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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection: WH Speechwriting: Research Office Records

Archivist: jas

File Folder: Omaha Beach memorial remarks (1) Box 17033

Date: 2/20/97

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
1. Personnel form	Re: Peter Zanatta	12/15/44	PG <i>Open on appeal</i> <i>6/25/97</i> <i>F96-016A</i>

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P-1 National security classified information [(a)(1) of the PRA].
- P-2 Relating to appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA].
- P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA].
- P-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA].
- P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA].
- P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA].
- C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- F-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA].
- F-2 Release could disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA].
- F-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA].
- F-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA].
- F-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA].
- F-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA].
- F-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA].
- F-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA].

Ben

*Tony
Peggy
Julie*

Kim W.

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 5/21/84

ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: _____

SUBJECT: LETTER LISA ZANATTA HENN RE ATTENDANCE AT D-DAY CEREMONY

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McFARLANE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEESE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McMANUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BAKER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MURPHY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEAVER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	OGLESBY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
STOCKMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> P	<input type="checkbox"/> SS	SPEAKES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FELDSTEIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SVAHN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FIELDING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	VERSTANDIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FULLER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WHITTLESEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HERRINGTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	COYNE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HICKEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ELLIOTT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			CAULFIELD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

RESPONSE:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FYE

Mr. President:

I ran this by Dick Darman and he thought that page 4 of this letter might be useful to speechwriters for possible use in Europe or for radio speech from Europe. Any objections?

NOT AT ALL.

Col. Caulfield already answered Lisa so no reply from you is necessary.

If Lisa's problem is inability to afford transportation how about a ^{Kathy} part. initiative to raise money for some people like this? RR

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 10, 1984

Dear Lisa:

Thank you for your letter to President Reagan.

The President has requested the Secretary of Defense to include you and your family on the United States Invitation List for the Omaha Beach commemoration on the 6th of June.

You should receive an official invitation from the Secretary of Defense in a few days. Unfortunately, intercontinental travel and accommodations cannot be provided by the United States government. However, you will be given whatever assistance is required once you arrive in France.

Please provide me as soon as possible the names and addresses of other members of your family who desire to attend the commemoration.

If you have any questions or there is anything else I can do for you, please write or call me on (202) 456-2150.

Sincerely,



M. P. CAULFIELD

Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Deputy Director
White House Military Office

Ms. Lisa Zanatta Henn
1100 Elmwood Drive
Millbrae, California 94030

DDP
March 15, 1984

Ronald Reagan, President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing this letter to ask for your assistance.

I have read recently that you are planning to attend the 40th Memorial of D Day.

My father, Peter Robert Zanatta, PFC, 37th Engineer Combat Battalion, landed on the First Wave on Omaha Beach on D Day. This event was probably the most important event of his life. He always planned to go back someday. Since he is no longer living - my mother, brothers and I are planning to attend. We would like to attend not just as tourists but as representatives of the United States. I don't know if there will be any special envoys to Normandy, but if there are, we would like to be part of them. We plan to get there any way we can, but it would be nice to be part of a group of proud Americans who although may not have been there know the anguish and pride of those who faced that day.

I would appreciate it if you would forward this letter to anyone that could possibly help my family realize this dream. Please know that I am available to help you in anyway I can. I am enclosing a short story I wrote about my father that explains how deeply I feel about attending this Memorial.

I can be contacted at:

Lisa Zanatta Henn
1100 Elmwood Dr.
Millbrae, California 94403
(415) 588-6609

OR

1340 North Dearborn, Apt 16E
Chicago, Illinois 60610
(312) 440-9395

I would appreciate any assistance you can give me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lisa Zanatta Henn

"Someday, Lis, I'll go back."

"Someday, Lis, I'll go back. I'll go back and I'll see it all again. I'll see the beach, the barricades, and the graves. I'll put a flower on the graves of the guys I knew and on the grave of the unknown soldier -- all the guys I fought with."

I heard my father say these words hundreds and hundreds of times for as long as I can remember. When he said them, he always looked like he was somewhere else, remembering something painful yet something he was so proud of.

My dad landed on "the beach"—First Wave, Omaha Beach, The Invasion of Normandy, June 6, 1944. The infamous D-Day. Not many people my age know or even care about this day but I always will—I can't remember when it wasn't important to me.

I know most fathers tell their kids war stories. The kids start to roll their eyes and say "oh no, not again. We've heard them all a million times." My brothers and I never said that in our house. No matter how many times we heard the stories, we never got tired of them. I tried to figure out why my dad's stories were different. The only thing I came up with is that he made you see it all, made you feel how it must have been.

My dad was 18 years old when he went into World War II. Eighteen -- when I was 18, I graduated from high school and the only heavy decisions I had to make were what college I wanted to go to or what kind of car I wanted my parents to buy me. Real life and death situations. But when my dad was 18 he had no choices, he went and fought for his country and was proud to do it. He never even thought twice about it. But those three years and the Normandy Invasion would change his life forever.

I can only remember a few of the stories he told us. There was one about a castle in Europe that had a long winding staircase. I guess my dad and his division were camping there for the night. Most of the guys were my dad's age, so being kids they slid down the banister. This always struck my brothers and me so funny — that my dad slid down some banister, in some castle in some strange city in Europe during the war. It seems they found a moment to be kids in a situation that would turn them old before their time.

I also remember the story about how he had to lay for a long period of time on top of a dead soldier without moving as German troops plowed by. He told us of how he was afraid to breath because the Germans might see him; of how the smell of the dead man made him so sick. We just looked at him with awe and without really comprehending it all. Not then anyway.

There were many stories — Christmas over there when the shooting stopped for a few minutes at midnight and turkey dinners fell from the sky; of giving his food to starving children so they would stop eating garbage; of being injured and then sent right back to the front; of the beauty of Paris even with the destruction of war; of the guys he knew — who lived and fought right next to him and those who died; of the songs they sung (that he taught us to sing); and of being afraid and yet going on every day — just trying to live and make it back to the glorious place called home.

But the story to end all stories was D-Day. No single incident in my dad's life ever meant more to him and I can understand why.

As I said earlier, my dad landed on Omaha Beach — on the First Wave. Even when I was small and he would tell us about D-Day, I could tell by the look in his eyes that this was different — this was the biggest thing that had ever happened in his life.

He made me feel the fear of being on that boat waiting to land. I can smell the ocean and feel the seasickness. I can see the looks on his fellow soldiers' faces, the fear, the anguish, the uncertainty of what lay ahead. And when they landed, I can feel the strength and courage of the men who took those first steps through the tide to what must have surely looked like instant death. I don't know how or why I can feel this emptiness, this fear, or this determination, but I do. Maybe its the bond I had with my father. (I was really lucky -- we never got tired of talking to each other). All I know is that it brings tears to my eyes to think about my father as a 20 year old boy having to face that beach.

When I grew older, I read everything on D-Day that I could find. As it turned out, the fact that my father lived to tell his children about it was a miracle. So many men died. I know that my father watched many of his friends be killed. I know that he must have died inside a little each time. But his explanation to me was -- " You did what you had to do and you kept on going."

My dad won his share of medals. He was a good soldier and fought hard for his country. He never considered himself or what he had done as anything special. But I always did. I guess most kids put their fathers on pedestals, but I truly believe my father belonged on one. He gave up three years of his life and when he came back, everything was different. But he went on. He was just an ordinary guy, with immigrant Italian parents who never really had enough money. But he was a proud man. Proud of his heritage, proud of his country, proud that he fought in World War II and proud that he lived through D-Day.

June 6th is a special day at my family's house. When we were younger, my dad's best friend would come over, and he and my dad would just sit in our kitchen and drink and talk about old times until the early hours of the morning. They had been friends since they were eight years old and had both fought in the war.

They talked of the war of course; of their lost childhood (you can't ever be the same can you?); of the friends they had lost. Some people would say that they made too much of it or hung on to the memories too long. But how can anyone forget something like that? I never will and it all happened 12 years before I was even born.

My dad is gone now. Its been eight years. He died fighting a war against cancer. Even then the experience of D-Day was on his mind. When he was just about ready to go into surgery, I asked him how he was doing. He looked at me and said, "Lis, I feel just like I did at the Invasion of Normandy, I don't know if I'll live or die."

Maybe he made it too big a thing in his life. Maybe my family and I hang on to this part of my father's life and make it more than what it was. I've tried to make my friends understand what I feel, but they all just look at me like I'm kind of strange. Maybe if they had listened to my dad, they would feel the way I do. I guess most people my age feel that it all happened so long ago, why should they think about it.

But it was and always will be a big event. It changed everyone's lives —then and now. Everyone takes it for granted. Maybe that's what made my dad different. After he fought one of the most important battles in our nation's history, he could never take anything for granted again.

It will always affect me too. War movies, old songs, stories of the war, all of it gets to me. I know a lot of it is because my dad is gone now, and these things were so much a part of his life. But it was those events that made him the man he was — the man that came to be my father.

When I talk of Dad, I always say he landed on the First Wave at Omaha Beach. People are amazed that I even know or care about that day or event at all. But I'm just so proud of it and I always will be.

"I'm going there someday, Dad, and I'll see the beaches and the barricades and the monuments. I'll see the graves and I'll put the flowers there just like you wanted to do. I'll see the ceremonies honoring the veterans of D-Day and I'll feel all the things you made me feel through your stories and your eyes. I'll never forget what you went through, Dad, nor will I let anyone else forget — and Dad, I'll always be proud."

Lisa Zanatta Henn
March, 1984



Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

PETER R ZANATTA 39 130 513 Private First Class
37th Engineer Combat Battalion

Army of the United States

*is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military
service of the United States of America.*

*This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest
and Faithful Service to this country.*

Given at SEPARATION CENTER
Camp Beale California

Date 8 December 1945

L. E. Goecker

L E GOECKER
MAJOR QMG

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL Zanatta Peter R		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 39 130 513	3. GRADE Pfc	4. ARM OR SERVICE CE	5. COMPONENT AUS
6. ORGANIZATION 37th Engr Combat Bn		7. DATE OF SEPARATION 8 Dec 45	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION Sep Cen Camp Beale Calif		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES 806 22nd St San Francisco S F Co Calif			10. DATE OF BIRTH 8 Jul 24	11. PLACE OF BIRTH Elk River Idaho	
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE BOUGHT See 9			13. COLOR EYES Brown	14. COLOR HAIR Brown	15. HEIGHT 5' 7 1/2"
16. WEIGHT 155 lbs		17. NO. DEPEND. 0		18. RACE X WHITE	
19. MARITAL STATUS X SINGLE		20. U.S. CITIZEN X YES		21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. Stage Builder 5-25.64	

MILITARY HISTORY

22. DATE OF INDUCTION 9 Apr 43	23. DATE OF ENLISTMENT 16 Apr 43	24. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE 16 Apr 43	25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE San Francisco Calif
26. REGISTERED X YES	27. LOCAL S.S. BOARD NO. 77	28. COUNTY AND STATE San Francisco Calif	29. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE See 9
30. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. Jackhammer Operator -188		31. MILITARY QUALIFICATION AND DATE (i.e.: infantry, aviation and marksmanship badges, etc.) Sharpshooter M1 Rifle 1943	

32. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS
Normandy Northern France GO 33 WD 45 Central Europe Rhineland GO 40 WD 45

33. DECORATIONS AND CITATION
Distinguished Unit Badge GO 64 Hq 1st US Army 27 Sep 44 European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with Bronze Arrowhead Croix De Guerre Purple Heart GO 10 Hq 5 ESB 14 Aug 44 Good Conduct Medal (55)

34. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION
Normandy 6 Jun 44

35. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES				36. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN		
SMALLPOX	TYPHOID	TETANUS	OTHER (specify)	DATE OF DEPARTURE	DESTINATION	DATE OF ARRIVAL
Jul 45	Aug 45	Feb 44	Typhus Aug 45	21 Oct 43	European African Middle Eastern Theater US	2 Nov 43
37. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE				38. HIGHEST GRADE HELD		
CONTINENTAL SERVICE		FOREIGN SERVICE				
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	
0	6	16	2	2	7	Pfc

39. PRIOR SERVICE
None

40. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION
Convenience of the Government RR 1-1 (Demobilization) AR 615-365 15 Dec 44

41. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED
None

42. EDUCATION (Years)
Grammar **8** High School **4** College **0**

PAY DATA

43. LONGEVITY FOR PAY PURPOSES YEARS 2 MONTHS 8 DAYS 0	44. MUSTERING QTY PAY TOTAL \$ 300 THIS PAYMENT \$ 100	45. SOLDIER DEPOSITS None	46. TRAVEL PAY 7.47	47. TOTAL AMOUNT 215.87	NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER W L VIERS Capt FD
--	---	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

INSURANCE NOTICE

IMPORTANT: IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WHEN DUE OR WITHIN THIRTY-DAY PERIOD THEREAFTER, INSURANCE WILL LAPSE. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS SUBDIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

48. KIND OF INSURANCE X Nat. Serv. X U.S. Govt. X None	49. HOW PAID X Allotment X Direct to V. A.	50. Effective Date of Allotment 30 Nov 45	51. Date of Next Premium Due 31 Dec 45	52. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH 6.40	53. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO X Continue X Continue Only 5 Discontinue
--	---	---	--	---	--

54. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)

**Lapel Button Issued
Inactive Service ERC 9 Apr 43 to 15 Apr 43
ASR Score (2 Sep 45) 77
(53) World War II Victory Medal THX 23 Oct 45**

56. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED <i>Peter R. Zanatta</i>	57. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) K H KOLLEY 1st Lt AC <i>K H Kolley</i>
--	---

WD AGO FORM 32-55
1 November 1944
This form supersedes all previous editions of
WD AGO Form 32 and 33 for enlisted persons
entitled to an Honorable Discharge, which
will not be used after receipt of this revision.

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

May 31, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR BEN ELLIOTT

FROM: ROBERT M. KIMMITT *Bob*
SUBJECT: Omaha Beach Remarks

The NSC concurs with the latest draft of the Omaha Beach remarks. However, given the time guidelines (3-5 minutes) for the speech, we have indicated where we feel the remarks could be trimmed, including a suggested revised and shortened conclusion.

Tab A - Omaha Beach Remarks w/suggested revisions

cc Dick Darman

(Dolan/RR)
May 30, 1984
4:00 p.m.

Kim W

Saint Laurent Cemetery
laid on on cliff above
Omaha
Beach

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OMAHA BEACH MEMORIAL REMARKS
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

D-Day Beaches
Revisited: p 117

June 6, 1984
memo to RR from
McCoy & Rydman - w/1
annotated agenda
for Europe

Longest Day:
p. 291

On Omaha
Beach by
Charles
Cawthorne
AMERICAN
Oct. 1944
see Nat'l Guard
sniping book

The Longest Day
by Cornelius
Ryan - pp. 203-
230
D-Day Beaches
p. 123
Quoted in
TIME Mag.
5/28/84; p. 22
(see pt. du Hoc
file)

[We stand] today at a place of battle, one that 40 years ago saw the worst of war. Men bled and died here for a few feet or inches of sand as bullets and shellfire cut through their ranks. About them, General Omar Bradley later said: "Every man who set foot on Omaha Beach that day was a hero."

Words do not do them justice. Speeches cannot portray their suffering, their sacrifice, their heroism. President Lincoln once reminded us that -- through their deeds -- the dead of battle have spoken more eloquently for themselves than any of the living ever could, that we can only honor them by rededicating ourselves to the cause for which they gave a last full measure of devotion.

Gettysburg
Aug 19, 1863

Today, we do rededicate ourselves to that cause. And in this place of honor, we are humbled by the realization of how much many have given to the cause of freedom and to their fellow man.

Some who survived the battle on June 6, 1944 are here today. Others who hoped to return never did so.

Jim Kuhn
W.H. Advance
5/24/84
See letter to
RR from
LISA LANA A
Hans - 9/15/84
see Discharge
attached to letter
of 9/15/84

("Someday, Lis, I'll go back,") said Private First Class Peter Robert Zanatta of the 37th Engineer Combat Battalion of the first assault wave to hit Omaha Beach. "I'll go back and I'll see it all again. I'll see the beach, the barricades, and the graves. I'll put a flower on the graves of the guys I knew and on the grave of the unknown soldier -- all the guys I fought with."

See
letter

Those words of Private Zanatta come to us from his daughter, Lisa Zanatta Henn, in an essay written about an event her father spoke of often: "the Normandy Invasion would change his life forever," she said.

Letter
from
Lisa
Henn

She tells some of his stories of World War II, but says for her father "the story to end all stories was D-Day."

"He made me feel the fear of being on that boat waiting to land. I can smell the ocean and feel the seasickness. I can see the looks on his fellow soldiers' faces, the fear, the anguish, the uncertainty of what lay ahead. And when they landed, I can feel the strength and courage of the men who took those first steps through the tide to what must have surely looked like instant death."

Private Zanatta's daughter says: "I don't know how or why I can feel this emptiness, this fear, or this determination, but I do. Maybe its the bond I had with my father. (I was really lucky -- we never got tired of talking to each other.) All I know is that it brings tears to my eyes to think about my father as a 20 year old boy having to face that beach."

She went on to say how the anniversary of D-Day for her and her family was always special; and like all the families of those who went to war, she describes how she came to realize her own father's survival was a miracle.

"So many men died. I know that my father watched many of his friends be killed. I know that he must have died inside a little each time. But his explanation to me was 'You did what you had to do and you kept on going.'"

"My dad won his share of medals. He was a good soldier and fought hard for his country. He was just an ordinary guy, with immigrant Italian parents who never really had enough money. But he was a proud man. Proud of his heritage, proud of his country, proud that he fought in World War II and proud that he lived through D-Day."

When men like Private Zanatta and all our allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy 40 years ago, they came not as conquerors, but as liberators. [When these troops swept across the French countryside and into the forests of Belgium and Luxembourg, they came not to take, but to restore what had been wrongly taken. When our forces marched into a ruined Germany,] they came not to prey on a brave and defeated people, but to nurture the seeds of democracy among those who yearned again to be free.

We salute them today; we also salute those who were already engaging the enemy inside this country -- the French Resistance -- whose valiant service for France did so much to cripple the enemy in their midst and assist in the advance of the invading armies of liberation. These French Forces of the Interior will forever offer us an image of courage and national spirit, and will be a permanent inspiration to those who are free and all those who would be free.

This day, we celebrate the triumph of democracy. This day, we reaffirm the unity of democratic peoples who fought a war and then joined with the vanquished in a firm resolve to keep the peace from that time on.

see State Dept draft p. 2

see State Dept draft p. 2

State Dept draft, p. 1

PN6081
.B27
1980
WH

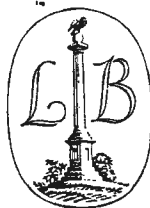
Familiar Quotations

*A collection of passages, phrases and
proverbs traced to their sources in
ancient and modern literature*

FIFTEENTH AND 125TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
REVISED AND ENLARGED

John Bartlett

— Edited by EMILY MORISON BECK
and the editorial staff of Little, Brown and Company



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY • BOSTON • TORONTO

as slaves within
 part of a state, the
 be in rebellion
 shall be then,
 free.

Proclamation
*September 22, 1862*²

boy in Kentucky
 unning to see his
 he was too big to
 to laugh.

he felt about the
*ns.*³ *From Frank*
and Weekly [Novem-

consist of its terri-
 s. The territory is
 certain durability.

l Message to Con-
December 1, 1862]

a proper time for
 at time surely is
 he present, men
 which they would
 ble through time
Ib.

t past are inade-
 t. The occasion is
 and we must rise
 ase is new, so we
 anew. We must
 hen we shall save

ot escape history.
 is administration
 e of ourselves. No
 nsignificance can
 s. The fiery trial
 l light us down in
 st generation. We
 he world will not
 know how to save
 s we do know how
 e, hold the power
 y. In giving free-
 re freedom to the
 what we give and
 all nobly save or
 t hope of earth.
 this could not fail.
 il, generous, just
 n was issued one hun-

oratio Seymour, *Dum-*
New York. Moreover,
 its picked up a number
 number of state elec-

— a way which if followed the world will
 forever applaud and God must forever bless.
Ib.

1 Beware of rashness, but with energy and
 sleepless vigilance go forward and give us vic-
 tories.

Letter to Major General Joseph
Hooker [January 26, 1863]

2 The Father of Waters again goes unvexed
 to the sea.

Letter to James C. Conkling
 [August 26, 1863]

3 I have endured a great deal of ridicule
 without much malice; and have received a
 great deal of kindness, not quite free from
 ridicule. I am used to it.

Letter to James H. Hackett
 [November 2, 1863]

4 Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers
 brought forth on this continent, a new nation,
 conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to
 the proposition that all men are created
 equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war,
 testing whether that nation or any nation so
 conceived and so dedicated can long endure.
 We are met on a great battlefield of that war.
 We have come to dedicate a portion of that
 field, as a final resting place for those who
 here gave their lives that that nation might
 live. It is altogether fitting and proper that
 we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate
 — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow
 — this ground. The brave men, living and
 dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it
 far above our poor power to add or detract.
 The world will little note nor long remember
 what we say here, but it can never forget
 what they did here. It is for us, the living,
 rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished
 work which they who fought here have thus
 far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be
 here dedicated to the great task remaining
 before us — that from these honored dead we
 take increased devotion to that cause for
 which they gave the last full measure of devo-
 tion; that we here highly resolve that these
 dead shall not have died in vain; that this
 nation, under God, shall have a new birth of
 freedom; and that government of the people,
 by the people, for the people, shall not perish
 from the earth.¹

Address at Gettysburg
 [November 19, 1863]

¹See Wycliffe, 143:12; Webster, 450:14; Disraeli, 501:6;
 Garrison, 505:19; and Parker, 537:15.

5 The President last night had a dream. He
 was in a party of plain people and as it be-
 came known who he was they began to com-
 ment on his appearance. One of them said,
 "He is a common-looking man." The Presi-
 dent replied, "Common-looking people are
 the best in the world: that is the reason the
 Lord makes so many of them."

From Letters of John Hay and Ex-
tracts from His Diary, edited by
C. L. HAY [December 23, 1863]

6 I claim not to have controlled events, but
 confess plainly that events have controlled
 me.

Letter to A. G. Hodges [April 4,
 1864]

7 The world has never had a good definition
 of the word liberty. And the American people
 just now are much in want of one. We all
 declare for liberty; but in using the same
 word we do not mean the same thing. With
 some, the word liberty may mean for each
 man to do as he pleases with himself and the
 product of his labor; while with others the
 same word may mean for some men to do as
 they please with other men and the product
 of other men's labor. Here are two, not only
 different, but incompatible things, called by
 the same name, liberty. And it follows that
 each of the things is by the respective parties
 called by two different and incompatible
 names, liberty and tyranny.

The shepherd drives the wolf from the
 sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks
 the shepherd as his liberator, while the
 wolf denounces him for the same act. . . .
 Plainly the sheep and the wolf are not agreed
 upon a definition of liberty.

Address at the Sanitary Fair,
Baltimore [April 18, 1864]

8 I do not allow myself to suppose that either
 the convention or the League have concluded
 to decide that I am either the greatest or best
 man in America, but rather they have con-
 cluded that it is not best to swap horses while
 crossing the river, and have further con-
 cluded that I am not so poor a horse that they
 might not make a botch of it in trying to
 swap.

Reply to the National Union
League [June 9, 1864]

9 Truth is generally the best vindication
 against slander.

Letter to Secretary Stanton, refus-
ing to dismiss Postmaster-General
Montgomery Blair [July 18, 1864]

Kim W
(Dolan/RR)
May 30, 1984
4:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OMAHA BEACH MEMORIAL REMARKS
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

We stand today at a place of battle, one that 40 years ago saw the worst of war. Men bled and died here for a few feet or inches of sand as bullets and shellfire cut through their ranks. About them, General Omar Bradley later said: "Every man who set foot on Omaha Beach that day was a hero."

Words do not do them justice. Speeches cannot portray their suffering, their sacrifice, their heroism. President Lincoln once reminded us that -- through their deeds -- the dead of battle have spoken more eloquently for themselves than any of the living ever could, that we can only honor them by rededicating ourselves to the cause for which they gave a last full measure of devotion.

Today, we do rededicate ourselves to that cause. And in this place of honor, we are humbled by the realization of how much many have given to the cause of freedom and to their fellow man.

Some who survived the battle on June 6, 1944 are here today. Others who hoped to return never did so.

"Someday, Lis, I'll go back," said Private First Class Peter Robert Zanatta of the 37th Engineer Combat Battalion of the first assault wave to hit Omaha Beach. "I'll go back and I'll see it all again. I'll see the beach, the barricades, and the graves. I'll put a flower on the graves of the guys I knew and on the grave of the unknown soldier -- all the guys I fought with."

Those words of Private Zanatta come to us from his daughter, Lisa Zanatta Henn, in an essay written about an event her father spoke of often: "the Normandy Invasion would change his life forever," she said.

She tells some of his stories of World War II, but says for her father "the story to end all stories was D-Day."

"He made me feel the fear of being on that boat waiting to land. I can smell the ocean and feel the seasickness. I can see the looks on his fellow soldiers' faces, the fear, the anguish, the uncertainty of what lay ahead. And when they landed, I can feel the strength and courage of the men who took those first steps through the tide to what must have surely looked like instant death."

Private Zanatta's daughter says: "I don't know how or why I can feel this emptiness, this fear, or this determination, but I do. Maybe its the bond I had with my father. (I was really lucky -- we never got tired of talking to each other.) All I know is that it brings tears to my eyes to think about my father as a 20 year old boy having to face that beach."

She went on to say how the anniversary of D-Day for her and her family was always special; and like all the families of those who went to war, she describes how she came to realize her own father's survival was a miracle.

"So many men died. I know that my father watched many of his friends be killed. I know that he must have died inside a little each time. But his explanation to me was 'You did what you had to do and you kept on going.'"

"My dad won his share of medals. He was a good soldier and fought hard for his country. He was just an ordinary guy, with immigrant Italian parents who never really had enough money. But he was a proud man. Proud of his heritage, proud of his country, proud that he fought in World War II and proud that he lived through D-Day."

When men like Private Zanatta and all our allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy 40 years ago, they came not as conquerors, but as liberators. When these troops swept across the French countryside and into the forests of Belgium and Luxembourg, they came not to take, but to restore what had been wrongly taken. When our forces marched into a ruined Germany, they came not to prey on a brave and defeated people, but to nurture the seeds of democracy among those who yearned again to be free.

We salute them today; we also salute those who were already engaging the enemy inside this country -- the French Resistance -- whose valiant service for France did so much to cripple the enemy in their midst and assist in the advance of the invading armies of liberation. These French Forces of the Interior will forever offer us an image of courage and national spirit, and will be a permanent inspiration to those who are free and all those who would be free.

This day, we celebrate the triumph of democracy. This day, we reaffirm the unity of democratic peoples who fought a war and then joined with the vanquished in a firm resolve to keep the peace from that time on.

From a terrible war, we learned that unity made us invincible; now, in peace, that same unity can make us secure. We sought the inclusion of all freedom-loving nations in a community dedicated to the defense and preservation of our sacred values. Our alliance, forged in the crucible of war, tempered and shaped by the realities of the post-war world, has succeeded in this end. In Europe, the threat has been contained. The peace has been kept.

Today, the living here assembled -- officials, veterans, citizens -- are a tribute to what was achieved here 40 years ago. This land is secure. We are free. These things were worth fighting -- and dying -- for.

Lisa Zanatta Henn began her essay with a quote from her father, who frequently promised he would return to Normandy. She ended her essay with a quote from herself, promising her father, who died eight years ago of cancer, that she would go in his place and see the graves and the flowers and the ceremonies honoring the veterans of D-Day. She promised him, ". . . I'll feel all the things you made me feel through your stories and your eyes."

"I will never forget what you went through, Dad, nor will I let anyone else forget -- and Dad, I'll always be proud."

Through the words a loving daughter -- who is here with us today -- a D-Day veteran has given us the meaning of this day far better than any President can. It is enough for us to say about Private Zanatta and all the men of honor and courage who fought beside him four decades ago: We will always remember. We will always be proud.

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

May 31, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR BEN ELLIOTT

FROM: ROBERT M. KIMMITT ^{Bob}

SUBJECT: Omaha Beach Remarks

The NSC concurs with the latest draft of the Omaha Beach remarks. However, given the time guidelines (3-5 minutes) for the speech, we have indicated where we feel the remarks could be trimmed, including a suggested revised and shortened conclusion.

Tab A - Omaha Beach Remarks w/suggested revisions

cc Dick Darman

(Dolan/RR)
May 30, 1984
4:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OMAHA BEACH MEMORIAL REMARKS
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

Mr. President, Distinguished Guests:

We stand today at a place of battle, one that 40 years ago saw the worst of war. Men bled and died here for a few feet or inches of sand as bullets and shellfire cut through their ranks. About them, General Omar Bradley later said: "Every man who set foot on Omaha Beach that day was a hero."

Words do not do them justice. Speeches cannot portray their suffering, their sacrifice, their heroism. President Lincoln once reminded us that -- through their deeds -- the dead of battle have spoken more eloquently for themselves than any of the living ever could, that we can only honor them by rededicating ourselves to the cause for which they gave a last full measure of devotion.

Today, we do rededicate ourselves to that cause. And in this place of honor, we are humbled by the realization of how much many have given to the cause of freedom and to their fellow man.

Some who survived the battle on June 6, 1944 are here today. Others who hoped to return never did so.

"Someday, Lis, I'll go back," said Private First Class Peter Robert Zanatta of the 37th Engineer Combat Battalion of the first assault wave to hit Omaha Beach. "I'll go back and I'll see it all again. I'll see the beach, the barricades, and the graves. I'll put a flower on the graves of the guys I knew and on the grave of the unknown soldier -- all the guys I fought with."

Those words of Private Zanatta come to us from his daughter, Lisa Zanatta Henn, in an essay written about an event her father spoke of often: "the Normandy Invasion would change his life forever," she said.

She tells some of his stories of World War II, but says for her father "the story to end all stories was D-Day."

"He made me feel the fear of being on that boat waiting to land. I can smell the ocean and feel the seasickness. I can see the looks on his fellow soldiers' faces, the fear, the anguish, the uncertainty of what lay ahead. And when they landed, I can feel the strength and courage of the men who took those first steps through the tide to what must have surely looked like instant death."

[Private Zanatta's daughter says: "I don't know how or why I can feel this emptiness, this fear, or this determination, but I do. Maybe its the bond I had with my father. (I was really lucky -- we never got tired of talking to each other.) All I know is that it brings tears to my eyes to think about my father as a 20 year old boy having to face that beach."]

She went on to say how the anniversary of D-Day for her and her family was always special; and like all the families of those who went to war, she describes how she came to realize her own father's survival was a miracle.

"So many men died. I know that my father watched many of his friends be killed. I know that he must have died inside a little each time. But his explanation to me was 'You did what you had to do and you kept on going.'"

["My dad won his share of medals. He was a good soldier and fought hard for his country. He was just an ordinary guy, with immigrant Italian parents who never really had enough money. But he was a proud man. Proud of his heritage, proud of his country, proud that he fought in World War II and proud that he lived through D-Day."]

When men like Private Zanatta and all our allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy 40 years ago, they came not as conquerors, but as liberators. When these troops swept across the French countryside and into the forests of Belgium and Luxembourg, they came not to take, but to restore what had been wrongly taken. When our forces marched into a ruined Germany, they came not to prey on a brave and defeated people, but to nurture the seeds of democracy among those who yearned again to be free.

We salute them today; we also salute those who were already engaging the enemy inside this country -- the French Resistance -- whose valiant service for France did so much to cripple the enemy in their midst and assist in the advance of the invading armies of liberation. These French Forces of the Interior will forever offer us an image of courage and national spirit, and will be a permanent inspiration to those who are free and all those who would be free.

This day, we celebrate the triumph of democracy. This day, we reaffirm the unity of democratic peoples who fought a war and then joined with the vanquished in a firm resolve to keep the peace from that time on.

From a terrible war, we learned that unity made us invincible; now, in peace, that same unity can make us secure.

We sought the inclusion of all freedom-loving nations in a community dedicated to the defense and preservation of our sacred values. Our alliance, forged in the crucible of war, tempered and shaped by the realities of the post-war world, has succeeded in this end. In Europe, the threat has been contained. The peace has been kept. ** Recommend drop last three paragraphs, substitute shorter paragraph [see insert]*

[Today, the living here assembled -- officials, veterans, citizens -- are a tribute to what was achieved here 40 years ago. This land is secure. We are free. These things were worth fighting -- and dying -- for.]

[Lisa Zanatta Henn began her essay with a quote from her father, who frequently promised he would return to Normandy. She ended her essay with a quote from herself, promising her father, who died eight years ago of cancer, that she would go in his place and see the graves and the flowers and the ceremonies honoring the veterans of D-Day. She promised him, " . . . I'll feel all the things you made me feel through your stories and your eyes."

"I will never forget what you went through, Dad, nor will I let anyone else forget -- and Dad, I'll always be proud."

Through the words a loving daughter -- who is here with us today -- a D-Day veteran has given us the meaning of this day far better than any President can. It is enough for us to say about Private Zanatta and all the men of honor and courage who fought beside him four decades ago: We will always remember. We will always be proud.]

(Insert for Page 4)

As I look out on the sea of gravestones, my final thoughts dwell on the heroism, patriotism and supreme sacrifice of our men and women buried here. They are fittingly honored by this memorial. For those, such as Private Zanatta, who bravely fought and returned from these shores, we rejoice in their return to the hopes and dreams they had left behind. Yet, I cannot help to look into the faces of the living here assembled -- officials, veterans, citizens -- and say this is the greatest tribute of all. We are free. This land is secure. And our peoples are enriched because democracy was worth fighting -- and dying -- for.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

KW

The President's Speech at Omaha Beach
June 6, 1984

NOTE: The Speech will be given at the American cemetery above Omaha Beach. The President will speak to a group including President Mitterrand, other French officials, veterans and veterans groups for approximately three minutes. The setting is a dramatic memorial to those who perished in the fighting.

Mr. President, Distinguished Guests:

I stand before you today as President of a country which has buried many of its war dead in foreign soil. I look out on the crosses and stars-of-David bearing names familiar to every American and feel an overwhelming sense of awe for the supreme sacrifice these men have made. From all parts of the American nation these men came to a foreign land to face a powerful foe. They died to free Europe, knowing at the same time that they were fighting to keep America free.

Those who failed to return from these shores are still remembered in our hearts and prayers. But this is not a day devoted exclusively to mourning our dead.

This day we celebrate the triumph of democracy. This day we reaffirm the unity of the democratic peoples everywhere who fought the war and then joined with the vanquished in a firm resolve to keep the peace forevermore. And this day is one more day we live in the peace which our unity and resolve has made possible.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DETERMINED TO BE AN
ADMINISTRATIVE MARKING
E.O. 12958, Sec. 1.3(a)

By NARA

RP

Date

2/19/97

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2-

When our allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy forty years ago, they came not as conquerors but as liberators. When these troops swept across France and into the forests of Belgium and Luxembourg, they came not to take, but to restore what had been wrongfully taken. When our forces marched into a ruined Germany, they came not to prey on a brave and defeated people but to nurture the seeds of democracy among those who yearned again to be free. The liberators and the newly-liberated then turned their energies to building a framework to protect the freedoms these brave men and women won back for us.

We also salute those who were already engaging the enemy inside this country, whose valiant service for France did so much to cripple the enemy in their midst and assist in the advance of the invading armies of liberation. These French Forces of the Interior--the French Resistance--will forever offer us an image of courage and national spirit, and will be a permanent inspiration for all free peoples.

We learned from that terrible war that our unity made us invincible. Now, in peace, that same unity would make us secure. We sought the inclusion of all freedom-loving nations in a community dedicated to the defense and preservation of our sacred values. Our Alliance, forged in the crucible of war, tempered and shaped by the harsh realities of the post-war world, has succeeded in this end. In Europe, the threat has been contained. The peace has been kept.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-3-

Those who say that the United States and Europe are drifting apart fail to understand the fundamental strength of our alliance. As free and sovereign democracies we can afford to disagree -- and to do so openly -- without compromising the common principles and essential cooperation underpinning our relationship. We have shared much with our European allies through the years. And we are confident that we are now as much a part of each other's future as we are of each other's past.

As I look out on this sea of gravestones, my final thoughts dwell on the heroism, patriotism and supreme sacrifice of the men and women buried here. They are fittingly honored by this memorial. Yet I cannot help to look into the faces of the living here assembled -- officials, veterans, citizens -- and say this is the greatest tribute of all. We are free. This land is secure. And our peoples are enriched because democracy was worth fighting -- and dying -- for.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

kw

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

May 28, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR RICHARD DARMAN

FROM: ROBERT M. KIMMITT ^{Boh}

SUBJECT: President's Draft Speech for Omaha Beach Ceremonies

Attached at Tab A is a revised version of the draft Presidential remarks to be delivered at Omaha Beach. The attached draft, written by State and NSC, refocuses the speech-writer's draft -- which concentrated heavily on one personal experience -- toward a broad tribute to the sacrifices of the American and Allied soldiers. It also draws attention to the role of French Resistance which is important given the fact that President Mitterrand will attend the ceremonies with the President.

Attachment
Tab A - Draft Speech

cc: Ben Elliott

Mr. President, Distinguished Guests:

I come before you today as President of a country which has buried many of its war dead in foreign soil. I look out on the crosses and stars-of-David bearing names familiar to every American and feel an overwhelming sense of awe for the supreme sacrifice these men have made. From all parts of the American nation these men came to a foreign land to face a powerful foe. They died to free Europe, knowing at the same time that they were fighting to keep America free.

We stand today at a place of battle, one that 40 years ago saw the worst of war. Men bled and died here for a few feet or inches of sand as bullets and shellfire cut through their ranks. About them, General Omar Bradley later said: "Every man who set foot on Omaha Beach that day was a hero."

Words do not do them justice. Speeches cannot portray their suffering, their sacrifice, their heroism. President Lincoln once reminded us that -- through their deeds -- the dead of battle have spoken more eloquently for themselves than any of the living ever could, that we can only honor them by rededicating ourselves to the cause for which they gave a last full measure of devotion.

Today we do rededicate ourselves to that cause. And in this place of honor, we are humbled by the realization of how much so many have given to the cause of freedom and to their fellowman. One such hero, Private First Class Peter Robert Zanatta of the 37th Engineer Combat Battalion, was one of the first to hit Omaha Beach.

"Someday I'll go back and I'll see it all again," he promised his daughter Lisa, "I'll see the beach, the barricades, and the graves. I'll put a flower on the graves of the guys I knew and on the grave of the unknown soldier -- all the guys I fought with."

Lisa Zanatta Henn recounted these words in an essay about her father who bravely fought, and ultimately succumbed to, a battle with cancer eight years ago. "So many men died," she wrote, "I know that my father watched many of his friends be killed. I know that he must have died inside a little each time. But his explanation to me was 'you did what you had to do and you kept on going.'"

Lisa is here today, fulfilling a promise made to her father that she would go in his place and see the graves and the flowers and the ceremonies honoring the veterans of D-Day. "I will never forget what you went through, Dad," she concluded, "nor will I let anyone else forget -- and Dad, I'll always be proud."

When our allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy 40 years ago, they came not as conquerors, but as liberators. When these troops swept across the French countryside and into the forests of Belgium and Luxembourg, they came not to take, but to restore what had been wrongfully taken. When our forces marched into a ruined Germany, they came not to prey on a brave and defeated people, but to nurture the seeds of democracy among those who yearned again to be free.

We also salute those who were already engaging the enemy inside this country -- the French Resistance -- whose valiant service for France did so much to cripple the enemy in their midst and assist in the advance of the invading armies of liberation. These French Forces of the Interior will forever offer us an image of courage and national spirit, and will be a permanent inspiration for all free peoples.

This day, we celebrate the triumph of democracy. This day, we reaffirm the unity of the democratic peoples everywhere who fought the war and then joined with the vanquished in a firm resolve to keep the peace forevermore.

We learned from that terrible war that our unity made us invincible. Now, in peace, that same unity would make us secure. We sought the inclusion of all freedom-loving nations in a

community dedicated to the defense and preservation of our sacred values. Our Alliance, forged in the crucible of war, tempered and shaped by the harsh realities of the post-war world, has succeeded in this end. In Europe, the threat has been contained. The peace has been kept.

As I look out on this sea of gravestones, my final thoughts dwell on the heroism, patriotism and supreme sacrifice of our men and women buried here. They are fittingly honored by this memorial. For those, such as Private Zanatta, who bravely fought and returned from these shores, we rejoice in their return to the hopes and dreams they had left behind. Yet I cannot help to look into the faces of the living here assembled -- officials, veterans, citizens -- and say this is the greatest tribute of all. We are free. This land is secure. And our peoples are enriched because democracy was worth fighting -- and dying -- for.

KW

Tab G

Possible Presidential Remarks at Omaha Beach

Even before dawn on June 6, 1944, two of America's most distinguished fighting units the famous 1st Infantry Division (The Big Red One) and the 29th Blue and Gray Division, a National Guard division from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, assaulted these beaches. The 116th Infantry Regiment, once commanded by our nation's most distinguished soldier, George Washington, landed in the first wave on Omaha Beach. These heroic Virginians debarked that morning from the USS Thomas Jefferson named after another distinguished Virginian. I am pleased to announce that the Department of the Army will reorganize, within the National Guard of Maryland and Virginia, the 29th Infantry Division who's colors have been folded since 1968.

Kim W
(Dolan/RR)
May 30, 1984
2:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OMAHA BEACH MEMORIAL REMARKS
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1984

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She tells some of his stories of World War II, but says for her father "the story to end all stories was D-Day."

"He made me feel the fear of being on that boat waiting to land. I can smell the ocean and feel the seasickness. I can see the looks on his fellow soldiers' faces, the fear, the anguish, the uncertainty of what lay ahead. And when they landed, I can feel the strength and courage of the men who took those first steps through the tide to what must have surely looked like instant death."

Private Zanatta's daughter says: "I don't know how or why I can feel this emptiness, this fear, or this determination, but I do. Maybe its the bond I had with my father. (I was really lucky -- we never got tired of talking to each other.) All I know is that it brings tears to my eyes to think about my father as a 20 year old boy having to face that beach."

She went on to say how the anniversary of D-Day for her and her family was always special; and like all the families of those who went to war, she describes how she came to realize her own father's survival was a miracle.

"So many men died. I know that my father watched many of his friends be killed. I know that he must have died inside a little each time. But his explanation to me was 'You did what you had to do and you kept on going.'"

"My dad won his share of medals. He was a good soldier and fought hard for his country. He was just an ordinary guy, with immigrant Italian parents who never really had enough money. But he was a proud man. Proud of his heritage, proud of his country, proud that he fought in World War II and proud that he lived through D-Day."

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Lisa Zanatta Henn began her essay with a quote from her father, who frequently promised he would return to Normandy. She ended her essay with a quote from herself, promising her father, who died eight years ago of cancer, that she would go in his place and see the graves and the flowers and the ceremonies honoring the veterans of D-Day. She promised him, ". . . I'll feel all the things you made me feel through your stories and your eyes."

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Familiar Quotations

*A collection of passages, phrases and
proverbs traced to their sources in
ancient and modern literature*

FIFTEENTH AND 125TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
REVISED AND ENLARGED

John Bartlett

Edited by EMILY MORISON BECK
and the editorial staff of Little, Brown and Company



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY • BOSTON • TORONTO

ld as slaves within
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Emancipation Proc-
*September 22, 1862*²

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How he felt about the
*visions.*³ *From Frank*
ated Weekly [Novem-

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Annual Message to Con-
[December 1, 1862]

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— a way which if followed the world will
forever applaud and God must forever bless.

Ib.

- 1 Beware of rashness, but with energy and
sleepless vigilance go forward and give us vic-
tories.

Letter to Major General Joseph
Hooker [January 26, 1863]

- 2 The Father of Waters again goes unsexed
to the sea.

Letter to James C. Conkling
[August 26, 1863]

- 3 I have endured a great deal of ridicule
without much malice; and have received a
great deal of kindness, not quite free from
ridicule. I am used to it.

Letter to James H. Hackett
[November 2, 1863]

- 4 Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers
brought forth on this continent, a new na-
tion, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to
the proposition that all men are created
equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war,
testing whether that nation or any nation so
conceived and so dedicated can long endure.
We are met on a great battlefield of that war.
We have come to dedicate a portion of that
field, as a final resting place for those who
here gave their lives that that nation might
live. It is altogether fitting and proper that
we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate
— we cannot consecrate— we cannot hallow
— this ground. The brave men, living and
dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it
far above our poor power to add or detract.
The world will little note nor long remember
what we say here, but it can never forget
what they did here. It is for us, the living,
rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished
work which they who fought here have thus
far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be
here dedicated to the great task remaining
before us—that from these honored dead we
take increased devotion to that cause for
which they gave the last full measure of devo-
tion; that we here highly resolve that these
dead shall not have died in vain; that this
nation, under God, shall have a new birth of
freedom; and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not perish
from the earth.¹

Address at Gettysburg
[November 19, 1863]

¹See Wycliffe, 143:12; Webster, 450:14; Disraeli, 501:6;
Garrison, 505:19; and Parker, 537:15.

- 5 The President last night had a dream. He
was in a party of plain people and as it be-
came known who he was they began to com-
ment on his appearance. One of them said,
"He is a common-looking man." The Presi-
dent replied, "Common-looking people are
the best in the world: that is the reason the
Lord makes so many of them."

From Letters of John Hay and Ex-
tracts from His Diary, edited by
C. L. HAY [December 23, 1863]

- 6 I claim not to have controlled events, but
confess plainly that events have controlled
me.

Letter to A. G. Hodges [April 4,
1864]

- 7 The world has never had a good definition
of the word liberty. And the American people
just now are much in want of one. We all
declare for liberty; but in using the same
word we do not mean the same thing. With
some, the word liberty may mean for each
man to do as he pleases with himself and the
product of his labor; while with others the
same word may mean for some men to do as
they please with other men and the product
of other men's labor. Here are two, not only
different, but incompatible things, called by
the same name, liberty. And it follows that
each of the things is by the respective parties
called by two different and incompatible
names, liberty and tyranny.

The shepherd drives the wolf from the
sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks
the shepherd as his liberator, while the
wolf denounces him for the same act. . . .
Plainly the sheep and the wolf are not agreed
upon a definition of liberty.

Address at the Sanitary Fair,
Baltimore [April 18, 1864]

- 8 I do not allow myself to suppose that either
the convention or the League have concluded
to decide that I am either the greatest or best
man in America, but rather they have con-
cluded that it is not best to swap horses while
crossing the river, and have further con-
cluded that I am not so poor a horse that they
might not make a botch of it in trying to
swap.

Reply to the National Union
League [June 9, 1864]

- 9 Truth is generally the best vindication
against slander.

Letter to Secretary Stanton, refus-
ing to dismiss Postmaster-General
Montgomery Blair [July 18, 1864]



ON OMAHA BEACH

by Charles Cawthon

Along this narrow stretch of sand, all the painstaking plans for the Normandy invasion fell apart. One of the men who was lucky enough to make it past the beachhead recalls a day of fear, chaos, grief—and triumph.

I WAS A CAPTAIN in the Stonewall Brigade when I first went into battle at Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. Our outfit was directly descended from the famed command of Gen. Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson and proud of it, and D-day was for me much as the First Manassas had been in 1861 for a Capt. Randolph Barton, CSA, of the Stonewall Brigade, who wrote: "I think I went into that action with less trepidation than into any subsequent one. Inexperience doubtless had much to do with it, and discipline told on me from first to last."

For me, too, in those first twenty-four hours, innocence was lost, trepidation surfaced, and discipline and training somehow prevailed. In ways D-day seems more distant from 1983 than from 1861 and, overall, like a particularly long and chaotic dream.

My command was Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 116th Regiment, 29th Infantry Division. The division, composed originally of National Guardsmen from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, was in 1944, by reason of the draft, a cross section of American military manpower—the white part, that is; the army was still segregated. The commanding general, the three regimental commanders, and a few others, including our battalion commander, were professional soldiers; the rest of us were aggressively amateur in background and viewpoint.

For most of a year the 29th trained for this operation, first in general amphibious tactics, and finally in great secrecy all planning was focused upon a small stretch of Normandy coast at the base of the Cherbourg peninsula. No surprise assault, this. Apart from exact time and place, all the warring world

knew it loomed and that its outcome would determine the course of the war in Europe.

The 2d Battalion began its preparation from a camp on the edge of the waterlogged expanse of Dartmoor, Devonshire, England, in the spring of 1943. Our commander at the time was a slightly built lieutenant colonel who addressed the battalion from a special stance—hands on hips, head tilted back and to the side. He had us formed in platoons of about thirty each, and then shouted that we were boat teams. From his posture, this cry appeared—not inappropriately—to be directed at Heaven.

Over the next few weeks, broad outlines of the plan emerged. We would cross the Channel in transports, transfer to landing craft near the coast, and storm into France, destroying all Germans and their works in the way.



Practice of this grand design started off as vaguely as the first announcement of it. Outlines of landing craft were staked out between barrack huts, and cargo nets were swung from the eaves. We clam-

Captain Cawthon in 1943: he left the Army a colonel, worked as a newspaper editor, and today is retired in Virginia.

bered up and down the nets and charged out of the mock-ups. Day and night tactical exercises were held on the soggy expanse of Dartmoor, where the rain was constant; uniforms, blankets, and food seemed always damp and cold.

About this time the 29th got a new commander, a demanding, uncompromising soldier. He was everywhere and into everything; his disapproval was forceful and usually final. We who were willing to make reasonable compromises with military perfection developed a marked wariness. He relieved two commanders of the 2d Battalion in turn; there was a similar shuffle throughout the division, and while deadwood was disposed of, some of his judgments were not borne out in battle: one of our deposed battalion commanders became a hero of the war in Normandy; a company commander who was relieved for not being forceful enough won the Distinguished Service Cross on the beach.

The tempo of preparation was constantly stepped up. New draftees, appearing very young, arrived to top the battalion off at full strength of nine hundred. Full-dress rehearsals were held on a Devonshire beach. We loaded into landing craft that pitched and rolled out into the Channel and then roared landward to drop ramps for us to flounder to the beach and go through assault drills.

We also practiced loading onto the U.S.S. *Thomas Jefferson*, a pre-war luxury liner that was to convey us to the offshore area for launching in landing craft for the beach. To foot soldiers the *Jefferson*, even stripped down for troop transport, confirmed exaggerated memories of the comfortable world before the war.

Another sign of the 29th's critical role was the interest in it shown by the high command. One day General Montgomery spoke to the division assembled in a huge meadow, but from my position all I could make out was a small figure gesticulating from the hood of a jeep. We were also addressed by General Bradley, who told us that we were select soldiers and assured us that casualties would not be as heavy as forecast. Few, I believe, really contemplated being a casualty.

ALL IN ALL, something of a pre-big-game atmosphere developed, in which we, an enormous first team, were exhorted and examined for competence and spirit. On the whole I believe we were light of heart, caught up in the momentum of a mighty effort. I don't recall questioning a frontal assault on prepared defenses from the unstable base of the Channel, even though word had come through of the cost of such assaults in the Pacific, and at Dieppe and Salerno.

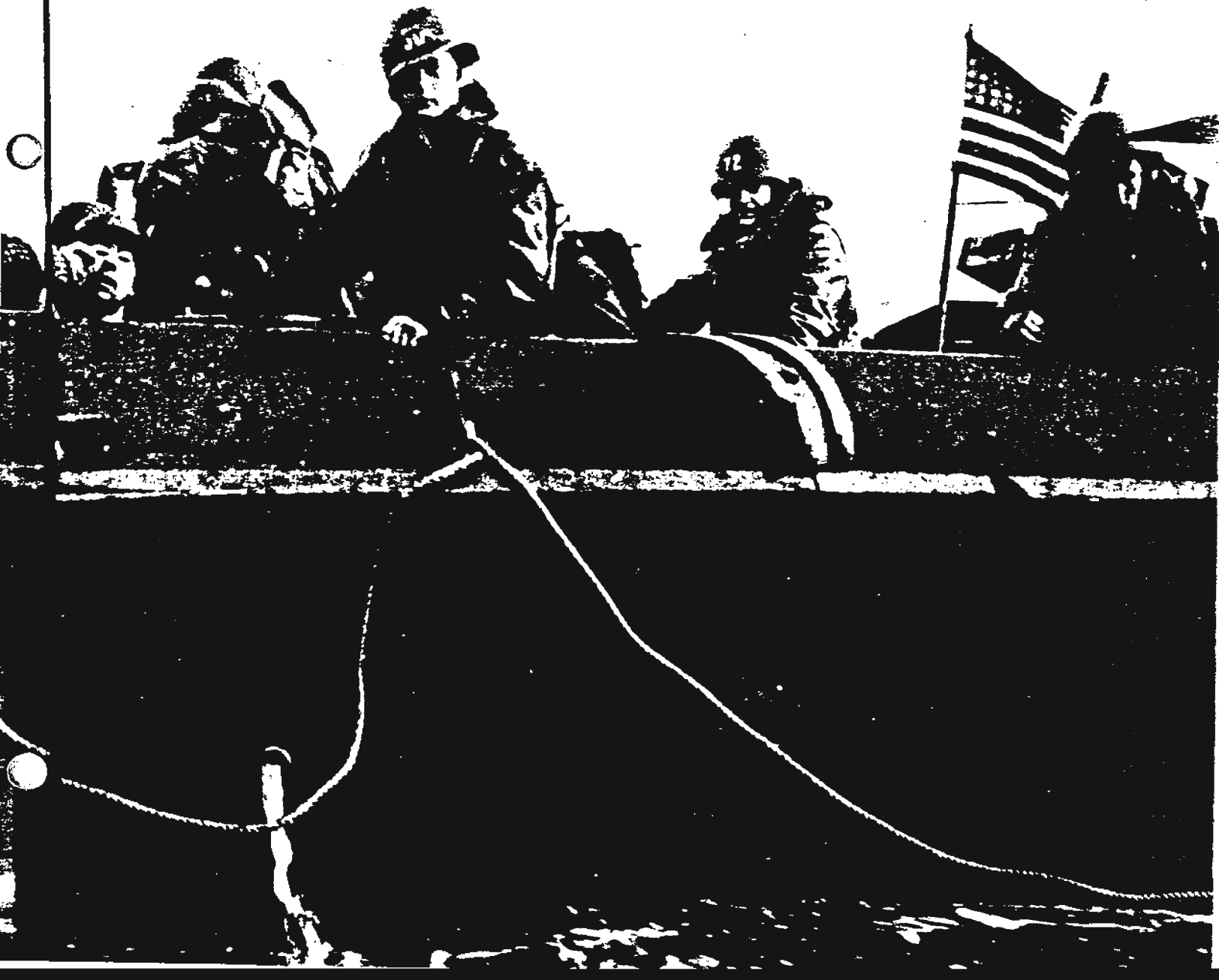
While rough winds were still shaking the darling buds of May, the battalion gave the Dartmoor camp a last policing and entrucked for the Stonewall Brigade's assembly area in Dorset. Watching the trucks roll out the camp gate, I thought that we were as ready as an outfit could be.

The next few days were rare, sunny ones that helped dry Dartmoor dampness from bones and bedrolls. In the evenings the 2d's lanky transportation officer and I found rides to Bournemouth, where we had made friends with an English dowager who organized parties on short notice. The south of

U.S. MARINE CORPS



I don't recall questioning
a frontal assault on
prepared defenses from
the Channel's unstable base.



England was sealed off; troops were everywhere and every leaf-roofed lane packed with supplies. The air was charged with restrained violence.

Parties ended as the 2d moved again to embarkation ports at Poole and Portland. Gradually the realization grew that no matter how many supplies were accumulated, or how brilliant the planning was, the job would come down heaviest upon the infantry. Rather than self-pity or resentment, this engendered in us what was probably an obnoxious arrogance.

Now came the final operations order, which we pounced on as the Book of Revelation. Here it was, on smudged, mimeographed sheets, with headings, subheadings, sub-subheadings, and annexes, stating that we would assault the Easy Green, Dog Red, and Dog White subsectors of the beach, which we learned was dubbed "Omaha." Our three rifle companies would go in abreast, preceded by tanks equipped with flotation devices enabling them to "swim" ashore. Directly behind the rifle companies would come combat engineers to clear beach obstacles, then our heavy weapons, battalion headquarters, and batteries of antiaircraft guns. All was on a split-second schedule, the rifle-company boats to touch down one minute after the tanks. Within thirty minutes the entire battalion was to be ashore, followed by wave after wave of artillery, engineers, medical units, and amphibious supply trucks. It is unlikely that even under training conditions such a schedule could have been followed; in the actuality, it proved fantasy.

The veteran 1st Infantry Division commanded the initial assault, and the 116th was attached to it for that phase. Attacking on our left would be 1st Division's 16th Regiment. The Stonewall Brigade's principal objectives were two roads that angle up from the beach to the crest of the bluffs, essential for moving heavy equipment inland. The 2d Battalion was to secure the road up to the village of Les Moulins.

The known difficulties were three separate bands of underwater obstacles, ranging from logs angled into the sand with mines attached to their tips, to steel gatelike structures, and giant iron jackstraws. The exit roads were guarded by concrete bunkers, barbed wire, and mines. The bluffs were zigzagged with fire trenches. An estimated eight hundred to one thousand troops manned this sector, some of them Polish or Russian defectors. Their willingness to fight to the death for the Third Reich was considered doubtful. The closest German counterattack force was believed to be an infantry division about twenty miles inland.

To destroy all this, the Allied command had assembled a force of awesome proportions: fleets of bombers and fighter

bombers to saturate all known targets (and incidentally to crater the beach with ready-made foxholes), two battleships, three cruisers, eight destroyers, and rocket-launching craft.

In bare recital the defense was impregnable, the weight of our attack overwhelming. We believed the odds to favor the overwhelming. Some of our young greyhounds maintained that they were going to race across the beach so fast that if they hit any barbed wire, they might spring right back into the Channel. The operations officer, a steady and cheerful presence, vowed to keep up the spirits of his boat team by reciting "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" all the way to the beach, timing the final line with the fall of the ramp.

The last equipment arrived, and combat loads were found to be disastrously heavy. Some registered this by braying about the camp under their packs, saying that since they were loaded like jackasses, they might as well sound like them.

There is a pang of pity looking back down the years to willing soldiers struggling into such a battle under the weight—in addition to weapons—of canvas assault jackets with large pockets in which were grenades, rations, mess gear, raincoat, a special first-aid kit, toilet articles, motion-sickness pills, water-purification tablets, DDT dusting powder, paste for boots in case of chemically contaminated areas, small blocks of TNT for blasting

Their defenses seemed impregnable, our attack overwhelming. We felt the odds favored overwhelming.

foxholes (never, I believe, used), and two hundred francs in invasion currency to start trade with the Normans. From a separate web belt swung an entrenching tool, another first-aid packet, and a canteen; from the shoulders were draped a gas mask and extra bandoliers of ammunition. Over sixty-eight pounds in all. All this worn over a heavy woolen uniform impregnated with a chemical to block blister gasses, giving the battalion the aroma of having been run through a sheep dip.

All of this was borne with ribald humor. But I recall one troublesome note during those last days. The evening before embarking, I returned to camp from a mission to find one of my men under arrest for refusing an order. I knew him as quiet and hardworking, and this was so out of character that I did not descend on him with the usual warnings of dire consequences. I tried to find out the reason for his refusal, which was not easy since he was not articulate. As we talked, it developed that his rebellion was not against what he termed "being pushed around" but against the insanity of the whole business. Perhaps I caught his feeling because—while never doubting that it had to be done—I, too, had a lurking sense of the insane. I could point out only that at this late date no replacement for his job was possible. He seemed relieved at having gotten his feelings across and said that he did not want to let his squad down and would do his best.

On the next day, June 3, we departed by truck for embarkation. The ride to the port was short. We stumbled out of the trucks, filed down a dockside street, were ferried out to the *Thomas Jefferson*, and against the pull of the heavy packs clambered up cargo nets to the deck. The closest to a send-off to war was a leathery old dock worker who croaked, "Ave a good go at it, mates!" It was like loading for a training exercise except for the mountains of equipment. Accommodations were spacious for a troopship, and I noted how the oppressive crowding, so much a part of a wartime army, thins out the closer the approach to battle. The initial assault on the two American beaches—Omaha and Utah—was to be made by no more than three thousand of the million and a half troops then crowded into southern England.

The weather was that English, month-of-June type that simultaneously promises fair and threatens foul. The harbor was spaced with craft of all the sizes and shapes developed for landing tanks, troops, and cargo on beaches. Having stowed our packs, we lined the deck to look with tolerant curiosity over the busy scene. It was, after all, for the sole purpose of getting us onto the coast of Normandy.

D-day was to be June 5. We spent the night quietly, and also the next day, as worsening weather led to the decision to delay the landings. The new date was announced for dawn the next day—June 6. Ship's signal lamps set up a frenzy of blinking, and that afternoon the antisubmarine net across the harbor was towed open and the *Jefferson* churned out into the wind-rough Channel. Vessels of all shapes and sizes, towing barrage balloons as if in some gigantic dun-hued carnival procession, were all around us. My view of this mightiest of all armadas was limited: my only interest was to bring the battalion command post in near the Les Moulins beach exit exactly thirty minutes after the first wave. Then we were to follow the assault to the top of the bluffs—the battalion's first objective. All this was to be done within three hours, after which we were to await orders for further destruction of the German army, little of which, we innocently thought, would be left. I had selected on the map the command-post location and had in all confidence advised the regiment where it would be.

The last dinner on the *Jefferson* was quieter than usual; I recall no mention of the morrow. Afterward the chaplain tried to hold a service above the throb of the ship's engine. There were probably more than the usual number of private prayers launched that night. Friends gravitated together; an engineer officer played an accordion, but there was no singing. I talked with a British navy frogman who had several times gone to Omaha Beach from a submarine to examine its obstacles. He could tell us little that we did not already know,

but it was curious to talk with a man who had already walked on the stretch of sand we were making such a titanic effort to reach.

Reveille was to be at 0200 with assault craft loading an hour later. The prospect did not induce sleep, but most of us turned in early. In our uncrowded state I had a cabin to myself. I lay on a bunk in that strangely lonely cabin and leafed through a copy of *Collier's* that was full of war stories—banal and bloody, as wartime writing tends to be. I put it down and dozed but was awake when strident gongs sounded reveille. The engines had quieted; we were twelve miles off the beach; even the big liner was registering the waves. I got into the dank, sour-smelling uniform and shaved for D-day. Breakfast in the ornate saloon was unreal: bacon and eggs on the edge of eternity. Conversation was perfunctory. Everything moved automatically, except for a brief discussion with the ship's mess officer, who demanded that troops going into battle

should first clean up after the breakfast. The troops settled this by simply ignoring him. A message from General Eisenhower calling our effort a crusade to liberate Europe was read over the address system.

I struggled into my own gear, light compared with a rifleman's but heavy and awkward enough. The final item was a life belt of twin brown tubes to be inflated by triggering cap-

sules of carbon dioxide. Thus clad for the crusade, I wedged out into the line of laden officers crowding down the corridor toward boat stations. There was handshaking and exchanges of good luck, all in a dreamlike atmosphere of Outward Bound. We filed out through heavy blackout curtains into the predawn dark of D-day; a cold, damp wind swept the deck and whistled through the rigging. The *Jefferson's* rise and fall in the heaving sea was more noticeable than it had been below. Darkness was not complete; one of the requirements for the assault was a full moon, and some faint light from it penetrated the overcast and showed whitecaps breaking against the ship's sides.

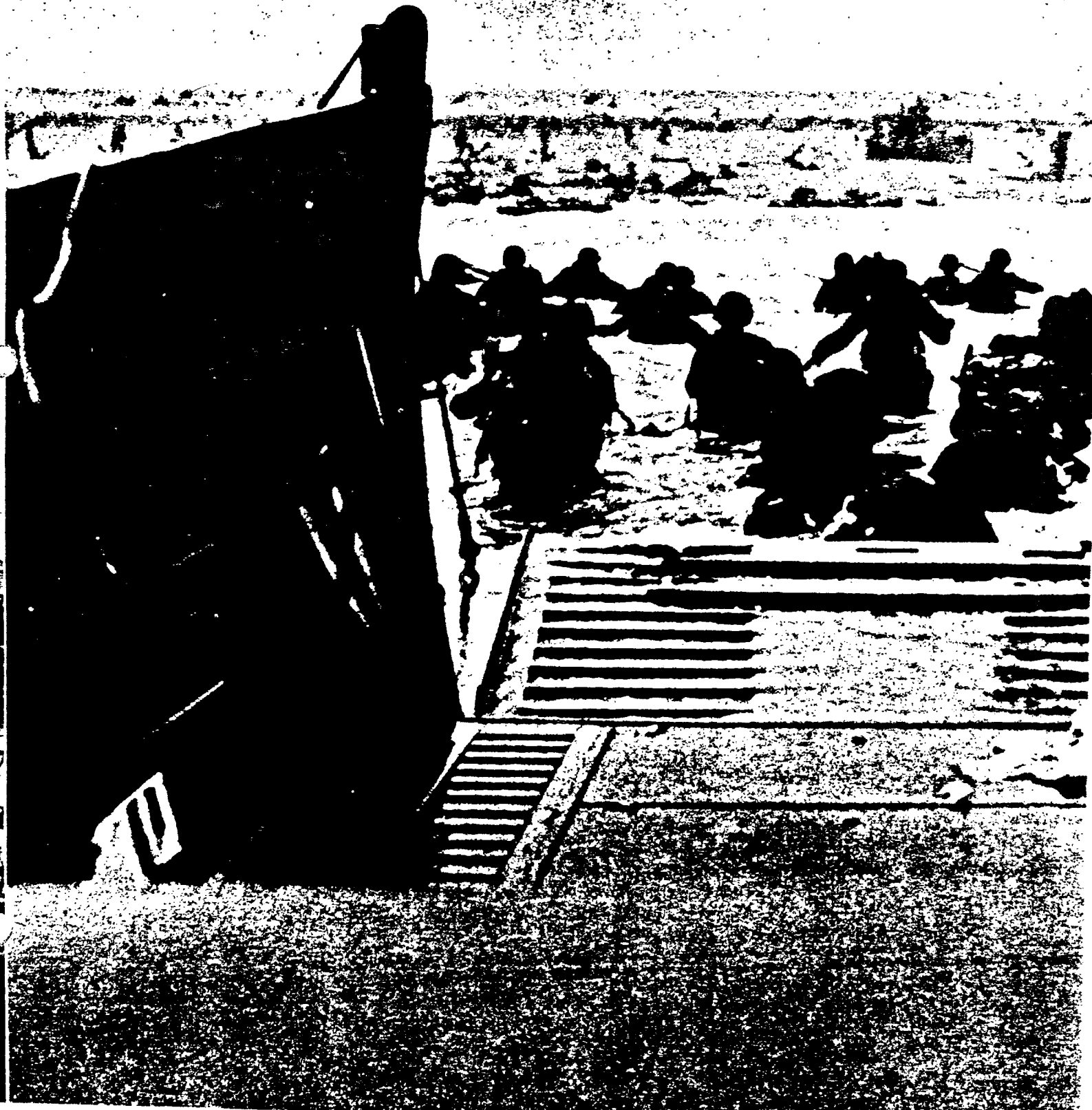
Obviously chance had already elbowed onto the scene in one of its favored military roles: miserable weather. We had practiced landings in rough surf but had never risked seas such as were now rocking the huge *Jefferson*. The assault, however, was locked into conditions of moon and tide, perishable factors that had to be used at once or be lost. So strategically situated, chance had great sport with us all—not excepting the German commanders, who considered conditions too bad for invasion.

My boat team assembled on station. We counted off and helped each other into the open-topped, rectangular steel box that we were to ride to war. It had a motor and rudder at the stern and the bow was a hinged ramp; on a platform above the

One officer vowed to boost morale by reciting "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" all the way to the beach.

When the ramp dropped,
we lumbered off in three
files—into the
cold, shoulder-deep surf.

Heavily laden soldiers leave the relative safety of their landing craft and struggle through surf and underwater obstacles toward the shore of Omaha Beach.





U.S. COAST GUARD

motor was the dark shape of the coxswain, hunchbacked in a bulky life vest. It occurred to me that this was the first time I had seen him. We had been told that he was in command from ship to shore, and I realized I had no idea of how well he knew his job or how determined he was to get us in at the right place. We sorted ourselves out to long-rehearsed places in the cramped, swaying confines. An awful seasickness was already immobilizing many. I was fortunate to be spared.

A stream of cryptic orders flowed from the ship's address system, and from a control launch in the Channel came unintelligible sounds amplified through a bullhorn. Suddenly, with a rattle of chains and screech of wire cable, the craft ground slowly down the *Jefferson's* side to be met by a rising sea that slacked the cables and then dropped us with a crash as it rolled on. The next move brought us fully into the waves. By some miracle we were not slammed into the ship's side; the propeller caught, and we followed a shepherding launch out to join other craft circling as in some strange conga line, red and green riding lights appearing on the crests and disappearing in the troughs of waves four or five feet high.

BLOWING SPUME HAD soaked us before we hit the Channel. It seemed we would surely swamp, and life belts were inflated. Not only our persons but also reels of telephone wire, radios, and demolition packs were girded with these in the hope that if they were lost in the surf, they would float ashore. The expansion of perhaps a hundred belts added to the bulk already crowding the craft, and so we rode, packed in an open can, feet awash in water and altogether cold, wet, and miserable. It seemed that we were slamming into waves with enough impact to start any rivet ever set.

After about an hour of circling, the control launch passed a signal, and the craft carrying us—the second wave of *Stonewall Brigade*—peeled off into line and began battering through heavy seas toward Normandy; thirty minutes ahead was the first wave; twenty minutes behind would come the third.

For the next two hours the line pitched and rolled toward Normandy and a gradually lighter horizon as we closed with the dawn of June 6. There was no attempt to talk above the roar of the engine, wind, slamming of the waves, and the laboring of the bilge pump that just managed to keep up with the water washing in. We stood packed together, encased in equipment, dumb with the noise and with the enormity toward which we were laboring. I recall offering no prayers and having no particular worries other than whether we were coming in on Dog Red sector.

The line roared past a great gray battleship, either the *Texas* or the *Arkansas*, that was by then to have obliterated the *Les Moulins* defenses. The ship's huge guns were silent. The naval fire-control party that was supposed to direct their fire had accompanied the first wave but had been killed or had had its radios knocked out by the curtain of German fire that had descended along the waterline.

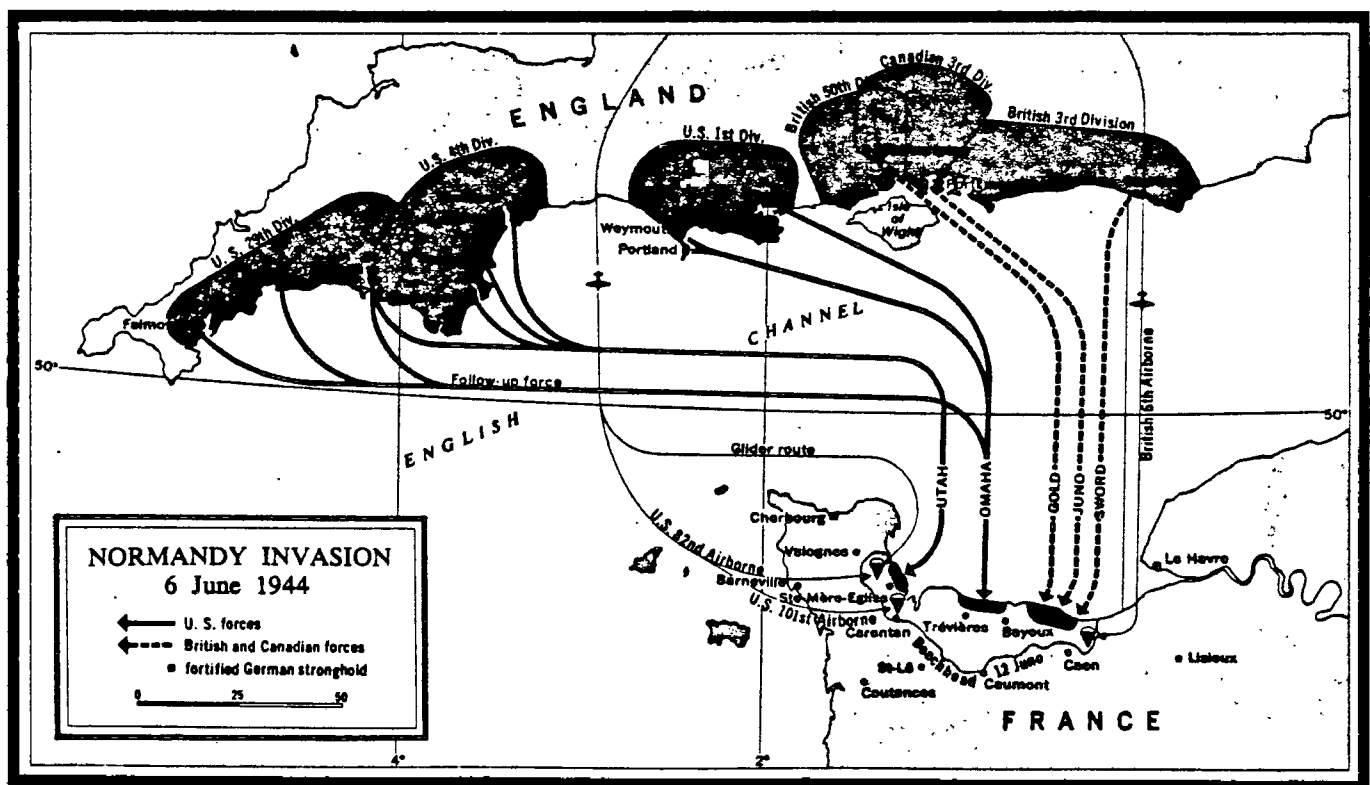
We bore on toward this curtain still unaware that it existed. It was now as fully daylight as the overcast allowed. Signs that things were going amiss were all around us, had I been battlewise enough to read them: one was the silent battleship, indicating that it was out of touch with the assault and fearful of firing into it; another was a trickle instead of a stream of return traffic from the first wave, which told of craft either destroyed or landed badly off target. Still another ill omen was the vacant sky where we had expected to see fighter bombers diving and strafing. We were unaware that the overcast had moved air strikes inland.

A haze of smoke, barely darker than the gray morning, was the first sign of the shore, and then the line of bluffs emerged. Our craft shuddered to a halt on a sandbar two hundred or so yards offshore. We were in among the beach obstacles: big, ugly structures partially covered by the rising tide. The coxswain failed on a couple of attempts to buck over the bar and then dropped the ramp. This may have been fortunate for us as well as prudent for the coxswain—a landing closer in would probably have drawn the artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire that was knocking the first wave apart. As it was, the German gunners had too many targets close by to bother with one more distant. So, as yet physically untouched by the battle, and in automatic response to the dropped ramp, we lumbered off in three files—center, right, left—into the cold, shoulder-deep surf. The life belt lifted me to the crest of a wave, and here, flailing around to keep right side up, I caught my first full glimpse of battle, the inner sanctum of war, toward which we had struggled so long and painfully. The sight was not inspiring. Where Channel and shore met was a wavering, undulating line of dark objects. Some of the larger ones, recognizable as tanks and landing craft, were erupting in

black smoke. Higher up the beach was another line of smaller forms, straight as though drawn with a ruler, for they were aligned along a bank of shingle stone and seawall. Scattered black forms were detaching themselves from the surf and laboring toward this line. Looming up between beach and bluff through the smoke and mist was a three-story house. Such a structure was a landmark of the Dog Red sector, but I could not see the beach exit road. I believed that we had come in on target, but I ceased worrying greatly over whether we had or not. There is a definite calming effect to the casting of the die, and the die had been irrevocably cast on Omaha Beach.

THE WAVE PASSED ON, and in the trough I touched bottom, to be lifted again moments later and carried toward France. Such was the pattern of my advance in the greatest amphibious assault of history: up wave and down trough, propelled forward by an insweeping tide. By now the invasion had allied itself with gravity, and there was no escape from it for either the paratroopers of the airborne assault or we who came by sea. Our voluntary act was to step out of landing craft. From then on gravity—in the form of the tide—pulled us into battle. This alliance with natural force was not entirely harmonious. The tide tended strongly eastward and carried much of the 2d Battalion far from its long-rehearsed objectives. Indifferent gravity had also brought paratroopers down in many unplanned places. All in all, the balance of natural force on D-day favored the enemy; fortunately he took only limited advantage of it.

My alternate lift and fall with the waves gave me glimpses of the battle that were like the stopped frames of a motion picture. From the crests the beach was visible, in the troughs



only green-black water. Thus, early in combat I developed what was to be a lasting regard for surface depressions. Omaha Beach coming into clearer focus made the successive walls of water between me and its exploding horror more and more welcome.

Others of the landing team were rising and falling with the waves around me like swimmers, unaccountably wearing steel helmets. Dirty red shellbursts were walking with rapid, short steps among the objects along the waterline. Off to the left a solitary landing craft skittered back out to sea, a sailor at its .50-caliber machine gun arching tracers toward Europe. Much farther down to the left one of our rocket ships loosed banks of missiles in gushes of white smoke. These, I learned later, fell innocuously into the Channel. Overhead to the right a single flight of the twin-tailed P-38 fighter bombers streaked inland, and close at hand a solitary destroyer ploughed along parallel to the shore. These were silent scenes; the wind was toward France and carried battle sounds away from us.

On his first day of battle the foot soldier probes new emotional depths, and his findings, I believe, are fairly universal. One is a conviction that he is abandoned, alone, and uncared for in the world. I looked into this depth on seeing the nearly empty sea and sky. The thought came that the crusade had been called off as a bad job, and that we few were left to struggle alone in the great, dark seascape. The first assault wave already on the beach did not resemble a battle line so much as it did heaps of refuse deposited there to burn and smolder unattended.

Abandoned or not, the tide and our own exertions brought us in through the obstructions to where the waves were breaking and rolling up the beach. There was no evidence that the engineers had succeeded in blasting the obstacles that now formed a barrier behind us. The water was waist deep, and we were moving faster. I would judge the time to be about 0730, and the first shots directed at us, however impersonally, keened above the sound of wind and surf. To my left a high cry in hurt surprise announced, "I'm hit!" I looked around. The white face, staring eyes, and open mouth of the first soldier I saw struck in battle remains with me. The image of no one—loved, admired, or disliked—is more vivid; his name I have lost. My first words in battle were not an exhortation to the troops but a useless shout to attend the wounded man. I think he was gone before the medic reached him.

With the burst of fire we all submerged neck deep in the surf. I lay flat out supporting my head above water by hands on the shifting sands and gave attention to the fact that a few more surges of the surf would eject me onto the beach where there were many dead things, both men and machines.

It was now apparent that we were coming ashore in one of

the preregistered killing zones of German machine guns and mortars. The quick havoc they had wrought was all around in incredible chaos: bodies, weapons, boxes of demolitions, flamethrowers, reels of telephone wire, and personal equipment from socks to toilet articles. Discarded life belts writhed and twisted in the surf like brown sea slugs. The waves broke around the wrecked tanks, dozers, and landing craft, thick here in front of the heavily defended exit road.

From my prone position the beach rose like a steep, barren hillside. There was a stretch of sand, being narrowed by the minute by the tide, then a sharply rising shingle bank of small, smooth stones that ended at the seawall. Against the shingle bank and wall were the men of the first wave. Some were scooping out holes; a number were stretched out in the loose attitude of the wounded; others lay in ultimate stillness. I could see only the upper portion of the house, its mansard roof gaping with shell holes. I still could not make out the

exit road, but we had come in not far off our appointed place. There were luckier sites but also unluckier ones.

While I was straining to see above the debris and still stay in the dubious protection of the water, one of the explosions that were rippling up and down the beach erupted close by. There was a hard jar to the side of my face, and blood started streaming off my

chin. I don't recall any particular emotion on being hit for the first time, but I did realize that this was no place to linger; those along the embankment seemed much safer. My boat team had completely disappeared in the debris. Having decided that survival, never mind valor, lay forward, I tried to rise but seemed to be hoisting the English Channel with me. The assault jacket's pockets, the gas-mask case, boots, leggings, and uniform all held gallons of saltwater. I had long preached the maxim that a good soldier never abandons his equipment, but now I jettisoned the assault jacket and lumbered up the beach, streaming water.

Gasping for air and retching salt water, I reached the embankment. All around were familiar faces from F, G, H, and Headquarters companies. Those who had arrived with me were in about my condition; others were more recovered. All were quiet. The embankment was in the eye of the storm, and no one was inclined to leave it without some compelling reason. Minutes later a tall, very composed colonel knelt beside me and said calmly that we must get the assault started inland. My work at the moment was for breath and against nausea, and I must not have looked a very hopeful source of dynamic leadership. He departed, walking upright down the embankment. I have no idea who he was or what became of him. Incredibly enough—and this may be a trick that memory has played—I recall his uniform as dry and clean,

The staring eyes and open mouth of the first soldier I saw struck remains with me. His name I have lost.



With the burst of fire, I
lay flat out, supporting my
head above water by hands
on the shifting sands.

*The photographer Robert Capa took this shot of
Americans seeking shelter from German fire behind
beach obstacles. Many were hit before reaching shore.*



while the rest of us were soaking wet and sand encrusted.

Gradually my lungs and stomach stopped heaving. I took my .45 service automatic from its plastic bag and found it sticky with salt and gritty with sand. When I pulled the slide back to load a round into the chamber, it stuck halfway. The embankment was strewn with rifles, Browning automatics, and light machine guns all similarly fouled. Except for one tank that was blasting away from the sand toward the exit road, the crusade in Europe at this point was disarmed and naked before its enemies. The Germans clearly lost Omaha Beach by failing to assemble a single company of riflemen to descend and sweep us up. Looking down onto our obviously helpless condition, they still stuck to their bunkers. We may have sensed that this was all they would do. On no other basis can I account for the fact that I had no feeling of defeat and saw none exhibited around me.

About this time the battalion commander came over the embankment with some half-dozen soldiers in tow.

He had been trying to get up the bluff at this point but was balked by weapons that wouldn't function. His first words, "This is a debacle," delivered in his volley fashion, remain with me; and *debacle* suited the scene as well as any word could. He told me to sort out the boat teams and round up some firepower, and then he left on the run

down the embankment to find a way up the bluff. Those who could move were already drawing together into familiar squads. But to organize firepower was another matter, for not a functioning weapon could be found. Nor could anything of the enemy be seen from the embankment. I left some of the able-bodied trying to clean weapons and ran down to the waterline, taking cover behind a blown-over tank dozer. From here the face of the bluffs and the exit road were visible, and I expected to see flashes and smoke from German guns. The only smoke visible on the enemy side, however, was in separate areas far down to my right and to my left, where brush fires were rolling up the slopes. While I did not know it then, those common brush fires, started inadvertently by the naval cannonade, were the salvation of the assault on Omaha Beach. Under their smoke a few brave souls were climbing the bluff. Nothing else accomplished by naval guns could have exceeded the value of this act, which demonstrated that a few smoke shells would have served as well as all the weight of high explosive. This was chance's second intrusion, the invasion planners having ruled out deliberate smoking of the beach as a hindrance to naval fire direction.

We were not aware of it, but chance, with inexhaustible ingenuity, had made a third major entry onto the scene. The German counterattack division, which Intelligence reports placed twenty miles inland, was, in fact, in the coastal

defenses. In addition to fortress troops, considered unreliable outside their bunkers, we were hitting first-class German infantry, than which there is none better. While we coped with the weather and took advantage of the smoke, the enemy, for his part, passed up the opportunity of wiping out the feeble beachhead with troops that happened to be at the right place at the right time.

Unaware of these workings of fate, I splashed down the waterline through the debris in the direction the battalion commander had taken and acquired a second bloodying. This time I didn't hear the shell, but there was another jar to the side of my face—opposite to the first one—and again I started leaking blood. My injuries, though much less serious than most, were spectacular by being so visible. Two soldiers advised me I'd been hit and guided me to a busy aid station. A medic looked over the wounds on both sides of my face and announced with professional authority that here was a rare

case of a shot having gone cleanly through one cheek and out the other without damage to teeth or tongue. Most of those around the station were 2d Battalion men who knew me, and they seemed to look on this as extraordinary on a day of wounds. I didn't take the trouble to deny the diagnosis, and so, without intent, abetted one of the minor tales of Omaha Beach: that of the captain

shot through the face while open-mouthed, suffering nothing more lasting than dimples. The story turned out to be harder to shed than the wounds. It gained wider currency through Ernie Pyle, who was on the beach later in that day and reported the "miracle" wound. When I tried to correct the story, people were reluctant to accept the more mundane truth.

Back to the beach: The aid man applied sulfanilamide power to my face, and, having an excuse, I rested and worried over what to do in this nightmarish circumstance so different from any I had ever imagined. Out among the breakers two large infantry landing craft were broached sideways to the beach, gushing black smoke. And all the while, the clouds hung gray and low, and waves crashed with a slow-paced roar, reaching up the beach to roll the bone-white shingle stones. All around were dead and dying, and I wonder more and more at the amount of life borne so quickly away.

Reluctantly rousing myself, I ran down the beach, coming to a stretch vacant and quiet except for the wind, waves, and beach birds swooping and crying. Omaha Beach was of this pattern: violent swirls of death and destruction with areas of quiet in between. It was as if the funnels of multiple tornadoes were touching down at spots, whirling men and materiel into broken pieces and moving on to touch again.

I was about one thousand yards east of the Les Moulins exit road and in the area where the brush-fire smoke had

The Germans lost Omaha Beach by failing to send a single company of riflemen to descend and sweep us up.

concealed the first penetration. The face of the bluff here was blackened, but the fire was largely burned out and little smoke lingered. I could see American uniforms slowly near the top. A barbed-wire entanglement between the shingle and bluff had been blasted open, and machine-gun fire from a distance was whining through it. To the left was a bigger gap in the wire, where a party of soldiers was starting up the slope. I joined them and found that they were from our 3d Battalion and had landed by good fortune in this smoke-covered area.

The trail, traced through the ash and soot, wound between small personnel mines with which the slope was sown. We came out on top onto a plateau of green fields, bounded by the embankments of earth and brush called hedgerows. There was no indication on this first encounter of the life and death role that these were to play in the battle over the next weeks. Here the hedgerows were not defended, the Germans being concentrated along the bluff line. But soon, pushing inland, we would encounter German reserves using them as ready-made field fortifications, and their deadly potential would become shockingly apparent.

Directly across the path at the top of the bluffs lay the first German soldier I had seen in two hours of battle. He was lying face downward, very dead, a stocky figure in complete uniform from boots to helmet. I recall no particular emotion on stepping over the body; in the brief course of that morning dead bodies had become commonplace; this one differed only in uniform and in title of "enemy." The time was about 0930. I had spent two unproductive hours on the beach. Ahead, small groups were moving inland, single file, along a hedgerow. I debated whether to return to the beach and bring up more of the battalion along this route or to find my commander to see if this was what he wanted. I certainly didn't want to return to the chaos below. I was a thousand yards off our appointed route, in the middle of another battalion, and in what I suspected was another regiment's sector. In training this would have raised serious questions about my leadership. Now it seemed trivial. Our plan did not provide for high waves, winds up to eighteen knots, and an extra German division in the defenses. The shock, inertia, and confusion of this was countered by the initiative and courage of a few (one study numbers them at no more than forty-seven) who rose above the circumstances. They are largely unknown; the republic is considerably in their debt.

I was following the path of some of these few, and I was not at all the happy warrior. Commissioned a leader, I was leading no one and was certainly not where I was supposed to be. Luck, however, continued with me. I came out onto a lane and here caught up with my enterprising commander, who was leading some mixed sections of F and G, and a few men of

Headquarters Company. The lane led to the village of St. Laurent, about one-half mile east of our designated route. Perhaps because of the spectacular appearance of my face, I was not taken to task for showing up alone. The commander told me to bring up whatever of the battalion I could find as he was to go for our objective from this direction.

Now that I knew what I was supposed to do, it was with considerable relief to the spirit that I began a search through the shallow beachhead for men of the 2d Battalion. And here it is that I can't remember clearly. Perhaps by this time my capacity for registering and storing sights and sounds in some order was saturated. Whatever the reason, the memory of that afternoon and night is a gray tapestry from which scenes emerge, then run together or change position, making it difficult to fix them in time and place.

I returned to the beach by the way I had left it. The burned-over area remained quiet, but toward the Les Moulins exit road the noise still mounted, and an even more distant rumbling was echoing from the Vierville exit far down to the west. The source of the noise, however, was shifting from German guns to our own. Destroyers cruising close inshore were methodically blasting the exit roads; a few surviving tanks were maneuvering in the limited space on the beach, adding the banshee screech of

their high-velocity guns. The lighter debris was washed in enormous drifts along the high-water mark, and the receding tide was leaving windrows of it exposed. The seawall and shingle embankment were still lined with men, most of them wounded, others emotionally broken beyond use. I was not the only searcher for able bodies. Officers and noncommissioned officers from engineer outfits were trying to organize men and materiel for clearing the obstacles exposed by the receding tide. Fighters and workers were few; the abject watchers, many.

The aid station was still in operation and was a collecting point of disaster information on the killed and wounded, some of it wrong, much of it sadly correct. Our amiable and gentlemanly operations officer was dead, and I never learned how far he had gotten into "The Shooting of Dan McGrew." The commander of E Company was killed far down the beach; the commanders of H and F companies were badly wounded. Many others of all ranks had simply disappeared into the maw of the exit road. The next day we learned that fragments of F, G, and H companies had climbed the bluff under concealment of the smoke west of Les Moulins. There they joined a surviving part of the 1st Battalion and the regimental commander near Vierville. This was only about a straight mile west of the 2d Battalion fragments outside St. Laurent, but the mile was German-occupied. Instead of being

Commissioned a leader, I was leading no one and was certainly not where I was supposed to be.

assembled on its objective, the battalion formed a giant letter U, with the points inland at St. Laurent and at Vierville and the base running along the beach. It was, moreover, a thin, wavering U with numerous gaps.

A few functioning soldiers came back with me to where the advance was stalled outside of St. Laurent. My search then turned eastward as I looked for sections of E Company reported to have landed far down in the 16th Infantry area. I met the battalion supply officer on a road along which were modest holiday cottages. On this day of history we came across three soldiers ransacking the poor contents of a cottage. We sent them on, but it was probably a brief interruption to a wartime career of looting. Further along this road we crossed a long, straight mound of dirt that looked as though raised by a giant mole with a strong sense of direction. It was a covered trench leading inland from the beach defenses. Some 2d Battalion men were there debating over whether to hunt for explosives to blow it up or try to smoke it out. The battalion commander's need being the more urgent, they were pointed in his direction and the tunnel left to others.

CONTINUING, I ENCOUNTERED my first liberated Norman: an elderly farmer in a faded blue smock, agitatedly pacing in front of a small cottage. My high school French didn't seem to reassure him that the battle had moved on, so I proffered some soggy notes of invasion currency as more universally soothing. This, too, had no effect, possibly because it did not resemble any currency he recognized; gold Napoleons might have calmed him. I left him still pacing.

This search through the short beachhead was at a run and half-run, canvassing stray groups of anti-aircraft men without weapons, signalmen without equipment, and medics with waterlogged aid kits. None were armed effectively enough to be worth impressing into our ranks. Next I recall standing beside a small, rural hotel where the bodies of three dead Americans were sprawled. The corporal of a squad of the 16th Regiment deployed around the hotel told me that the dead had been there when he arrived. When asked if he had seen any of the 116th, he assumed that look of the soldier who is asked a question for which he doesn't have to know the answer. The look involves a trace of piety and also questions the sanity of the asker. It is acquired early in basic training.

He inquired of the squad, "Any of you seen anything of the—what was it, sir?—116th?" They all assumed the same look. "We ain't seen them," he summarized. In the meantime a lanky private started firing at, and missing, the insulators on a telephone pole. Everyone ducked, and in answer to the corporal's profane question about what he was doing, the private said that these might be lines that German observers were using. The corporal threatened to shoot him.

The corporal helped me arrange the lifeless young bodies in more decent postures and covered them with raincoats. I continued a search that, in retrospect, seems aimless.

The afternoon passed into the evening of double-daylight-saving time by which the invasion planners provided for a long day of fighting in lieu of being unable to make the



**Disaster information
was collected at the aid
station, some of it wrong,
much of it sadly correct.**

With their wounds temporarily dressed, casualties from the 1st Infantry Division sit mutely against the seawall at Omaha Beach, waiting for evacuation.



sun stand still. Sometime early in that evening I arrived at a crossing of lanes and realized that after many turnings I was thoroughly lost. Around me were only green fields and hedgerows; of war there was no evidence. The sodden mass that had been my map had been discarded. I turned by chance back toward St. Laurent instead of toward the encompassing German positions and out of the war. By that time I was far into the sector of the 16th Infantry. There were boat teams of E Company probably within shouting distance, but they might as well have been on another continent.

Back toward St. Laurent I crossed a new road that the engineers had opened from the beach. Trucks, jeeps, ambulances, and weapons carriers jammed this outlet and were turning into fields on either side. The Germans west of St. Laurent were still an effective stopper, but the pressure of men and materiel was building up in the beachhead. More helpful to the cause at the moment than these thin-skinned vehicles were guns of a decimated armored field-artillery battalion that had gone into action. For no reason that I can determine, I remember their red and white aiming stakes standing out brightly against the green field.

IN THE STREAM OF MEN and materiel flowing in from the beach was the 115th Infantry, a sister regiment in the 29th Division. The day hadn't killed deep regimental instincts, for I recall passing it with the feeling of superiority of a combat veteran of several hours' seniority. Near St. Laurent I met a squad of our 3d Battalion that was surprisingly knowledgeable of the situation. I was advised not to go into the village that had been shelled a short time before by either our warships or German artillery. The 2d Battalion was reported to be to the right along a farm road leading to Les Moulins, and to my amazement, that's where it was. I found the battalion, about ninety strong, deployed around farm buildings facing German positions that we should, according to the plan, have long since occupied. The battalion commander was in a barn across a cobblestone-paved yard from the farmhouse. I told him that aside from the few men retrieved from the beach, I had found nothing but the dead, wounded, and emotionally crippled. He exhibited no dismay; such news was standard that day.

One of my duties as battalion adjutant was to keep a journal of combat orders and actions. Early in the evening I remembered this but could find neither dry paper nor anything for writing other than a grease pencil used in marking maps. The entries would probably have been as inexact as much of the information of the moment. Perhaps I should have made a greater effort; instead, I posted the Headquarters Company men (about a dozen, I believe) for command-post security and then washed my automatic in the barn's horse trough. There was no gun oil and no certainty that it wouldn't jam again after the first round.

Word continued of death and disaster: the 111th Field Artillery Battalion, the longtime fire-support teammate of our regiment, had lost all its howitzers in the Channel, and its commander lay dead on the beach. The regimental commander and some of his staff were inland near

Vierville—he and his adjutant wounded, his supply officer dead. There was a vague report that A Company of our 1st Battalion had lost all officers and most of its men in front of the Vierville exit road. This proved all too nearly true. (Many of the fragmented reports of that night are now verified by names on monuments across the United States. The memorial in Bedford, Virginia, the original home of A Company, bears twenty names under June 6, 1944.) Midnight found the Stonewall Brigade far-flung and hard used. First reports set losses at about one thousand men killed, wounded, or missing. This figure was scaled down, but not greatly, as some of the missing were gathered in. It had been one of the most costly days in the regiment's history since Chancellorsville and the wounding unto death of Old Stonewall himself.

Of all the capacities that the years diminish, none leaves a greater void than that of the youthful ability for easy friendships without the questioning and restraints that complicate those of later life. I feel a void now in looking back upon friends gone that day. Together we had been through months and years of wartime discomforts and strain; marched countless tedious miles; lived in mud and dust, heat and cold. The battalion dominated our time and efforts. Then it all came down to this brief first day of battle, and for them it all ended, and for the rest of us I believe that what has been since has not been exactly the same.

Sorrow had its beginnings that night, but it was still a dim presence. We were weary, for twenty-four hours of flat-out physical and emotional effort had elapsed since reveille on the *Jefferson*. But neither weariness nor sorrow was the dominant presence. Overriding both was a sense of life forced to a hard, bright flame to survive. It is this, and its illuminations, I believe, that burnishes the memory of battle. Soldiers who have experienced this have tried to describe it and at the same time the dread that accompanies it. Dread and exhilaration from the same source at the same moment are difficult to reconcile and impossible to convey convincingly. It is common for visitors to war to note the increasing cheerfulness encountered on approaching the front. I believe that they are witnessing this phenomenon of intensified, illuminated life.

Nothing was further from my mind that night than speculation upon whether the shade of Stonewall Jackson might be drawn from the shadows to this unlikely place where the current bearers of the name of his famed command were in deep travail. History indicates that he would have given his usual abrupt order: "Close up, press on." I cannot imagine disputing that awesome individual in person, but from this safe distance, I quote his less known pronouncement at the end of a hard and confused day at White Oak Swamp in the Seven Days' Battles before Richmond, when he told his commanders, "Now, gentlemen, let us at once to bed and see if tomorrow we cannot do something." I believe that the day on Omaha Beach was as hard and confused as at White Oak Swamp, and rest from it was equally needed. In any event, in the early morning, I retired to a corner of the barn, cradled my swollen face, and slipped into a troubled sleep. The last sounds I recall were far-off artillery and machine-gun fire.

It was about two hours before dawn of the second day. ☆