russians were rolling on the Eastern Front, and Germany was being bombed around the clock.

In the Mediterranean, the last German submarine kill was on May 18, 1944. On the same day, the Germans withdrew from the Monte Cassino abbey, one of the bloodiest battles of the Italian campaign.

Things were even looking up on the U.S. homefront. On May 4, all meats were taken off the ration list except steaks and roasts.

But the fact remained that the Allies had yet to tackle Hitler's much-ballyhooed defenses in France. It also could not be ignored that the beaches were defended by Germany's most respected commander, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.

In England, a joke making the rounds had it that the island was in jeopardy of sinking from the massive buildup for the invasion.

Gen. Omar Bradley, commander of the U.S. invasion forces, termed logistics "a

monstrous jigsaw puzzle that was to be disassembled for ferrying across the Channel and then reassembled on the far shore."

The buildup involved 3 million troops, 5,000 ships, 4,000 landing craft, 13,000 aircraft, two prefabricated harbors and 14.5 million metric tons of supplies, including 300,500 gallons of drinking water for the first three days ashore.

The Germans initially expected the attack at Pas de Calais, only 20 miles across the Channel from England. And they expected a hard charger, Gen. George S. Patton Jr., to lead the assault.

When Eisenhower stationed Patton just across the channel from Pas de Calais and began building what appeared to be an invasion force, the Germans felt sure they had guessed correctly.

Complicating matters was Rommel's absence because it was his wife's birthday. He had thought bad weather precluded an invasion. Also, nobody had the courage to wake a sleeping Hitler and ask his permission to call in reinforcements.

The first mainland assault came at night by 24,000 paratroopers from the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne and the British 6th.

The 82nd's disastrous jump into the middle of the village of Sainte-Mere-Eglise became the feature of a Hollywood movie. After 33 straight days of combat, the 82nd's 11,770 assault troops suffered 1,033 killed and 5,028 wounded.

The assault by 133,000 troops came at dawn on code-named beachheads that are now household names: Omaha, Utah, Sword, Juno and Gold. Omaha earned its nickname of "Bloody," accounting for more than 1,000 of the 1,465 Americans who died that day.

"It was a brown-pants day on the beach," said Thompson, the war correspondent who landed in the third wave on Omaha and was pinned down for hours by enemy gunners.

"Everytime one of those big shells hit close, your bowels let loose," he said. "I don't know how I survived. It was luck and whiskey, I guess."

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## OPERATION OVERLORD: A CHRONOLOGY

By Toni Ginnett

The following is a chronology of the Normandy invasion, code-named Operation Overlord:

**May 30, 1944:** Allied forces begin loading assault forces along the British coast for the invasion.

**June 1, 1944:** Allies transmit over the BBC the first coded message—part of a poem by Verlaine—giving a general warning to the French Resistance that the

invasion is imminent. The Germans alert some of their troops.

**June 3, 1944:** Allies complete troop loading for the invasion.

**June 4, 1944:** Allied troops, already at sea in anticipation of a June 5 landing, turn back because of bad weather. Gen. Eisenhower decides to postpone the invasion one day to occur at dawn during low tide.

**June 5, 1944:** A second warning message is trans-

mitted to the French Resistance. The Germans monitor it but fail to warn their 7th Army unit in Normandy. Allied airborne troops are dispatched from Britain shortly before midnight.

**June 6, 1944:** The invasion begins.

At 2 a.m. the first airborne forces are dropped on their targets. At 3:15 a.m. the aerial bombardment of the beaches begins. At 5:50 a.m. warship guns begin firing on the beaches. At 6:30

a.m. the first troops descend on the beaches—the Americans on Utah and Omaha Beaches, the British on Gold and Sword Beaches and the Canadians on Juno Beach. Forces penetrate six miles onto Utah Beach but troops on Omaha are pinned down by the German 352 Division.

By nightfall, they fight their way to the coastal road and within 24 hours of the start of the invasion, the other beaches are secured.

# The big plane that couldn't

Sun-Times reporter Lloyd Green recalls the frustration of D-Day.

By Lloyd Green

**L**t. Bishop was a little guy, much too small for a bomber pilot. Flying over Germany, he had to sit far forward in his armor-plated seat to reach the control pedals.

Besides being small, Bishop had a mournful expression that had earned him the nickname in college of the Lonesome Polecat. And that was the name emblazoned on the nose of the B-24 that he chauffeured through flak and fighters in World War II.

But what I remember most about Bishop is that he cried on D-Day. Why he cried isn't easy to explain. It wasn't any one thing; it was a lot of things. I'll try to explain.

I was a gunner on Bishop's

op's crew with the 489th Heavy Bombardment Group, a part of the 8th Air Force. Our base was near the little town of Halesworth, England.

The night before D-Day, a group of us enlisted men started what we planned as an all-night poker game in our quonset hut. We were always too nervous to sleep the night before a mission. Losses by our group had been heavy.

Our card game was cut short when we were called to the briefing room shortly after midnight. We thought it strange to be ordered out so early, but we still never guessed the invasion had started.

When the briefing officer unveiled the huge map and pointed to our target, we breathed a momentary sigh

of relief. We were to drop our bombs near St. Lo. It seemed an easy target. But then the briefing officer said:

"We don't know what to tell you to expect today, but you're sure to get fighters and probably heavy flak."

As he spoke, the pancakes we'd just eaten turned into cannonballs in our stomachs.

After the briefing for the full crews, the officers stayed behind for a more detailed briefing. We gunners went to our plane to install our guns. Then we sat under the wing of the plane and waited. Within a few minutes, the four officers arrived in a jeep.

By then our eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, and we watched the officers trudge through the darkness. Bishop led the way, his parachute banging against his legs at every step. He looked like a small

boy sent to do a superman's job.

Bishop, whose first name I've long ago forgotten, was maybe 22 or 23. He seemed almost middle-aged in the eyes of us teenage gunners, but we managed to accept him. In fact, we all called ourselves "Polecats."

Bishop let us know in a hurry what was up.

"I'm not supposed to tell you this," Bishop said, "but I don't think any of you are spies. The invasion has started. This is D-Day. The reason I'm telling you is that I want you to be especially alert."

A collective chill ran up our backs. We could tell from the tenseness in Bishop's voice that he was as scared as we were.

It was still dark as we taxied to the end of the runway and lined up for takeoff with the rest of the B-24s, which looked like a row of giant, roaring ducks.

Now, it should be explained that we didn't have our regular plane for D-Day. Our "Lonesome Polecat," a fine plane, had been taken over by a lead crew sent from Air Force headquarters to guide our group. We were assigned a "spare" plane named "Black Magic."

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"Surf's up"

©1984 Chicago Sun-Times

This cartoon of Willie and Joe storming a beach at Normandy is a work of imagination. I wasn't there. But I had attended other beach parties with Willie and Joe at Sicily, Salerno and Anzio, so I had some background material for the drawing.

The reason I wasn't at Normandy was that I was in Rome. Gen. Mark Clark, commanding the Fifth Army in Italy, was possibly the only person there who knew the schedule for D-Day in Normandy. He

was most anxious to capture Rome (and the U.S. headlines) before the big invasion up north. He knew that once it started, Italy would become a forgotten theater.

Clark ordered a vigorous attack against the stubborn German defenders south of Rome. Our soldiers prevailed at some cost. The general got his victory two days before D-Day and I entered Rome with the survivors, including some guys who looked remarkably like Willie and Joe.

Bill Mauldin



# D-Day: 'an encounter between flesh and fire'

*It has been 20 years since publication of Cornelius Ryan's The Longest Day. Now British war correspondent and military historian Max Hastings—author of The Battle for the Falklands, Das Reich and Bomber*

## By Max Hastings

**T**here is no more demanding task for infantry than to press home an attack across open ground under heavy fire, amid heavy casualties. The American assault on Omaha Beach came as close as the experience of any western Allied soldiers in the Second World War to the kind of headlong encounters between flesh and fire that were a dreadful commonplace in the battles of 30 years before, and that were so grimly familiar on the eastern front.

V Corps' plan for Omaha eschewed tactical subtleties, the use of British special-

ized armor and any attempt to seize the five vital beach exits by maneuver. Instead, Maj. Gen. L. T. Gerow committed his men to hurling themselves frontally against the most strongly defended areas in the assault zone. This was an act of hubris compounded by the collapse, amidst the rough weather, of all the elaborate timetables for the landing.

Most of the young Americans plunging into the surf had been crouched in their landing craft for some three hours, having been transferred from the transports 12 miles out from the beach rather than the seven miles the British decided upon.

Many had quickly thrown

up their breakfasts, and then crouched miserably in the bucketing boats, drenched in spray, paddling in vomit, as darkness gave way to the first light of dawn. Each man was grotesquely heavily loaded with gas mask, grenades, half-pound blocks of TNT, pole or satchel charges, two bandoliers of rifle ammunition, rations and waterbottle—68 pounds in total.

Now, in an instant, they were compelled to rouse themselves from the cramped, crowded stagnation of the landing craft and stumble forward into the hail of machinegun and mortar fire from the German defenses, which killed

and wounded many before they even reached dry ground. Others, still groggy with seasickness, their clothes and equipment stiff and matted with salt, desperately sought cover among the beach obstacles or lay paralyzed amid the harvest of wreckage that quickly gathered on the shoreline.

Early in the assault the beach was clogged with grounded and damaged landing craft, some hulks being swept broadside onto the German obstacles to create a logjam which the next wave could not pass.

Many men were confused to discover that they had

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## BIG PLANE...Cont.

But airplanes are like autos in one respect. Coming off the assembly line, all cars and planes look alike. Every so often, however, out comes a lemon. Such a plane was Black Magic. True, it would fly. But something always seemed to go wrong with it. That's why it was used as a spare plane.

When a flare went up from the control tower, the planes began racing down the runway one after another. Black Magic, we were relieved to find, took to the air with as much grace as the Polecat. Our confidence soared.

The plane flew flawlessly until the huge formation of bombers began climbing as they started across the English Channel. But as soon as Bishop cut in the engine superchargers at 10,000 feet, Black Magic began to shake and buck. It shimmied like a Model-T Ford.

At last Bishop saw it was no use. Black Magic's wildness was endangering other planes in the formation. We peeled off and headed back to our base.

We had no more than landed than the colonel in charge came racing out in a jeep. He was a West Pointer. Seldom, if ever, had he heard a justifiable excuse for anything. Our aborting the mission was a personal affront to him, and he let Bishop and the rest of us know it.

Within a couple of hours, the rest of the planes came back from St. Lo. They still had their bombs. The target had been covered by clouds, and the orders had been given not to drop unless the ground was visible. Too many Allied troops were below.

Since the first mission was unsuccessful, a second mission was scheduled shortly before noon. Black Magic's superchargers had tested perfect on the

ground, so we again took off with the rest of the planes.

But halfway across the channel, the same thing happened. Every time Bishop tried to get the plane above 10,000 feet, it would buck and jump around like a sick bird dog. Again we turned back. Again the colonel was waiting. He accused Bishop of being everything from a coward to a Nazi saboteur.

A short time later the other planes came back with a report that again the target had been covered with clouds. No bombs had been dropped.

In late afternoon, still a third mission was scheduled. Never was a man so determined to go on a mission as was Bishop.

"We're going across the channel this time even if this damn plane shakes itself to death," he said. The rest of us were in agreement. We had almost forgotten the deathly fear we'd had at the start of the day.

For the third time, we

raced down the runway. For the third time, Black Magic did its airborne hula dance and we turned back.

Once again the colonel's jeep came racing out to our parking pad. For 15 minutes, he raked Bishop up and down, threatening him with court-martial, reduction to private and confinement to the base for the rest of his life. Never mind that the rest of the planes hadn't dropped bombs either.

When the colonel finally left, Bishop sank onto an ammunition box, put his head in his hands and wept. The rest of us tried to find somewhere else to look.

Youth, exhaustion, fear and frustration had proved too much. If there was one thing we Polecats learned on D-Day, it was that fighting is not always the worst part of war.

*This story, in a different form, appeared in the Sun-Times on the 25th anniversary of D-Day.*

## ENCOUNTER...Cont.

been landed far from the sector for which they had been briefed and trained. Americans lay prone in the shallow water seeking cover, or dragged themselves painfully up the sand with wounds suffered before they were even out of the landing craft. Hundreds huddled beneath the sea wall at the head of the beach, seizing the only shelter Omaha offered that day, although some companies' survivors took 45 minutes to struggle even that far from the waterline.

Hundreds of men were already dying or dead—there would be more than 2,000 casualties on the beach that day.

Among the living, an overwhelming paralysis set in. Much of what takes place on every battlefield is decided by example, men being driven to act in noble or ignoble fashion by the behavior of those around them. On Omaha that morning, the inexperience of many American junior leaders made itself felt. The confused nature of the landings, with men landing by half-platoons often many yards from the boats carrying their own officers and comrades, destroyed unit cohesion.

To the great majority of infantrymen looking for an example to follow out of the

apparent collapse of purpose on Omaha that morning, it seemed most prudent merely to seek what shelter they could, and cling to it.

Ranger Mike Rehm of C Company, 5th Battalion, landed in Dog Green sector shortly after H-Hour with 10 men, two of whom were killed and three wounded in the first hundred yards between the sea and the base of the hill.

Rehm huddled for shelter behind a knocked-out DD tank, finding himself beside a Ranger whom he did not recognize, smoking a cigar. Suddenly they discovered that the tank was not knocked out, for its engine sprang into life and it began to move.

The two men ran toward the sea wall. After a few paces Rehm glanced around and saw that his companion lay covered in blood from the waist down. He reached the wall alone. There he lay through the two hours which followed, amidst a huddle of infantry and other Rangers representing almost every unit on the beach that morning.

The reports that reached V Corps and General Bradley from Omaha that morning were not merely gloomy, but at times almost panic-stricken. Bradley's personal aide and Admiral Kirk's gunnery officer cruised close inshore aboard a PT Boat and returned soaked and grim.

Bradley considered halting all landings on the eastern beach and diverting the follow-up waves to Utah. A monstrous traffic jam had developed off the beach. By a serious flaw in the timetable, soft-skinned vehicles were beginning to arrive to offload in the middle of the battle.

Among many naval crews who displayed exemplary courage, there were others whose lack of experience and determination magnified the confusion. The sailors manning a huge rhino raft loaded with vehicles simply abandoned it, 700 yards out, and the drivers and cargo drifted out of control until the rising tide brought them ashore.

The Rangers had developed an early skepticism about naval efficiency when the officer in charge of one of their landing craft rammed a breakerwater before getting out of his English harbor, and the skipper of another spent the cross-Channel voyage prostrate with seasickness. Now, one group of Rangers found themselves left to bring their landing craft in to the beach unaided. Its crew simply took to their dinghy and deserted them. In contrast to these episodes, the sailors manning two LCTs with immense courage rammed the beach obstacles head-on, and remained in position using every gun to support the infantry in their plight.

Lt. Col. John Williamson, commanding the 2nd/18th Infantry of the 1st Division, led his men into their LCVPs's soon after 8 a.m., more than an hour late. When some craft began to swamp as they circled waiting for word that the beach was clear, the crews of others sought to begin rescue operations. After some forceful urging from Williamson, the craft began their run-in. They approached the shore not in an orderly wave, line abreast, but in a column, a queue, jostling for position on the sands.

"The beach was loaded with men, tanks, DUKWs," said Williamson. "I was surprised that nobody had moved off."

Major Frank Colacicco, executive officer of the 3rd/18th, stood among his men on the deck of an LCI, watching the spectacle ashore in utter bewilderment: "It was like a theater. We could

see it all, we knew that something was knocking the tanks out, but we kept asking, 'Why don't they clear the beach? Why aren't our people getting off?'"

When at last their own turn came to approach the sands, Colacicco's LCI struck an obstacle whose mine blew up. Some men were hurled into the water by the blast, others found themselves struggling in the surf moments later as the craft settled. At last someone on the beach got a lifeline out to them, and the soaking men dragged themselves ashore. The major was told that Brigadier Wyman, the assistant divisional commander, wanted to see him. He reached the command post after being knocked off his feet by a mortar blast. He was told to take over the objectives of the 1st/16th, and returned to his men lying below the sea wall to point out to them, unanswerably: "We can't stay here."

Slowly they began to work up the hillside, crawling over the immobile figures of men of the 116th Infantry: "They were too green to know that the closer you are to the enemy, the better off you will be." Colacicco tore a strip off one man he saw firing apparently recklessly along the hillside: "Just settle down," said the major soothingly: "That's our men over there." "But sir, they have overcoats on," insisted the soldier. Indeed they were German riflemen.

Yet although the defenders possessed the capability to maul the American landing on Omaha seriously, to impede and to disorganize it, they lacked the power to halt it absolutely. Despite the near total destruction of the first wave of invaders landing on the western flank below Vierville, despite the casualties and the terror inflicted upon thousands of green troops, a great many men survived to reach the sea wall alive—enough, finally, to swamp the vastly outnumbered German defenders.

At Omaha, the Americans found themselves facing Germans of the 352nd Division as well as the 716th—eight battalions instead of four. The defenders possessed the strength and determination

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3¢ DAILY TIMES  
CHICAGO, ILL. MONDAY  
WAR EXTRA

**INVASION**

**YANKS 10 MILES**

**INTO FRANCE!**

The Chicago Daily Times' Page 1 for June 6, 1944.

## ENCOUNTER...Cont.

to fight doggedly from fixed positions. But where the Americans, inch by inch, gained ground, they were able to keep it. The toeholds prised out of the heights above the beach that day by a few brave men of the Rangers, the 1st and 29th Divisions could never normally have been held against the quick local counterattacks at which the German army excelled. But such movements did not develop. Like a trickling stream slipping between pebbles, a handful of courageous leaders and small groups of men found their way around the German strongpoints covering the beach exits, and forced a path for the American army off Omaha beach. The corps plan for the attack was a failure. But the men on the hillside, spurred by their own desperation, found their own means to gain the high ground.

The principal problem in almost every attack on every battlefield is to maintain momentum. Every instinct, especially among inexperienced soldiers, is to take cover under fire. Instinct is reinforced when the bodies of others who have failed to do so lie all around. It requires a considerable act of will to persuade limbs to act which have suddenly acquired an immobility of their own. Inexperienced troops find it notoriously difficult to assess the extent of resistance and risk. On some occasions this can be to their advantage—or rather, that of their commanders—because it leads them to perform acts that more seasoned soldiers would not be so foolhardy as to attempt. But on Omaha the 29th Division, in its first experience of combat, deprived in the first hours of many of its officers, dismayed by its losses and confused by its predicament, became dangerously paralyzed. The veteran 1st Division, on its left, performed significantly better—indeed, most Americans later agreed that without "The Big Red One" the battle would have been lost.

It was individuals, not divisions, who determined the outcome of the day. It is arguable that as early as mid-morning, when Bradley and Gerow were still receiving

## 'Almighty God: Lead our sons straight and true'

Hours after the invasion of France began, President Franklin D. Roosevelt led the nation in prayer:

My fellow Americans: Last night when I spoke with you about the fall of Rome I knew at that moment that troops of the United States and our allies were crossing the Channel in another and greater operation. It has come to pass to success thus far.

And so, in this poignant hour, I ask you to join with me in prayer:

Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our nation, this day have set upon a mighty

endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.

Lead them straight and true; give strength to their arms, stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith....

With thy blessing, we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the apostles of greed and racial arrogance....

Thy will be done, Almighty God. Amen.

deeply gloomy reports from Omaha, the real situation was much more encouraging than the view of the beach from the ships led the commanders to believe.

Brigadier General Norman Cota and his 29th Division command group reached the beach at 7:30 a.m. with the 116th Regiment's headquarters. The general began to move among the bewildered tangle of infantrymen, Rangers, naval beach maintenance parties and gunner forward observers.

The fiery, inexhaustible brigadier began pushing officers, urging men, seeking routes by which to break the bloody deadlock by the sea wall.

Mike Rehm of the 5th Rangers had been huddled beneath the shingle bank for two hours or more with a group of men when Cota appeared. In one of his legendary encounters of the day, the general demanded to know who they were. Rangers, he was told. "Then, goddammit, if you're Rangers get up and lead the way!" exploded Cota. The men began to thrust four-foot lengths of bangalore torpedo beneath the wire ahead, locking them together until they could blow a gap. In front, the entire hillside was wreathed in smoke from the blazing undergrowth. Coughing and choking, the Rangers realized that they could not run through it, but at last they pulled on their gas masks and groped forward. Some 35 men reached the metalled road at the top of the hill. Covered

by 60-mm. mortars firing at such short range that the tubes were almost vertical, they began to work slowly westwards. There were now Americans behind some of the most dangerous German positions covering the beach.

All that afternoon, Cota moved relentlessly up and down the hillside, urging on the men clambering in slugs through the minefields and over the bodies of the dead. There were still perilously few heavy weapons on the higher ground to support the infantry now beginning to fight through the first hedges and fields of the bocage. When he found a group of Rangers claiming to be pinned down beyond Vierville, Cota himself walked ahead of them across the open ground to demonstrate that a man could move and survive. Many soldiers who attempted to set this sort of example on June 6 and in the weeks that followed were killed instantly. But Cota lived and the Rangers moved forward. Although persistent shellfire was still falling on the beach behind them, most of the Germans defending the hillside were dead or captured.

On the high ground, Lt. Col. Williamson and the 2nd/18th had advanced to within a mile of their designated D-Day objectives. Like every American soldier above Omaha that day, he and his men were cursing the hedges of the bocage which provided such perfect cover for snipers, and were already inflicting interminable delays upon

advancing units. Men sought cover whenever firing sounded nearby. Crossing a gap, the young soldier in front of Williamson was shot. The colonel put a Browning automatic rifle on top of the hedge and raked the area with fire. They moved onwards a little way without further casualties, then took up positions for the night just short of Colville. The Omaha beachhead had been secured. The Germans lacked the power and mobility to reverse the verdict of the afternoon. By nightfall, the Americans controlled a perimeter up to a mile deep beyond Omaha, while the 4th Division on Utah had linked up with General Maxwell Taylor and his men of the 82nd Airborne Division west of the causeways from the beach.

While the Utah landing had gone as nearly in accordance with planning as any commander could have expected, on Omaha the failures and errors of judgments by the staff had only been redeemed by the men on the sand. Many officers, including Cota, believed that the American landings would have proved far easier had they been made in darkness, a possibility rejected by the navy and air force, who insisted upon the need for daylight to make best use of their bombardment power. Had elite infantry such as the Rangers led the way ashore before dawn, it is indeed likely that they would have been able to get off the beach and work in among the German

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

# Illinois had its share of heroes on Longest Day

These are the stories of a few of Illinois' brave men.

By Marcia Schnedler

**F**ive companies of the 2nd Ranger Battalion were assigned to scale the cliffs between Omaha and Utah Beaches and silence the German artillery that threatened Allied ships and troops.

The 69-man C Company, led by 24-year-old Capt. **Ralph E. Goranson**, was to take out the gun emplacements atop the cliffs of Pointe-de-la-Percee, overlooking Omaha Beach. They headed ashore in two landing craft.

"There were 88-mm. guns," said Goranson, of Libertyville, now an account executive with a sales promotion firm.

"The Vierville Road divided the west end of Omaha Beach from Percee, and was to be a major route inland for the Americans. At the entrance was a pillbox,

which was a real problem," Goranson said. "The only cover was under the cliffs. I lost about a third of my men, killed in action, and another third who couldn't proceed beyond the beach because of severe wounds." That left only 29 men.

"Three men pulled themselves up the cliff with trench knives, and for the last few feet stood on one another's shoulders until they could get toggle ropes attached," he said, so that others could haul themselves up.

That afternoon, an Allied destroyer began bombarding Percee. "They worked us over pretty good, too, till they realized who we were," Goranson said. By nightfall, Goranson's Rangers had taken Percee.

"I couldn't eat because there were bullets in my food tins," Goranson said. "There was one in my flare projector, two in a kit on my belly, one in my water bottle. I don't have a mark on me."

**John "Cowboy" Hanlon** of Zion, then 26, landed with the B Company at 5:30

a.m. "I was hit before 6 a.m.," he said. B Company's objective was to get to the top of the hills behind the Omaha Beach and work toward Pointe-du-Hoc to assist the Rangers there.

"There were poles with mines all up them all along there to keep ships from coming in," Hanlon said. "The Navy man was doing his best to get us in. Finally, a ship hit one of those mines and sank and we went on alongside of it and onto the beach.

"When you got up on top of the big hill that day, there was so much commotion you were just trying to survive," Hanlon said.

Along with 224 other Rangers, **Thomas F. "Red" Ryan**, now a Chicago police lieutenant, went in to scale the 100-foot cliffs of Pointe-du-Hoc. Six 155-mm howitzers with a range well over four miles—the enemy's most powerful guns—were supposed to be there, aimed at both Omaha and Utah Beaches.

On the way in, the men in his boat sang "Happy Birthday" to Ryan. The staff ser-

geant turned 22 that day.

"I was probably the 30th guy up the cliffs," Ryan said. "We used ropes and rope ladders, shot up like skyrockets. But the ropes were wet and with the extra weight we couldn't get them all up. Guys who could free-climb would go on up and fight the Germans. They'd push the Germans back a little and drop some ropes so the rest of us could get up. Most of them got killed."

At the top, the Rangers found the landscape pitted and scarred like moon craters. "Holes from the bombs gave us a place to hide in," Ryan said.

But the 155-mm howitzers weren't there. The Rangers found the guns unmanned, stashed in a hedge a mile or so behind the cliffs, and destroyed them.

The 2nd Ranger Battalion, which already had a casualty rate of 60 percent, moved from the cliffs into the hedgerows to join other troops in the fighting.

**Richard A. "Rick" Sover**, a Chicagoan recently retired from Peoples Gas, and the Rev. **George W. Knapp** of Westchester, now the semi-retired chaplain of a LaGrange Park retirement home, are veterans of the 4th Infantry Division that landed on Utah Beach on D-Day. They and two other 4th Division veterans from this area remain good friends.

Sover was a 24-year-old sergeant on D-Day, a squad leader in charge of a 60-mm mortar section.

"When our LCVP landed, all the shelling was to our left and right, and everything in our area was calmed down. It was like a practice landing.

"We cleared the area, and broke through and started inland, towards Ste. Marie-du-Mont. The Germans had opened the locks to flood

## ENCOUNTER...Cont.

positions with or without the bombardment. The events of D-Day emphasized the limited ability of high explosives to destroy strong defensive positions. But the follow-up waves and armor would have suffered immense problems attempting to get ashore under heavy fire before dawn. The timing of the landing was probably sound, although the troops could have profited immensely from continuing support fire until the moment they reached the beach, and from better gunnery forward observation thereafter. American naval reports spoke of the frustration of ships cruising silently offshore; unable to fire because of lack of identified targets.

The Americans refused to employ British-designed specialized armor—tanks throwing flame and explosive

charges, and flail mine-clearers. These would certainly have made a significant impact on Omaha. But they were not a magic formula for success. Given the formidable weight of German firepower concentrated against the five critical beach exits, it is likely that much of the specialized armor would have been knocked out on the beach in the same fashion as so many gun Shermans, merely contributing to the logjam of wreckage that did so much to hamper movement of vehicles and landing craft.

Chester Wilmot and others have seized upon the example of Omaha to demonstrate the supposed shortcomings of the American soldier. In the weeks that followed, some American commanders, including Bradley, were to be seriously worried by the performance of some infantry

units. On D-Day, there proved to be sufficient outstanding individual American soldiers and enough elite units such as the Rangers and Airborne to gain the day. Casualties on each of the Allied beaches, including Omaha, were almost exactly in proportion to the weight of unsuppressed enemy fire that the invaders met. The Americans suffered 4,649 casualties among their seaborne landing force to put ashore 55,000 men on D-Day. If the American line at midnight on June 6 was still tenuous, and fell some distance short of its planned objectives, V and VII Corps had achieved their vital strategic purposes merely by establishing themselves ashore.

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## HEROES...Cont.

the area. We were in that water five, six, seven hours trying to get out. We lost men and equipment.

"The men had to take long poles and feel their way so they wouldn't fall into deep holes and drown," said Knapp, the 4th Division's 28-year-old Protestant chaplain.

"The company I was in was detailed to go off to a bridge to relieve the paratroopers who were holding it," said Sover. "We were coming in at night, so we couldn't reconnoiter on what positions the Germans had. We walked in blind and got surrounded. That was one night, that first night, I'll never forget."

Sover's company consisted of 250 to 290 men, he recalls. "Our losses were severe. We had soldiered together for almost two years in the States before going overseas, so we had lived, slept, drank, done everything together and were so close. So when I saw my first good buddy go, I didn't know whether to holler, scream, cry, or what."

The 4th finally broke through and relieved the paratroopers the next morning.

"We landed very early in the day," Knapp recalls. "I'm sure I was one of the very first chaplains to land, if not the first."

"The thing that impressed us so terribly was that so many of the gliders had slammed into trees, and we would find a whole glider and everyone in it killed, or paratroopers in trees who had been shot while hanging there. We were shocked, we just couldn't comprehend it."

At first, Knapp and his assistant were at the front with the fighting troops, helping care for the wounded. "I stuck right with them till we were ordered to get back a bit," he said. He was awarded the Bronze Star, but won't say much about it. "Everybody did what they had to and you didn't worry about yourself."

The 4th Division was in contact with the enemy for 199 straight days.

"There was action every second of every day," Knapp said. "Artillery, tanks, bombing, small arms,

machineguns. Screaming meemies. There were always 12 of them. They were shot from round carriages holding the shells, on a machine, and we knew if one came it would be followed by 11 more and they'd all hit in about the same place. It wasn't like regular artillery, with shrapnel that would blow your leg off. These would cause terrible concussions, like 12 small tornadoes. It was horrifying.

"Although I had held quite a few funerals by the time I entered the Army, I had never seen bodies blown up and torn apart and in such terrible condition before, so it was really a shock.

"When Rick wasn't busy, I was the busiest—holding services. I remember services in quarries and basements and kitchens of houses and under the apple trees—communion out in the open. I'll never forget how the communion wafers were blowing all over.

"Later on, most of my time was spent writing letters of condolence."

The 90th Division began landing on Utah Beach June 8 and headed straight into the difficult bocage country of Normandy—farm fields of a few hundred square yards surrounded with thick, centuries-old hedges and banks separated by sunken dirt lanes, streams and rivers. Every hedgerow could become a small fortress.

Five thousand of the division's 15,000 men would become casualties during the 80 days of hedgerow fighting.

James Reid, now president of an Elmhurst firm that imports industrial equipment, was a private with the division's 400-man 344th Field Artillery. "I was 19 on D-Day," he said. It was the division's first landing.

"We were green, just a bunch of kids," added Carl Olejniczek Sr., now a retired steelworker from Portage, Ind. On D-Day, he was a 19-year-old private first class in the division's 358th Infantry Regiment.

Reid arrived on the beach in a jeep. "My job was as a driver in the Forward Observer Group, and I had a lieutenant with me. Our job

was to support the infantry with artillery fire, and we would go with the artillery to direct the cannon fire.

"On Utah Beach, things were fairly miserable. We went on in to support the 101st and 82nd Airborne, and they were having a heck of a fight. And the Germans were trying to blow us off the beach, because that was our supply line."

The guns came ashore June 9. "We set them up and began fighting hedgerow to hedgerow," Reid said. "On June 10 and 11, we were in position near Sainte-Mere-Eglise and the Luftwaffe bombed us. There were four dead and 16 wounded, the first men we had lost."

"Every field, every hedgerow, was a battlefield," Olejniczek said. "The Germans were dug in. They could see us coming. We were pigeons. I don't know how I survived."

"We had to fight our way to Hill 122," Olejniczek said. Hill 122 rose from the forest of Monte Castre, and overlooked la Haye-du-Puit at the neck of the Cherbourg peninsula. The battle there took eight days and 2,000 casualties. Olejniczek was one of them.

"Hill 122," said Olejniczek. "The Germans were on top and wouldn't let us have it. My first sergeant was killed there and his head was touching my feet. He was killed instantly when hit by an .88. I was hit in the back."

"The history of the 344th talks of bodies stacked like cordwood or killed in the foxholes by concussion," Reid said. "No trees were left in the forest."

The 90th Division went on to fight a terrible two-week battle at the Seves River, north of Periers, that cost them 3,000 more casualties and lasted until the breakout.

Almost three months later, Olejniczek would rejoin his Division and go on to win a second Purple Heart and a Bronze Star.

D-Day was minutes old when 120 American pathfinders parachuted behind enemy lines. Their job was to mark zones where the 82nd and 101st paratroopers and gliders would land behind Utah Beach.

"We were supposed to set lights up in the form of a 'T,'" said Chicago truck driver Donald Krause, then a 19-year-old pathfinder in the 82nd Airborne's 508th Regiment. "Then, about every six seconds a plane would come over and paratroopers would jump into that area."

There were to be 378 airplanes carrying parachutists and 52 gliders hauling their heavy weapons and equipment. An additional 375 troop-carrying gliders would follow.

But Krause's team, like many others, landed miles from where it was supposed to. "They opened up with that flak and all we wanted to do was get out of that plane!" Krause said. Planes were forced off course and only 38 pathfinders landed on target.

"I landed at 3 a.m.," said Francis Pletsch, then a 21-year-old paratrooper, also in the 508th Regiment. Pletsch, a retired International Harvester worker from Bridgeport and a good friend of Krause, came down about six miles from his drop zone.

"There was a lot of flak," he agreed. "When your plane gets hit it's like you were standing up, and someone hit you with a big board underneath your feet. Our plane was hit by flak that night."

"The planes had to come in low, somewhere around 500 feet," Pletsch continued. "I had about 90 to 100 pounds in equipment."

Krause landed safely in an open field among the hedgerows. He used a toy tin cricket to find his fellow paratroopers who'd landed nearby. "You'd give two clicks and the other guy would give two clicks back," he said. After a day or two, he was able to find his unit.

"I landed in the water," Pletsch said. The Germans had opened dikes along rivers and canals to flood the low-lying land behind Utah Beach. "A lot of boys drowned."

# The women they married

By Michael Cordts

**M**ore than 60,000 U.S. soldiers brought home more than just memories from England. They came home with war brides.

One of them was Joyce Rayner, a 19-year-old clerk at the British Air Ministry. And she met her American husband-to-be in a scenario worthy of Hollywood.

As her husband of 38 years, private investigator John Hanlon of Zion, remembers it:

"The last time I got hit, I was in military hospitals in Belgium, then France and then in North Nimms, England. After I was doing better, I got a pass to go into London. There was an air raid, as usual, and I started to head to some sandbags.

"But then I decided to head for the tube (subway). It's the oldest in the world and 90-feet deep, a good place to be in an air raid. This girl cut in front of me as I started down the steps.

"I ran into her, got to know her, and we've been married 38 years."

Did the American GIs in England deserve their reputation as womanizers and raucous partiers?

"Well, I was young and not thinking about it too much," Joyce said. "Not all the Americans over there acted silly. Others were quite serious, but I'm not talking about my husband, obviously."

Hanlon was 26 when he arrived in England and he was no choir boy.

He had little formal education when he left Chicago to travel the world. When war broke out, he bounced from unit to unit until he found a home with the 2nd Ranger Battalion.

"In the Rangers, you had to be able to take care of

yourself without being told what to do every step of the way," he said. "I had found a home."

Hanlon was wounded five times, twice in the famous D-Day assault of Pointe-du-Hoc, steep cliffs where German artillery positions overlooked two invasion beaches.

The wound that took him to the subway rendezvous came on Dec. 10, 1944, the day before the Battle of the Bulge, when his motorcycle struck a land mine.

The Hanlons returned to Zion after the war, gradually overcoming the stiff opposition to their marriage by her parents. He opened a private detective agency, the first in Lake County, which he still operates.

They had seven children and, not surprisingly, their two oldest sons are career Air Force.

Eric, 38, is a staff sergeant stationed in California. The Hanlons will visit Mark, 32, also a staff sergeant, in Aviano, Italy, when they return to Europe for D-Day ceremonies this week.

Their other children are Donnalee, 34; Stephen, 25, employed at Anaconda Brass in Kenosha, Wis.; Valerie, who is married and lives in Kenosha; Trudilyn, 19, who works at Reliance Paint in Zion, and Cherylann, 18, a senior at Zion Benton High School.

The oldest boys were not pushed toward a military career, Joyce said. But her husband has maintained close friendships with survivors of the assault and the family attends battalion reunions. (For more on "Cowboy" Hanlon, see Page 8 of this section.)

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Not everyone shared their D-Day experiences with their spouse. Take Joy

and Francis Pletsch of Bridgeport.

Joy said she knew her husband of 37 years had been a paratrooper in World War II, but didn't know until 10 years ago he had one of D-Day's most harrowing missions.

"He just never talked about anything that happened over there until his regiment started having reunions," she said.

Francis was in the 82nd Airborne's 508th Regiment, and was part of an advance team of Pathfinders who parachuted into France to mark drop zones for the 18,000 paratroopers to follow.

The couple returned to Normandy 10 years ago, and Joy soon learned of the reverence the French have for the paratroopers.

"They couldn't do enough for us," she remembers. "The wife of the late mayor of Ste.-Mere-Eglise came up to me and said, 'Don't ever say anything bad about your husband. He is a hero.'"

Elements of the 82nd by mistake landed in the square of the village, with scores being killed as they hung by their parachutes from trees and buildings. It became the first French village to be liberated.

The late mayor's wife who gave the advice was Simone Alexandre Renaud, who authored *The Sky Devils*, a book detailing St.-Mere-Eglise's role in the airborne assault.

The Pletsches met in 1947 and have three children: Roy, 35, a grammar school teacher; Diane, 31, an office worker, and Jimmy, 28, a production manager at a food products firm. Francis recently retired from International Harvester.

• • •

And if you're a late-night TV buff, you must have seen one of the war movies where the wounded GI ends up with the nurse. Well, it happened.

As Doris Sover of the North Side remembers it:

"I was a 21-year-old nurse at the Percy Jones Army Hospital in Battle Creek, Mich. I probably would never have noticed him, but a girlfriend I went through high school and nursing school with had met him and kept talking about him.

"She said they were going to go out when he was better. Well, she got transferred off the floor, I got transferred on, and she never got the chance to go out with him."

Her husband, Richard, recently retired from People's Gas Co. When he met his future wife, the Utah Beach survivor was bedridden with a ruptured disk and a serious infection after a near miss by an artillery shell.

They had five children, and all but one has either served in the military or is associated with medicine:

James, 34, married a nurse, served in the Navy during Vietnam and is now general manager of Threardite Screw Products in Chicago; Kathleen Gardner, 32, is a nurse in Mayfield, Ky.; Christine Willard, 30, is a radiation therapist at St. Francis Hospital, Evanston; Eric, 28, is a Navy doctor who will marry a nurse this summer, and Robert, 24, is a quality control manager for Subot Tool Co., Palatine, who married a school-teacher.

"All the children are very patriotic and feel a strong sense of duty to their country," Doris said. "I feel that is their father's influence. He is active in the VFW and American Legion."

There was one hitch in the soldier-meets-nurse story. It seems the nurse was an officer and the soldier an enlisted man—and their dating was strictly against regulations.

"I had four brothers in the service, all enlisted men. So I didn't mind," she said. "We just had to sneak out of town for a date."

# 'Dear Mrs. De Witt: Your son's loss was a shock'

*Forty years ago, a Naperville resident had to perform a dreaded duty—write to the mother of a fallen comrade in battle.*

**By Michael Cordts**

It is dreaded duty in every war. There are no easy words when a mother asks how her soldier son died.

This time it was Lionel DeWitt, from Owosso, Mich. The letter writer was Al Rubin, an aggressive and charmed young lieutenant from Naperville.

The killing ground was France in June, 1944.

*Dear Mrs. De Witt:*

*He came to Ft. Meade shortly after I did, so we really "grew up" together in this unit. He was in my platoon through recruit training, and also after we had moved to the desert.... Please believe me, his loss was a shock to me also, as it was to the rest of the men of the troop.*

Forty years later, as Rubin holds a copy of the letter, the chaos and blood and luck that were D-Day come marching back.

Rubin, who now owns Colonial Caterers in Naperville, was a pre-med student at the University of Illinois when world war came. When it was time to storm Hitler's European fortress, he was 23, a lieutenant in the 4th Calvary reconnaissance squadron known as the "Fightin' Fourth."

He had never been in combat. Neither had any of the 131 other soldiers who along with Rubin would be the first American ground troops to invade French soil.

Their objective would be the tiny Isles of St. Mar-

couf, 6,000 yards off Utah Beach, the code name for one of five invasion beach-heads.

What happened on the rocky isles was termed by author Cornelius Ryan, whose *The Longest Day* remains the best reconstruction of the invasion, "a D-Day footnote, a bitter and useless victory."

*I must admit, I took a liking to Lionel from the start. He impressed me as a person of sterling character, and he was always pleasant and smiling. I realize I don't have to tell you all of these things, as you know much better than I, as well as others recognized these facts. I considered him not only a soldier, but a friend.*

The islands had somehow been overlooked in the planning of the largest invasion force in history. When reconnaissance photos only days before the invasion showed activity, an assault was hurriedly prepared in fear anti-aircraft batteries or heavy guns were being installed.

In the darkness two hours before 154,000 men would storm the mainland beaches, the 4th Calvary charged from the surf onto St. Marcouf. The entire force ran straight into a mine field.

The buried charges were dreaded "S mines" filled with ball bearings. When tripped, the mine is propelled out of the ground to waist height before exploding.

Rubin led a 30-man platoon up the beach as at least seven mines exploded, and remembers one soldier "lying on the ground spitting up ball bearings."

Two of his men were seriously wounded and were evacuated to a hospital in England where Rubin's sister, Gish, was a Red Cross worker. One of the men, delirious from his wounds, told Gish that Rubin had been killed in a mine explosion.

It would be three weeks

before she knew any different.

*Mrs. De Witt, Lionel was taken by an enemy bullet. He did not suffer, as I know, it took him immediately. Our medical detachment took him away to an American Cemetery for burial. I am, at the present, not sure of the name of the town near which the cemetery is located. I shall find the name of the town, and write you again as soon as I find out what it is.*

When it was all over, 19 of the 132 soldiers who stormed the islands were killed or wounded. They found no enemy anti-aircraft gun emplacements, no howitzers to threaten the approaching armada.

In fact, the islands were deserted.

"What we ended up with was a front-row seat for the landings on Utah," said Rubin. "The battleship Nevada, which had been damaged at Pearl Harbor, was right off the islands when it opened up. I'll never forget it. The big shells sounded like freight cars as they came over."

*Your offer of the magazines is positively a noble and generous gesture on your part. It certainly indicated the faith you must have and, I know, need to sustain you, as you say.*

In the 11 months from D-Day to the German surrender, Rubin was wounded three times: shrapnel in the back of the right leg in July; a rifle shot through the upper right arm in August; a spent rifle bullet in the right shin in May, 1945.

But he came away uninjured in his closest call only days after D-Day. Ironically, it was a map case taken from a dead German soldier that he credits with stopping grenade fragments.

At 5 p.m. on July 17, 1944, near Villebaudon, France, Rubin led an assault against a cluster of fortified buildings.

The platoon was soon pinned down by heavy ma-

chinegun fire. Rubin ran up and down the stalled assault line, assigning targets, and then led a second charge. Three Germans were killed, seven wounded, 11 captured and 35 fled.

For "leadership" and "initiative" and "disregarding the fact he was an easy target for enemy fire," the Army awarded Rubin the Silver Star.

*I can speak for myself, the Troop Commander, the other officers, and men that the receipt of the magazines would be a fine tribute to your son, and would be deeply appreciated.*

The grandson of Russian Jews, Rubin said there were rumors but no solid proof of the Holocaust among the GIs.

He still shakes his head over the picture he took from a captured German soldier in Normandy. It was of huge ovens at a concentration camp.

"Even with the picture, it still didn't register. It still didn't strike home what they were doing," he said. "We couldn't imagine the Germans were murdering them."

When it was all over, Rubin returned to Naperville and opened a restaurant. He named it "Rafter House" after a slain lieutenant who often spoke of his desire to build a house with rafters.

And six days before Christmas 1949, Rubin received a final letter from Theron and Edna DeWitt.

*Dear Friend,*

*I believe that my wife has already written to you telling of Lionel's remains having been sent home a year ago. That seemed to help a lot to heal the misery of having lost him. Seems a lot better to have him here in our own lot.*

The enclosed Christmas card showed a family lugging a Christmas tree from a forest. It was entitled "Homeward Bound."

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

3 June 1984

"D-Day Special" Pg. 11

## GOING BACK

Four D-Day veterans going back to Normandy for the anniversary ceremonies reminisce.

**ALBERT STIRN**, Chicago, age 68  
Occupation: Retired carpenter  
Company: 713th Military Battalion  
Position: Military policeman, corporal

"We were in charge of the Red Ball Highway, the advanced communications and traffic. Our unit was supposed to land on D-12, that was 12 days after the invasion, but we couldn't get across because the waters were too rough.... We finally made it on July 7. I guess we were feeling fear. We weren't kids, and we had a general idea of what was going on.... When we did land, it was terrible, artillery flying all over and schrapnel. All we could do everytime we heard the artillery going off was dig in an inch deeper.... They told us we would probably suffer two-thirds casualties in our unit [about 750 men], but we were very fortunate because we didn't lose anyone. They were amazed...."



**NEIL HOLTZ**, Norridge, 59  
Occupation: Construction estimator  
Company: 79th Division  
Position: Infantryman

"We knew at least a month before that it was bound to happen sooner or later, but we didn't know when. We landed on June 10 on Utah Beach. We didn't encounter any gunfire the first day, it was mostly sniper fire. What I remember mostly the first day is we got off the boat and they let us down and took us into Utah Beach. The only thing that got wet was our feet. I can remember seeing a lot of landmines and little tractors about five or six feet long and they were filled with explosives."



**MARTIN O'MALLEY**, Chicago, 65  
Occupation: Retired  
Company: 79th Division  
Position: Infantryman

"We came in a few days after June 6. I knew it was the start of the end. I don't think I realized the significance. It was just something that was going on. That was the biggest and only battle I was in, thank God.... I'm going back [for the commemorative ceremonies] because you like to see where you went through."



**THOMAS H. MAHER**, Tinley Park, 60

Occupation: fork truck mechanic  
Company: 462nd Automatic Weapons Battalion, 2nd Infantry  
Position: Artillery range setter

"We went in a few days after the assault, thank God. When we were going over, I remember thinking how my Mom had to sign for me to get in the Army and I was thinking 'why did she ever sign.' We landed in Scotland in November, 1943, and trained around the British Isles.... When we landed and when I saw the dead in the water, I started crying. You're thinking 'this is it.' I couldn't believe the catastrophe and how we actually made it. There were a lot of dead on both sides.... I lost a few friends. They're buried in two different cemeteries [in France] and I stop at both. It's the least I can do."



U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT  
4 June 1984 Pg. 20

France's abrupt rejection of a West German request to participate in D-Day ceremonies at beaches in Normandy was a disappointment to Reagan. The President, who was not asked for his view, felt that a German presence would have underlined Western unity—but the French, who still harbor ill feelings, felt that German participation would be inappropriate.



# The Desert Fox's last battle

By Philip Williams

*Stuttgart, West Germany*  
**R**ommel picked up the regulation black telephone at 7:30 a.m. on June 6, 1944, in his study near the bedrooms in his modest family home. His 15-year-old son, Manfred, sat by his side.

Rommel's bronzed face was impassive as his chief of staff in Normandy, Hans Speidel, read the first sketchy reports of Allied landings. Speidel clearly did not believe they were true.

Erwin Rommel knew that if they were true, they spelled the end of the 11-year-old Nazi Third Reich that Adolf Hitler had promised would stand the ravages of 1,000 years.

Forty years later, Manfred Rommel remembers clearly how he and his father, then commander of Hitler's Channel defenses, quietly debated the appalling ramifications of Speidel's news. "He didn't go white. He didn't gasp. He was a mathematician of the odds," Manfred said.

At 10 a.m., the field marshal the world knew as the Desert Fox for his exploits in north Africa became impatient. He called back, only to learn a nightmare finally was reality. The Allies were

ashore.

"His driver was already called," Manfred said. "In half an hour he was gone in a black Horch convertible. When I saw my father again, he said the war was finished, bar the shouting."

For Rommel, the long drive back to France from Herrlingen, near Stuttgart, must have lasted an eternity. Two days before, he had left his troops on the French coast to celebrate his wife's birthday at home, calmed by navy and meteorological reports that adverse tides and bad weather made an Allied landing "impossible" for 14 days.

For months he had streaked up and down the coast from Holland to the Bay of Biscay, bullying for better fixed defenses to back his plan to throw the invading Allies back into the sea before they could fix a bridgehead.

But the Germans were battling the advancing Red Army on their crumbling Eastern Front and the Eastern Front always got priority for war supplies.

Rommel asked for 100 million land mines but got a scant 6 million. Massive bunker-building programs never rose higher than the foundations.

Worse, neither the general

staff around Hitler nor Rommel's nominal superior in the West accepted Rommel's key thesis. They preferred a mobile defense using armored reserves held away from the coast.

But Rommel believed the total superiority of the Allies made this approach nonsense, and he argued the German forces would be beaten badly by fighter planes before they could be committed. Events proved him correct.

His repeated demands for seven Panzer tank divisions to be pulled close up to the beaches were junked. Five of those divisions stayed 156 miles from where they eventually were needed.

"The result was that the defense of the coast was a shabby compromise," said Manfred, now 55 and mayor of Stuttgart.

When Rommel arrived in Normandy at 5 p.m. June 6, the Allies already were ashore in force. He hoped they might stumble over supply problems, but the next morning he saw the artificial harbors the Allies had stationed off the beaches. They eliminated many difficulties.

"That was a terrible shock—a complete surprise," Manfred said.

Battling universal reluctance to commit the Panzer reserves, Rommel finally obtained permission to throw them against the invaders.

It was too little, too late.

He contained the enemy for a time, but a breakout from the beachheads into open country was inevitable.

He begged Hitler to consider the political consequences of collapse in France as the Germans reeled before bitter Soviet determination in the east.

"The troops are fighting everywhere with heroic bravery, but this unequal struggle is nearing its end," Rommel reported. "It is necessary to draw conclusions from this situation."

Hitler refused and began issuing a stream of Stalin-grad-style orders for "no retreat." Rommel, already drawn into the growing circle of conspirators plotting Hitler's downfall, secretly passed them word that the Western Front could be held only three weeks.

"He came home to visit Hitler and swore and cursed. He said Hitler had the military competence of a sergeant. He told me, 'He is going to destroy us all. Is he going to wait until the Russians are in Berlin?'" Manfred recalled.

*United Press International*

## For German Foot Soldiers, Barrage of Bombs Came Suddenly, Out of Nowhere

By HERBERT ARNOLD

**M**y father was a thoroughly civilian, anti-militaristic German who actively disliked the idea of military service, despised and quarreled with his brother-in-law, a highly decorated German war hero, and managed to stay out of the army until 1943, late in the war for any German in his mid-30s.

Like most Germans of his age, he did not want a war, having seen the effects of World War I. Like

*Herbert Arnold is chairman of the German department at Wesleyan University.*

most, he was, however, supportive of what he saw as a regaining of national stature by Germany after the Treaty of Versailles. He was neither pro nor actively anti-Nazi, but like all German men, he was subject to the rigorous laws governing induction into the armed services.

Until he joined the army, he worked as an office manager in a firm distributing coal and oil, a position that was regarded as important for the war effort once rationing began. He had been deferred for four years because of a medical problem, but as the war began to take its tolls, the manpower shortage was such that the army decided to provide the corrective surgery that would render him fit to serve in the infantry.

After basic training and a short stint with an anti-tank unit, he was stationed in Normandy — part of the much-touted Atlantic defense of Fortress Europe, commanded by the legendary Desert Fox himself, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. German newsreels proudly displayed the impregnable

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GERMAN SOLDIERS...Continued

bunkers of the Atlantic Wall and the propaganda unit's cameras swept across the beaches covered with spikes of steel, called Rommel's Asparagus.

Without warning — or so it seemed to the foot soldiers on the German side — an enormous, never-ending barrage of bombs and grenades of all sizes descended upon them on June 6, 1944.

Total confusion reigned. There was no one to give any orders, no one knew where the enemy came from, no one could even reach the other members of his unit. The bunker in which my father had found shelter together with a young boy of 18 and an older veteran shook from the hits scored directly on it or nearby.

During a temporary lull, the three ventured outside only to find the unit commander dead and two other comrades badly mangled in a foxhole. A new barrage made them scurry for shelter again and when they re-emerged, the foxhole had disappeared, together with the wounded men.

They found a machine gun and began firing in the general direction of the beach, although they could see very little. The last thing my father remembers was a flash and something hitting him in the face and on his back.

He came to in a small foxhole. He was in severe pain and could not move or speak. Shrapnel had smashed his lower jaw in several places, while other pieces of metal had pierced his back and his right leg — the leg the German government had paid so much to have fixed so he could be sent off to Normandy.

His captors turned out to be Americans — young, and very cautious. Indeed, my father insisted later, "They were more afraid of us lying there than we were of them. Their guns were shaking in their hands." He was taken prisoner, moved to the beach and put on a ship carrying Allied wounded. He did not see another German anywhere.

He was taken first to England, where he was given a tube-feeding, and later to Scotland, where a team of captured German doctors was supposed to operate on him. But when he arrived at his destination, his doctors had been sent to the United States and he was himself put on the next U.S. ship leaving from the north of England in a convoy.

At this point in his narrative my father would pause and say: "And that was the first time I had time enough to be scared because they were saying the German U-boats were attacking the convoy. Wouldn't it have been something to survive that day on the beach and then be killed by your own submarine? But that's war, I guess."

In the United States he was operated on and rehabilitated. He lived out the rest of the war in relative comfort in a hospital camp in Tennessee. In 1946 he was sent back to Germany.

My father's D-Day had been quite different from ours, of course. We had been fed the official propaganda about an abortive landing, German reserves that would fling the enemy back into the sea,

and the promise of a secret weapon The Führer had kept for such an occasion.

But there was neither miracle weapon nor reserves once the Allies had broken out of their beachheads and Gen. George S. Patton had begun to turn the fight for the beaches into one of mobile sweeps with motorized units. Less than a year later Germany surrendered and the historians began their work of assessing D-Day and its significance.

At home in Marienbad, my mother and I were still anxiously waiting news from my father. He had left in the fall of 1943, and we thought he had been sent to northern France, but any specific mention of location had been censored in his letters home. Since June 1944, there had been no letters and no word.

My mother was worried, but did not say so to me, who, at the age of 9, was interested mainly in airplanes and German war heroes. (My favorite was air force flyer Adolf Galland, who was shot down, lost a leg, had a new leg made and flew again.)

The first doubts I heard came from an uncle, who had just seen the bombed-out cities of western Germany and insisted that the war was over. I still remember him calling Hitler a criminal and the frantic attempts of my other relatives to hush him up before somebody would hear and report him for his defeatist remarks which, as we all knew, were punishable by death.

In May 1945, the advance columns of Patton reached Marienbad and the war was officially over. In the summer of that year, an International Red Cross card arrived, informing us only that my father was a POW and alive.

As agreed upon at Yalta, the whole area around Marienbad, called the Egerland, became part of Czechoslovakia. Our property was expropriated by the newly formed Czech government. My mother and I were interned and shipped to West Germany by cattle train, to begin a new life as refugees, part of the mass movement of Germans from Eastern Europe as agreed upon among the Allied powers.

It was in West Germany, in 1946, from a small village south of Augsburg, Bavaria, that my mother and I went to pick up my father from a hospital in northern Germany when he returned with an Allied transport. And it was in West Germany that our small family reunited and resided from 1946 on.

My parents stayed in West Germany until their deaths. I came to the United States, originally as an American Field Service high school exchange student,

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

D-Day — June 6, 1944

# The Battles on Omaha and Utah Beaches

## An Airborne American Commander Reflects On The Trials and Triumphs

By MAXWELL D. TAYLOR

**N**owadays Greenham Common in Berkshire is known as the site of demonstrations against the installation of U.S. missiles. In 1944, during the preparations for D-Day, it was the location of the headquarters of my command, the 101st Airborne Division, and the site of an important airfield.

Greenham Common acquired considerable fame from Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's visit to the division to dine at our headquarters and to talk with departing soldiers. When we had taken off, he went to the roof of our headquarters to watch the formation of the great airborne armada, bearing 13,000 parachutists of two airborne divisions, the 82nd and ours, that were to serve as the spearhead of the Allied invasion.

The 101st division had prepared for months for D-Day by taking part in exercises simulating the conditions of meeting with seaborne troops on Utah Beach. I also held night rehearsals of our drop into Normandy, hoping to find better ways to avoid the confusion expected there. Dissatisfied with our ability to distinguish friend from foe in the dark, at the 11th hour I obtained emergency shipment of several thousand toy crickets to provide each para-

*Maxwell D. Taylor was Army chief of staff from 1955 to 1959 and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1962 to 1964. He wrote this article for The Washington Post.*

chutist with an identifying sound. I was thankful for them.

Worrisome things occurred as D-Day drew near. A book titled "Paratroopers" by a Czechoslovak captain appeared in London bookstores. It was essentially an analysis of German airborne operations earlier in the war, followed by speculation as to how the Allies might use airborne troops in an invasion of Europe. It included a map showing how our parachute troops might land on the Cherbourg peninsula and indicated several possible drop zones, some of which we had already selected. All we could do was hope that if members of the German general staff had the book, they would not take it seriously.

Causing greater concern was the appearance in our air photographs of heavy poles planted irregularly in Norman fields with the purpose of impeding airborne operations. We pored over these pictures nightly, and thought that by studying the irregular pattern of the poles, we might learn how the enemy expected us to land and modify our plans accordingly. But we never found a pattern that suggested a German plan of defense.

By May 28 all the units of the division had been sealed up in their departure areas, which extended over much of Wales and southern England. At the same time, I started my rounds for a final talk with my men. I wanted to be sure that each person knew where, when and why he was going and, in the case of parachutists, what to do if badly scattered in the night jump.

The order given them was: "If on landing you don't find yourself in the right place, join our men, nearest you and help them take their objective."

When Ike finished his talks with the troops at Greenham Common, he wished me good luck for the mission and departed for his observation post at division headquarters. With the help of the jump master of my plane, I was buckled into my parachute harness and loaded with the paraphernalia a

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GERMAN SOLDIERS...Cont.  
and later to teach at Wesleyan University.

Any German, looking back on World War II and knowing what we do know now, is in an irresolvable moral and emotional bind. Clearly Hitler had to be defeated and Nazism had to be wiped out, but that could be achieved only by the defeat and destruction of Germany and the death and maiming of many Germans. At the time, opposition to the Nazi regime might mean death at the hands of the Nazis; and support of the regime, death at the front.

Being patriotic in a genuine sense meant being against the Germany Hitler had built, thus forcing Germans into a position of divided loyalty. Germans could not be loyal to the idea of human rights and freedom and at the same time try to be loyal to the country they lived in. On D-Day any "good" German had to rejoice in the Allied success, even though it meant suffering and death for many of his countrymen.

Today, the rows of graves in Normandy in neatly kept cemeteries do not differentiate between nationalities and ideologies, political goals and military glory. Interred in them lie the bodies of

German soldiers and of Americans and of volunteers from other countries, who fought on both sides. The graves are a simple and stark reminder that the cost of tyranny and freedom is very high. That is the somber message of D-Day.

Its ironic and private message for the boy from Marienbad is that then and there his father, by being wounded, was saved from being killed, and his homeland, by being defeated, was saved from losing its soul to the greatest tyranny of our century. The German defeat on D-Day was a blessing both private and national.

# D-Day Memories Still Vivid After 40 Years

## Two Area Veterans Recall June 6, 1944

By WILLIAM COCKERHAM  
*Courant Staff Writer*

The voice of Nazi propagandist "Axis Sally" was hard for Navy coxswain Martin Higgins to forget that morning of June 6, 1944.

The anonymous woman with the sexy voice had been warning American and British troops for months that Adolf Hitler's Normandy beach-front defenses were impenetrable.

"I really thought I was going to get killed," Higgins said of his World War II experience. "With all that 'Atlantic Wall' propaganda we were hearing on the radio, I thought I was going to die on the beach."

Higgins, of Glastonbury, was only 19 when about 156,000 Allied troops sprung from the sea and air onto the coast and hedgerowed fields of Normandy, France, on that D-Day 40 years ago, to smash the so-called Atlantic Wall.

He was at the helm of an LCT landing craft, carrying soldiers and half-track vehicles of the Army's 29th Infantry Division. Their destination was a stretch of Normandy, code-named Omaha Beach, where about 3,000 American soldiers from the 29th and 1st divisions would be killed or wounded.

Somewhere near Higgins' landing craft out in the English Channel, Platoon Sgt. Clayton Booth of Wareham, Mass., was also heading for Omaha Beach. Booth, then 26, was part of the 29th's Cavalry Reconnaissance Group. He was in a larger landing craft, an LST, which was designed to return the wounded to England after unloading its cargo of soldiers and equipment.

"You could hear a lot of small arms fire. There were dead and wounded lying on the beach. My first thought was that I couldn't swim. I'm still a lousy swimmer. But I had an intuition that if I made it to dry land I would survive," said Booth, who now is retired.

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### BATTLES...Continued

parachutist takes into combat — weapons, ammunition, emergency parachute, first-aid pack, water, rations, jump knife, etc. I climbed aboard, and at 11 p.m. the plane rolled down the runway to its appointed place among the 800 transport planes that were to carry the airborne divisions to Normandy.

The air distance from Greenham Common to our destination was about 130 miles, but it took nearly four hours for us to get there. Once aloft in the armada, our plane joined with the others in circling over England until it was our turn to cross the channel. For the trip, our plane and those near it assumed a tight V formation, flying low over the water to avoid the German radar.

Although the crossing was uneventful, as we approached landfall on the Cherbourg peninsula, I saw an unexpected gray wall of fog that we would have to penetrate to get to our jump zone. The fog, very thick as we entered it, caused many pilots to widen their formations to avoid collisions. In so doing, they lost their directions. But our plane broke out of the fog without difficulty and brought us to the battle zone.

Our jump master lined us up in the aisle of the plane. I was at the door pressed against his back when the green light of the pilot signaled "jump" and out we went.

The plane was flying low at about 500 feet to avoid ground fire and to allow us parachutists to land more or less together. But my chute opened with a jerk and I floated toward the top of a tall tree. I made every effort to avoid the branches and succeeded in landing inside a small field enclosed by a hedgerow.

I cut away my parachute and equipment with my jump knife, drew and cocked my pistol, readied my identification cricket and moved cautiously toward a nearby gate. I suddenly heard the welcome sound of a cricket. I responded in kind and jumped around the gate, where, in the moonlight, stood a parachute infantryman, bareheaded but with his rifle ready and the bayonet fixed. We slapped backs reciprocally and proceeded in silence to look for our misplaced division.

We found parts of it in small groups dispersed among the hedgerows — about 90 men by daylight. But where were we? I recognized the church stee-

ple of Ste. Marie du Mont to our northeast, in formation that indicated we were not far from the southern end of Utah Beach, a major objective of the division for which no visible unit appeared to be responsible at the moment.

Deciding to make this objective our own, we formed a ragtag column and took off for the coast town of Pouppeville. There we could expect to meet the lead forces of the 4th Infantry Division.

The Germans caused us little trouble during most of our march to the beach, so we could admire the imposing sight of the amphibious landings taking place both at Utah and Omaha beaches. Large formations of bombers were attacking targets behind Omaha while naval guns seemed to be firing on just about anything everywhere. I spent much of the morning ducking their screaming shells, many of which, after ricocheting in front of us, seemed to pass overhead just above our helmets.

As we drew near to Pouppeville, we had a brisk fight with a considerable number of Germans who had accumulated in the vicinity. For the most part they were quite happy to surrender, and we rounded them up with few losses.

As the firing died down at Pouppeville, it began anew to the north as elements of the 4th Division started to move inland from the beach. To avoid any collision of our troops with theirs, I sent a small patrol to meet and guide them to Pouppeville. It was about noon when their advance guard appeared to the cheers of our men, who well understood the importance of this juncture.

I obtained the use of a radio belonging to the 4th Division to inform Gen. Omar N. Bradley at Army headquarters of the contact just made and the absence of enemy resistance along Utah Beach. Thus ended our D-Day spearhead role, but not our part in the continuing battle.

From D-Day-plus-1 on, as a light infantry division, we were engaged in many operations, including the protection of the rear of our divisions moving north on Cherbourg; a forced crossing of the Douve River followed by the occupation of Carentan, a key town to the south; and the repulse of a heavy panzer counterattack aimed at retaking Carentan in the period from June 11 to 13.

Thereafter things were quiet for us until mid-July, when we were ordered

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# Americans Will Flock to Europe in Record Numbers This Summer

By **FREDERICK M. WINSHIP**  
*United Press International*

**A**MSTERDAM — Americans are expected to flock to Europe this summer in record numbers to enjoy an unprecedented variety of summer festivals and celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Hitler-occupied Europe.

Holland has declared the entire country a summer festival and most of its neighbors could do the same. From Helsinki to Belgrade, visitors will hear the sound of music, watch ballet and films, sample theater, savor food and wines, all in the name of culture and just plain fun.

On the historical side, Wednesday is the anniversary of D-Day 1944, and throughout the summer there will be commemorative observances of the Allied landing and subsequent sweep

across the Continent. Many American World War II veterans are planning to return — with their families — to the cities and villages along the invasion route.

The major reason for new American invasion, which travel agents in the U.S. say will represent a 15 to 20 percent gain over 1983, is that many Americans have put off trips to Europe for the past few years because of the economy.

Now that the economy has improved and the dollar is king in the world currency market, nothing will stop footloose, travel-hungry Yanks, many of whom can afford those \$100-a-day all-expense package tours for the first time since the recession began in 1980.

The Dutch are not the only Europeans making an extra pitch for a wedge of the tourist dollar. Eastern European nations including Poland, Czechoslova-

kia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have gotten their act together with a summer-long program of tourist events designed to boost the number of U.S. tourists by 20 percent to 25 percent.

Amsterdam — which ranks with Paris, London and Rome as one of the Continent's most attractive cities — is the festival capital of Europe, starting with National Barrel Organ Day, which is today, and continuing through the Harvest Fruit Pageant in September. Scores of music and sports events and art and crafts exhibitions are scheduled in towns and cities around The Netherlands, none of them more than a few hours from City of Canals.

memorations are being held throughout the year. Many towns are observing their individual lib-

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## FORECASTER...Continued

Society commemoration of the D-Day forecasting at Fort Ord, Calif., last month.

On June 2, with the forecasts suggesting the assault could be launched, the Allied ships began to sail toward France. But a day later forecasters concluded the weather of June 5 — then scheduled as D-Day — probably would be unsuitable for the assault. U.S. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied forces, ordered the troops to stop and await further word.

"If they had gone ahead on the 5th, they would have been in real trouble," Robinson said. "The situation was low clouds, rain and strong onshore winds with much higher seas than anything they had operated in."

No sooner had the decision been made to hold the invasion than the forecasters began to get a clearer picture of the weather patterns.

"It did pretty soon appear that there was going to be a chance on the 6th of June," Robinson said. "It wouldn't be anything like such good weather as they had been asking for, but there would be a short interval, covering most of the 6th of June, in which the wind would be within the limits we had been given, though only just. And the cloud would be sufficiently broken, but only just."

"All the generals had to do at that point was listen to the weath-

erman, decide whether or not they could trust him and then make the horrible decision to go or not to go in very marginal conditions."

Also, there were only two brief periods in June, one of them June 5 or 6 and the other later in the month, when the landing parties could have the advantage of a low tide at dawn.

Late on June 4, Eisenhower and the other commanders decided to launch the invasion two days later.

The forecast, which called for moderate winds and clouds, proved reasonably accurate. "The weather was very mixed. You get completely different descriptions of the exact weather from the people there. The wind was a little stronger than we had forecast ... and the cloud was very variable, some had perfect weather, some more cloud," Robinson said.

The wind increased throughout the day, as soldiers came ashore on the French coast. "By the evening, it was probably strong enough to have made the assault very, very tricky. But it was right, as forecast, in the morning," he said.

Compounding the vagaries of the weather was the forecasting organization itself. Three forecast centers — representing the U.S. Army and Air Force, the

British navy and British civilian forecasting — each prepared a forecast.

Each day the three centers conferred by telephone with a three-member group at the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Bushy Park, about 10 miles west of London. There a composite forecast was prepared, with Robinson helping to fashion that forecast.

The three centers often differed in their forecasts, and getting all three centers to agree proved increasingly difficult.

Donald N. Yates, a retired Air Force lieutenant general who lives in Cocoa Beach, Fla., was one of the three officials overseeing the forecasting at headquarters.

"For a future operation," he said last week, "I would hope that we could assemble a team of forecasters that would work together in a unit and let that unit do the forecasting, rather than attempt to pull three forecasts together from a telephone conference. That is the hard way to do it. We got away with it, but that is the hard way to do it."

Robinson, a squadron leader at Allied headquarters, was demobilized at the end of the war and began a career in meteorological research.

"I've never done another forecast since," he said.

## EUROPE...Continued

eration days. And the D-Day beaches themselves — already one of the biggest tourist destinations in France — expect an enormous number of American visitors throughout this 40th anniversary year.

Many of them will be veterans of the D-Day landings making their first — and perhaps their last — repeat visit here. They are growing older, these men who waded ashore that fateful day, and time is running short.

Time not only ran short but stopped completely for thousands of American soldiers on D-Day. The U.S. First Army alone lost more than 6,000 men, most of them at Omaha Beach, in the first 24 hours. Some units lost more than half their complements.

When you visit Omaha Beach, you understand instantly why the landings were so costly. The Germans atop the bluff overlooking the beach were in a commanding position. Firing on the Americans "was like shooting ducks," said one Caen resident.

Many of those killed on D-Day lie in graves at the Normandy American Cemetery at Colleville sur Mer, which Reagan will visit. Here, on a gentle slope overlooking Omaha Beach, are buried 9,386 American GIs, from every state in the union and of every rank from private to general. Each grave is marked with a marble cross or star of David set in precisely aligned rows — hundreds and hundreds of rows.

It is a place of quiet repose and great dignity. There is a monument and a chapel, but it is the stark simplicity of those endless rows of gravestones that brings home the enormity of the invasion's death toll — and personalizes the war in a way nothing else can. Perhaps that is why the cemetery draws 1,200,000 visitors every year.

One of those visitors is Marvin Helgren, who was among the first to land at Omaha Beach on D-Day. A Navy specialist, Helgren came ashore before dawn, ahead of the infantrymen, to cut the barbed-wire entanglements. He was 19 and unarmed except for his wire-cutters.

Now, on his first visit back to Normandy, was he going to look for the place where he came ashore?

"No, I think not. I don't want to

remember," said Helgren.

That kind of reaction — a resistance to reliving so traumatic an experience — is not uncommon among D-Day veterans, according to Joseph P. Rivers, superintendent of the 170-acre cemetery. "Many find coming back a very difficult experience," he said.

You don't have to be a veteran, however, to feel emotion at the Pointe du Hoc, at the tip of Omaha Beach. Of all the beach sites, this surely is the one that brings home most devastatingly the cruelty of war and the gallantry of the men who fought it.

Here, on a strategically situated tongue of rock, the Germans reportedly had mounted several 155mm guns with a 25,000-foot range. They had to be eliminated to ensure success of the invasion. That assignment was given to a company of Rangers under Lt. Col. James Rudder.

Standing on a cliff that overlooks jagged rocks the Americans had to scale, one shudders at the thought of the fire the Rangers faced from the entrenched Germans. But somehow, using grappling hooks in an assault that resembled a medieval battle, the Rangers managed to pull themselves to the summit and overcome the defenders — only to find no trace of the big guns. Of the 225-man Ranger force, only 75 survived the assault.

Pointe du Hoc has been left virtually as it was on D-Day. Shell holes, now grassy, still pockmark the site. Heavily damaged German batteries, steel and concrete ripped asunder, remain in place.

The invading Americans had it easier at Utah Beach. Using a red-roofed house as a marker, the landing craft headed for shore but were blown off course, a fortunate happenstance.

They landed a mile or two from their original target, but this part of the beach was lightly defended, so the troops were able to move inland quickly.

Today, a museum is being finished at the site, and a marble monolith commemorating the American landing has just been erected. Reagan will dedicate it Wednesday.

Most American visitors, understandably, concentrate their interest on those battle sites in which U.S. troops participated. But one should not miss visiting

Arromanches in the British Gold Beach sector, where a great artificial port was constructed.

It was this port, and later Cherbourg, that funneled into Normandy the enormous quantity of supplies and reinforcements needed to support the beachhead and breakout. Remains of the caissons that were sunk to create the port remain visible. A superb view can be obtained from the heights just east of the city.

At Arromanches, too, is the Museum of the Landing, with a variety of exhibits relating to the invasion and to the artificial port. Another worthwhile facility in the area is the Museum of Battle of Normandy in Bayeux, which tells the story of the liberation from D-Day to the breakout in August.

These are just a scattering of the D-Day sites one can visit in Normandy. There are many others. If time permits, there is also the Pegasus Bridge, site of a celebrated British battle; various German batteries such as those at Longues sur Mer and St. Marcouf (under restoration but due to open this month); rusted skeletons of landing craft, tanks and cannons on the beaches and elsewhere; the memorial monuments at Vierville, which provide a good view of Omaha Beach. And you cannot miss seeing the ravages of war on many buildings — the ever-present bullet and shrapnel marks.

Of course, there are the simple charms of Normandy as well. This is farm country, with hedges separating fields green with crops and pasture. It is Calvados country, home of the potent apple brandy that many a veteran remembers well if fuzzily.

The towns are small, and their people seem genuinely grateful for their liberation. Perhaps this is because Normandy suffered so many invasions, starting with that of the Normans under William the Conqueror in 1066, from which the province gained its name.

For information about the D-Day beaches, write or call the French Government Tourist Office, 610 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10020, (212) 757-1125; or the Calvados Tourist Office, Place du Canada, 14000 Caen, France, phone (31) 86-53-30.

# D-DAY: Forty years ago, a great armada of warships, fleets of aircraft and armies of men stormed 'Fortress Europe' at a place called Normandy

## America's young men fought for freedom, and found glory

By Scott Thurston  
Staff Writer

The brief, matter-of-fact announcement came from Supreme Allied Command headquarters in England at 3:33 a.m. EST, June 6, 1944.

"Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France."

It was the middle of the night along the Eastern Seaboard, but 3,000 miles away in the French region of Normandy Americans were making violent history while their countrymen slept peacefully.

This Wednesday marks the 40th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy, the largest, most complex military operation of modern times and the climax of World War II. It shattered Adolf Hitler's "Fortress Europe," and with it his insane dream of Nazi world domination.

So cataclysmic was the event, it will always be known simply as D-day.

The term actually is a standard military designation for the first day of any offensive. There was a D-day in North Africa in 1942, a D-day in Sicily in 1943, and even a D-day in Grenada in 1983. But there was only one real *D-day*.

This year's anniversary will include visits by heads of state to the shores where American, British and Canadian troops fought and died for the salvation of Europe. At Army posts around the United States, flags will be hoisted, cannons fired and speeches delivered.

At a time when memories of recent conflicts are clouded by uncertainty of purpose, the nation will be reminded that on June 6, 1944, the sacrifices of war were made with profound sadness but no regrets.

The real significance of D-day plus 40 years, however, lies with the veterans. For some, this will be the last round-numbered anniversary; age is taking the toll Hitler's minions could not.

Thousands of them will flock to the now-serene killing ground to mull over the memories and stare at the graves of friends. Many more will stay home to reflect on the event in their own ways.

They are ordinary people, and one need not look far to find them: an Atlantan who, unbeknown to his current friends and co-workers, is the subject of the most famous D-day beach photograph; a Cartersville native who was among the first Americans on French soil; a retired Dublin postal worker who at age 28 deliberately failed an Army clerical test so he could join the paratroopers; and many others.

They tell their stories in different ways. Some recite the events of D-day with an odd, good-natured detachment. Others stumble through the memories, pausing here and there as if trying to avoid the most harrowing of them.

In all their accounts, though, there are frequent glimpses of the incredible bravery, inhuman cruelty and sheer terror of the day. Hearing them, one is reminded of a line by war correspondent Ernie Pyle:

"War makes strange, giant creatures out of the little routine men who inhabit the earth."

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Cool, early summer air rushed through the C-47 Dakota as it lumbered across the coast of France. Inside the laboring transport, Pfc. B.R. Williams, 26, of Cartersville, Ga., still had to rub the sweat from his palms as he hooked the cord from his parachute to an overhead cable.

"I guess I was pretty nervous, but I had done turned it over to the Lord by that time," he recalled.

### A leap into the darkness

A small red light glowed near the gaping black hole of the open door. Then the light was green. The C-47 slowed, and its tail pitched up. The first man in line, Capt. Frank Lilly-

man of Syracuse, N.Y., leaped out the door, followed by another man.

Then the shuffling toward the door stopped. "What the hell?" someone yelled from the rear. "Let's go, let's go!"

Williams, the fifth man in line, joined in the yelling as a paratrooper whose gunsight had caught on the side of the door tried frantically to free himself. With each passing second, the C-47 roared farther inland — and farther from the drop zone.

After eight or 10 seconds of shoving, the men simply forced their hung-up comrade out the door and tumbled out behind him, static lines snapping open the parachutes on their backs.

Williams landed in a field with two other paratroopers and immediately began looking for more. "It was pitch dark, though. You couldn't see nothing."

They knew they had missed their appointed drop zone because of the delay in getting out of the plane. Nonetheless, Williams and the others began setting up an alternate radio beacon they carried for just such an emergency.

Time was of the essence. During the next two hours, 16,000 American paratroopers would be dropped over Normandy from planes that homed in on the beacons put in place by Williams and his comrades — all members of a handpicked unit known as "Pathfinders."

It was about 12:30 a.m. For better or worse, D-day was under way. And Bluford Reed Williams, crouched next to a radio beacon in a small field, had become the fifth American to touch French soil.

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The Pathfinders were the vanguard of Operation Overlord, the code name for the Normandy invasion. The plan was to drop the main body of American paratroopers from the 101st and 82nd Airborne divisions about 90 minutes after the Pathfinders in the vicinity of the sleepy village of Ste.-Mere-Eglise. Fifty miles to the east, members of the 6th British Airborne Division

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D-DAY...Continued

also would drop behind the beaches.

Later in the morning, the paratroopers would be augmented by glider-borne troops, jeeps and anti-tank guns. Their assignment was to capture and hold important crossroads and bridges for the seaborne forces already on their way to the beaches.

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Some 50 miles north of the Normandy coast on the choppy, wind-streaked English Channel, Pfc. William Prater, 20, was sick to his stomach.

A member of an anti-tank battalion in the 29th Infantry Division of the U.S. First Army, Prater pitched and rolled with his landing craft as it plowed through the water toward France.

"I tell you, it was rough," recalled Prater, who two years earlier had graduated from Atlanta's Tech High School.

Prater and his comrades had been aboard for more than a day already. The ships were cramped and foul-smelling. Infantrymen and even some sailors retched uncontrollably as seasickness spread like a plague. Some men hugged the railings, others used butt cans and even helmets as bedpans.

"I was pretty seasick myself," said Prater

**Assault on Omaha Beach**

In another ship, Pfc. Edward Regan, a 21-year-old Pennsylvanian who would later make Atlanta his home, was having similar troubles.

"They had us packed into those ships just like sardines," recalled Regan, a rifleman in the 29th. "I was bored and restless as hell. We had a meal about midnight, though I don't remember exactly what it was . . . beans and sausages, I think. Navy food."

As the armada churned toward France, a few men were able to nap. Most stayed awake to talk quietly among themselves and cope with the seasickness.

"We were combat-ready but we had never been in a fight, so we didn't know what to expect," Regan said. "Some guys thought it was going to be a cakewalk, others said we'd have it rough."

But there were no pep talks or forecasts of glory on the beaches, not even any Hollywood-style scenes of privates asking their sergeants if they, too, were scared. "No, there

was none of that stuff," Prater recalled. "We just wanted to get the thing over with. We'd been thinking about it for too long by then."

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The 29th Division's destination was a five-mile strip of Normandy coastline code-named Omaha Beach. It was one of two beaches to be assaulted by American troops on D-day. The 29th was combined with the battle-tested 1st Division for the Omaha assault. The other beach, code-named Utah, would be taken by the 4th Division.

British and Canadian troops were to assault three more beaches to the east, code-named Gold, Juno and Sword.

To accomplish this onslaught, the Allies had assembled the largest armada ever seen — some 5,000 warships of virtually every type and description, from brand new landing craft to battered old cargo ships converted to troop transports.

The troops had been loaded on the evening of June 4, 1944, and some of the ships actually sailed for France that night to land on June 5, the original D-day. But Allied Supreme Commander Gen. Dwight Eisenhower postponed Operation Overlord 24 hours.

Bad weather was the reason. A ferocious summer storm battered the English Channel on June 5, the first of three days in June when both the moon and tides would be right for an invasion. The Allies needed a late-rising moon for airborne drops and a low tide at dawn for beach landings so the landing craft could avoid the hellish maze of beach obstacles erected by the Germans.

After June 5-7, the conditions would not be right again until July. Such a delay, Eisenhower said, was "too bitter to contemplate."

On the afternoon of June 5, Allied meteorologists reported a small break in the storm for the morning of June 6. The channel would still be choppy, the skies still cloudy. But the window of improved weather was just big enough, if combined with a small amount of good luck, to allow an invasion to succeed.

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On the balmy evening of June 5, Atlantans had no inkling of the events unfolding in Europe.

The public knew an invasion would probably occur that summer, but the same security network that kept the date from the Germans also kept it from the Allied citizenry.

And so, Atlanta, a bustling city of 315,000 people, went about its busi-

ness routinely that night. The city was still a buzzing railroad terminus then, with 15 main lines and eight systems running through the area.

Jefferson Davis' birthday was no longer a state holiday, but just the same, it had been observed two days earlier in Rich's Magnolia Room by the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

**Mixed blessing for Allies**

The papers were tracking the exploits of A.B. "Bud" Foster, a candidate for sheriff of Fulton County. Foster, it seems, chased down a "shrewd police character" linked to a string of petty thefts and turned him over to authorities.

"Pin-Up Girl," starring Betty Grable, played at the Fox Theatre that night. Loew's State Theater featured "Gaslight," starring Charles Boyer, Joseph Cotton and Ingrid Bergman.

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The planes bearing the main body of American paratroopers crossed the French coastline about 2 a.m. The drops were met with varying amounts of groundfire, but the Germans did not immediately recognize them as the first phase of the invasion.

The bad weather had led German commanders to discount any possibility of an invasion that week, and the man charged with the defense of the beaches, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, had left the front to go home for the June 6 birthday of his wife.

But the weather that gave cover to the Allies was a mixed blessing. The Pathfinders had marked only one drop zone accurately, and heavy fog banks and low clouds caused Dakota pilots to lose their way or scatter to avoid collisions. The paratroopers were dropped haphazardly across the Cotentin Peninsula. A few were even dropped into the sea.

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Inside the dark interior of a C-47 that passed over the coast of France, a green jump light glowed steadily. But 2nd Lt. Kelso C. Horne, 29, of Dublin, Ga., held his ground in the plane's doorway.

"I was told specifically we would see three things before we jumped: the coast, then a river, then a set of railroad tracks," said Horne, a platoon leader in the 508th Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Horne knew the flight had gone badly. A few minutes earlier, the plane's crew chief had come back

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**D-DAY...Continued**

from the cockpit to tell him the formation was scattered. Horne believes the pilot, unsure of his location, simply turned on the green jump light as soon as the plane was over Normandy.

Horne, holding his 22 men until the proper landmarks appeared, finally saw the river and the railroad tracks. He looked at his watch — it was 2:06 a.m. — and jumped. "I began to see lots of flak and then some machine gun tracers coming right up at me, or at least they looked as if they were coming right at me," he recalled. "I looked up and could see them going through my chute. They were firing randomly, I guess, to hit anything in the sky that they could."

Because the plane had been flying too fast and too high, Horne's unit was widely scattered. He landed in a small field, utterly alone except for a few cows that cantered away.

**Speaking in passwords**

"Apparently I became scared, because I forgot everything I had been told and had a lot of trouble getting out of my parachute harness. I pulled out my knife and couldn't cut the straps. I think it was due to nervousness," Horne said.

After finally freeing himself from the chute — and in the process cutting away a satchel containing rations, dry socks and underwear — he began walking across the field to find other Americans. A shadowy figure approached from the right. Horne rammed a cartridge into his rifle.

"We kept walking toward each other at an angle. At about 30 yards, we both stopped," he recalled. "I still couldn't tell who he was. So I said, 'Flash,' and he came back with, 'Thunder.' That was the password we had learned.

"Thinking back, it was pretty stupid of me to speak first, because if he was German he would have recognized me and shot."

A short time later, Horne saw a green flare shoot into the sky — an assembly point signal. He reported to a command post set up beside an apple orchard, where he was told to gather all the 508th men he could find and reinforce an American group fighting for a bridge a short distance away.

When they arrived, they saw that the Germans were firing from a house near the bridge. Horne and a sergeant were assigned to run down

a lane and get into the house.

"We did, and when we got in the sergeant took his machine gun and started firing up through the floor. At that time the Germans started hollering 'Kamerad!' and sticking white sheets out the window.

"We sat around for a little while acting like the war was over, just waiting for the boat to come and take us home," he recalled. "Then some Germans on the other side (of the bridge) started shelling, and we knew it wasn't going to be over for a while."

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Horne was among the lucky, for he had made it to the ground safely.

Many other paratroopers were caught by flak or machine gun bursts fired by the awakening Germans. Others landed in a flooded area to the south of Ste.-Mere-Eglise, where, weighed down by as much as 100 pounds of equipment, they drowned in shallow water. Some landed in trees, where they hung helplessly until cut down by fellow Americans or shot by Germans.

**Skulking in hedgerows**

And now, as the first faint glimmer of light approached, an even more risky airborne drop was about to begin. Wood and canvas gliders, filled with either troops, jeeps or anti-tank guns, were cut loose from their tow planes to float to earth.

In some cases, the hedgerows — borders of rocks, shrubs and trees along fields — were too high to negotiate. In others, the gliders encountered "Rommel's Asparagus" — wires strung between posts to wreck any landing attempt.

An estimated 50 percent of the gliders crashed, killing or injuring hundreds of soldiers.

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First Lt. Charles Daley, of Augusta, Ga., heard none of the sounds of battle, only the rush of the wind as his glider fell slowly to earth. "Our fate was in the pilot's hands . . . and also in the hands of the good Lord," he recalled.

Daley's glider carried two pilots, two 82nd Airborne soldiers and a jeep. Daley was strapped into the passenger's seat of the jeep as the glider wafted down through the dewy air.

The landing, he recalled, was little more than a controlled crash.

"The jolt was so severe that the jeep broke its tie-downs and rolled to the front. Fortunately, the nose

had broken and was tilted upward in relation to the rest of the glider. If it wasn't, the jeep would have run right over the pilots. We were in that awful position, and one of the pilots was groaning about his back being hurt. We were all pretty shook up.

"Anyway, we got the pilots out and were lying there on the ground to catch our breath," Daley said. "I looked up and the first thing I saw was the North Star. I thought to myself, 'I know damn well I'm not where I'm supposed to be, but I don't know where I am.'"

Daley's carbine was broken in the landing and the jeep was useless. They were lost, and no other Americans were in sight. So Daley and his jeep driver left the two pilots and, carrying a machine gun, joined the thousands of other Americans skulking through the hedgerows in search of friends.

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Three thousand miles away, Atlanta baseball fans were celebrating. The Crackers had taken a scintillating 6-5 win from the Nashville Vols under the lights at Ponce de Leon Park.

The home nine nailed down the victory in the ninth inning on short-stop Luther Gunnell's no-out single. The win moved the team to within one game of the Knoxville Smokies for the Southern League lead.

Also in a festive mood were the 207 new graduates of North Fulton High School, who had paraded to the tune of "Pomp and Circumstance" that night at the Municipal Auditorium. Commencement speakers were honor graduates Anne Ezzard and Mildred Cragon.

Rudell Blackmarr was named best all-round student in the senior class. Earl Patton was given a ring for being the "most gentlemanly cadet officer," in memory of North Fulton alumni killed in the war.

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Despite the problems encountered during the paratrooper and glider assault, the airborne operation over Normandy was effective. Because the Americans were so widely scattered, the awakened German defenders could not fathom what was taking place.

Ste.-Mere-Eglise was taken and held against a counterattack by German troops in the area. Other groups of paratroopers kept German units tied up for hours on end. German commanders received contra-

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**D-DAY...Continued**

dictory, confused reports throughout the night. As a result, no real action was taken to move reserves to the Normandy coast, where, as dawn broke, the sea landings were about to begin.

Moments later, the Allies unleashed a murderous shore bombardment.

**'... Lord, we were firing'**

Off Utah Beach, Yeoman 3rd Class Charles Langley, 18, of Loganville, Ga., was below deck of the battleship USS Nevada when, at precisely 5:38 a.m., he heard the unearthly roar of its 10 14-inch guns and felt the 30,000-ton ship shudder from their force.

"Good Lord, we was firing," he recalled.

From all along the invasion front — some 50 miles — the gunships of the Allied armada joined in the bombardment. The lethal hail of shells was designed to kill German defenders and eliminate shore guns that could fire on the landing craft approaching the beaches.

Overhead, American and British bombers added to the barrage.

To Sgt. M.G. "Bud" Shiver, 25, of Leary, Ga., an engineer and top-turret gunner on a B-24 Liberator, it seemed that the air was full of more planes that morning than he could ever remember.

"Some were going one way, some were going another. It was amazing to me how we ever stayed together in all the traffic and cloud banks," he recalled.

Unchallenged by the German Luftwaffe, which had been withdrawn for the defense of German cities, the 16 bombers in Shiver's formation dropped their bombs about 5:45 a.m.

"We wondered how those boys were going to fare down there," Shiver remembered. "I'm sure a lot of us were doing some praying about it. We were anxious to hear we hadn't dropped any bombs short..."

Many bomber crews worried about the same thing and, in trying to avoid any mishaps, dropped their loads inland of the coastal targets. As a result, some shore defenses, particularly those behind Omaha Beach, were virtually untouched.

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"Believe me, Lang, the first 24 hours of the invasion will be decisive... for the Allies as well as Germany, it will be the longest

day."

Those words, spoken by Field Marshal Rommel to an aide several days earlier, proved prophetic as D-day raged into the morning and the beach landings began.

Without a useable beachhead in the first 24 hours through which to pour men and material, the Allies would be unable to sustain and enlarge the attack on Hitler's Europe. The airborne forces behind the beaches would be lost.

H-hour was 6:30 a.m.

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Pfc. William Prater stood near the bow of his heaving LCT, a large landing craft that carried vehicles as well as men and looked toward Omaha Beach.

"Looks like we caught them asleep, huh, Georgia boy?" remarked Lt. Forrest Ferguson, one of his comrades in the anti-tank company.

"About the same moment we got that conversation out of our mouths, our big naval guns opened up and the Germans started returning the fire," Prater remembered. Artillery and mortar shells began raining down on the advancing landing craft of the first wave of 1st and 29th divisions' assault troops. Some craft received direct hits, and the men in them were killed before they ever reached shore.

Prater's boat made it through. Just after 6:30 a.m., its front ramp splashed into the water.

**Resistance was ferocious**

"They had told us we wouldn't get our ankles wet, but I looked over and saw a short sergeant go right over his head when he went in the water," Prater recalled. "We were all landed in the wrong places, it seemed. It was regular confusion."

All around Prater, men were being killed by German gunfire from the bluffs overlooking the beach. Others drowned as their landing craft were struck by fire in deep water or simply foundered in the waves.

"The Germans had us zeroed in, almost like a shooting range," Prater said. "There was machine-gun fire, artillery, everything. All hell broke loose. Bullets were skipping across the water all around us. I saw people killed on the right and the left, in front and behind."

The troops who made it to shore became even bigger targets for the German gunners as they stumbled across the open beach. The jagged

beach obstacles proved the only salvation for some.

"People tried to get back in the water, but that was no good because the bullets could get you there too. We just jumped from obstacle to obstacle, sort of zigzagging."

The survivors eventually reached a sea wall that ranged from 3 to 12 feet high. Numbed by the carnage and confused by the ferocity of the resistance, they clung to the wall in desperation, for it offered a respite from the withering fire.

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Several miles to the west, 27-year-old Capt. James "Chic" Haley's small landing craft struggled toward Utah Beach.

"The water was so rough you might go ahead 15 or 20 yards, then go back 10," recalled Haley, a Louisiana native and company commander in the 4th Division. "By the time we got halfway there the water in the landing craft was knee-deep, and about half of that was vomit."

"Everybody was absolutely sick, and I'm reasonably sure that was the case in most landing craft. But I guarantee you that when that ramp went down they got over it in a hurry. They were under fire immediately. The small-arms fire was not too severe, but there was a lot of artillery," Haley recalled.

He saw 15 or 20 dead American soldiers on the beach. His assignment was to turn his company left down the sea wall to clear out enemy emplacements along either side. Other units would move inland.

"As soon as we got to that sea wall, there were anti-personnel mines everywhere. They had what we called the 'Bouncing Betty,' with a small trip above ground and the rest concealed in the sand. If you set it off, it jumped out of the ground 4 or 5 feet and exploded, spraying shrapnel all around. Very deadly damn things."

"I remember one of my mortar squads tripped one off and it killed or wounded every one of them. I can still see the sergeant now, a big, tall, red-haired, freckle-faced fellow..."

**Theory went up in smoke**

The plan worked despite the mines, artillery and casualties, and the Utah beachhead was established. "Fortunately for us, the Germans had about third-rate troops there, even some Russians (prisoners of war who fought for the Germans)," Haley recalled.

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D-DAY...Continued

In theory, the first wave was to be off Omaha Beach and scaling the grassy bluffs beyond it by the time Pfc. Regan arrived with the second wave about 7:10 a.m. As his landing craft bucked to a stop on a sand bar about 20 yards from shore, Regan knew the theory had gone up in smoke.

"You heard all these machine guns, and it seemed like they were zeroed in on that ramp," he recalled. "I'd already decided I wasn't going off the end of the ramp, so when I got up to it I just hopped off the corner. I sank right to the bottom in about 8 feet of water."

His slight, 150-pound frame weighed down by another 50 pounds of equipment, Regan thrashed about for several minutes just to save himself from drowning.

"I forgot all about my life preserver. All I had to do was reach down and release a valve to blow it up, but I would have had to use two hands anyway and I didn't want to drop my rifle. A wet rifle is better than none at all.

"Once I got to where I could walk, I decided to get as far in as I could with just my head above water, but of course you can only go so far," he said. "I remember the fire all around, and the bodies of two GIs face down in the water. That really jolted me. As soon as I got to shore I just collapsed. I was physically spent."

It was then that Life magazine photographer Robert Capa immortalized Regan in his famous picture taken on the beach, the one showing the frightened yet determined visage of a GI belly down in the surf.

Regan does not remember seeing the photographer. Some distance away, a group of engineers trying to blow away a beach obstacle were waving at him, urging him to get up and run to the seawall.

"I somehow fumbled and stumbled my way up to it," Regan recalled. Once there, the horror continued.

"We just piled in right on top of the first wave. It was every man for himself. Everyone was just crouched there, waiting and waiting and waiting. Some people were in shock, including the sergeants and lieutenants. Some people cried. I was just scared to death."

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In Atlanta, Eisenhower's terse announcement came in the dead of night. A local radio station immedi-

ately placed a call to Dr. Louie D. Newton, pastor of the Druid Hills Baptist Church.

"My feelings were inexpressable," Newton, now 91, recalled. "I could not find the words then or now to express what was in my heart." Newton prepared himself for his own long day; he knew churches would be a focal point of D-day activity in the city.

**Citizens huddle for news**

At Grady Memorial Hospital, the first child born after news of D-day was named Jacqueline — a nod toward France suggested by attending physicians.

In Marietta, then as now a town devoted to defense industries, police cars sped through neighborhoods with sirens blasting to alert the populace that D-day had arrived. Many citizens gathered at the town square to huddle around car radios and wait for snatches of news.

By dawn, most churches throughout the Atlanta area had opened their doors, and relatives of servicemen were gathering inside them. Newton went on WGST Radio at 7 a.m. to broadcast a D-day prayer. Georgia Gov. Ellis Arnall readied a speech to be broadcast from Newton's church that afternoon.

"Every Georgian is following with pride the masterful strategic invasion stroke," Arnall wrote. "We on the home front should be inspired to new heights of cooperation by buying bonds, giving blood and working in every way possible to back up our invasion forces."

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The success of D-day was still uncertain, however. The Americans were having a much rougher time than had been anticipated. At the knifelike rock outcropping called Pointe-du-Hoc, a battalion of Rangers was nearly wiped out scaling the cliffs to capture guns that, they learned upon reaching the top, had been moved.

And off the Normandy coast on the USS Augusta, the U.S. First Army commander, Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, agonized over the debacle on Omaha. The men still were pinned to the sea wall at noon, and Bradley considered diverting follow-on forces to Utah. To do so would doom the soldiers on shore to death or capture and allow the Germans to maintain a wedge between the Americans and British.

Then, about 1 p.m., a message

came in from one of the shore patrol boats: "Troops formerly pinned down ... advancing up heights behind beaches."

William Prater calls it "a miracle of God." Somehow the men crouched along the sea wall at Omaha went over the top and began working their way up the bluffs, knocking out German emplacements but suffering heavy casualties as they went. Prater's friend, Lt. Ferguson, was riddled by machine-gun fire and seriously wounded as he led one advance.

But a toehold had been won that would never be relinquished.

"Someone brought in a prisoner," at one point in the climb up the bluffs, Regan remembered. "He was about 15. Crying like a baby."

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As D-day waned into late afternoon, the Allied armies burrowed into the coastline. They had not advanced as far as had been hoped, but they were on the continent to stay. Inland, the paratroopers slept in farmhouses and behind hedgerows. It would be days before they met the seaborne forces or even found their own units.

In the next few weeks, the fighting remained intense as Allied soldiers inched through the hedgerows, measuring their progress in fields per day. Prater, Regan and Horne all were wounded.

Horne, like Regan, also was immortalized in print. His picture, hastily snapped by a photographer as Horne and his unit advanced on a village a few days after the invasion, appeared on the cover of an August issue of Life magazine.

A breakout was finally achieved on July 18, and Paris was liberated Aug. 25. Eight months later, the Third Reich was finished.

Four months after that, Japan surrendered. The largest conflagration in world history was over. An estimated 55 million soldiers and civilians had been killed.

**Mixture of pride, sadness**

By comparison, the D-day toll seems small: German losses were put at 9,000 killed, wounded or captured. The Allies suffered 10,000 casualties, including 1,465 Americans killed, 3,184 wounded, 1,929 listed as missing and 26 captured.

But D-day was the death blow to an empire whose domination of Europe was considered worse than the loss of life necessary to overcome it.

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# USS Augusta cruised to the fore

**U**nder most circumstances, the cruiser USS Augusta (Heavy Cruiser 31) would have been just another radar blip among a fleet of 5,000 warships. But on June 6, 1944, the ship named for the east Georgia city was the focal point of the invasion armada.

On the Augusta's bridge that day were Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, commander of the U.S. First Army, elements of which were going ashore at Utah and Omaha beaches, and Rear Adm. Alan G. Kirk, commander of the Western Naval Task Force, backing the American invaders from the sea.

It was largely by chance that the Augusta, a 14-year-old, 600-foot-long heavy cruiser of the Chester class, was chosen as Bradley's D-day command post. As one naval historian put it, such assignments were usually the product of "being in the right place at the right time."

Launched in 1930 at Newport News, Va., the Augusta, a speedy ship for its time (top speed: 32 knots), spent most of the prewar years in the Pacific as part of the U.S. fleet's scouting force.

The Augusta transferred to the

## USS Augusta

**Design:** The USS Augusta, launched Feb. 1, 1930, was one of six cruisers of its design. Others of the same design were the Chester, Louisville, Chicago, Houston and Northampton.

**Displacement:** 9,050 tons.

**Crew:** War complement of 1,100.

**Armament:** Guns included nine 8-inch mounted on three turrets, 12 5-inch anti-aircraft, and two 3-pounders. It also carried four aircraft.

**Special fitting:** The Augusta was built as a flagship with extra accommodations amidship.

Atlantic Fleet in 1941 and soon received its first special assignment: ferrying President Franklin Roosevelt to Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, for the Atlantic Conference.

The ship took part in the American landings in North Africa in late 1942, then helped escort the steamship Queen Mary, carrying British

Prime Minister Winston Churchill, to New York.

After more escort duties, the Augusta joined the invasion force being assembled in England during the spring of 1944. The ship was designated as Kirk's flagship, and Bradley's flag soon flew from its mast as well. The sea and land commanders were assigned to the same ship to facilitate quick and reliable communication between the two.

The Augusta sailed from Plymouth, England, on June 5, and at dawn the next day its nine 8-inch guns joined thousands of others in pummeling the Normandy coast behind Omaha beach. The Augusta and its crew of 621 men stood off the French coast for the next 18 days as the invasion forces carved out a foothold.

The Augusta's final duty came at the end of the war, when she joined the "Magic Carpet Fleet" bringing home American troops from Europe.

The ship was decommissioned in 1951, sold for scrap eight years later, and eventually dismantled at Panama City, Fla., according to Navy records.

— Scott Thurston

## D-DAY...Continued

After D-day, the outcome was never in doubt.

Following the war, the men who delivered the blow melted quietly back into society.

Today B.R. Williams, 66, owns a farm near Lost Mountain; William Prater, 60, is a retired teacher and businessman in Atlanta; Ed Regan, 61, whose picture has come to be indelibly identified with the American effort in World War II, works for the federal government in Atlanta; Kelso Horne, 69, is retired from his Postal Service job and still lives in Dublin; Charles Daley, 68, is a retired banker in Columbus;

Charles Langley, 58, a former mail carrier, resides in Stone Mountain; M.G. Shiver, 65, also retired from the Postal Service, lives in Leary; and James Haley, 67, who went on to an Army career, lives in Columbus.

They view the 40th anniversary with a mixture of pride and sadness.

"War solves nothing, really," said Prater. "It's just a great waste and destruction. But back then, we had a cause. What holds my interest now is the memory of my friends. I attend a lot of commemorations and reunions, mostly out of respect for my buddies who lost their lives."

Regan said he came to grips years ago with the carnage he saw on

Omaha. "You can't keep that inside you for 40 years. You'd go batty."

"I think about D-day every June 6, mostly about what a tremendous undertaking it was," he said. "To think you were a part of it is a very exciting thing, especially if you're alive to tell about it."

Williams, too, is proud of his role. "You read a lot about how disorganized the whole thing was, and I guess it was. But I don't reckon it was that bad . . . we won, didn't we?"

Said Daley: "The outcome was certainly glorious, but I don't think of it as a glorious event. It was a dirty, messy, minute-to-minute existence. I wouldn't wish it on anybody."

# Paratroopers jumped to the wind with moxie of 'Screaming Eagles'

By Jingle Davis  
Special to The Journal-Constitution

SEA ISLAND, Ga. — A young Atlanta Journal managing editor working in London as a war correspondent broke one of the century's biggest news stories when he filed the first eyewitness account of the Allied invasion of France 40 years ago.

Now retired and a part-time resident of Sea Island, Wright Bryan was 39 when he flew with the first wave of Army paratroopers across the English Channel to the Normandy coast. Bryan watched 17 young "Screaming Eagles" of the 101st Airborne Division jump into Nazi-occupied territory and saw the first exchange of fire in the D-day invasion.

"Before I had counted to 10 seconds — it may have been 11 or 12, but no more — our passengers had left us. All but one of them. The paratroopers shoved each other so

**'The Battle of Europe had begun and our squadron had delivered the first foot soldiers to their scene of action.'**

swiftly and heavily toward the door that they jolted against the door frame.

"One man among the last half dozen hit the rear of the door so heavily that he was thrown into the back of the cabin and was dazed. The men behind him shoved (him) aside and went on jumping. Before the unhappy soldier could get to his feet, our plane was well past the drop zone, and that soldier had to return with us."

The young soldier was "inconsolable," Bryan wrote.

After the last paratrooper jumped, Bryan hurried to the obser-

vation dome and looked back toward the drop zone.

"Tiny streams of tracer bullets were curving upward from the ground, but they were well behind us," Bryan wrote.

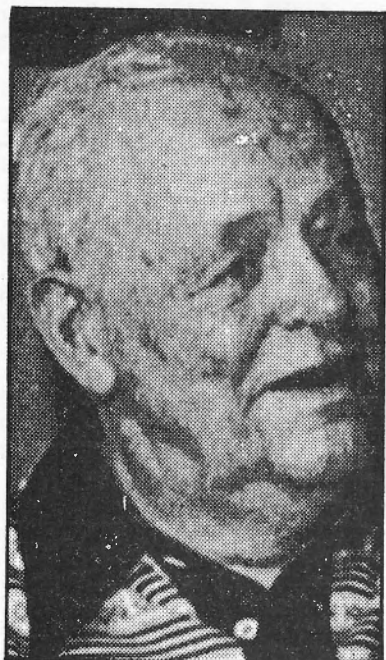
"The battle of Europe had begun and our squadron had delivered the first foot soldiers to their scene of action."

After the jump, Bryan flew back to an Army base in rural England and caught a jeep for the 50-mile trip to NBC-BBC radio headquarters in London. He arrived about the time that Allied ground forces were hitting the beaches at Normandy.

Bryan had his scoop, but he had to delay filing his story until 9:33 a.m. British time, when a spokesman read the official announcement that the long-awaited invasion had begun.

In an interview here last week, Bryan said he was fortunate to get the assignment.

"I signed on as a stringer with  
**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**



LARRY HAND/Staff

**WAR CORRESPONDENT:**  
Wright Bryan reported on D-day.



## WRIGHT BRYAN FLIES TO ATTACK IN TROOP PLANE

Journal Editor Writes Graphic Account Of U.S. Paratroopers' Leap Into Action

By WRIGHT BRYAN  
Managing Editor, The Atlanta Journal

## D-Day Dawn Finds Atlantians in Prayer

Relatives and Friends of Overseas Men Gather Throughout Day of Church Alarms

By DAVID WINK/Staff



GERMANS GIVE

## Nazi Defense Found Weak

Air Troops Fight in Coax; Goering Orders Fighters Out

By WEB GALLAGHER  
SPECIAL REPORTER

DAVID WINK/Staff

**FIRST REPORT FROM NORMANDY:** The Atlanta Journal ran front page story on Bryan's eyewitness account of Allied attack.

# Thunder of war fed Londoners' hope for freedom

By Joseph W. Grigg  
Special to The Journal-Constitution

LONDON

**F**ew Londoners slept late on the morning of Tuesday, June 6, 1944.

From dawn onward on that brilliantly sunny early summer day just 40 years ago, the thunder of squadron after squadron — whole fleets, in fact — of heavy bombers, light bombers, fighters and transports roaring over the war-scarred city woke all but the deepest sleepers.

In June 1944 I was a war correspondent and United Press (now United Press International) bureau chief in London. Today, I recall

*Joseph W. Grigg retired from United Press International in January 1983 and since that time has been a correspondent in London for The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution.*

clearly being awakened at 4 a.m. by the mighty thunder that literally rocked the apartment house where I was living.

And I remember thinking, "This is it."

Londoners had long been familiar with the sound of enemy bombers, which had left much of their city in ruins since 1940. But this time it was different.

Instead of Hitler's Heinkels, Dorniers and Messerschmidts, it now was giant American Flying Fortresses and British Lancasters, Halifaxes and Blenheims, and C-47 transports — all heading southward in one immense avenging aerial armada toward the English Channel and the Normandy coast to blast the Nazis' supposedly impregnable "Atlantic wall" defenses.

For some hours yet, few Londoners would know for sure what was happening.

But in Normandy, only 200 miles to the south, D-day already had begun.

Another 11 months of bitter fighting and cruel losses were still in store for both sides. But D-day on June 6, 1944, was the beginning of the end for the Nazi war machine and the prelude to an overwhelming Allied victory in Europe.

In London, my telephone rang with the call I had expected for days of tense invasion-waiting. It was Bob Dowson, manning the overnight desk in the United Press office at 30 Bouverie St. in the heart of London's Fleet Street newspaper district.

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## PARATROOPERS . . . Cont.

NBC just before D-day," Bryan said. "The full-time NBC men were going on the beaches. The catch was that those correspondents had no communications, and they couldn't get their stories out as quickly as I did."

Bryan's own account of the beginning of the invasion, broadcast immediately after tape-recorded statements by the king of England and the president of the United States, was carried by radio stations all over the world.

That same evening, Bryan's story ran on the front page of The Atlanta Journal. His eyewitness account was first heard in Atlanta at 3:33 a.m. Tuesday, June 6, 1944, when it was broadcast by NBC's Atlanta affiliate, WSB, which was then owned by The Atlanta Journal.

Among local listeners were Bryan's wife, Ellen, and the couple's three young children — Newell, Billy and Mary Lane.

Bryan's story, written under pressure and based on notes scribbled in the dimly lit cabin of a C-47 Dakota transport plane, painted a tense picture of the silent midnight flight across the moonlit channel and the

frenzy of the young paratroopers as they jumped from a 700-foot altitude into the cold darkness.

During the first part of the journey, Bryan, an Atlanta native, recalled in an interview that he rode in the aircraft's navigational dome, his 6-foot, 5-inch frame cramped in the small space, his steel flak helmet pressing against the ceiling.

Later, Bryan said he moved to the frigid passenger cabin to check on the paratroopers.

Some had taken a new anti-nausea drug called Dramamine, which probably made them drowsy, Bryan said. He said he declined an offer of the drug because he wanted to stay "keyed up."

Bryan said he still thinks it "remarkable" that some of the paratroopers were able to sleep during the flight.

"More than half of them had taken their colonel's advice and were dozing with their heads back against the wall and their feet stretched out in front of them, but others were sitting silently except for two or three who talked among themselves in whispers," Bryan wrote.

Bryan said he was in Paris later in August when Allied troops liberated the city. In September, he was wounded and captured by German troops while on assignment near Chaumont, France. Bryan spent the next six months in hospitals and prison camps in Germany and Poland.

He said his captors treated him fairly well but kept him on starvation rations.

"I lost 25 pounds, and I was already skinny," Bryan, now 79, said.

The war in Europe ended in the spring of 1945. Bryan, his leg wound badly infected, spent several months in an American hospital in Paris.

He was immediately promoted to editor of The Atlanta Journal, a position he held until 1954, when he moved to Ohio as editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

He and his family later moved to Clemson, S.C., Bryan's boyhood home, where he served until his retirement as vice president for development at Clemson University.

Bryan and his wife now divide their time between homes on Sea Island and in Clemson.

**THUNDER OF WAR... Cont.**

"Right, they're off," he shouted and hung up.

Although the Allies had released no word yet that the invasion was under way, the Germans already were reporting it in shortwave radio bulletins monitored at the United Press listening post at Barnet, 10 miles north of London.

Eisenhower's headquarters at Southwick House near Portsmouth and his press office in London refused all comment on the German reports.

**Confused reports add up**

But Allied reporters, among them my old friend and colleague Edward W. Beattie Jr. of United Press, were summoned by phone to the Ministry of Information, housed at that time in the tall, gray concrete London University Senate House on Mallet Street, near the British Museum.

There they were locked into the main press briefing room and warned they could not leave or even make a telephone call until an announcement from Eisenhower was released some time later.

Meanwhile, I managed to grab one of London's scarce taxis down to the United Press office, where German shortwave radio reports were flooding in by wire from our monitors at Barnet.

Although confused, these reports all added up to one thing — the epic invasion was under way.

For several hours I and my colleagues hammered out our dispatches, based solely on the Nazi bulletins.

Then at 9:30 a.m. the news floodgates burst.

At the Ministry of Information, Eisenhower's chief press aide, Col. Ernest Dupuy of the Army, read out an announcement to the waiting reporters.

"Under the command of Gen. Eisenhower," it said, "Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France."

The announcement, written by Eisenhower himself at his Southwick House headquarters on the south coast, replaced one he had scribbled in pencil for use if the invasion failed.

This one would have said: "The troops, the air force and navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If there is any blame or fault attached to this attempt, it is mine alone."

Minutes later the British Broadcasting Corp.'s chief radio announcer, Stuart Hibberd, read out the same announcement in a voice breaking with emotion.

"Invasion," proclaimed the London Evening News in a giant headline.

"At last the tension has broken," said The Times of London in an editorial.

**Warfare ravages London**

At 11 a.m. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the "old lion" who had led Britain through what he called its "finest hour" after the bloody evacuation of the British army from Dunkirk in 1940, confirmed Eisenhower's announcement in a dramatic statement to Parliament. It brought the House of Commons to its feet in an emotion-charged storm of cheering.

Then an overwhelming silence seemed to envelope London. Even the skimpy wartime traffic all but disappeared. Pubs and stores emptied. That evening, theaters and movie houses were almost deserted. People remained at home, tensely awaiting the latest radio newscast bulletins.

Women, queuing for food rations, just as they had had to do for nearly four dark, dreary years, seemed almost too overcome to talk.

One said, "I couldn't eat any lunch. I just felt too sick." Another said, "I just want to cry with relief."

Yet everyone in Britain had sensed the news could not be long in coming. Only they didn't know when.

For weeks all southern England, off limits to anyone without a special permit since the beginning of the war, had been one vast armed camp. More than 3 million Allied troops, 13,000 bombers and other warplanes, 1,200 warships, 1,600 merchantmen and 4,000 landing craft all were poised, awaiting the order to go.

For Britons who had come through four grim years of bombing, blackouts and ever-tighter food rationing, D-day almost seemed a release — like a promise of a light at the end of the wartime tunnel.

"Surely, this must mean the end is in sight," said one woman queuing for a bus who had just heard the news.

London in June 1944 was a depressing city indeed — shabby, bombed, blacked out at night, untouched by paint for four years. Many windows smashed in the earlier air raids still were boarded

up.

Empty lots, where wrecked buildings once had stood, were converted now into emergency reservoirs for use in case of a new fire blitz like that which burned down much of the capital in 1940-41.

With gasoline stringently rationed, there was little traffic on the streets except for a few buses and occasional taxis — which America's well-paid GIs seemed always to manage to grab.

As the British used to complain humorously about the Americans on leave: "They're overpaid, overdecorated, oversexed and over here."

**Nazi bombers strike again**

Almost everything was in short supply. Food, clothes, shoes and coal were rationed. Razor blades, shaving soap, toilet paper, writing and wrapping paper, perfumes of any kind — all were hard to find. Even Scotch whisky and beer were scarce or unobtainable unless you had the right connections.

The bombing blitz, which left much of London in ruins, had more or less ended by the spring of 1941.

But suddenly and without warning, on the evening of Friday, Jan. 21, 1944, the Nazi bombers returned — nearly 500 of them — in a last-gasp attempt by Hitler to avenge the Allied bombing that had left Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne and other German cities in ruins.

Exactly a week after Allied troops landed in Normandy, a new horror hit the capital — V-1 "Buzz Bombs." More than 2,000 of the unmanned, jet-powered "Flying Bombs" would fall on London streets, killing more than 6,000, before the Allies captured Nazi launching sites in northern France.

Then, with the end of the war only nine months away, Hitler began attacks with the so-called V-2, a small ballistic rocket launched to a height of 60 miles from the Netherlands, then plunged onto London at a speed of 2,500 mph.

D-day did not end the war, but for veterans of the invasion, for Londoners and for the French, it was a day none will forget.

Madame Therese Gondree, now 82, owner of a cafe near the Orne Canal bridge in France, where British paratroopers jumped and gliderborne troops landed, told me: "It's called 'the longest day.' But for us French, it meant the beginning of our liberation. It's a day we shall never forget."

# The battle for Normandy, 1944

## Allied gamble led to Hitler's final downfall

By Joseph Albright  
Cox News Service

**H**NORMANDY BEACH, France Harry Garton can still see wounded GIs moaning on the sand and no one helping them.

On June 6, it will be 40 years since the opening of the Battle of Normandy, that horrible and glorious gamble in which two million American and Allied soldiers landed in Nazi-occupied France. When Adolf Hitler failed to repel them, he and his empire were fated to a lingering death.

Garton, then a 19-year-old Army private first class from Philadelphia, remembers splashing, terrified, out of his flat-nosed landing craft, past seven or eight dead GIs floating in the surf.

The place was code-named Omaha Beach. The time: 7 a.m. on D-Day. It was half an hour after the first wave of landing troops plunged ashore, almost seven hours since the paratroopers slithered out of the sky by moonlight five miles inland.

Garton remembers struggling across the sand while a German machine-gunner rat-tat-tatted from a pillbox to his left.

As an ammunition bearer, he carried about 100 pounds of gear. Luckily, he was in good shape, he says, having been a 135-pound amateur boxer.

After 100 yards of running, dodging and hiding among wreckage, he collapsed behind a dune. He leaned to one side and found his shoulder touching a GI whose lower body had been ripped away.

"I couldn't help the guy," says Garton. "I looked around the beach and there weren't any medics."

Garton's commander, a bulldog-squat captain named Murphy, ran between clumps of huddled GIs, shouting orders to get the machine gun firing.

After about an hour they succeeded. As they began peppering the pillbox, some infantrymen sneaked up next to it and planted a demolition charge.

After it detonated, the pillbox fell silent. About noon, Garton and his unit of the 1st Infantry Division scrambled up the 150-foot ridge overlooking the beach.

Eleven of the 15 men in his machine gun section made it through the day. He never learned what happened to the four others.

When the Battle of Normandy ended 77 days later, 20,838 American soldiers were dead. So were another 16,138 British, Canadian, French and Polish soldiers.

German losses were heavier — at least 50,000 soldiers killed, about 210,000 captured, 200,000 more wounded. Three days after the battle, the Allies took Paris.

Throughout Normandy, Harry Garton wasn't nicked. He fought on through Belgium, into Germany, through the Battle of the Bulge.

Then on April 16, 1945, as his unit was dashing toward Czechoslovakia, his jeep ran over a German anti-tank mine.

Three of the four GIs in the jeep were killed.

Squeezed in the middle of the front seat over the transmission, Garton lived. But the explosion blew off one of his legs. Doctors amputated the other leg a few days later, explaining they had found gangrene.

"I felt this feeling of relief because I knew the war was over for me," he says 40 years later. On May 8, the Germans surrendered.

### The German view

"They must be crazy," said a German sergeant named Krone in Pillbox 62 overlooking Omaha Beach. "Are they going to swim ashore? Right under our muzzles?"

Allied ships opened fire at the bunkers and pillboxes minutes before the invasion, but to little avail.

Maj. Werner Pluskat thought his bunker would fly apart. Knocked down and showered with concrete splinters, Pluskat was amazed to discover that none of the guns in his sector had been hit. Of the 128 guns defending Omaha Beach, more than 100 were manned and ready.

Now and throughout the rest of Normandy, the German soldier would fight with a grim fanaticism the Allied soldiers never equalled.

When German units were shattered, the survivors gathered themselves into improvised battle groups — *kampfgruppen* — that fought on with devastating effectiveness. When Allied units suffered heavy casualties, they were often pulled out of combat.

A post-war American military study shows that for every two casualties the Germans suffered from Allied ground forces at Normandy, they inflicted three on the British and Americans.

Long after Normandy, U.S. Air Force Gen. Elwood "Pete" Quesada told author Max Hastings: "One's imagination boggled at what the German army might have done to us without Hitler working so effectively for our side."

For it was Hitler and the Army High Command in Germany who made the fatal error that lost Normandy. They kept their battlefield generals from slashing forward with the Panzer (armored) divisions to destroy the Allies near the beaches.

At about 5 a.m. on D-day, news of the paratrooper landings convinced Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, the ranking general on the Western front, to commit the 350 tanks and 50 assault guns of the 12th SS "Hitler Jugend" and the Panzer Lehr divisions. He gave the order, and then asked the High Command headquarters in Germany for permission to do so.

Gen. Alfred Jodl, Hitler's chief operations officer, was outraged when he found out. Hitler had issued orders that the Panzers could not move without his personal permission. Jodl had a subordinate telephone Rundstedt and order the Panzers to stop moving until Hitler decided.

Admiral Karl Jesko von Puttkamer, Hitler's naval aide-de-camp, chose not to wake Hitler from his drugged sleep until later in the morning. At his morning conference Hitler got so agitated over the confused situation in Normandy that he turned heel and left the room without even considering Rundstedt's request for the Panzers.

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**BATTLE...Continued**

Hitler delayed and delayed. Finally, around 2 p.m., Hitler burst out of luncheon and sent word to Rundstedt that he could deploy the Hitler Jugend and Panzer Lehr divisions. But under no circumstances should Rundstedt touch the more than 1,000 other smaller Panzer units throughout Europe that were already fueled and ready to move toward Normandy.

**Some odd-looking tanks**

A month before D-Day, British farmer Sydney Cripps noticed some odd-looking tanks in his meadow.

A bull in the meadow noticed, too. The bull charged one tank broadside. The tank collapsed like a big balloon — which in fact it was.

The rubber tanks — more than a brigade of them — were deployed far from the actual landing troops.

This was one of thousands of stratagems woven together by Allied counterintelligence to give the Normandy landing troops the vital edge of surprise.

So fully did they deceive Hitler that at midnight on June 9 — about 40 hours after the invasion started — the Fuehrer canceled plans to reinforce his Normandy defenders because he was certain the main attack would hit 50 miles northward near Pas de Calais.

The weavers of this scintillating web were the XX-Committee of MI-5, the British counterintelligence agency, and the X2 branch of the American OSS, the wartime predecessor of today's CIA.

Thanks to the skill of British code-breakers, the Allies could also read German military messages through Ultra, a device that duplicated the internal wiring of the German encoding machine.

Ultra was the bobber that signaled the Allies when Hitler was taking their bait.

The central fiction was Eisenhower's order to Gen. George S. Patton to head a non-existent million-man army that supposedly stayed behind in southern England after D-day.

To deceive German reconnaissance planes, the British put 400 fake landing ships in the Thames Estuary made out of oil drums and canvas. Fake fuel dumps, barracks, pipelines, hospitals were all fabricated from wood and cardboard.

The props were meant to supply confirmation for phony intelligence reports being fed to Germany by double-agents "Garbo" and

**"Brutus."**

To widen the confusion, Allied planes bombed 26 of the 42 coastal radar stations in Belgium and France. Some stations were left deliberately operational so they could be spoofed on D-day.

As the actual invasion fleet approached Normandy, a Royal Air Force spoofer squadron scattered bales of tin foil off Pas de Calais, creating a radar image of a massive "invasion fleet."

When the ghost fleets reached 10 miles from Calais, a few small launches switched on recordings of chains rattling, commanders talking over loudspeakers, bosuns piping.

Two days after D-day, Brutus radioed his German controller in Paris that he had seen "with my own eyes the Army Group Patton preparing to embark." He reported that "General (George) Marshall of the American Army comes here from Washington on the 9th or 10th of June to see Patton and his troops off."

The next day Garbo radioed a similar account to his German controller in Madrid. The controller, Gen. Erich Kuhlenthal, cabled Hitler's headquarters that he was convinced Normandy was just a "maneuver" to entice the Germans into a trap.

On the morning of June 10, an Ultra intercept confirmed to the Allies that Hitler was still hooked. The decoded message said the Fuehrer had canceled "Case Three," a massive Panzer counterattack aimed at Normandy, in order to be ready for Patton's strike at Pas de Calais.

Victory at Normandy belonged not only to the foot soldiers and the deceivers. They would probably have failed without the sledgehammering of occupied France by the Allied air forces.

"Without air superiority, we couldn't have made the landing at all," says retired Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay, who commanded 200 B-17 heavy bombers as a two-star general during Normandy.

Eisenhower's staff had devised a plan code-named "Transportation" for the bombing of 80 railroad centers in France and Belgium to hinder the Nazis in sending reinforcements.

When "Transportation" came before the British war cabinet, it declared its "adverse view" after hearing that the plan might kill 20,000 civilians. Even Churchill

worried about creating such hatred in France that it would poison Anglo-French relations for years.

But President Franklin D. Roosevelt prevailed, on grounds that the bombing would save lives among Allied troops.

By June the Allies had dropped 66,000 tons of bombs on scores of railyard centers — the explosive equivalent of four Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs. By D-day, rail traffic had fallen to 13 percent of its January level, creating what Churchill called a "railway desert around the German troops at Normandy."

Forty years later, one of the few remaining battle relics is the great Gothic cathedral at Rouen, France, whose stained glass windows are still being repaired. The cathedral was accidentally bombed because it happened to stand a few blocks from a rail yard.

In May the bombers added German synthetic fuel plants to their hit list. Aviation fuel available to the Luftwaffe fell from 180,000 tons in April to 50,000 tons in June to 10,000 tons in August.

One of the critical inventions that further weakened the Luftwaffe was the American P-51 Mustang fighter. Since early 1944, the long-range Mustangs had shot down more German pilots than could be trained. On D-day, the Allies filled the sky with 9,000 planes, including hundreds of bombers with orders to knock out beach defenses. On Omaha, the bombing failed. The clouds were so thick that the bombers were forced to unload up to three miles inland.

The Allies had expected the Germans to strafe the beaches, but nothing happened. The Luftwaffe could only manage to get 319 planes in the air all day.

Field Marshal Rommel wrote to Hitler on June 10: "Practically our entire traffic ... is pinned down by powerful fighter-bomber and bomber formations ... The movement of our troops on the battlefield is almost paralyzed, while the enemy can maneuver freely."

The climax came in mid-August when half a million German soldiers were encircled in the Falaise "pocket" 30 miles inland. Day after day, Allied fighter-bombers would seal off German columns on congested roads, then strafe and bomb the columns in what Spitfire pilots called "the killing ground."

Eisenhower, after visiting Falaise in late August, said, "It was literally

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

**BATTLE...Continued**

possible to walk for hundreds of yards at a time stepping on nothing but dead and decaying flesh."

**Another route to Berlin**

"Our chiefs are convinced of one thing," President Roosevelt confided to his son Elliott in 1943.

"The way to kill the most Germans, with the least loss of American soldiers, is to mount one great big invasion and then slam 'em with everything we've got. It makes sense to me. It makes sense to Uncle Joe (Stalin)..."

"Trouble is, the P.M. (Churchill) is thinking too much of the postwar, where England will be. ... He's scared of letting the Russians get too strong in Europe."

Churchill had favored another route toward Berlin: a thrust upward through the Balkans into Hungary.

But Stalin balked, and the American joint chiefs worried that their troops would bog down in the mountain passes through Yugoslavia. Reluctantly, the Allies agreed on a slash into northern France.

In April 1943, about 40 British and American officers under British Lt. Gen. Frederick Morgan began the planning.

They had to find miles of flat, wide beach close enough to British airfields to be covered by the Spitfire fighter. The beach had to have natural exits so vehicles could move inland, and dry fighting terrain beyond.

The Pas de Calais, closest to Britain, looked good. But Morgan's staff dismissed it because of massive German defenses. Hence Normandy.

Planners had to correlate millions of details:

Would landing vehicles travel on the right side of the road in France, as in Britain? No.

What about mail? Postal units must operate from the day after D-day.

What about water? Transport half a gallon a day for each healthy soldier, two gallons for the wounded.

There were fears of a German nerve gas attack. So the planners set aside a 60-day supply of gas shells in Britain.

**LeMay became cult figure**

After Normandy, people went their own ways.

LeMay, now 77, was assigned to

## ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

3 June 1984 Pg. 34A

**Day at Normandy to be relived**

President Reagan, seven other heads of state and thousands of veterans of World War II will participate in a spectacular but solemn ceremony commemorating the 40th anniversary of D-day.

Reagan and the other heads of state will stand facing the sea for a ceremony highlighted by the remarks of French President Francois Mitterrand.

At least 20,000 veterans of the Allied forces, including 2,100 Americans, will attend the ceremony. Reagan's four hours on the Normandy beachhead will be an emotional — and photographic — high point of his 10-day trip to Europe.

A re-enactment of the American Rangers' cliff-scaling at Pointe-du-Hoc is scheduled for Tuesday, with 90 Ranger veterans watching today's modern Army perform the feat.

Reagan will speak briefly at a German observation post, the surroundings pockmarked by bomb

craters. The president also will visit the cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach, where U.S. troops, led into battle by the 116th Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division, suffered the heaviest losses of D-day.

There are 9,630 white crosses and Stars of David marking the graves of those who died in the invasion and in the battles thereafter. Thirty-three pairs of brothers lie there.

Both Reagan and Mitterrand will speak, and the television cameras will picture them amid the graves on a bluff overlooking a narrow strip of sand that was the beginning of the end of Nazism and World War II.

Plans call for a massing of color guards, veterans and heads of states, or their representatives, of the participating nations: the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Norway.

the Pacific, where he directed the incendiary bombing of Tokyo. Later, as U.S. Air Force chief of staff in the nuclear age, he would become a cult figure with his reputed remark: "Bomb 'em back to the Stone Age."

LeMay recalls how frustrated he felt on D-day because he had to stay in his operations center.

"I wanted to get out there over the beaches to see what was happening," he says.

And Pfc. Harry Garton?

After his jeep hit a mine, he came to and noticed his boot had been blown across the road. In it was part of his leg.

"I think it helped that I had been a boxer," Garton says. "I knew how to take a little pain."

Interviewed during his first visit to Normandy in 40 years, he said he fashioned a tourniquet by twisting a knife in his pantleg. A medical vehicle happened by and took him to a field hospital.

A Red Cross attendant wrote a letter to his teenage girlfriend, Anna, in Pennsylvania. It said that he had been hurt but he was OK.

Anna telephoned Garton's mother,

who had heard nothing. His mother said it was probably frostbite.

Four years after the war, he and Anna were married. They have a son and a daughter.

With a ninth-grade education and artificial legs, Garton could find no job back home.

Instead, he used the GI bill to finish high school in an accelerated program at Temple University in Philadelphia.

He went back to Temple and earned a bachelor's degree, a master's and a doctorate in education. Garton was a teacher and curriculum coordinator at the Council Rock School District in Bucks County, Pa., until he retired two years ago.

Since then he has taken on an avocation: lecturing to high school students about war and peace.

"I tell them what it was like on D-day," he says. "That there weren't any heroes, that sooner or later you are going to get hit or killed."

He tells them they should think about war — and about how they must work to avoid it.

"It's become almost a crusade for me," he said.

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER 3 June 1984 Pg. 3F

## *40 years later, a memory of D-Day remains as fresh as yesterday*

By W.R. Higginbotham

*W.R. Higginbotham, a veteran journalist from Missouri who is now 70 years old, was a United Press war correspondent assigned to the Navy during World War II. In this remembrance of D-Day, 40 years ago, he describes a number of events during the historic landing in France on June 6, 1944.*

You can try telling me that, after all, it has been 40 years, and if some people know the term D-Day, few will know what "H-Hour" means. Mere fragments out of history. Well, I know better. Though 40 years have passed, the date June 6, 1944, feels like yesterday — certainly no longer than the day before yesterday. D-Day, when at a dirty, windy hour, Allied soldiers by sea and air invaded Normandy in France to begin liberating Europe from Hitler's grip.

The world spun on "H-Hour," that hour when the boys were scheduled to hit the beaches, those beaches code named and still called Omaha and Utah, where the Americans landed, and Gold, Sword and Juno, where the British and Canadians went ashore. And the world still spins on that day and that hour, when our future was fixed for good and for all.

I was a war correspondent for the United Press, the outfit now called United Press International. I was assigned to the Navy aboard the USS Bayfield, which was the command ship for the U.S. Navy in the invasion.

I can still recall the big picture — thousands of large and small ships choking the English Channel, aerial fleets above, gliders unhooking from tow planes to slip silently down to the hell of the Normandy hedgerows, incendiary shells cutting red and white streaks in a dark sky, guns blasting from battlewagons.

But within the big picture is my personal memory. Of Gen. J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins running me

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**In the dark off Utah Beach, the Bayfield rolls in a 22-m.p.h. wind. Landing craft are eased down. You hear a ship's officer bawl. "Now, now, now, fill the nets, fill the nets."**

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through the huge shelf of secret logistics and plans, so detailed that they spotted the names of French residents in farmhouses and villages. Of a fat boy lining up with his platoon on the deck of Adm. D.P. Moon's flagship, the USS Bayfield, headed for Utah Beach, 90 miles from England across the open water.

Fat boy has a long, metal tube weighing down his right shoulder.

"What's that thing, soldier?" I ask.

"Hell, Mack, I dunno. Belongs to my little buddy here," nodding to the soldier next to him. "I'm lugging it for him. He's got a bellyache thinking of what's ahead."

I notice that the tube is the barrel of a hand-held, shoulder-shot, anti-tank weapon.

In a smelly latrine below decks, a sergeant, pants bunched at his ankles, perches on a metal commode. His men are squatting in a semicircle in front of him. He is making each man recite instructions for his turn going against a concrete pillbox filled with the enemy, this man with covering fire, the next man with grenades to lob into the entrance. They recite, knowing their lives depend one upon the other.

These boys are from the Fourth

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

## MEMORY...Continued

Division. I knew they were green to war. (All war correspondents attached to the Navy had been briefed before we started out.) This division will go into Utah Beach. Over the Fourth's back will move the veterans of the Ninth, who were bloodied in North Africa and the Mediterranean. The British and Canadians are on the left flank of the broad invasion front along the Normandy coast.

How many guys are on the water and in the air that day? Tens of thousands. Some have lived in the British Isles for months, even years, waiting for this to happen.

No one who was there will forget the delay of 24 hours. The invasion is dated for June 5. At the last moment the weather worsens and Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower has to call off the Marine movement. The minesweepers already are out there working. There is silence on the radio. You watch small ships go blasting out after the sweeps to tell them to come in. Could it all have been given away?

Luckily not, and on June 6, in the dark eight miles off Utah Beach, the Bayfield rolls in a 22-m.p.h. wind that roils the sea. Landing craft are loosened and eased down, and heavy cargo nets flop down the ship's sides where they swing out, thumping back hard against the iron hull with each roll.

Suddenly, out of the dark and through the swirl of thin mist clinging wetly to your ears, you hear a ship's officer bawl through a bullhorn: "Now, now, now, fill the nets, fill the nets, fill the nets."

The heavily laden boys move, shifting packs and weapons. Sailors in the landing craft below hang onto the cargo nets, trying to steady the rocking craft. Two soldiers crawl over the gunwales and, at the first roll, they lose their hand grips on the cargo net ropes and they fall — whump! whump! — into the boats below. One can't get up.

Some boys vomit. Some need help but they are willing, and they keep moving. One by one the boats fill and the cargo nets with the gear go down, and the boats pull from the ship and circle; and the circle grows and the motors of the landing craft go louder and louder until they roar; and Fred Sondern — he was a writer for Reader's Digest — says, "Oh, God, the little guys."

All you can do is swallow hard.

Navy Lts. Johnny Tripson and Mike Halperin will lead the landing craft to the beaches. They are talking in low voices.

"Nobody goes with me except my coxswain," Halperin says, "nobody else, because we're not coming

back."

We finish off the bottle passing among us, and the man to empty it pitches it over the side. We shake hands and Halperin is ready. (Halperin, the main scout at Utah Beach, was from Chicago and had played halfback at Notre Dame in 1931. He also played briefly with the Brooklyn Dodgers football team. Tripson, from Big Mission, Texas, played football at Mississippi State in the late '30s and was briefly with the Detroit Lions in 1941 — I am reading from the notes I took that day, on June 6, 1944.)

Halperin missed his mapped landing point by half a mile. Good thing he did, too. The place where he struck the beach lay just out of reach of heavy guns protected by thick concrete. A few days later, Gen. Omar Bradley heard the story and laughed over how Halperin insisted that he had hit the right place. And yes, Halperin came back.

By daylight Tripson takes a cavalry unit — with no horses — to the tiny Isle de St. Marcouf before going in to the beach. It is no refuge. It is a solid minefield. Soldiers find a place to step or sit by spading the ground with long knives. Two men jab too hard and the war ends for them.

Just off the island, an American minesweeper makes one too many passes over a clock mine. The mine blows and the sweep explodes in a great spout of water, listing heavily, its ports on one side running blood. Big Johnny grabs the landing craft tiller from his coxswain and turns the landing craft to speed toward the stricken vessel.

Men tumble over the side of the sinking minesweeper and, as we haul up next to her, we see a tall man walking calmly, stark naked. He is blowing up a rubber float and, at the side, he pauses to tie off the rubber nozzle, and he dives with the float held above his head.

We pick up the naked man, who has turned almost blue from the water's chill, and a dozen other sailors, all dazed and shaken.

Utah Beach is going very well. I hear differently about Omaha Beach. Then I'm back on the Bayfield and I bump into an Army colonel with a medical insignia on his collar. He has just come aboard from another ship. I collar the colonel.

"You know a doctor, a major, named James M. Higginbotham?"

"Know him?" the colonel says, "I'm damned well looking for him. Medics from the invasion teams are OK on Utah. I've got to check out Omaha Beach. Jim is supposed to be there with two teams from the Third Auxiliary surgical unit. I'm told they've given up the beach where he landed. Why?"

"He's my brother."

"Brother," the colonel says. "Let's shake down a boat from the admiral and see if we can find him."

So together we go to see if we can find my only brother, a major in the medical corps, who is supposed to have landed with his surgical team on a part of Omaha Beach given up to enemy fire in the early hours of the invasion.

We go to Adm. Moon, in command of the Navy off Utah Beach, and ask for a landing craft and a coxswain to run it. We intend to cross eight miles of open water, never swept for explosive mines, and scout Easy Red, the far left flank of Omaha Beach. Only later would we learn that our invading forces lost 1,700 men there in the first assault.

Moon looks skeptical and waves a shaking hand east and south, saying, "You mean there?"

"Yes, sir," the medical colonel says.

"Go," Moon says, shaking his head. (Weeks later I heard that Moon shot himself in his bunk aboard the USS Bayfield en route to a Navy command during the invasion of the South of France. His death was recorded as battle fatigue.)

Somehow we reach Easy Red. There is sheer cliff all along Omaha Beach, and right under the bluff top we find some men. The first man out is my brother, Jim. He has a shrapnel cut on his forehead, but otherwise he seems OK. He puts out a hand.

"What the hell are you doing here, Bill? Don't you know any by God better?"

All I can do is grin and offer my hand.

Like all men who landed that June 6, from the sea and from the air, Jim has a story, which he recalls to me: The medic teams go in unarmed on three landing craft. The Navy lieutenant in command of their little flotilla calls Jim back to his bridge as the ranking Army officer aboard and says, "Major, just got a signal. This place is gone, given up. What do you want to do?"

There is a destroyer behind them sending continuous fire toward the beach, and the beach is answering, some of the shells falling in the water.

Jim is 15 years older than the sailor. Jim puts a hand on the youth's hand and says, "Son, you see that lead hitting the water ahead of us and behind us?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, get our asses in there," he said, pointing to a spot on the beach, "where we can at least dig into the ground. Go, dammit, go, go."

The three little landing craft fall

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

## MEMORY...Continued

in line, racing at top speed. And just as shells find the lead craft, officers and men jump and splash, some going in over their heads. Surgical gear is smashed and lost in the surf, but the men crawl to the bluff and start climbing. Halfway up they dig in with shovels and hands. Some are middle-age surgeons. One is a Hollywood society doctor. Another is a university professor. Here they are simply bodies hoping to survive. Some of them do.

Now, after Jim and I meet, the medical colonel satisfies himself about the condition of the teams, and arranges for replacement of lost gear. Then an officer in one team takes me aside to say, "Bill, we're going to cite your brother Jim for at least the Silver Star, and all of us are going to sign it. Will you help us write the citation?"

I help and later, over a strong drink from a tin canteen that Jim has found, I say to him, "They say you're a hero. What about that?"

"That's crap, Bill," Jim says. "Those guys, they're not country boys like we are. They're damned soft city boys who can't swim or are too old to be here and I had to haul them out of the water and kick their butts to keep them moving. That's all."

Jim is about half the size of some of his fellows, and that isn't the story they tell. The story is this: At the peak of the firefight on the beach, Jim collects the few medic kits they've salvaged and goes man to man among the wounded strewn along the waterfront, patching them where he can, moving those who can be moved. (Jim finally did receive the Silver Star for his bravery on the beachhead.)

All the while, I write stories. Two never did come out of the censors' hands. One was particularly intriguing. It was a yarn about the ingenious way the military collected men of the 101st Airborne in Cherbourg who, by the time that city was taken, were scattered throughout Normandy. The military reopened a whorehouse there that had formerly catered to German soldiers. An old movie theater in the middle of a single block of row houses, it could be quickly isolated by military police standing across both ends of the street.

Word had spread that a soldier who wanted a woman could buy a ticket at the box office of the old theater. Then, when the soldier emerged, he was grabbed by an MP, who took his name and outfit and gave him orders on where to report. As a collection point, the whore-

BALTIMORE SUN

3 June 1984 Pg. 27-28, 30-31

# BACK TRACKS

By Fred Rasmussen

**F**or those Baltimoreans who had gone to bed the night of June 5, 1944, hoping the Allies would continue to win in Italy after capturing Rome, the news the next morning would prove to be simply astonishing.

On their doorsteps that June 6 morning would be an extra edition of *The Sun* put together so hastily it didn't even have the weather forecast:

**ALLIES INVADING FRANCE,  
TROOPS LAND IN NORMANDY**

What had been foreshadowed three days earlier, with an erroneous report June 3 that the invasion of Europe had begun, now was reality.

*The Sun* carried this news item with a London dateline: "Prime Minister Churchill told the House of Commons today that an immense Allied armada of 4,000 ships with several thousand smaller craft had carried Allied forces across the Channel for the invasion of Europe." Churchill also said that massed air-

borne landings had been successfully effected behind the German lines.

The front page also carried Eisenhower's Order of the Day.

"Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the following order of the day to his invasion troops today:

"Soldiers, sailors and armies of the Allied Expeditionary Force:

"You are about to embark on a great crusade. The eyes of the world are upon you, and the hopes and prayers of all liberty-loving people go with you. . . ."

And there was other news in the paper that morning:

• "Walter J. Seif, chairman of the organization for the fifth War Loan campaign, announced yesterday that the Italian-American group, under the chairmanship of Representative Thomas D'Alesandro, has accepted a campaign quota of \$2,570,000."

• Gilman Country School awarded 13 diplomas. Four members of the class were away in the armed

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

house got results.

I catch up with Jim again as the battle for St. Lo, a Normandy hinge-point, is developing, and we ride a few miles together in a weapons carrier loaded with hospital gear. I ask whether he has heard from our mother in Bowling Green, Mo. She is the only other living member of our family. She has five battle stars in her window at home — one for each of her family in the service. (That custom of putting a flag in the window showing a star for each member of the household serving in the armed forces seems to have been unique to World War II.)

Our mother's stars were for Jim and other kids she raised — orphaned relatives — but none for me, because I'm only a war correspondent.

Jim says, "Yeah, one letter. She saw the piece you wrote in a St. Louis paper. She said, 'Oh, I'm so glad your father is not alive to go through this because with both you boys there together he simply couldn't have taken it.'"

"Of course," I say, "she can."

(Mother's letters to Jim were lost

when he had to abandon a hospital, taking out his patients, in the Battle of the Bulge during the following winter. Jim died a few years ago in Chattanooga, Tenn., after a distinguished career as a surgeon.)

No, 40 years doesn't begin to dim the memory. On the first few anniversaries of D-Day, people could remember exactly where they were and what they were doing that day, whether they were in the midst of battle or hearing of it from afar. By now, D-Day has passed into folklore.

Experts separate World War II from later wars by saying, "They knew what they were fighting for." Of course, that belittles the dogfaces who took it in Korea and Vietnam and elsewhere.

Still, J.R.R. Tolkien, who wrote the books about the Hobbit, remarked that it is well to take it into account whether there is a dragon in the neighborhood. Well, there was one, and on June 6, 1944, many little guys were hungry for the dragon, and from that day, the dragon was doomed. Who can forget it?

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BACK TRACKS...Continued

forces. The class of 1944 included Matthew C. Fenton 3d and Daniel Willard 3d, grandson of the late president of the B&O.

• Goucher College held its annual commencement week step-singing and daisy chain ceremonies on the lawn of Goucher Hall before a large group of parents and friends.

• The Orioles had beaten the Red Wings, 4-2, and were scheduled to play Rochester at Oriole Park that night at 8:30.

And life went on in other areas as well.

In business, the New York Stock Exchange index featured 30 industrials at 73.5, 15 railroads at 27.5 and 15 utilities at 36.5. Baltimore & Ohio Railroad stock was reported at 7 1/2; Bethlehem Steel, 58; Black & Decker, 19 1/2, and the Pennsylvania Railroad at 29 1/4. On the Baltimore Exchange, USF&G was selling at 37 1/4 and Arundel Corporation at 15 1/2.

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad reported wartime record May carloadings of 341,476.

For entertainment Baltimoreans could go to Keiths, at Lexington and Park avenue, where "Her Primitive Man," starring Louise Allbritton, Robert Paige, Robert Benchley, Edward Everett Horton, Helen Broderick, Walter Catlett and Ernest Truex, was playing.

Or they might want to take in the "Song of Bernadette" at the Rex on York road or "Meet the People" at Loews Century or catch Charles Boyer, Ingrid Bergman and Joseph Cotten in "Gaslight" at the Valencia.

Others might head for the Hippodrome at Eutaw and Baltimore streets, where Woody Herman and his orchestra were starring live in a "gala midnight show."

Or, for \$2.41, orchestra seats could be had for "Able's Irish Rose" at Ford's Theatre. The cheapest seat went for 91 cents.

But the war affected Baltimoreans' lives in curious ways, too. For instance, in an ad featuring several servicemen and a telephone operator, the Chesapeake &

7 A.M. THE SUN EXTRA

BAaltimore, Tuesday, June 6, 1944

ALLIES INVADING FRANCE, TROOPS LAND IN NORMANDY

BULLETINS

London, June 6 (AP)—Prime Minister Churchill said the House of Commons today that an immense Allied armada of 1,000 ships with several thousand landing craft had carried Allied forces across the Channel for the invasion of Europe. Churchill also said that Allied air forces had been successfully directed behind the German lines.



AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS AIMED FROM CHERBOUR TO LE HAVRE, NAZIS SA

General Montgomery in Charge Of Assault, Eisenhower's Headquarters Reports—Strong Navy And Air Support Backs Troops

London, June 6 (AP)—The German press report today that their British parachute divisions had been between Le Havre and Cherbourg in France. This was five times the size of the first parachute force dropped in Crete in the Mediterranean.

ALLIES PURSUE FLEEING NAZIS NORTH OF ROME

Rome, June 6 (AP)—Allied armor and motorized infantry are pushing through Rome today, capturing its right bank and proceeding with the task of destroying the German armor armor being in the north.

VICTORY NOT NEAR, WAR DEPARTMENT ROOSEVELT WARNS; WORKS ALL NIGHT

WASHINGTON, June 6 (AP)—The war is not over, and the end is not in sight, the War Department said today.

KING TURNS RULE OVER TO UNBROT

London, June 6 (AP)—King George VI today turned the reins of government over to Winston Churchill.

Eisenhower's Order Of Day

General Eisenhower's order of the day to the troops of the First Army, June 6, 1944.

Potomac Telephone Company admonished: "The boys in camp know how hard she tries to get their calls through. They will thank you, too, if you leave the long-distance wires from 7 to 10 for the servicemen. This is the best time many of them have to call."

The editorial page that morning contained no mention of the invasion. Editorials ranged from comment on the drowning at Lake Roland of two boys to the Supreme Court and to an editorial declaring the Ku Klux Klan was not dead, but only sleeping. Another editorial said: "This is an 'on' year for most fruit crops. Whether the fruit will be cheap is a question for the OPA. But at least it will be plentiful."

And the news touched local hearts as the paper reported:

• Pastors said they felt the ringing of church bells or calling special services when the invasion is announced would "tend to create even more emotional disturbances" among congregations. Churches of

many faiths were open at all times for prayer.

• Howard Baetjer 2d, who was reported missing after a flight over Yugoslavia April 16, was alive and safe, "according to a cable received by his father, Harry N. Baetjer of Eccleston, Baltimore county."

• H. Herbert Lloyd, lieutenant, USAAF, of Frederick was missing over Germany. Ralph H. Currens, sergeant, USAAF, of Frederick was a prisoner of war.

However, it wasn't until June 7 that the full impact of the invasion on Baltimoreans was reported.

"The eagerly anticipated invasion of Western Europe at last a grim and sobering reality, Baltimore last night was calm, watchful and not a little afraid," The Sun reported.

"Earlier in the morning as the first Allied landings in France were reported, there had been jubilation, excitement and even skepticism.

"But as bulletin after bulletin recounted the Allies' battle toward Paris

kilometer by kilometer, the glamour attended upon the dramatic opening thrust across the Channel dissipated.

"Rejoicing quickly was tempered by anxiety for friends and loved ones."

People reacted in different ways to the news.

• Following the request of Governor Herbert R. O'Connor, bars and taverns closed for the day. The downtown theaters were empty and Sun Square, at the corner of Baltimore and Charles street, was quiet.

• In Hagerstown fire alarms were sounded, and in Cumberland whistles and

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## A LANDSCAPE OF D-DAY MEMORIES

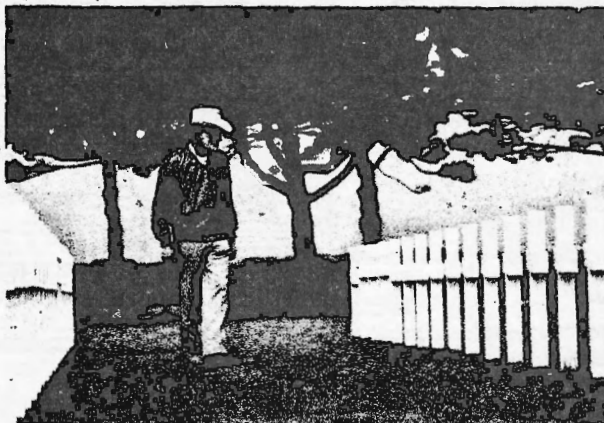
BALTIMORE SUN  
MAGAZINE

3 June 1984

Pgs. 12-19, 38

# 40 years ago

By Robert Ruby / Photos by David Harp



## Normandy

The cemetery overlooks a beach on the northern coast of France, in the stubbornly rural province called Normandy.

There are more than 9,000 graves arranged in rows so perfectly straight as to suggest the American soldiers buried there are about to parade.

Forty years ago this week, the soldiers began landing on the wide beaches below as part of D-Day, the Allied invasion of Europe that ultimately ended World War

II on the Continent. Only some of them arrived that first day, June 6, 1944. But at some point during the war they all waded ashore at Omaha Beach, beneath the cemetery cliff, or at the less rugged Utah Beach a few miles to the west. And were shot. Or piloted a bomber over occupied France and crashed. Or during the night before the first landing craft reached the coast, parachuted into a marsh just deep enough for the weight of the wet silk and equipment to cause them to drown.

A few miles away is a more densely populated cemetery at the crossroads called La Cambe. It is the burial ground for the losers. In sheer numbers, the 21,000 Germans there would be enough to populate most of the towns they occupied in the province and lost. As if to keep sympathy in check, the headstones are a discreet dark brown and flush

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

## BACK TRACKS...Continued

bells were rung to announce the invasion.

"Here, unlike other cities," *The Sun* reported, "there was no public signaling of the event. The first announcements of the Allied landings were made while most Baltimoreans still slept. Generally, people heard of the crossing and sea sickness, the landing and the fighting several hours later, as they dressed, ate or rode to work."

• At the Bethlehem Fairfield Shipyard, there was a special rally at noon and the Victory Production Committee sent a cable to General

## Eisenhower.

• At Westinghouse Electric Company, radio news broadcasts were transmitted over the plant public address system.

• In the public schools, radios were left on to keep the students informed on the progress of the invasion. At Poly, however, radios were switched off for three hours due to spring examinations.

Baltimore merchants were quick to respond with full-page ads in the paper. The Brager-Eisenberg department store copy simply read: "Lafayette, we are here... Again."

The editorial page June 7 featured a cartoon by Edmund Duffy,

the Pulitzer Prize winner, with the caption: "The Ramparts We Smash," featuring the torch of liberty burning into a Nazi swastika.

The lead editorial ran under the headline, "The Cause is Good":

"Four years of anxiety and preparation have been brought to bear on a short section of the French coast. Now the first great surge of excitement and release has worn away. And there is no disposition to cheer nor any occasion to. The awful magnitude of these plans now going into execution, the mounting fury of the fighting and the simple bravery of the men who have the task in hand, deny us that satisfaction." ■

## NORMANDY...Continued

with the ground. In the visitors book, the most frequently written remark is the word "why," in English, German or French, followed by a question mark.

And scattered beside the stone Norman churches are the small plots for the French. They are the least conspicuous of all. There is a jumble of metal crosses painted white, or at the end of a one-lane road there is a plaque on the blackened wall of a church abandoned after the Germans or an Allied bomb set it afire. Sometimes the most that could be engraved on the cross is "an old woman," or "ossements" — bones.

It's a happy and sad time for the survivors. For many of them, the 40th anniversary is the last major occasion they will be young enough to tour the beaches and hedgerows where the fighting took place. So there are more and more tour buses and rental cars arriving at the cemeteries. American and British veterans, white-haired, pace the grounds with wives who up to now have heard the story but not seen it. Some of the veterans cry.

"I never thought I'd get back," Baltimore native Thomas W. Shaffer says, looking for familiar names on the graves.

Back to the United States alive? Or back to Normandy? "Both." This big man in a white stetson can barely speak for the tears. "I haven't been sad on the trip till I got here."

A career officer, retired now, walks down the rows and comes back smiling: "It makes me happy I made it."

"Well, we were young," John A. Fry, a captain on D-Day, says after the same tour. "I think hitting the beach is a day that stands out just like the day I was married, and like the day I watched my father die."

The workings of the tides and dunes mean the old battlefields are more easily imagined than seen. Omaha and Utah beaches these days are most often talked about as places for brisk swims, or as the site for a vacation home. Low tide uncovers a flat beach hundreds of yards wide that local jockeys find ideal for giving horses exercise.

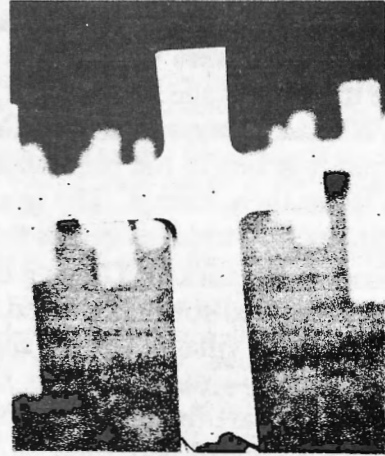
The countryside of ancient walls hasn't lent itself to large monuments other than the graves. Time is well on the way to making D-Day the disconnected past instead of the almost present. The cemeteries are nearly as much landscape as felt memory. In Normandy, D-Day is nearing dusk.

*My dearest Odette, Simone, Jacqueline and all,*

*A few lines in answering to your sweet letter received yesterday. I was very glad to know you were all in good health. Here at home we are all well and working very hard. I have had four different jobs since I got home from the army.*

Odette Bernard keeps the letters in a Fanny Farmer candy box, and they are signed "Slim," "Clyde," "Yoyo" and "Charlie." They are about to tear at the folds.

She was 20 at the time of D-Day, and Odette and her sisters, Simone and Jacqueline, lived on their parents' dairy farm near the village called St. Fromond. Forty years



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NORMANDY...Continued

ago, her parents and their neighbors were glaring at each other because Odette was bringing flowers to the grave of a crashed pilot and bringing unwanted attention from German authorities looking for the culprit. "We were waiting and waiting for the invasion," she says.

When D-Day came, the Germans ordered families in the path of the invaders to leave their homes. The landscape was permanently traumatized in the minds of those who returned. Driving on the country roads, Odette sees wounded soldiers behind a hedge where I see sleeping cows. At a village bridge, she wants us to slow because there was — there is — a burning tank. Germans and Americans are firing from opposite banks.

The Bernards left their home with three horses, food and the family jewels, and walked in the direction away from the fighting. They moved from farm to farm for two months. Each barn usually sheltered a half-dozen families living off the generosity of the farmers. On August 16, their paths safely crossed that of the Americans, and they began walking back to St. Fromond.

Old pictures show the dismal scene. Shells had torn through the roof of the house and there were big gaps in the front wall. Of the herd of 30 cows, the family eventually found one, La Belle, who was its supply of milk for the last winter of the war.

It wasn't long before the Americans noticed the family included three daughters. Odette unpacks her old dance cards ("headquarters company, Omaha district, 'a salute to the girls,' real coffee") and isn't shy about the photos. She and her sisters stand with Yoyo and the rest in discreet poses built around jeeps, uniformed arms around slender waists.

In the weeks as refugees from the fighting, the Bernards spent one night at the farm of Odette's uncle, Arthur Michel. He is 85 and as nearly typical of the province as the flinty walls: blue-eyed, blue-smocked, not much of an enthusiast for cities, strong-willed, clearly keeper of his castle. When strangers are present, his wife, Yvette, calls him *monsieur*.

Mr. Michel was just as typical in the province for his lack of regard for the German occupiers. Late one night, he and his neighbors heard the unmistakable crash of a plane. When he went to get the next morning's milk, a uniformed man came out from bushes 100 yards from the house to ask for a place to sleep. He wanted food and to know where the Germans were. Mr. Michel took the Englishman to his house.

Just hearing the beginning of the story again, Mrs. Michel interrupts with a sigh.

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"Don't think my husband was brave or a hero," she says. "He's a moderate man. He simply has very good sense."

Mr. Michel was able to get the flier false papers that, in case he was stopped

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## NORMANDY...Continued

by the Germans, identified him as a jeweler, and he was given a plausible story to tell. For some weeks, the airman lived in an upstairs bedroom. Food was so scarce that when Mr. Michel brought home bread he cut it into 32 slices, one for each of the refugees on the farm. Some of the French objected to an Englishman taking a share, but none denounced Mr. Michel to the authorities. Eventually the flier was reunited with the Allies.

Forty years later, an American coming to the house is an immediate ally — a friend. No introduction needed. Sit here at the dining room table: come back for a meal. And at every visit, out come the Christmas cards, nearly 40 years worth, from the Royal Air Force Escaping Society. Then, at the end, the certificate signed by Dwight D. Eisenhower, General of the Army. It thanks Arthur Michel for "gallant service in assisting the escape of Allied soldiers from the enemy."

Everyone at the table enjoys hearing the story another time. It's hard to believe a war could have happened in such an impassive place. Odette, back in her own home, repacks the letters and photos. She cries a little: some of the letters are addressed to her sister, Simone, who is now dead. "For us," says Odette, "those were the best years."

*One job is with a leather company, one with a bus company as a chauffeur. And as a weaver for cloth for clothes. Am now working in a silk mill for silk stockings, silk dresses and such things as that.*

*I have had three different automobiles, and at the present time I do not have any.*

French children are playing in what looks to be a Bauhaus building gone terribly wrong. It's a slab-sided concrete mushroom planted in a field, and its center is open to the English Channel.

A father hoists his daughter onto his shoulders to get a better look. She straddles the sculpture in the

center and slides on it about a foot. Her outsized toy is the rusted artillery piece in the rusted turret of a German pillbox.

Georges Mourot, her father, is too young for wartime memories, but he is telling the history of the guns at Longues Sur-Mer and nearby Omaha Beach. They were manned by Germans but built by French workers not yet deported to work in German factories.

Forced labor is perhaps what most embittered the Normans. They were involuntarily building much of the Atlantic wall of pillboxes and command posts. At the same time, the Germans requisitioned a large share of their crops. At Omaha Beach, the French-built guns in the French-built emplacement caused heavy casualties and some hours of doubt as to whether American troops would be pushed back into the Channel. "This is a sad story for everyone," Mr. Mourot says.

In some towns, D-Day is the happiest event in memory. In Ste. Mere Eglise, talking about the invasion is both the chief recreation and industry.

American paratroopers landed there beginning just before midnight on June 5 to secure roads vital for the success of the dawn landings at Utah Beach.

It was a grisly night. A house fire, probably caused by a stray American bomb, gave German soldiers the wind toward the townspeople passing buckets of water. But at 4:30 in the morning of June 6, the American flag was flying in the town square, as it does today.

Even for somber Normandy, this is a stolid, gray town. The square-towered church, which hid persistent German snipers, is best described as austere. Ste. Mere Eglise is little more than a north-south street that runs to Cherbourg and an east-west road joining it to Utah Beach, plus the loop of streets around the church. Sheep graze next to city hall. But much happened here.

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Across from the church, Jeanne Pentacote leads the way into the kitchen of her cafe to show the window from where she saw the paratroopers land. Raymond Paris points out the water pump next to the church, where he helped fill buckets of the fire brigade.

By D-Day, Mr. Paris had already done a lot. As cashier in the notary's office, he was second only to the mayor in signing — forging — the mayor's name. His talent was false identity papers. He simply says he wrote quite well. His life, he says, is not divided into years. He prefers "before the landing" and "after the landing."

But the invasion is not —

can not be — in mind every day. In the town of Carentan, in 1944, Frenchmen put British and American flags on the memorial to the dead of World War I, to celebrate liberation. Since then, plaques have been added for victims of wars in Indochina and Algeria as well as World War II.

A few streets away from the monument, sisters at a convent open a door to examine a photograph taken in 1944. It shows a sister in a billowy habit shoveling debris of a battle.

Yes, the sisters say, the photo shows this convent. It shows this doorway, where we stand. But they say by their silence, no, it is not remarkable. Broken buildings were for some years only an ordinary Norman scene.

There should be no surprise the convent — the beaches, the hedgerows, the stone walls and churches — is there as it was the century before. Some of the cemeteries, though, are new.

*I sold all of the cars and made a good lot of money on each of them. I do not like to walk, but if I can make a lot of money and not work I like that. Wouldn't you?*

*I wish I was back over there some time to visit my good French friends. But it is too far now. Maybe someday I can come back.*

*I better close for now. So write to me again, and I will do the same.*

*As ever your American pal,  
Clyde.* ■

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## Filling shelves with books on June 6: D-day

It's possible to fill a small library with books about World War II. And a sizable section of that library could easily be devoted to accounts written about D-day. Which is as it should be. The Allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, was one of the most complex and daring operations in the history of modern warfare.

Moreover, the battle produced some of the bitterest controversies of the entire war, many of which continue to be debated in print (and otherwise) to this day. Since 1981, for example, there have been at least seven books published about the events surrounding Normandy.

Two, *Patton's Gap* by Richard Rohmer and *The War Between the Generals* by David Irving, have little historical value, but the other five, David Belchem's "Victory in Normandy," Russell F. Weigly's "Eisenhower's Lieutenants," Carlo D'Este's "Decision in Normandy," Nigel Hamilton's "Master of the Battlefield: Monty's War Years" and Max Hastings's "Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy," merit serious attention.

Victory in Normandy is a fairly conventional account of the battle by David Belchem, one of Gen. Bernard Law Montgomery's senior staff officers. But it has a definite tilt toward Montgomery, who commanded the Allied ground forces during the invasion.

Offsetting General Belchem's account is Carlo D'Este's 1983 book, *Decision in Normandy*, one of the best written (and most thoroughly researched) accounts ever of the campaign.

D'Este, a former career Army officer, is no apologist for Montgomery. He castigates him for failing to quickly capture the strategic city of Caen and for ignoring requests to reinforce the Canadian army, a mistake that allowed Germany to withdraw most of its troops through the now-famous Argentan-Falaise gap.

Max Hastings's book, *Overlord: D-Day and the Battle for Normandy*, which contains some excellent maps and line drawings, is based on British historian Sir Basil Liddell Hart's thesis that, "There has been too much glorification of the campaign and too little objective investigation."

Hastings's investigation gives short shrift to chauvinistic legends. It credits the Germans with fighting "one of the fiercest defensive battles of all time." Moreover, it finds Allied armored and infantry tactics woefully inadequate, and its weapons "inferior in every category, except artillery."

The battle was won, Hastings believes, because of massive Allied air superiority. But even that, he insists, would not have been enough without huge exertions by Allied ground troops, whose resourcefulness and determination won the day.

The other two books, Russell F. Weigly's *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* and Nigel Hamilton's *Master of the Battlefields*, the second volume in Hamilton's

exhaustive biography of Montgomery, offer good, comprehensive accounts of Normandy and the campaign in Northwest Europe from the American and British points of view.

Hamilton, of course, has had access to Montgomery's personal papers, and has been able to use them to good advantage in trying to explain Montgomery's reasons for many of the seriously flawed decisions he made in Normandy.

Montgomery's own account of the battle, *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Montgomery*, published in 1958, is an invaluable source of information. So are accounts by British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, contained in *Triumph and Tragedy* (1954), and Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander, contained in *Crusade in Europe* (1948) and in Volume 3 of his *Papers*.

Two of the most critically objective biographies on Eisenhower, *The Supreme Commander* (1970) and *Eisenhower: Volume 1: Soldier, General of the Army, President Elect* (1983), were written by Stephen Ambrose, a history professor at the University of New Orleans and editor of the Eisenhower papers. Although Ambrose by no means ignores Eisenhower's wartime experiences in his most recent book, the 1970 book gives a much more detailed account of events surrounding D-day.

Perhaps the single best book about the battle (one of the most readable, certainly) is Cornelius Ryan's *The Longest Day* (1959). Ryan, a former war correspondent for *Time* magazine, interviewed scores of participants in the fighting and created a comprehensive and exciting account of the fighting.

Forrest C. Pogue's biography of U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George C. Marshall, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943-1945* (1965) is also excellent. Marshall, whom Churchill judged "more remarkable for his gifts of statesmanship than for his gifts as a military strategist," was involved in Operation Overlord from its conception.

Among the books by field commanders in Normandy are Omar Bradley's *A Soldier's Story* (1952) and *A General's Life* (1982, with Clay Blair); Frederick deGuingand's *Operation Victory* (1960); James M. Gavin's *On to Berlin* (1978); Hastings Ismay's *Memoirs* (1960), and George S. Patton's *War As I Knew It* (1947).

On the other side are Heinz Guderian's *Panzer Leader* (1952); Hans Spiedel's *Invasion 1944* (1950) and *We Defended Normandy* (1951), and Walter Warlimont's *Inside Hitler's Headquarters* (1962).

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, who was in charge of Germany's defenses in the west, committed suicide after the July, 1944, plot on Hitler's life and left nothing written about the battle (although his captured papers are available). One of the best accounts about the role of the brilliant but high-strung and mercurial German commander in the campaign is contained in *Rommel in Normandy* by Frederick Ruge.

A companion book is Siegfried Westphal's *The German Army in the West* (1951). General Westphal, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt's able and respected chief of staff, is convincing in his argument that Rommel's presence at Normandy on D-day (he was away from the front visiting his wife on her birthday) could have changed events substantially.

Finally, there is a vast treasure trove of battlefield reminiscences and divisional and regimental

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# D-DAY 1984

## Europeans Looking for Reaffirmation Of U.S. Commitment to Their Defense

By Michael Dobbs  
Washington Post Foreign Service

OMAHA BEACH, France—Next Wednesday, on the 40th anniversary of the D-Day landings, President Reagan will descend by helicopter on a 175-acre field planted with row after row of white crosses, each marking the grave of a fallen American serviceman.

The principal theme of the president's mission—apart from whatever political gains he can make for his reelection campaign—will be to persuade a skeptical world that Americans are prepared to die for the cause of Europe's freedom once again.

There is no more powerful symbol of America's links with Europe than the 50-mile strip of sandy beach on the western coast of Normandy.

It was here that the western allies under the supreme command of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower aimed the long-awaited blow that foreshadowed the end to Hitler's Reich. And it was here that the United States was formally invested with the global responsibilities of the world's leading superpower.

But Europe, America and the world have all changed since 1944. The young men who waded ashore onto the invasion beaches are now aged between 60 and 70. In western Europe, there is a perception that the geostrategic priorities of America's new leaders are in the process of shifting away from the old continent. In America, there is a feeling that the Europeans

should stop complaining about Uncle Sam and do much more for their own defense.

America's erstwhile enemy, Germany, has become a friend. The wartime ally, the Soviet Union, is now the natural adversary.

The significance of D-Day in 1984 lies in the psychological counterweight it provides to political uncertainty that has arisen as a result of the change in generations and the shift in the global balance of power. That at least is the view of Maurice Schumann who served as a French liaison officer with a British commando unit on D-Day and went on to become foreign minister under Gen. Charles de Gaulle.

"This year's D-Day ceremonies are bringing the president of the United States back to the beaches along with thousands of Americans. This is going to mean an essential and perhaps decisive contribution to the restoration of the balance in American foreign policy between the Pacific and the Atlantic," Schumann predicted.

"The message of history" contained in D-Day, according to Schumann, is that it would be "suicide" for the United States to contemplate turning its back on Europe.

Apart from the war memorials dotted along the Normandy coastline, and remnants of Hitler's supposedly "impregnable" Atlantic wall, there are few visible signs of the bloody battles that took place here 40 years ago. Wartime memorabilia like old German helmets, uniforms and weapons have been stuck in museums and the beaches have given up their shrapnel to souvenir hunters.

Soon after D-Day, German prisoners of war were put to work clearing the sand dunes of anti-invasion obstacles like land mines and the spindly sticks known as "Rommel's asparagus"—named for German

general Erwin Rommel—that were connected to deadly underwater explosives. Today it is only the beaches' wartime code names—Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword—that conjure up memories of the ghastly carnage that once occurred here.

What accounts for the almost compulsive fascination that these places continue to exercise is not the visual reminder of war but the reminiscences of the 154,000 American, British and Canadian soldiers who participated in D-Day as well as the French they came to liberate.

"D-Day means something to everybody who speaks English. It's one of those phrases that enjoys a universal currency. People who arrived in Normandy on D-Day as opposed to the day afterward are tremendously proud of it—and can be fanatical about that being recognized. It's the case of a day having a luminosity of its own," said John Keegan, a British military historian and author of "Six Armies of Normandy," one of the standard books about the invasion.

American memories of D-Day include the dreadful seasickness suffered by many of the soldiers due to the turbulent weather on the way across the English Channel, bets as to who would make it and who would not, parachutists searching for each other in the dark or sinking helplessly into swamps under the weight of their own equipment, buddies blown apart by land mines, the incapacitating physical fear produced by wading onto a beach under enemy fire.

The predicament of many of the Americans who landed at Omaha, scene of the bloodiest German bombardment, was summed up with brutal candor by Col. George A. Taylor who persuaded his troops to move up the cliffs by yelling: "Two kinds of people are staying on this beach—the dead and those who are going to die. Now let's get the hell out of here."

The most abiding recollections of D-Day for local French people are of the sight of an armada of 5,000 ships stretching across the horizon, of night skies lit up by brilliant flashes of bombs and artillery shells, of days spent crouching in ditches and hedge-

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### BOOKS...Continued

histories available to students of the battle. There are also voluminous newspaper files of major daily newspapers, as well as several books about wartime activities and attitudes, including *Don't You Know There's A War On?* by Richard R. Lingeman (1965) and *The Homefront* by Mark Jonathan Harris, Franklin D. Mitchell and Steven J. Schechter (1984).

Lingeman's book is an account of life in America during World War II, from V-girls and V-mail to Ernie Pyle and Rosie the Riveter. Harris, Mitchell and Schechter have compiled an oral history of a cross-section of ordinary American civilians from shipyard workers and factory hands to store clerks and farmers.

JOHN KELLY

Mr. Kelly writes for *The Sun*.

D-DAY 1984...Continued

rows while allied planes bombed everything that moved in the towns and villages of Normandy.

For members of the resistance, there is the memory of the British Broadcasting Corp. broadcast of the second line of Paul Verlaine's poem ("Pierce my heart with a monotonous languor"), signaling that the invasion was imminent.

There is a black-and-white simplicity about D-Day that is absent from today's more complicated world. After four years of Nazi domination of Europe, the issues at stake were clear cut. People knew why they were fighting and why the invasion was necessary.

"We were fighting for freedom, the freedom of the world," insisted Harvey Koenig, a former U.S. Ranger returning for the first time to the scene of his company's heroic assault on German gun positions on the 100-foot cliff at Pointe du Hoc.

He went on: "When I volunteered for the Army in '39 before the war even started, they asked me why. I told them I wanted to fight the war on foreign soil, not on our soil. My mother can't fight it, my dad can't fight it, and later on it was my girlfriend whom I was engaged to. That's why I fought it—for freedom and to end the damn thing."

For Leon Villiers, a local French farmer who recalls meeting American parachutists on the day of the invasion, D-Day meant "quite simply liberty: Once again we became a free people who could express ourselves freely."

The deep impression produced by those first encounters is caught in the 13th century church at Ste.-Mere-Eglise which was the first town in France to be liberated from German occupation, at 4.30 a.m. on June 6, 1944. A stained glass window in the church, installed after the war, shows the Virgin and Child surrounded by American paratroops descending from the sky.

There is a sense in which the present balance of world power can be traced back to D-Day. If the invasion of Normandy confirmed the United States as a superpower, in contrast to its relative isolation in 1939 when the war broke out, it also marked a step in the historic decline of Great Britain and France's obsession with its own independence.

After investing so much national effort in standing alone against Hitler at the beginning of the war, Britain had reached the point of exhaustion by 1944. British commanders initially resisted the American determination to land in force in France.

For Gen. de Gaulle, the leader of the Free French movement in exile, the invasion of Normandy was a bittersweet mo-

**D-DAY 1944****Allies Met Unexpected Resistance,  
But Masses of Materiel Prevailed**

By Richard Harwood  
Washington Post staff writer

The summer of 1944 was a grisly season, perhaps the most cruel in human history.

The remorseless Nazi slaughter of millions of Jews and East Europeans proceeded apace. The vast plains of the Soviet Union had become an immense killing ground for Russian and German armies. The great cities of Europe were in ruins. Italy was lit-

tered with shattered bodies and towns. In the Pacific, Americans began their death struggle with the Japanese for the central islands. All of Asia was caught in the frenzy of war and all the oceans of the earth were graveyards for men and ships.

As June came on, the Allied forces prepared for the decisive thrust of World War II. It came

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ment. The secondary role played by his troops, and what he regarded as the deliberate snub by president Franklin D. Roosevelt in failing to inform him of the allied plans in advance, confirmed his suspicions of the "Anglo-Saxons."

The experience of playing second fiddle to Roosevelt and Britain's Winston Churchill made de Gaulle more determined than ever to restore his country's self-esteem, a process that led naturally to France's withdrawal from the military wing of NATO decades later.

While the western allies were securing their beachhead in Normandy, the Red Army was poised on the borders of Poland having borne the brunt of the fighting against Nazi Germany for nearly three years.

"Whatever our opinion about the Soviet Union now, we must never forget that D-Day might never even have been attempted had it not been for the huge losses which the Red Army inflicted upon the Germans from 1941 to 1944," remarked Schumann.

The importance of the invasion of Normandy, Schumann said, was the blow it dealt to German morale. Up until June 1944, it was still possible for the German Army to believe in final victory.

"Once it was established that we could not be pushed back into the sea, that we were there [on the mainland of Europe] and remained there, no German could have the slightest doubt about the outcome of the war. Psychologically, it was absolutely decisive," he said.

For western military historians like Keegan, the Normandy campaign was probably the biggest single allied victory of the war, costing the Germans more territory than any other campaign. He points out, how-

ever, that American loss of life was relatively low—many times less proportionately than the Soviet Union which lost 20 million men in the war or indeed any other European nation.

"For me, that's the key difference between Europeans and Americans. Americans haven't suffered. That's why the United States is such a fascinating country [for a European]: It's like going to a place without original sin... America rose to world power more cheaply than any other nation has ever done," said Keegan in a telephone interview from Princeton University where he is a visiting professor of history.

The present mood of doubt in France and other European countries over American intentions was reflected in a cover story in the latest edition of the French weekly, L'Express. Pegged to the D-Day ceremonies, it was entitled "The United States—Imperial Solitude" and began with the question, "Can we count on the Americans to defend Europe?"

Part of the answer to the concerns raised on both sides of the Atlantic can surely be found in the graves of the 9,386 American servicemen in the U.S. war cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer. Joseph P. Rivers, the cemetery's superintendent, estimates that the number of visitors increases by between 5 and 10 percent every year.

Seeking to explain the drawing power of the graves, set on a windy cliff overlooking Omaha Beach, Rivers said: "It reflects the uncertainty of the times. People are casting their minds back to what happened here 40 years ago in order to gain a sense of reassurance about America's commitment to Europe."

## D-DAY 1944...Continued

on June 6, with the landing of British, American and Canadian divisions on the French beaches of Normandy. If the invasion succeeded, Germany was doomed, its armies trapped between the Russians on the Eastern Front and the Allied forces in the West. If it failed, the Germans could still hope for victory.

"If the Allies could be thrown back into the sea," the historian Max Hastings has written, "it was inconceivable that they should mount a new assault for years, if ever. Almost the entire strength of the German Army in northwest Europe, 59 divisions, could be transferred east for a fight to the finish against the Russians. Within the year, secret weapons and jet aircraft should be available in quantity. Thereafter, Hitler reasoned, anything was possible."

That was, in fact, a crazed expectation. On the Eastern Front, 2 million of Germany's finest soldiers already had perished in battle with the Russians. On the seas, the German Navy was in retreat, capable of little more than harassing actions. The German Air Force was enfeebled, its squadrons decimated by a new American fighter plane, the P51 Mustang. In the first three months of 1944, the Luftwaffe lost 5,500 aircraft. Its experienced pilots were being killed off faster than they could be replaced.

Thus, by D-Day, June 6, there was virtually no German air or sea resistance to the landings at Normandy. German infantry and tank divisions had strong defensive positions at some of the landing beaches, but they were under-strength and not of the highest quality. Their lines of reinforcement and resupply were subject to constant harassment and air interdiction.

Against this weakened force, the Allies were prepared to throw into the battle from bases in England nearly 3 million soldiers, airmen and sailors, supported by virtually inexhaustible stocks of materiel and more than 8,000 aircraft. The British, with no more men to conscript, were fearful of heavy casualties. Even the old lion, Winston Churchill, nervously warned that the English Channel could become "a river of blood."

The Americans, with millions of replacements available in the States, were eager for the Normandy plan, eager for a frontal assault on the German forces.

Churchill had argued for two years against

this plan. The losses of British troops in World War I—"the ghosts of 1916"—and the heavy attrition Britain had suffered in the first year of World War II weighed heavily on him. As historian Russell Weigley put it, Churchill "blanched at any prospect of a tournament of mass armies, even with the might of America at Britain's side."

Why not, Churchill asked repeatedly, simply peck away at the Germans at the periphery of their strength? He argued at one point for an invasion of Norway. At another point he proposed operations out of the eastern Mediterranean to attack Germany's "soft underbelly." But the Americans, strongly supported by the Russians, insisted on the cross-channel plan. In the end, Churchill reluctantly agreed. Operation Overlord was finally approved at the end of 1943.

Churchill's fears were not vindicated. The Normandy invasion achieved its purpose—the ultimate destruction of the German armies. That is the basis for the anniversary celebrations that will be observed on the beaches of France this week by leaders of the Western democracies and veterans of the fighting.

But it was a far more difficult operation than the Overlord planners expected. The performance of the Allied troops disappointed them; the fierce resistance of the Germans surprised them. Their timetables for success were badly miscalculated.

The battle commenced at 12:15 a.m. on June 6 with the bombing and shelling of German batteries and bunkers. Simultaneously, 24,000 American and British paratroopers were airborne for landings several miles behind the German coastal defenses. Historian Hastings described the assault:

*Private Fayette Richardson was one of the 82nd Airborne troops. He came from a small town in upstate New York and like so many others had wanted to be a pilot but was rejected for poor eyesight. Instead, he joined the Airborne and shipped to Northern Ireland with the 508th Regiment.*

*A few hours before the assault, he stood in his hut in Nottinghamshire, joking self-consciously with the rest of his team as they struggled to stow a mountain of personal equipment about their bodies. A 32-pound radar set was strapped below the reserve parachute on his stomach; fragmentation grenades were hooked on his harness; gammon bombs and a phosphorous grenade, chocolate D-rations, fighting knife, canteen, anti-tank mine, a morphine syrette and an armed forces paperback edition of "Oliver Twist" were among his gear.*

*He swapped his rifle for a .45 pistol strapped to his high paratroop boot, where he could reach it easily. The pressure of the pis-*

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D-DAY 1944...Continued

tol belt, the tightly laced boots and equipment made him feel oddly secure, as if he was wearing armor.

When the trucks came for them, the paratroops tottered forward, floundering like men in diving suits, boosted aboard by the cooks and maintenance men who were being left behind. When the shouted messages of good luck faded away, the men in the back of the truck sat silent, scarcely able to recognize each other beneath the layer of burnt cork on their faces. Then they lay beside the fuselage of an olive-drab Dakota in the summer evening silence for almost an hour, drinking coffee and posing for an Army photographer. They were no longer excited, merely tense and thoughtful. Soon after darkness fell they were airborne.

Jammed together in the belly of the plane, they could only talk by yelling over the noise of the aircraft, could see out of the windows only by squirming around inside their great clumsy burdens. The crew chief clambered down the aircraft to the rear and pulled off the door. Richardson saw a flash of light in the sky outside and understood, after a moment of puzzlement, that it was antiaircraft fire. Then, on the shouted command, they pulled themselves clumsily to their feet and hooked static lines to the overhead cable. As the green light came they began the familiar rush to the door in the paratroop one-step shuffle that they had practiced so many times, at last pivoting abruptly before they hurled themselves into the slipstream.

At the moment "Rich" Richardson jumped over the fields of the Cotentin, thousands of other Allied paratroops were already on the ground ahead of him. Men of the British 6th Airborne Division seized the bridges over the Caen Canal and across the Orne at Ranville a few minutes after midnight. The American 101st Division, the "Screaming Eagles," began to drop at 1:30 a.m., the 82nd following at 2:30. The drops were marred by poor performance by many of the Allied Dakota pilots; countless units landed far from their target areas. It was a remarkable tribute to the 82nd and 101st that while thousands of their men found themselves miles from their units and their objectives that night, they engaged the Germans wherever they encountered them. Their great achievement on June 6 was to bring confusion and uncertainty to the Germans across the whole breadth of the Cherbourg peninsula.

Private Richardson landed near an orchard amid a rattle of gunfire from the ground. He walked cautiously toward the sound of the little metal crickets that American soldiers were snapping all over the Cotentin that night as a recognition signal. Through the darkness, other men moved in to join them.

Richardson picked up a machine gun from a collapsed parachute. But another trooper ran over and said curtly, "That's our gun." After an argument, Rich-

ardson gave up the weapon, dug a foxhole and fell asleep. He was awakened by daylight and the overhead roar of an Allied fighter-bomber. When the word came to move out, he picked up a bazooka without enthusiasm because he had only the barest idea of how to use it. Among a long file of men, all of them unknown to him, he began to march across the Norman fields. Suddenly everyone was signaled to lie flat. A car was approaching. From behind a hedge Richardson could see the heads of its three German occupants, passing by like targets in a shooting gallery. A trooper stood up and fired a burst of automatic rifle fire at the car. It swerved off the road into a ditch. Somebody shouted, "Finish 'em!" and tossed a grenade. But the Germans were already dead. One of them was Lt. Gen. Wilhelm Falley, commander of the German 91st Division.

Like Richardson, many of the paratroops had never seen a man killed before, least of all on a peaceful summer morning in the countryside. They found the experience rather shocking. They marched on through the meadows and wildflowers.

While Richardson made his way across the countryside with little interference, other American paratroops were engaged in desperate battles around the causeways and hamlets of the eastern peninsula. But the young New Yorker's story catches the dreamlike quality, the curious sense of detachment that so many men felt in those first hours after being wrenched from the peace of the English summer and thrust onto an alien battlefield. While the great drama of Normandy unfolded, it seemed a fantasy into which they had somehow slipped as spectators.

On the landing beaches there were no spectators.

The boats were launched at dawn. The invasion force of 154,000 men struck in waves at five beachheads under a veil of naval and aerial bombardment from 600 warships and 3,000 fighter planes. The Americans at Omaha beach encountered heavy resistance from German positions on the bluffs above. Scores drowned or were cut down by machine-gun and mortar fire before they reached shore, creating a floating obstacle course for the men behind them. The bodies of more dead and wounded quickly littered the heavily mined beach.

Many of the assault troops lay prone in the shallow water, seeking cover. Others huddled beneath the sea wall at the head of Omaha Beach.

One of the first ashore was Staff Sgt. Thomas Turner of the 29th Division, made up of National Guard units from Maryland and Virginia. Within a few hours, Turner was among the 3,184 Americans wounded that day. His brother, Charlie, a platoon sergeant, was among 1,465 killed.

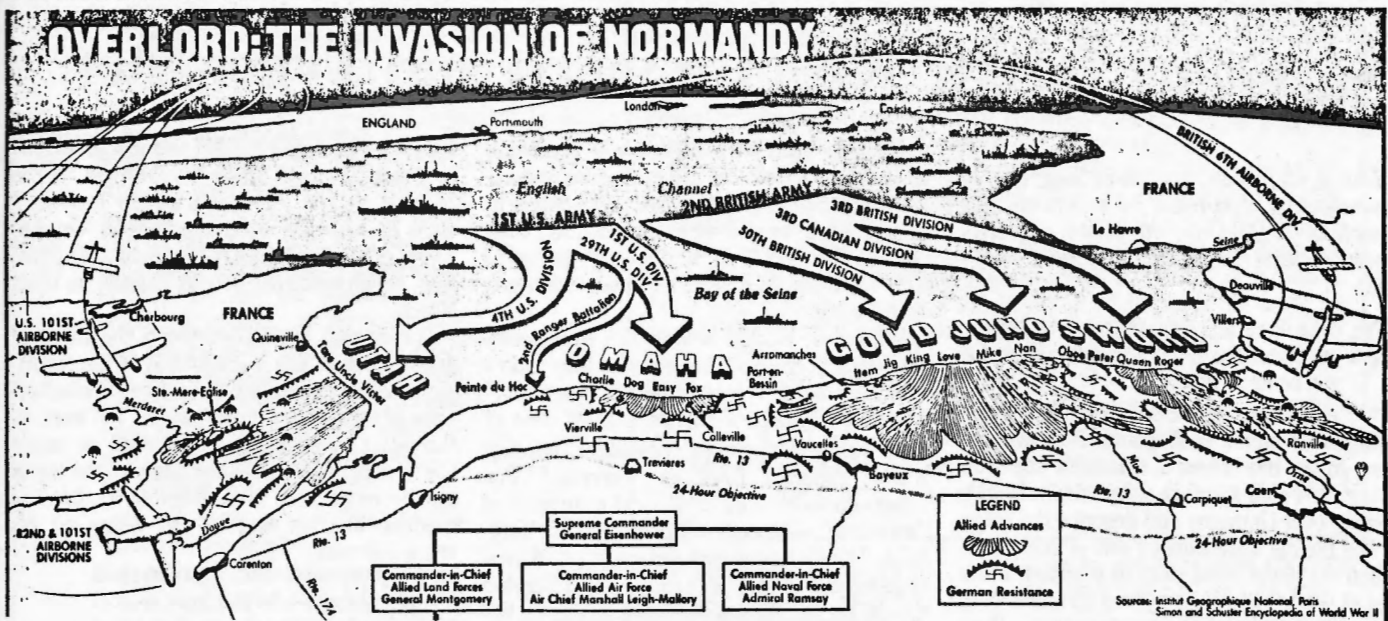
"Charlie and I were farm boys," said Turner, now a special agent for the Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Board and still living in his native town, Emporia.

"We served in the same Army unit," he said, "but on D-Day our commander wouldn't let us go in the same [landing craft] . . . We trained long and hard. We were fit. But one of the first things we noticed was that we were weak in the knees. With the excitement, the fear, our knees buckled.

"After a few shots were fired, though, we were over that. We had confidence. We felt we could beat anyone,

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40th ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY



COMMANDING UNITS	ATTACKING FORCES	BEACHES	D-DAY OBJECTIVES	
U.S. 1ST ARMY Lt. Gen. Bradley	VII CORPS Maj. Gen. Collins	4TH U.S. DIVISION 8th Regiment 22nd Regiment 12th Regiment	Tare Uncle Victor <b>UTAH</b>	Establish a beachhead south of Quineville and join up with the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions.
	V CORPS Maj. Gen. Gerow	29TH U.S. DIVISION 2nd Ranger Battalion 116th Regiment 115th Regiment	Pointe du Hoc Charlie Dog Easy <b>OMAHA</b>	Knock out the gun battery at Pointe du Hoc. Reach a line stretching between Isigny, Treveries and Vaucelles.
BRITISH 2ND ARMY Lt. Gen. Dempsey	XXX CORPS Lt. Gen. Bucknall	50TH BRITISH DIVISION 47th Commandos 231st Brigade 56th Brigade 69th Brigade 151st Brigade 8th Armored Brigade	Item Jig King Love <b>GOLD</b>	Reach Route 13 and capture Bayeux. Join up with the 3rd Canadian Division to the east and the American First Army to the west.
	I CORPS Lt. Gen. Crocker	3RD CANADIAN DIVISION 7th Brigade 2nd Armor. Brigade 9th Brigade 8th Brigade	Mike Nan <b>JUNO</b>	Establish a deep beachhead. Dominate the hills overlooking Coen and Carpiquet.
		3RD BRITISH DIVISION 4th Commandos 9th Brigade 8th Brigade 185th Brigade French Commandos 27th Armored Brigade 1st Commandos	Obse Peter Queen Roger <b>SWORD</b>	Capture Coen. Join up with the British 6th Airborne Division.

Note: Landings were not made on all the planned sectors of beaches.

By Richard Furno, Dave Cook and Larry Fogel—The Washington Post

D-DAY 1944...Continued

anyone. The first German division we met, we demolished them. I was hit that morning with shrapnel . . . I was brought back to a hospital in England. It was there I found out about my Charlie."

Ranger Mike Rehm of C Company, 5th Battalion, landed in Dog Green sector shortly after H-hour with 10 men, two of whom were killed and three wounded in the first hundred yards between the sea and the base of a hill. Rehm huddled for shelter behind a knocked-out tank, finding himself beside a Ranger smoking a cigar. The two men ran toward the sea wall. After a few paces, Rehm glanced around and saw that his companion lay covered in blood from the waist down. He reached the wall alone.

A couple of hours later, Brig. Gen. Norman Cota of the 29th Division found Rehm and other troops huddled by the wall. He demanded to know who they were. Rang-

ers, he was told. "Then Goddammit, if you're Rangers get up; and lead the way!" Rehm and the others got up and began blowing gaps through the German wire with Bangalore torpedoes.

Army Medic Donald F. Gwinn landed at Utah Beach with the 4th Infantry Division: "It was pretty horrible. Bodies were all over the beach."

He moved out with other medics to set up an aid station. Now 68 and retired in Rensselaer, N.Y., he remembers that "we processed about 85 guys in the first hour. After that we couldn't keep track . . . we treated guys for broken bones and wounds. We gave morphine to reduce the pain. I remember one guy, he had his face shot off. His jaw was gone. At the time no one really thought of the importance of the day. We were busy . . . just doing the best we could. It was survival."

The reports that reached the high command from Om-

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# Surviving D-Day, With Euphoria and Typewriter

*Larry LeSueur, the first war correspondent to broadcast from Normandy Beach after D-Day, 40 years ago this week, talked recently to Carol Bennett.*

**Q:** You were the first reporter to broadcast after the D-Day landing. How did you come to be there?

**A:** I was chosen by CBS. The landing was a tremendous secret in England. Not that we were going, but when. I was with the U.S. Army Air Force to make a broadcast from a bomber over Germany and describe the scene as the bombs were salvaged out of the plane. When my plane came back to England, I was met at the landing field by two men in a jeep, who told me that I was under arrest. They seemed quite friendly, and I wasn't really alarmed. They didn't want it known that I was being taken away to make the landing on D-Day.

As soon as I picked up my gear in London, I was driven to the south of England to the little town of Dartmouth. I was put into a

*Carol Bennett is Washington correspondent for the radio network of Alabama.*

marshaling yard — a barbed-wire enclosure where I saw a dozen of my colleagues, reporters from around London. We were called in for a briefing by the corps commander, Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins, who was going to coordinate the landing in my area, which was Utah Beach.

We would remain behind the wire enclosure until boarding time, because they didn't want any leaks. It was to be an "operation." In military parlance there's a great deal of significance to the word "operation" because it's so different from an "exercise." The American forces had conducted a number of "exercises" — practice landings — in England. The Germans had gotten wind of one, code-named "Tiger" at a place called Slapton Sands. As the American troops were practicing sailing through the night and landing at dawn, a German flotilla of motor-torpedo boats shot them all up with cannon and machine guns. More than 700 Americans died.

**Q:** Did you have any choice about whether you wanted to go on this particular story?

**A:** Several correspondents were working for Ed Murrow at the time, and we elected to do what we would like to do most. I elected to go with the infantry forces. Another went with the Air Force. Another went on a battleship. The man on the battleship made the first

broadcast back to England and it was relayed to America, about the bombardment of the beaches as the American troops landed. I went in with the First Regimental Combat Team of the 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Division, which made the assault landing on Utah Beach.

We crossed from Dartmouth the night of June 3. There was a great deal of apprehension about this landing. It had been called off once while we were on the water. We were on the water about three days before we made the landing. Midway in the channel the water was so rough that Gen. Eisenhower felt the weather was too bad to risk losing all his ships and men.

He postponed the invasion and some of the ships turned back to port to shelter from the storm. But I was on one of the lead craft and it was too slow to get back. We went around in circles in mid-channel. Most of the men had become very seasick; the cooks too. I managed to escape that, as did the commander, Col. Van Fleet. So we prepared the only thing we could think of — the only thing we knew how to make. Beans. Not many could eat.

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## D-DAY 1944...Continued

aha Beach that morning were not merely gloomy, Hastings writes, but at times almost panic-stricken. The 1st Army Commander, Gen. Omar Bradley, considered halting all landings on the eastern beach and diverting the follow-up waves to Utah. There were monstrous traffic jams off Omaha as vehicles milled about seeking a landing berth. Many landing vehicles were swamped, drowning scores of troops. Artillery pieces were lost in the heavy seas. Short rounds inflicted heavy casualties. Naval gunfire support was hampered by the lack of spotter teams. Young American infantry officers failed, in many cases, to rally their troops and drive them forward. Many units lost the critical momentum of attack and at the end of the day, few of them had reached their assigned objectives.

For the German soldier in the opening rounds of the Normandy campaign, historian Hastings observed, "actions were a rush to the threatened sector; a fierce and expert defense against clumsy Allied tactics; growing casualties as the enemy's massed firepower was brought to bear; and at last, a retreat of a few hundred yards to the next line to be equally doggedly held with fewer men, less weapons, a slowly dwindling supply of hope. 'Let's enjoy the war,' the men of 12th SS Panzer and no doubt many other German units said, 'because the peace will be terrible.'"

Few German soldiers, even of moderate units, felt great respect for the fighting qualities of their enemies.

Sgt. Heinz Hickmann of the Luftwaffe Parachute Division said: "We had no respect whatever for the American soldier."

Col. Kurt Kauffmann had been optimistic at the start of the Normandy landings. He believed that within a few days a determined thrust against the Americans could have driven them into the sea. Thereafter, "I realized that the situation was hopeless, with more than 40 percent of our infantry gone and the tremendous Allied shelling and air activity."

That, in the opinion of most analysts of the battle, was the key to the Allied success: metal rather than men. Ten weeks after the landings, the Germans had been driven out of Normandy by overwhelming Allied resources, overwhelming air and artillery superiority.

When Gen. Dwight Eisenhower was given command of the Overlord operation in January 1944, his instructions were simple:

"Enter the continent of Europe and . . . undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her armed forces."

However inelegantly, that job got done.

Material for this article was drawn from the Max Hastings' book, "Overlord—D-Day and the Battle for Normandy;" from Russell F. Weigley's "Eisenhower's Lieutenants;" from standard reference works and from reporting by United Press International.

## LeSUEUR...Continued

**Q:** When did the actual landing begin?

**A:** The morning of June 6, 1944, an hour or so after first light — "H" hour. My craft landed at "H" plus 20 minutes. There was a wave of riflemen on the beach already. The combat engineers were taking down some of the obstacles the Germans had erected. There was not much opposition except some intermittent artillery fire. The bad weather may have reduced German alertness. Then they started shelling our beach as well as Omaha Beach, which caught a great deal more fire.

**Q:** What was in your mind as you made that landing?

**A:** My uppermost feeling was that I had survived the landing. We all shared that euphoric relief. We didn't know *what* we were going to meet up with. Many of us remembered that the British had attempted, with the Canadians, such a landing two years before at Dieppe on the French coast. They had been shot to pieces.

We were huddled in the prow of our assault craft. German shells landed in the water, but you didn't hear any noise — just white geysers of water going up alongside. Other small ships were swamped, and several of the tanks that accompanied us foundered. There were quite a few helmets floating around in the water nearby, which increased our apprehension. My only thought was to keep up with everybody. We all waded through the water and landed on the beach.

Soon a shell landed and some of us fell. The first man I got to had a very bad leg wound. He was groaning. His pant leg was ripped open and the white of the leg bone was showing. I tried to comfort him as well as I could, crawling over to him and talking in his ear. I said to him, "Well, you won't have to go through this again, Buddy, you're going to be sent back to England right away. You'll probably be taken back to the United States for recuperation. You're going to be all right." He looked at me rather dismayed, and said, "But you don't understand, I never *wanted* to get wounded." Every young man thinks he is immortal and is going to get away with it.

"Twenty-five tanks were supposed to land with us, but most of them sank in the rough waves. They had

*Larry LeSueur, 74, was the first war correspondent to broadcast from Normandy beach after D-Day. LeSueur landed on Utah Beach with the 1st Regimental Combat Team, 8th Infantry, on June 6, 1944. He is scheduled to be covering the 40th anniversary commemoration of D-Day in France for the Voice of America on Wednesday.*

*LeSueur joined CBS in Europe in 1939 to cover the war. He had previously been with United Press in New York. Under Edward R. Murrow, then-European director for CBS, LeSueur covered France until the German occupation, leaving on a British troop ship. He then covered the Blitz in London for a year and the war in Russia. After D-Day, he went on to report the first news of the liberation of Paris. He was also an eyewitness at the liberation of Dachau and the surrender of the German High Command.*

*After the war, LeSueur covered the White House for CBS, and then the United Nations. He joined VOA, then headed by Edward R. Murrow, and remained with the government until retirement this year. He and his wife live in the District.*

canvas all around them and propellers in the rear, but they couldn't withstand the force of the waves and the storm. After we landed we had to cross a great swamp, called the inundated area, which the Germans had flooded, and gain the ridge line behind. We had only two tanks left.

The Germans were firing from the ridge. I saw the first Americans killed by rifle fire crossing the inundated area. We knew Americans could get wounded, but we didn't know that they could actually *expire*. We thought that was only going to happen to the enemy. It was rather a sobering sight.

We crossed the swamp and went up a hill. Because of the shellfire from the ships at sea, the Germans had fled. I remember coming up right into the mouth of an antitank gun which was looking down my throat. There was still a shell in the magazine.

**Q:** You carried a typewriter?

**A:** I had many thoughts about whether I *was* going to carry that typewriter. Some people discarded the extra things they'd brought along because they didn't want to go down in the rough surf and drown.

**Q:** When did you file your first story?

**A:** I didn't write anything until dark that day. I managed to get into a farmhouse and I typed out a story which I then took down to the beachhead. I gave it to a naval officer there, the beach master, who was supervising the landing of ships.

The stories I filed for several days were simply lost. I'd take them down to the beachhead at night and head

back up to our front lines the same night. But the stories went astray.

**Q:** So you were filing written stories?

**A:** Written dispatches, yes. But they never managed to make the crossing. Certain things in war just fall all apart.

About three or four days after the original landings, the army managed to land a small transmitter in a trailer, code-named J-E-S-Q — Jig Easy Sugar Queen. As soon as that arrived, I was able to do the first broadcast about the American landings on Utah Beach and get it back over the channel, where the BBC then relayed it to the United States.

**Q:** Did this story evolve into further coverage of the war?

**A:** I used to cover the war in broadcasts every night and morning, and sometimes in between, if I had a big story, until we proceeded inland out of range. One of the sources of great satisfaction to me came when the American troops managed to cut across the Cotentin Peninsula, about June 16.

Cherbourg, the main objective of our landing, is on the northern end of the peninsula. If we could gain such a port, we could pour in materiel and men to reinforce the infantry.

When we cut the peninsula, the Germans could no longer reinforce Cherbourg. When I got to the other side of the Cotentin Peninsula, I could see the Channel Islands — Jersey, Guernsey and Sark, in the mist. I reported this when I got back to my transmitter.

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## LeSUEUR...Continued

At the end of the war I got a letter from the editor of the newspaper on the island of Jersey. He said that the people of Jersey, which had been occupied by the Germans, were very studiously following my broadcasts. Because of my name — there are many LeSueurs on that island, it's the place all the LeSueurs originate from — they were tremendously encouraged. They had a premature uprising because they thought the Americans were going to liberate them. That was the *last* thing the Americans had in their plans; we were proceeding for the capture of Paris.

The island of Jersey was not considered strategically, or tactically, worthy of sending a force to liberate. The Germans occupied them until the very end of the war. But I was dismayed to find out that I had, unknowingly, encouraged my distant relatives to rise up against the Germans. He said it had been put down very brutally by the Germans.

**Q:** So you went on to Paris?

**A:** It's not very much of a drive from the beachheads in Normandy to Paris, a couple of hours. But it took us three months to get there because of the nature of the countryside. It was totally unsuitable for tanks. It's called *bocage* or hedgerow country.

Each Frenchman has a small plot divided from his neighbor's by hedgerows — really high, earthen walls with trees growing in them. Every small field was a battlefield; the people who are attacking have to go across the open space in the field, while the defenders can hide behind these walls of dirt and trees and fire at them. Tanks were useless against these walls, until we finally devised a way to try to knock them down.

The infantry took a great many casualties in order to get to the outskirts of Paris. Aug. 25 we finally liberated Paris.

The U.S. First Army did its best to have correspondents in the forces but the leader of the task force of correspondents and the censors who accompanied them delayed in getting there.

**Q:** Who did the censoring?

**A:** Army officers — editors and public-relations men trained in censoring. There was a great deal of firing on the outskirts of Paris. The Germans were withdrawing from

**“We knew Americans could get wounded, but we didn't know that they could actually expire. We thought that was only going to happen to the enemy.”**

Paris, but with a rear guard. Also, French militiamen who had been co-opted by the Germans under Vichy France were defending the city from Americans or anybody else coming in.

I thought this story was too important for me not to take a chance on getting in to broadcast so I joined a French tank division. It had been planned that the French forces would go in first anyway, because it was felt that they should have the honor of liberating their capital, their beloved Paris. So I managed to get my jeep in through their line of attack.

The Germans were holed up on the Place de la Concorde and the Ministry of Marine and a number of places. There was a great deal of small arms firing. I and another reporter found out that the French underground actually had an underground broadcasting station. The big broadcasting stations were all under the control of the Germans.

They had a nice little studio for broadcasting. I don't know where they got all the material from. I managed to do a broadcast describing the liberation. They broadcast it every hour on the hour, and it managed to get to the United States.

I had been in Paris when the Germans came in 1940. I was delighted to be back for the liberation. When the Germans took Paris I fled and hitchhiked down to the south of France to Royal Air Force headquarters. I finally got back to England on a troop ship.

**Q:** Did you worry that the Germans could hear the stories you were sending?

**A:** No. If it were anything that would make our men more vulnerable, I probably would have left it out; but that was up to the censors — to see whether I was giving away secrets the enemy might profit by. The only time I ran into difficulties with censorship was broadcasting from Paris. I wasn't supposed to broadcast without a censor but I felt that I just

had to. The censors had failed to complete their mission, and were waiting outside the Porte d'Orleans. I had completed mine, so I did my broadcast without benefit of censorship.

**Q:** Forty years later another American force landed, this time on Grenada. There were no reporters with them. What's changed?

**A:** The preparation for the attack on Grenada was limited to a very short time. The operation was conceived only a short time when word was received the government of Grenada had been murdered and that medical students were in danger.

If you're going to take the press along on a landing, you've got to make tremendous preparations. You can't have television cameras in unless you have ships to carry them in. You have to take technicians, producers and correspondents. This was one of the reasons they decided to make the landing and leave the television crews behind.

Vietnam was the first war we ever fought in which there was no censorship. Some of the reports they got out may have been helpful to the enemy. I don't know. But I think [the government] felt in the case of Grenada that the invasion and the security of the troops was number one. I feel a pool of correspondents might have been appointed and when the word came they could have been taken. It's very helpful to the U.S. Army. The people who have to make the landings — risk their lives and put themselves in harms way to liberate other people — really enjoy having the press with them. In France each division had a press officer. They would sometimes come up to our press camp and ask us to come around and stay with their division, because they were being neglected. The men's morale would be helped by having their stories sent back to the people in America so their friends

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# Postmarked Memories From the Home Front

By Howard J. Whelan, Jr.

**"D**-Day! Thousands of Allied troops began landing in northern France."

Forty years ago this month, those headlines in the morning newspaper caused hearts in Baltimore to miss a beat. It had finally come. Those seeing the stark type on streetcars going to work or opening the paper at the breakfast table knew that the mass of men were really their sons, father, husbands, friends and relatives.

A week earlier, a former Loyola College classmate, Ensign Charles F. Hemelt, Jr., wrote to me from "Somewhere in England: . . . I have been transferred to CENSORED. . ."

*Howard J. Whelan, Jr., a former Baltimorean, is an engineering analyst and free-lance writer now living in Utah. The typed transcript of his wartime letters is on file at the Maryland Historical Society.*

## LeSUERE...Continued

and relatives could read what they were doing.

I guess they didn't expect the occupation of Grenada or the whole action to last very long. But it *was* a lapse.

**Q:** Have you been back to the beach at Normandy?

**A:** I went back on the fifth anniversary in 1949. A number of correspondents were taken back. We went down to the beaches, and saw what progress had been made in building up the destruction wrought by the war. We saw them rebuilding the city of Caen.

**Q:** Are you going back for the D-Day anniversary this year?

He had been trained in amphibious operations. His was the first of almost 350 letters I found in a box in a Baltimore row house, my family's former home. Many of the letters I had written to my parents from the Army in Europe. Many more were written to me by friends and relatives.

During the next 11 months, while Europe was torn apart by invasions, retreats, lifted by victories to the final VE-Day, life in Baltimore continued, shaded by news that came through the mail slot in the front door. And people wrote back to airfields and Army camps in the United States and the anonymous locations of military post offices. Each letter carried a piece of life in Baltimore.

Some sad, much glad. Here are some excerpts:

October, 1944, from a neighbor: "How about the Orioles winning the pennant and the Little World Series? Looks like we have major

**A:** I've been asked to go back to broadcast the commemoration. The 4th Division, of which I am an honorary member, is planning quite a pilgrimage to Utah Beach. Some of our captured tanks are there and also, just where we landed, there's a pillbox which was knocked out by our naval gunfire.

**Q:** Do you expect you'll still have to go down to the beach and have your broadcast carried out?

**A:** I don't know *how* I'm going to get any broadcasts back. I've been trying to find out from the Pentagon just what they plan to do. I don't think they really know. They say it's being handled by the U.S. military in Europe. Anyway, I'm sure I'll find some way to get it back.

league stuff. The stadium packed 53,882 for the final game."

From Marie Doehler, the junior high school-age daughter of friends: "My sister, Patty, and I are driving mom and pop crazy about the Orioles. I have all of their autographs. Of course, if you were here I wouldn't be writing to any young baseball player like Kenny Braun. Even though he is the best looking on the team."

Many homes displayed a service flag in a front window, a blue-bordered white cloth about 5 by 7 inches with a blue star for each relative in the service. There would be a gold star for those who had died. And casualties: dead, wounded and missing were part of that time in Baltimore.

Mary Kraus, a member of the Cathedral Guild, a college-age group, wrote: "Have you heard that Eddie Jendrek was killed in France? I don't know anything that has affected me lately as much as that."

Joe King, who had been in school with me: "Dutch Slaysman was killed in Holland. He was a paratrooper who jumped and was wounded on D-Day."

Ann Scharper, a member of another youth group: "Jack Simmons is missing in action with the 8th Air Force in England."

From my mother: "John Burns was listed as missing. Now he is reported as dead."

A neighbor: "Last night at church, Father announced that Ambrose McIntyre had been killed."

And on it went.

The local draft board had

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

## HOME FRONT...Continued

an impact, not only on those drafted, but on those deferred or rejected for various reasons, and their families.

From a neighbor: "Local Board No. 9 is on its semi-annual prowl for at-home little boys, and I am once again 1A." (He "came in" later.)

Radio was part of life in the 1940s.

November, 1944, from my mother: "I'm trying to write and listen to 'Amos and Andy,'" and another time, "I'm listening to Bing Crosby singing a beautiful song. I especially enjoy his Thursday night program," and later, "Our President Roosevelt is on the radio at this time."

Others wrote: "I'm listening to 'Henry Aldrich' on the radio. His friend, Homer, is in the process of ruining a suit for him."

These were painful times for all-male colleges, such as my alma mater, Loyola.

December, 1944, from Dr. Edward Doehler: "The college these days is rather dismal. The numbers get smaller, around 130, the kids younger and the profs grouchier by the minute. They keep going, though, in spite of the loss of Lefty Reitz, Father Jake and most of the characters. ... With so many grads spread across the Pacific we will have to move the alumni office to some spot in the Mariannas."

Shortages were not limited to some colleges, but were part of the daily life of the city.

March, 1945, my mother: "We have lines waiting for a small amount of butter, chicken and tobacco. While your brother was home on furlough, he was surprised by the people waiting at the tobacco store for a package of smokes. ... When one goes to a butcher shop, the first thing the customer asks is how many red points ... not how much does it cost."

From Mary Murphy, whose family lived five

houses from us: "I hit the jackpot Saturday. Brought home 2 pounds of butter and even a pound of bacon. I was proud of myself. ... Thanks for that stick of Wrigley's Doublemint gum you put in the last letter from Germany. I don't know whether I should frame it, send it down to the Pratt Library for exhibition or just chew it."

February, 1945, a letter from my mother: "The biggest item here is the curfew closing nightclubs at midnight. It will put some entertainers out of work, but most people agree the closing is a splendid idea. ... Some war workers will get more sleep so they can do better work during the day."

From another writer: "I was downtown last night, the first night of the 'brown-out.' You can't realize what a difference it makes not having storefront lights, neon signs or theater marquees. ... Even if the Office of War Utilities expects it to save coal used by power plants, it was weird."

Music was part of the memories of those days. From my brother at home

on furlough before going out to the Pacific: "Bought some records at Hamman's Music Store ... 'More and More' by Tommy Dorsey; 'My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time' by Les Brown; 'Sentimental Journey' by Hal McIntyre. The last was the best."

From a friend: "Last night I heard the Coast Guard Orchestra at the USO on Charles street. Oh my!! Just like old times when they played 'Southern Fried,' 'Intermezzo' and 'Back Bay Shuffle.'"

April, 1945. Even the Easter parade, a fixture since before the turn of the century, had its wartime twist. Traditionally, on Easter Sunday afternoon, thousands of well-dressed Baltimore citizens would stroll on the sidewalks of North Charles street around Johns Hopkins University. It was a social event and the opportunity to display colorful spring fashions after the drabness of heavy winter clothing.

Mary Murphy wrote: "Out on Charles street in the Easter parade, four people

walked up and asked me if I was the 'Blue Angel.' I don't know if it was because I was dressed in blue or due to my lovely spring corsage you had sent. Anyway, the Women's Army Corps is recruiting medical technicians called 'Blue Angels.' There were signs all over town, 'Blue Angels for Purple Hearts.' Charles street is 'Purple Heart Highway' and Saratoga street is 'Blue Angel Boulevard.' At a banquet in the Lord Baltimore Hotel, I was with 500 people to honor 30 girls who had joined and were leaving for Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. Each recruit received many gifts including an autographed photo of Mayor Ted McKeldin. That last item was presented to them by the mayor."

On April 12, 1945, a news flash went out to the nation and the world: President Franklin D. Roosevelt died unexpectedly today of a cerebral hemorrhage at 3:35 p.m. Central war time at his summer cottage in Warm Springs, Ga.



Rain greeted VE-Day, May 8, 1945, in Baltimore.

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# Marylanders fought 'the longest day'

*Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces supported by strong air forces began landing Allied armies this morning on the coast of France.*

BBC broadcast,  
June 6, 1944

By John Kelly

They're retired now, or about to retire, nine paunchy old men with lined, seamy faces and hair the color of silver; grandfathers, many of them, even a few great-grandfathers; decent, hard-working, patriotic men who, once, 40 years ago, fought at a place called Normandy on a day that will be forever known as D-Day.

Tuesday, June 6, 1944, a day German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel predicted would be "the longest day" for the Allies as well as Germany. It began precisely at 12:15 a.m. when a handful of American and British pathfinders parachuted into Normandy to light the drop zones for the paratroopers and glider-borne infantry that were soon to follow.

A few hours later, as paratroopers fought among the dark hedgerows, almost 5,000 ships carrying more than 180,000 British, Canadian and American troops assembled off the coast of Normandy. At 6:30 a.m., preceded by a massive naval and air bombardment, a few thousand of these men stormed ashore at five invasion beaches: Gold, Juno, Sword, Utah and Omaha.

By nightfall, the Allied toehold in Normandy was still tenuous. But it was a toehold. The invaders were ashore. In less than a week, their

armies were linked and driving inland. Hitler's "Thousand-Year Reich" had less than a year to live.

## MIDNIGHT

Lt. Col. John P. Cooper, commander of the 110th Field Artillery Battalion of the U.S. 29th Division, lay in his bunk aboard a Navy transport ship reading a paperback book titled "Admiral Mahan on Sea Power."

The book was "Purley" Cooper's "first — and last — brush with naval theory." But he "would have read Aristotle in the original Greek" if it had taken his mind off what he knew was coming.

The 33-year-old officer, a graduate of Virginia Military Institute who had joined the Maryland National Guard soon after going to work for the C&P Telephone Company, had gone over the invasion plans — code-named Operation Overlord — with his staff earlier that day, and the only flaw he had found was "a crazy order to 'de-salinize' the wheel bearings of the guns" immediately upon landing.

The order had been issued at one of the last briefings before the invasion. Purley Cooper had listened in "utter amazement" as two ordnance officers from General Eisenhower's staff told them "immediate de-salination was essential to prevent the wheel bearings from deteriorating." Angrily, he had raised his hand and asked who was "going to fight the Germans while we're flushing the salt out of wheel bearings?"

Pfc. Jimmy Kline was euphoric. The invasion was on and the 24-year-old Baltimorean was glad to be part of it. Everyone had said they would never go because "there were too many sons of big shots" in the 29th Division. Now, the man whose friends called him "Big Eye" sat in the dark on the pitching deck of the ship several miles off the northwest coast of Normandy happily singing hill-billy songs.

Below, Jimmy Kline's squad leader, Sgt. Lee C. Benson, 24, a native of Chesapeake City who had enlisted in the Maryland National Guard when he was 19, was passing the time playing Pitch. He found it hard to concentrate. There were too many things around him to remind him that this "was not just another game."

Sgt. Joseph J. Leno, a mortar squad leader in the 29th Division, watched the card game for a few minutes and then wandered up on deck and stood by the railing wondering what he "would be doing at the same time tomorrow."

Whatever it was, he was ready, physically and spiritually. The 26-year-old Baltimorean, who served as altar boy for the division's Catholic chaplain, had been to confession earlier that afternoon. His conscience was clear.

At an airfield in England, Cpl. Richard E. Fritter, a 23-year-old radio operator in the 82d Airborne Division's 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, shrugged into his parachute and followed his commanding officer,

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## HOME FRONT...Cont.

From my mother: "This surely was a sad weekend with the sudden death of our beloved president. The news shocked everyone. Businesses were closed Saturday; all theaters and saloons were closed from Friday noon until Sunday noon. Radio stations canceled all regular programs and gave only news and talks about the president. Even the weather is affected by his passing. We had rain this morning and now a heavy gloom hangs over the city...."

April 29, 1945, my mother wrote: "Last evening we all had our hopes dashed to bits by a false rumor over the radio of the surrender of Germany. Of course everyone was happy, then President Truman spoke over the radio. False rumor. I must

come soon. We are storming Heaven with prayers."

Finally, on May 8 she wrote: "VE-Day. Victory in Europe. Yesterday shops on Charles street closed and most people went to church to give thanks. St. Alphonsus Church downtown was crowded. Today the president told the people that the U.S. victory is half won. The West is free, but the East is still in bondage. Plenty of work ahead. After his broadcast, sounds from sirens, whistles and anything that could make a noise filled the air. . . . Tonight, the lights have just been turned on at the Statue of Liberty as well as all of the other lights which have been off since the beginning of the war."

So the war ended in Europe almost 40 years ago and now wartime Baltimore returns to that box of post-marked memories. ■

**"THE LONGEST DAY" ...Cont.**

Lt. Col. Louis G. Mendez, up the steps of the C-47 and sat down near the tail of the plane.

The noise was "deafening." Scores of planes, some with gliders hooked to them, lined the runway and the thunder of their engines made conversation impossible.

But that was okay. Dick Fritter, a Virginian who settled in Maryland after the war, didn't feel much like talking anyway. Like almost every other paratrooper in the 23-man "stick," he "was scared to death." He remembered the words of a buddy the night before. "Every man has a duty to give his life to his country." He fervently hoped it would not be necessary.

**THE DARK HOURS**

Lt. Col. Edwin J. Wolf of the 6th Engineer Special Brigade swore softly. He still couldn't believe they were going to drop them off "in the middle of nowhere, 12 miles from the beach." But the Navy was adamant. That was as close to shore as they were going. The DUKWS — amphibious vehicles commonly known as "Ducks" — would have to make it the rest of the way on their own.

The ramp on the LST was lowered and the Ducks, loaded with ammunition and supplies, began backing down the ramp and into the water. The night was "pitch black," and the LST heaved and rolled in the choppy sea.

Ed Wolf, a 33-year-old Baltimore lawyer "with a wife, two kids, a dog and a mortgage," gripped the windshield of his vehicle and nodded to his driver. "Let's go," he snapped. They backed slowly down the ramp. Almost immediately the cold, dark, frothing water sloshed over the side, soaking them to the skin.

Sgt. John C. Hodgson of the 5th Ranger Battalion heard the call over the ship's public address system and felt his stomach lurch. "U.S. Rangers, man your stations! Prepare to board assault craft."

He glanced at his watch. It was almost 3 a.m., and, while almost every other man around him seemed to be either seasick or cold, John Hodgson, a 23-year-old postal clerk from Silver Spring, felt neither. If anything, he was "too hot."

He knew the cause. It was the impregnated fatigues he was wearing. The clothing had been issued as a precaution against a gas attack. Sergeant Hodgson, who was married two weeks before he went overseas, gripped his Thompson submachine gun and wondered which was worse, to be "burned by mustard gas or

roasted to death in those damned fatigues."

As the lumbering C-47 droned across the coast of France toward the drop zone near Ste. Mere-Eglise, Dick Fritter shifted in his seat and tried to get comfortable. He glanced at Colonel Mendez, who winked and said, "We're getting close." Corporal Fritter nodded.

They were approaching the drop zone at 400 feet and he was "surprised at how quiet it was." At that altitude, he had expected anti-aircraft fire. "Maybe," he thought, "it won't be so bad after all." Minutes later, bullets began tearing through the fuselage of the plane.

Lt. Col. Ed Wolf's small flotilla of Ducks bobbed in the sea like corks, buffeted by 6-foot swells. The amphibious vehicles were shipping water almost as fast as the pumps could pump it out, and Ed Wolf was thankful he had thought to order the men to clear the hulls of supplies that had been blocking the pumps. If he hadn't, he knew, they "would have sunk like stones."

But there was a more serious problem facing the bespectacled lieutenant colonel. He had "no real idea" where they were. The landing craft that had been assigned to escort the amphibious vehicles to the beach had disappeared, and the only means of navigation they had were small, on-board compasses. Colonel Wolf prayed they were accurate. It would be "embarrassing as hell" to land on the wrong beach, he thought.

As the last man in his stick of 23 paratroopers, Sgt. William Howe, at 24 "the old man" of the 82d Airborne Division's 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment (the average age was slightly over 19), was standing in the radio room of the C-47. The trip across the channel had been "pretty dull," but now, as they crossed the coast of France, "all hell broke loose."

Alerted by preceding waves of British and American transport planes, German anti-aircraft batteries were sending up a steady stream of fire, filling the air with glowing tracer bullets and deadly bursts of shrapnel. Looking out a window, Bill Howe, a New Englander, who settled in Rockville after the war, thought it looked "just like the goddam Fourth of July."

Purley Cooper closed his book, turned out the light and stretched out on his bunk. In a few hours, his battalion of light artillery would be on Omaha Beach. By then, the whole German army would know they were coming. He expected heavy resistance. He knew it was imperative that they get off the

beach as quickly as possible.

He recalled General Montgomery's briefing in Plymouth a few weeks before. "Push in," Monty had said. "Go as far as you can as fast as you can and don't worry about your flanks or rear. We'll do everything in our power to protect you." Colonel Cooper thought it was "sound advice."

Cpl. Richard Fritter followed Colonel Mendez out of the door of the plane and felt the reassuring tug of his chute opening. Moments later, he recoiled in horror as multi-colored tracer bullets arched up toward him. Miraculously, he wasn't hit. He landed in a small field, tore off his chute, and scrambled into a ditch. He had no idea where he was. He did not recognize the drop zone. Nor did he see any other paratroopers.

As he peered into the eerie darkness trying to get his bearings, Corporal Fritter heard footsteps. Suddenly, silhouetted against the sky, he saw his first German soldier. He "was walking along the side of the ditch right towards me with a pistol in his hand." Corporal Fritter raised his rifle and shouted the password. There was no reply. He fired. The German "didn't make a sound" as he fell.

The light over the door of the plane flashed green and, one by one, paratroopers in Sgt. Bill Howe's 23-man stick began jumping. Sergeant Howe gripped the edge of the table in the radio room, genuflected quickly and began shuffling toward the door. Just before he reached it, the plane was hit by a burst of anti-aircraft fire. The concussion "tipped the plane up on its right wing" and flung Sergeant Howe, three other paratroopers and the air force crew chief "in a heap" on the floor.

Seconds later, the plane leveled off, and, amid "a lot of shouting and cursing and screaming," the four paratroopers struggled to their feet, lurched to the door and jumped. Sergeant Howe "came out tumbling." His Tommy gun, tucked under his reserve chute, flew up and struck him in the face, breaking three teeth and the stock of the gun.

As he fell, Sergeant Howe saw the flash from a German anti-aircraft gun set up in a barnyard and realized with a rush of fear that he was "going to land right on top of it." Desperately, he swung on his risers, veered to the right, and dropped in a field behind a stone fence about 100 yards away from

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**"THE LONGEST DAY" . . . Cont.**

the battery. Minutes later, he was joined by two of the three other paratroopers. The fourth was missing.

Crouched in the ditch less than 10 yards from the German soldier he had just shot, Cpl. Dick Fritter heard Colonel Mendez softly call his name. Corporal Fritter left the ditch and crawled over to his battalion commander. He was lying "flat on the ground, holding a grenade."

Colonel Mendez motioned in front of him and whispered, "Germans." Then he pulled the pin on the grenade and threw it. It exploded and Sergeant Fritter heard someone scream, "Karl! Karl!"

**DAWN**

The landing craft had slipped to within a few miles of the French coast and anchored a little after 2 a.m. Now, in the murky gray light of dawn, Sgt. Lee Benson, who led a mortar squad in the 29th Division, listened as British and American naval warships began bombarding German coastal batteries with their guns. It was almost 6 a.m. Already the troops of the first wave were on their way to the beaches.

They were supposed to have jumped near Ste. Mere-Eglise and seized a causeway, but it was obvious to Sgt. Bill Howe that the delay in getting out of the plane had caused them to miss the drop zone. Now, moving silently from hedgerow to hedgerow, Sergeant Howe and his companions searched for some landmark they could recognize.

About an hour later, they stopped at a crossroads and two of the men lifted Sergeant Howe high enough up to read the sign in the dark. He spelled out the name St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte. The town was about 10 miles from their original drop zone. But they did not know that. It was not on their maps. They stumbled on, praying they were going in the right direction.

Ensign Stanley Panitz heard it before he saw it. A rumbling like distant thunder, building to a great crescendo of noise as thousands and thousands of bombers and fighters appeared overhead, blackening the sky.

The invasion had begun and in the predawn hours of June 6, 1944, Stan Panitz, a 20-year-old graduate of the Johns Hopkins University and the assistant gunnery officer aboard a Navy LST, was in a state of "part-euphoria, part-fright and part-wonder."

The whole thing was "unreal, like being half-drunk," and, as he watched wave after wave of planes pass overhead, Ensign Panitz had "a marvelous feeling of pride, of being part of a crusade."

Sgt. John Hodgson of the 5th U.S. Ranger Battalion stood up in the landing craft as it plunged toward Omaha Beach, awe-struck by what he was witnessing. The noise was deafening. The beach was wreathed in haze. Troops huddled behind concrete and steel obstacles draped with barbed wire and capped with mines. Low-flying fighter planes darted overhead, oblivious to shelling from naval gunboats offshore.

The 5th Battalion was supposed to have followed the 2d Battalion up the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc to silence a battery of six long-range guns. Instead, the bulk of the battalion was sent to the Vierville-Colleville area of Omaha Beach in support of the 29th Division. Now, ducking as machine-gun bullets slapped against the hull of the assault craft, Sergeant Hodgson's only thought was "to get the hell off that damned boat and find someplace to hide."

After steaming toward shore most of the night, Lt. Col. Ed Wolf's flotilla of Ducks were almost out of gas. It was 6:30 a.m. Ahead lay Omaha Beach. But they were "way to the left" of where they were supposed to land.

Slowly, they maneuvered the Ducks around the maze of obstacles, and headed toward shore. Machine-gun and mortar fire raked the beach. Big, 16-inch naval shells screamed overhead. And all around them the dead floated gently in the water, moving with the tide toward the beach.

Lt. Col. Purley Cooper was "struck by how nice and peaceful" the scene looked. He "couldn't see a damned thing except the beach" and "a little barbed wire" at the edge of the beach, but "it didn't look too bad," and, as the coxswain steered the landing craft ashore, the commander of the 110th Field Artillery Battalion wondered if they "had suddenly got lucky." When the boat hit the beach, he had his answer. As Colonel Cooper started down the ramp, he "heard the tattoo of machine-gun bullets overhead."

Pfc. Jimmy Kline watched as the first four or five soldiers stepped off the ramp of the landing craft and "just disappeared," sinking "like rocks" in the water from the weight of their equipment. Gripping his Browning Automatic Rifle, around

which he had wrapped an extra Mae West life jacket, Jimmy Kline walked to the edge of the ramp and gently pushed off and swam the few remaining yards to shore, machine-gun bullets slapping the water around him.

Sgt. Joe Lench was frustrated. And angry. First, they had taken their good old time getting them to the beach. Then they had goofed up and landed them in the wrong place. Now, the troops were pinned to the beach by intense machine-gun and mortar fire and shelling from German 88-mm. guns, and no one was doing anything at all about it.

Sergeant Lench was fed up. "Let's go!" he shouted. "Let's move!" An hour later, he was "still yelling for them to get us off the beach."

It was "all a blur" for Sgt. John Hodgson as he splashed ashore at Omaha Beach. The Germans were "throwing everything they had at us," and he "half-ran, half-crawled" through the sand toward a 3-foot-high cement sluice gate near the base of the hill, the only protection he could find. Behind him, it seemed like "half the 29th Division" was pouring ashore. He had no idea where they were going to go. There was "no place left to put anyone."

The beach "was a mess." Everywhere Lt. Col. Ed Wolf looked he saw destruction. Small islands of dead, dying and wounded men dotted the shore. Piles of wrecked supplies and equipment — rifles, ammunition boxes, radios, gas masks, entrenching tools, canteens, helmets, field phones, reels of wire — were scattered across the sand. Great spirals of oily black smoke spewed from burning tanks and the twisted hulks of landing craft.

Colonel Wolf finished refueling the Duck and started to climb back in when, suddenly, without warning, a shell exploded nearby, damaging the vehicle and wounding his executive officer.

Signaling the remaining Ducks to "circle offshore and await further orders," Colonel Wolf grabbed his rifle and headed up the beach at a half-trot to look for the brigade commander. Minutes later, he was hit in the face by a piece of shrapnel from an exploding shell.

The blow "felt like someone hit me with an ax." He staggered and fell, and when he regained consciousness, a medic was bending over him. He opened one eye and tried to open the other. There was blood all over.

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"THE LONGEST DAY"...Cont.

"I can't open my right eye," he said. The medic wiped the blood away and smiled. "Don't worry, colonel," he said, "you'll be OK." The shrapnel had glanced off the edge of Ed Wolf's helmet, broken his glasses and torn into his cheek and nose. He was evacuated later that day.

Stan Panitz, the assistant gunnery officer aboard LST 515, had no idea what was happening. Everything "was utter chaos." Floating mines exploded against the hulls of ships. Amphibious tanks and Ducks foundered and sank in the rough seas.

An American P-47 was mistaken for a German fighter plane and shot down by Navy gunners. Ensign Panitz shared the general confusion. He was not even sure where he was. He thought he was at Utah Beach. Years later, he learned he had actually been at Omaha.

On Omaha, "Bloody Omaha," Sgt. John Hodgson huddled at the base of the bluff with other members of his Ranger company. The machine-gun and mortar fire was withering. It came from the bluffs above, pinning them "like butterflies" to the beach. They couldn't go forward and they couldn't go back. And they couldn't dig in "because the beach was sand and pebbles and the minute you started to dig, it caved back in on you."

Sgt. Hodgson wondered what happened to the bombers. They were told they were going to bomb the beach so the troops could use the craters as foxholes. Later, he learned they had dumped their bombs inland.

**MORNING**

Sgt. Lee Benson was halfway up the hill when he heard the explosion. "Land mine," he thought. Seconds later, he passed a buddy with his foot and part of his leg blown off. He "wasn't hollering or nothing, but he was in agony."

An officer kept shouting at them to "move on" and "stay on the path." Sergeant Benson moved on, following carefully in the footsteps of the man in front of him.

At the top of the hill, Pfc. Jimmy Kline heard someone shout for him. He trotted forward. His platoon commander, Lt. Waldo Schmitt, had captured two German soldiers in a foxhole. The two "were so scared and shaking" they couldn't crawl out of the foxhole.

Lieutenant Schmitt ordered Private Kline to cover him while he hauled the Germans out and searched

them. Jimmy Kline poked the snout of his automatic rifle over the edge of the foxhole and wondered who was more scared, the Germans or him?

After searching the prisoners, Lieutenant Schmitt sent them back to the beach under guard and started cautiously up the path. Moments later, a shot rang out. Private Kline heard a sound "like a slap" and saw Lieutenant Schmitt stagger and fall.

Jimmy Kline sprayed the trees with automatic rifle fire and then crawled back to the lieutenant, who had "a hole the size of a man's fist" in his thigh.

He was "cussing a blue streak, hollering about all that training he'd gone through and this was as far as he got." Private Kline tore open a packet of sulfa powder and sprinkled it on the lieutenant's wound, and used the strap from an extra pouch of ammunition to make a tourniquet. Then he shouted for a medic and began reloading his rifle.

As he pulled a magazine from his cartridge belt, he was startled to find the rounds in the magazine fused together. A bullet had hit the cartridge belt, but he had no idea when. He had not felt a thing. Later, he found a spent round lodged in the entrenching tool he carried on the back of his pack.

The bullet "was bent in half, like a fishhook." He remembered earlier feeling "a burning sensation across his back," but, again, he did not realize he had been shot.

Sgt. Dick Fritter felt like they "had been walking forever." They thought they were heading toward Ste. Mere-Eglise, but it was hard to tell. There was firing "in every direction." Still, it was "a bright, sunny day," and except for two Germans in a field, who took a couple of shots at them and ran, "things were pretty peaceful."

The war seemed "a long way off" to Dick Fritter.

It was a lot closer to Sgt. John Hodgson. He and about 60 others from his company had been pulled off Omaha and loaded in a landing craft and sent in support of the 2d Ranger Battalion's assault on the German long-range guns at Pointe du Hoc.

Now, landing at the base of the sheer 100-foot cliffs, the Rangers "stepped over the dead and wounded" and scrambled upward on rope ladders left by the 2d Battalion.

Sergeant Hodgson was "shocked by the sight" at the top. The ground was "so chewed up by the bombing and shelling it looked just like the face of the moon." The 2d Battalion held a small perimeter. It had tak-

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**D-Day events**

Ceremonies to commemorate the D-Day landings 40 years ago are planned at Fort Meade and at the 5th Regiment Armory.

First Army Headquarters (Mapes road and English) will hold a brief ceremony at 11 a.m. Wednesday honoring 1st Army soldiers who were in the invading force.

In addition, the Fort Meade Museum (Leonard Wood road) will present lectures and displays from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. At the same time, D-Day films will be shown in the Recreation Center (Zimborsky street).

More information may be obtained from Maj. Ralph Paduano at Fort Meade, 677-3495.

□

The Maryland National Guard Historical Society will dedicate a memorial 2 p.m. Sunday, June 10, at the 5th Regiment Armory, honoring the 29th Infantry Division (since disbanded, but then composed mainly of men from Maryland and Virginia National Guard units). The division was part of the assault on Omaha Beach.

More information may be obtained from Maj. Howard S. Freedlander at the armory, 728-3388.

en heavy casualties.

By nightfall, not including the 60-man detachment from the 5th Rangers, Sergeant Hodgson counted "less than half" of the original 225 men in the battalion who were still able to fight. Worse, the heroic assault had been in vain. The bunkers atop Pointe du Hoc were empty. The Germans had never mounted the guns.

**AFTERNOON**

By early afternoon, elements of Lt. Col. Purley Cooper's 110th Field Artillery Battalion and the 115th Infantry Regiment were near St. Laurent-sur-Mer. Unfortunately, most of the battalion's artillery was still in boats offshore.

Colonel Cooper was told that large landing craft "were not yet being allowed on the beach." His guns did not arrive until the next day. Meanwhile, the battalion was using four 105-mm. howitzers that belonged to a battalion

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## Maryland man was said to be the first ashore at Normandy

By Paul Beeman  
Special to The Sun

LARGO, Fla. — The Allied Forces didn't handpick the first American to step on the beaches of France during the D-Day invasion 40 years ago, but if they had it would have been someone very much like the Maryland man credited with being the first to wade ashore at Normandy at 6:28 a.m. on June 6, 1944.

Leonard T. Schroeder, Jr., was a 25-year-old ROTC captain from Linthicum Heights, an all-American soccer player at the University of Maryland, a new father who had yet to see his 18-month-old son. An International News Service dispatch credited him with being first on Utah Beach.

He went on to serve 30-plus years in the U.S. Army, retiring as a colonel. Today, he and his wife, the former Margaret Nicholson, whom he met while attending Glen Burnie High, live in Largo, Fla., near St. Petersburg.

"It was pure circumstance that

we hit the beach when we did," Colonel Schroeder says. "My boat just happened to catch the right wave."

The young captain was commanding officer of Rifle Company F, 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Division. His unit's mission was to blow up the seawall, knock out a small fort and some machine gun nests, and liberate the village of Ste. Marie-du-Mont, about 5 miles inland.

He was aboard the USS Barnett, a transport troop carrier. About midnight, the Army men were fed a steak dinner, and an hour later they climbed down nets to the small landing craft that would ferry them ashore.

"The Air Force had been bombing the beach heavily, making craters for us to use as cover. Some of those craters were offshore, hidden by the water, and our boat hit one of them and stuck. The Navy man thought it was as far as we could go, and the point is you don't

just sit there. He dropped the ramp and that was the signal for us to go. I was standing right by the ramp and went down it first, into that crater and about 6 feet of water. I came up sputtering into water about waist deep and about 50 or 60 yards from shore. . . . I was the first man from my company to get to the beach and I was out of the water before the other boats in my company got there."

Less than an hour later, Captain Schroeder discovered that a piece of shrapnel or a machine-gun bullet had hit him in the left arm. Four operations at a hospital in England saved the damaged limb, and it was while he was recovering more than two weeks later that he learned there were claims of his being No. 1 on the beach.

"A nurse brought me a stack of newspapers and some mail. She said I had a lot of reading to do. I told her I was only interested in the mail from home and she said, 'Well, you better read those papers because you're in them.'"

### "THE LONGEST DAY" . . . Cont.

that had been "decimated in the fighting."

The war, which had seemed a long way off to Cpl. Dick Fritter a few hours before, became terribly real again when the 82d Airborne Division paratroopers came upon a German machine-gun nest around mid-afternoon. Two of the Germans surrendered. A third, armed with a rifle, fired.

The Americans returned the fire and seconds later, three Germans lay dead on the ground. Next to them was a mortally wounded paratrooper. They gave him a shot of morphine and moved on.

Pfc. Jimmy Kline figured he must be living a charmed life. He had been hit at least twice — three times if you counted the heels shot off both his boots — and he was still going strong.

Now, as he reached a field and started to cross it, he heard someone behind him shout, "Hey, soldier, there's a sniper in them trees!"

Jimmy Kline instinctively dropped to one knee. As he did, a shot rang out. He heard the bullet "whiz past my head." When he looked up, the man behind him was dead.

It was one of the bravest things Purley Cooper ever saw. The regi-

ment was held up by fire from a farmhouse occupied by Germans outside St. Laurent, when Brig. Gen. Norman D. Cota, the crusty, 51-year-old assistant commander of the 29th Division, drove up in a jeep and asked about the delay.

Colonel Cooper listened as a young infantry lieutenant explained the situation and said he was "sending a detail in to clear the Germans out." But, he added, "I'm afraid it's going to be costly, sir."

"Give me a squad," General Cota snapped, and, as Colonel Cooper watched "in amazement," the general, "brandishing his .45 and chewing on the stump of a dead cigar," led a charge against the farmhouse, routing the Germans.

Returning, he clapped the lieutenant on the back and said, "See, that's how it's done," and then he climbed back in his jeep and left. St. Laurent fell shortly after that.

### EVENING

After Sgt. Bill Howe's small band of paratroopers narrowly missed being seen by a German patrol, he decided it would be wise to "hunker down" in a copse and wait until dark to move. They dug in and ate "chocolate bars and some vegetables" they

found in a field and "a few raw chicken eggs from a henhouse."

Several German patrols passed, but they did not engage them. Not only were they outnumbered, there "was no one around to take notes for medals."

Lt. Col. Purley Cooper was worried. He believed the invasion had been "a success," but he fretted because there was "nothing to back us up, no tanks, no artillery to speak of, just some pistols and rifles and a few mortars."

Now, sharing a ditch on the outskirts of St. Laurent with Lt. Col. Louis G. Smith, executive officer of the 115th Regiment, he recalled an intelligence report issued shortly before they left England. Four German armored divisions were believed to be "less than two hours away" from the beaches.

"My God," he thought, "we're helpless. If they attack we'll be crucified." He turned to Colonel Smith. "What do you think, Lou?" he said. "If they bring their armor in tonight, do you suppose we'll be alive in the morning?"

Lou Smith shrugged. "God only knows," he said. "We can only pray." Purley Cooper closed his eyes and prayed.

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