



# SPIRIT OF NORMANDY



75th ANNIVERSARY D-DAY LANDINGS  
OFFICIAL COMMEMORATIVE JOURNAL

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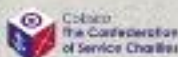
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# IN TRIBUTE & REMEMBRANCE

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Dedicated to the Normandy Veterans

*"If ye break faith with us who die We shall not sleep,  
though poppies grow In Flanders fields".*

*John McCrae*

His wish for the sacrifice of so many to be remembered by their compatriots is completely understandable and strikes a chord with anyone who has lost someone in war. The worst fate of all is to be forgotten.

Almost One Hundred years later, Colonel McCrae would be moved to witness how strongly remembrance burns in a grateful nations collective conscience. The cemeteries are lovingly attended and visited in enormous numbers by the descendants of those that fell and by thousands of their countrymen who merely wish to pay their respects.

The shock waves of past conflicts still shimmer on the edge of our folk memory, the sacrifices have not been forgotten. Britain's casualty figures affect the country still.

**Their Name Liveth Forever More.**

Soldier poet Richard Aldington wrote:

*"You are the future of a far-flung past. You are the generation for whom we wept and died."*

The covenant has been kept. **WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.**





# SPIRIT OF NORMANDY

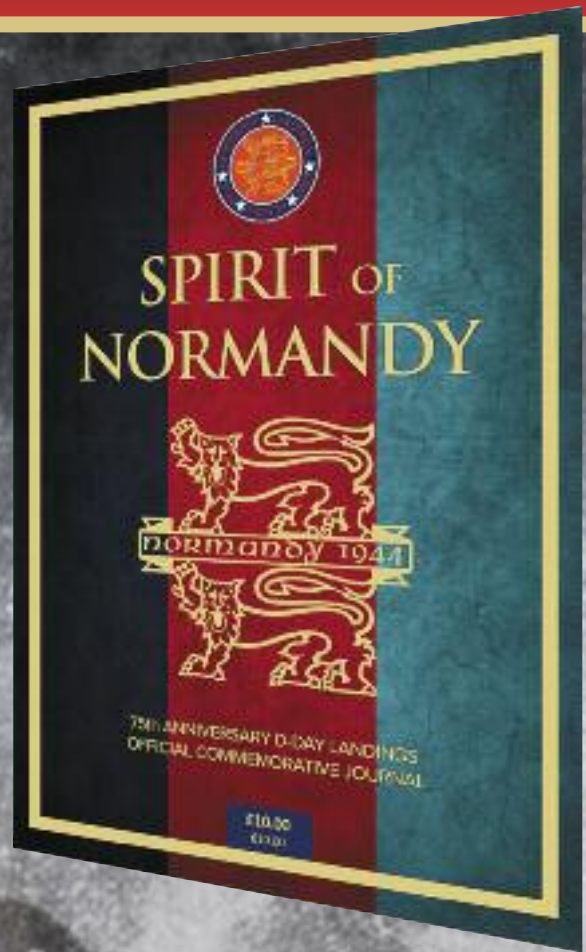
75th ANNIVERSARY D-DAY LANDINGS  
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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

MESSAGE FROM  
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II



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Please convey my warm thanks to all those associated with the Spirit of Normandy Trust for their loyal greetings, sent on the occasion of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the D-Day Landings which is being marked throughout 2019.

I much appreciate your thoughtfulness in writing as you did and, in return send my best wishes to you all.

ELIZABETH R.

2019





1944

# THERE THEN, HERE NOW

2019



Cherbourg

UTAH

OMAHA

BOLD

JUNO

SWORD

Le Havre

FRANCE

Established in 1885, SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, is the UK's oldest tri-service military charity and is still supporting serving personnel, veterans and their families today. Providing emotional, financial and practical help to more than 73,000 people every year - SSAFA continues to be there for those Armed Forces families in need.

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FOREWORD  
**RICHARD PALUSINSKI**  
CHAIRMAN, THE SPIRIT OF NORMANDY TRUST



I welcome this souvenir publication and I am grateful for all those who have given time to contribute towards it. The 75th Anniversary of D Day is a significant moment when we can reflect on our history, those who played their part in the shaping of it and the human cost of doing so.

The Spirit of Normandy Trust is a national charity with two distinct aims. The first is the welfare of veterans of the Normandy Campaign and the second is to perpetuate the memory of D Day and the Battle for Normandy. It is vitally important to us that the veterans of this exceptional military campaign should live out the remainder of their lives in comfort and we work closely with SSAFA and other military charities to ensure that their individual needs are addressed. It is also important to us that the historic significance of D Day and the Normandy campaign should never be lost, even when the generation that delivered this has entirely passed from our presence.

The 75th Anniversary of D Day has, to a certain extent, overshadowed another milestone anniversary. That is the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War 2. It is therefore appropriate that we should take a moment to reflect on the fact that many of those who were part of the D Day landings and Normandy Campaign would have still been at school when war broke out in 1939.

This was not a time served army of regular troops but a largely conscript and volunteer force who had gone through extensive training and exercises but many of them had never engaged in a real battle. As Colonel James Moulton of 48 Commando said "This was the day we finished our training. It was the day we came of age".

Neither was this the age of mass travel. As one veteran put it, "most of us had been no further than Margate - and that was an adventure".

These were ordinary men from ordinary backgrounds called upon to undertake an extraordinary task which they carried out with great determination and courage, successfully delivering the freedoms that we continue to enjoy today. This was an exceptional generation that responded in full measure to the demands and responsibilities placed upon them. We owe them our respect, our gratitude and our perpetual remembrance. It is our combined responsibility to take up the torch of remembrance and carry it forward on their behalf.

March 2019





# The D-Day 75 Collection



As we commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day and Normandy Landings, AWARD is proud to announce its continuing support of The Spirit of Normandy Trust and the jointly commissioned Normandy 75 Badge. The exclusive and thoughtfully designed badge depicts the red, blue and RAF blue of the Allied services with the 5 bold white stars representing the five landing beaches and identifying the Allied forces' vehicles and tanks. At its centre is the

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# OVERLORD: AN OVERVIEW

*from the Editor, Tony Talbott*



'OVERLORD' was the codename for the western allies' invasion of occupied North-west Europe. The initial seaborne assault phase of the Normandy landings was codenamed 'Operation NEPTUNE'.

The Casablanca (codenamed 'SYMBOL') Conference between British Prime Minister Churchill, US President Roosevelt and Soviet Leader Stalin, convened in January 1943, gave the impetus to planning and executing OVERLORD by agreeing to establish an interim planning staff: Chief-of-Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC) under British Lieutenant-General Frederick Morgan; and to increase the build-up of US troops in the UK ('Operation BOLERO'). COSSAC, aided by the earlier work undertaken by Britain's General Sir Bernard Paget and his 'Plan SKYSCRAPER' as well as other proposed incursions to the Continent, sought a suitable landing area along the Channel coast of France within range of allied fighters, where beach defences could be neutralised and where the rate of build-up of troops could equal that of the defending German forces.



Any build-up depended on the immediate capture of a major port, but as it was supposed that it would take three-months to put any captured port into working order, it was necessary to find firm and sheltered beaches over which the troops ashore could be supplied for at least 90 days and which had an adequate road network beyond. Like Paget before, COSSAC chose a narrow sector in the Bay of Seine, between Le Havre and the Cherbourg (Cotentin) Peninsula, because it fitted the necessary criteria and was close to a major port, Cherbourg, which could, it was hoped, be captured almost immediately. All supplies were to be landed over the beaches, via two huge artificial ports (each codenamed 'MULLBERRY') constructed in the UK, while fuel was to be pumped across the Channel by British conceived and technologically ground-breaking pipelines known generically as Pipeline-Under-The-Ocean ('PLUTO'). The COSSAC plan was approved at the Quebec ('QUADRANT') conference between Churchill and Roosevelt and hosted by Canadian premier Mackenzie King in August 1943, where Churchill requested a 25% increase in the assault force. No firm decision on

this uplift was made until General Sir Bernard Montgomery, the nominated commander for all OVERLORD Ground Forces as Commander-in-Chief of 21st Army Group, recommended a much broader assault front encompassing: five as opposed to three assault beaches with each to be commanded by a Corps Commander; a corresponding increase in the initial assault force from three assault divisions to five with a further seven afloat; and one or more additional airborne divisions.

#### NEPTUNE Initial Joint Plan

In February 1944, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), the Headquarters and staff of recently nominated allied Supreme Commander, US General Dwight D Eisenhower, was activated, and OVERLORD's maritime, land and air component commanders (Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, General Montgomery and Air Chief Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory respectively) agreed the NEPTUNE Initial Joint Plan, which incorporated the expanded assault force, however, in order to ensure availability of an increased number of landing craft now required

to transport a much larger assault force to Normandy, the allied landings on the French Riviera (Operation 'ANVIL' later 'DRAGOON') that had been planned originally to coincide with NEPTUNE and the launch of NEPTUNE itself, had to be delayed. Timing was critical. All allied amphibious operations in the Mediterranean had started under cover of darkness, but because of the complexity and scale of OVERLORD and because naval and air forces could only neutralize a heavily defended coastline in daylight, it was decided to assault just after dawn. Other factors limited the landings to about one hour after low water and this, plus the need for the airborne troops to have a full moon and minimal cloud, narrowed the first possible days down to a three-day window of the 5-7th June.

The date selected by Eisenhower for 'D-Day' was set at 5th June, which had a full moon, but the landings were delayed 24-hours because of bad weather. To guard the time and place of the landings the most stringent measures were taken to maintain security. All TOP SECRET plans



relating to OVERLORD were given the additional handling classification of 'BIGOT' and the UK was forced to follow the strictest of restrictions on freedom of movement and expression: foreign diplomats were prohibited from travelling overseas; mail was intercepted and international phone calls monitored; and all civilian travel between the UK and Republic of Ireland stopped. Finally, at Eisenhower's personal request, a coastal belt, 10-mile (16 km) deep, stretched from the Wash in the east of England to Land's End in the west and another either side of the Firth of Forth in Scotland, was closed to all, but authorized travellers.

#### **The Atlantic Wall and "Fortress Europe"**

The Germans were, of course, well aware that the allies intended to invade, but deception kept them guessing as to where the landings would be, and, once the invasion had occurred, whether it was a diversionary operation with the main blow to fall elsewhere. They were also afflicted by an unsatisfactory command system and conflicting methods of organisation: neither the C-in-C West, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, nor the commander of 'Army Group B', Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, had control over naval and air forces in France, while the two men held differing views on how any invasion should be defeated. Rundstedt believed that nothing could prevent the Atlantic Wall defences from being pierced and that the best hope was to hold a large mobile force in reserve, positioned to strike once the Allies had landed; while Rommel was convinced that because of allied air and matériel superiority, any invasion had to be beaten on the beaches and that reserves should be positioned close to the most vulnerable places. In the event, neither policy was pursued properly and in April the armoured reserves were divided between Rommel and Hitler's Armed Forces High Command (OKW) and a separate and conflicting Panzer Corps Command imposed. In the first six months of 1944, Rommel reinforced the defences on all large beaches and extra troops were drafted in so that by the end of May, Rommel's two armies (the Fifteenth in northern France and the Seventh in Normandy) comprised 25 static coast divisions and 16 infantry and parachute divisions, 10 armoured and mechanised divisions, and 7 reserve divisions. But the Third Air Fleet in France remained weak with only 319 of its aircraft operating on D-Day, though within a week it had been boosted to 1,000, while German naval surface forces amounted to only 4

destroyers in the Atlantic ports and 39 E-Boats between Ijmuiden and St Malo.

#### **195,000 tons of bombs**

Much of Rommel's work to reinforce the coast and to rush reinforcements to the invasion beaches was hampered by Leigh-Mallory's tactical air forces and by the two strategic air forces (Britain's Bomber Command and Eighth US Army Air Force), which the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff placed temporarily under Eisenhower's command. Between 1 April and 5 June 1944, more than 11,000 aircraft from these Allied air forces flew more than 200,000 sorties in support of the invasion, dropping 195,000 tons of bombs on rail and road communications, airfields, military installations, industrial targets and coastal batteries and radar positions. For every bomb dropped on Normandy others were dropped elsewhere in occupied Europe as to mask the bombers emphasis and focus on the invasion region. Another important factor that hampered the Germans before and after the landings was the work of the French Resistance. By May 1944, it was calculated that some 100,000 French men and women, armed and helped by the UK's Special Operations Executive (SOE) and to a lesser extent by the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS), were ready to take orders from the head of the Free French Forces of the Interior, General Koenig. There were also some 35 - 45,000 armed 'Marquis', though a quarter of these had only enough ammunition to fight for a day. Before and after D-Day, special three-man UK, US and French/Belgian 'JEDBURGH' teams were dropped to gain intelligence and to support the French resistance. Sabotage was widespread: the railway system and the Germans' telephone communication network were severely disrupted.

#### **UTAH, OMAHA, GOLD, JUNO, SWORD**

The climactic day - known then and now as 'D-Day' - began just after midnight on 6th June - when 23,400 British and US paratroopers were landed on the flanks of the invasion beaches. On the left, the 6th British Airborne Division was dropped east of the River Orne and on the right, the 82nd and 101st US Airborne Divisions, were dropped between Ste Mere Eglise, the first village in France to be liberated, and Carentan. Then, starting at 0630, the assault divisions were delivered by five naval assault forces to their beaches codenamed (from west to east) UTAH, OMAHA, GOLD, JUNO, and SWORD. Each

naval assault force was given the first letter of the codename of the beach on to which it was to deliver its division. There were also two additional naval forces: 'B' and 'L', which were associated with landing the Follow-up-Forces.

#### **75,215 British and Canadian Troops**

Nearly 7,000 ships and adapted landing craft were employed to bombard German positions, land the five beach divisions, create two artificial harbours, which had to be towed across the Channel, and counter any German naval attacks. Of the 1,213 naval warships involved 79% were British and Canadian, 16.5% were American, and 4% were Dutch, French, Greek, Norwegian, and Polish. Including allied merchant marines, 195,701 naval personnel took part. The Allied Expeditionary Air Forces also played their part, protecting the armada from air attack, bombing German defences and with specialist naval assets creating a 'ghost' invasion force (Operations 'TAXABLE' & 'GLIMMER'), which deceived German radar. Altogether 75,215 British and Canadian troops and 57,500 US troops were landed on D-Day. There were about 4,300 British and Canadian casualties, and 6,000 US. Operation NEPTUNE ceased officially on 30th June 1944, by which date no fewer than 850,279 men, 148,803 vehicles, and 570,505 tons of ammunition and supplies had been landed for the loss of 59 vessels of all types sunk and 110 damaged. Pressure mines caused a substantial number of naval casualties and the worst storm for 80 years, that struck Normandy on the 9th June, wrecked one the artificial Mulberry harbour off OMAHA beach, caused more.

#### **A Defining Period in British History**

The Normandy Landings marked one a climactic event in British history. To those that prosecuted the invasion we today, have, in no small part, our liberty and associated freedoms to thank them for. We owe them our gratitude.

The 75th Anniversary commemorates not only one of the most successful battles in modern times, but remembers those who did not return from the battles of northern France. This Journal is dedicated to them and to our Armed Forces today, serving around the world. Our thanks are extended to our contributors, advertisers, and supporters. Thank you for supporting the Normandy Veterans.







## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL SIR NICK CARTER KCB, CBE, DSO, ADC CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF



NEPTUNE, OVERLORD, D-Day. Different names, each with personal poignancy, for one of the most critical and effective Allied military operations leading to the end of the Second World War. A significant maritime, land and air force comprising nearly 7000 ships, over 11,500 aircraft and around 160,000 troops deployed to Normandy to open the vital 'Second Front' against the Nazis in Europe. The ensuing eleven months of intense warfare, resulted in the celebration of Victory in Europe.

Those who took part were mainly young men conscripted from farms and factories, offices, shops and other workplaces. Although some were veterans of earlier campaigns, for many it was their first experience of combat. For some, it was their last; many making the ultimate sacrifice and resting now in Commonwealth cemeteries in Normandy and beyond.

It is easy for the post-war generation to think that we know the D-Day story, but there are many stories; the experience was unique to every individual, as indeed was the impact it had upon each of their lives. Their stories are all different and will undoubtedly be vividly relived and retold amongst old comrades as they gather to commemorate and reflect on the 75th Anniversary.

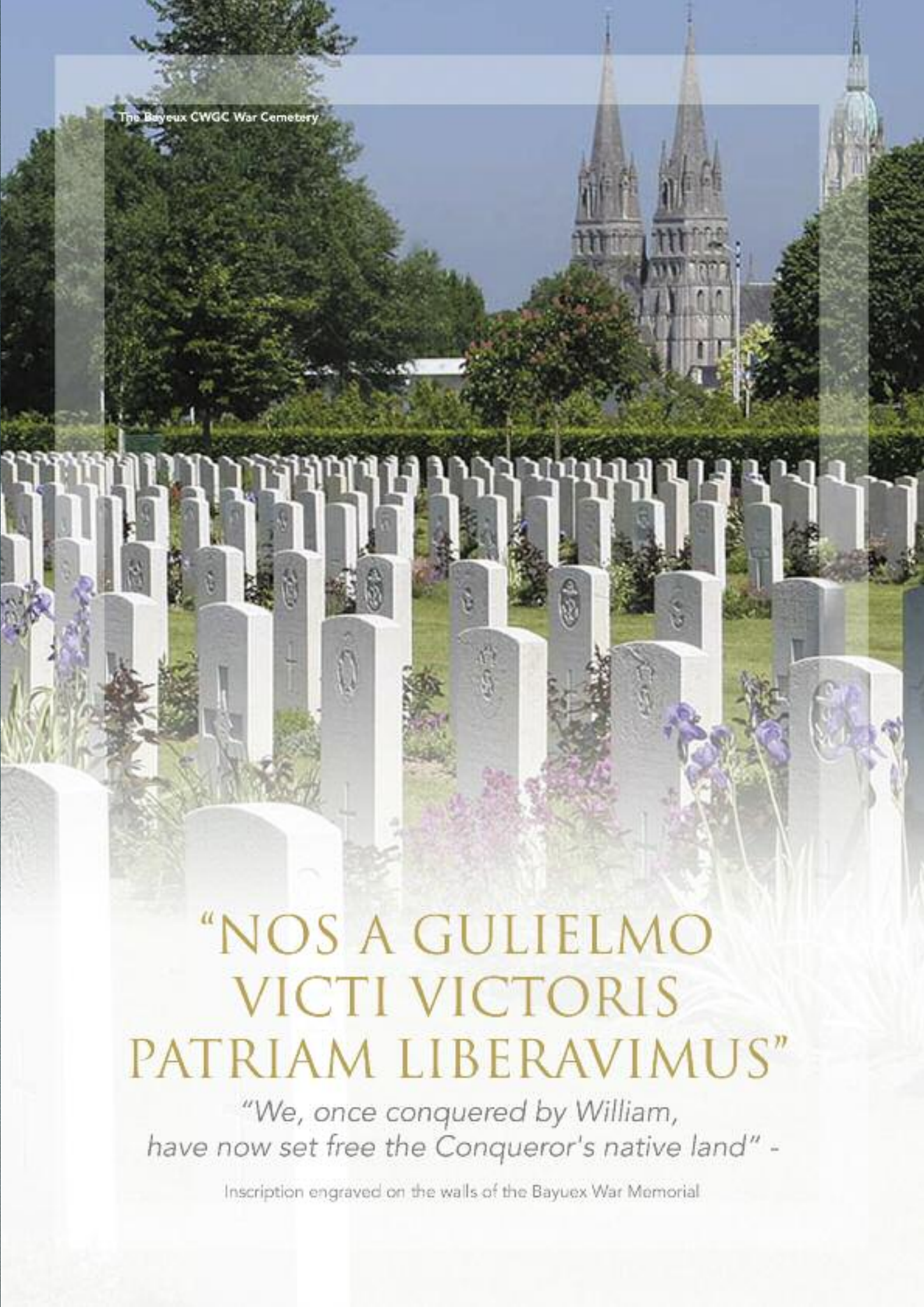
The stories of storming the beaches and of combat will be emotive, stirring and powerful, particularly for those who were at the forefront of the action, but the success of D-Day and what followed was enabled by the whole nation's efforts. To get a true understanding of what it takes to win a war, we should also hear the stories of the planners, the logisticians, the armourers, the creators of the specialist vehicles that supported the invasion, those who designed, constructed and installed the Mulberry Harbours and Pipe Line Under the Ocean to provide essential supplies to the front line, the meteorologists and everyone who served their country in other ways as part of a huge collective endeavour.

Today, 75 years later, all survivors of that campaign should be proud of the part they played in the final Allied victory. And we must never forget their sacrifice.

So I am grateful to have this opportunity to pay tribute to our veterans and to current members of the Armed Forces. Their dedication, and sense of duty and service is no less admirable than it was 75 years ago. The same spirit of courage, comradeship, and selfless commitment is as true today as it was then – indeed all of us are proud of the responsibility we have inherited from those who have gone before. We, as a nation, remain grateful to every one of them – long may the 'Spirit of Normandy' endure.

MARCH 2019





The Bayeux CWGC War Cemetery

**“NOS A GULIELMO  
VICTI VICTORIS  
PATRIAM LIBERAVIMUS”**

*“We, once conquered by William,  
have now set free the Conqueror's native land” -*

Inscription engraved on the walls of the Bayeux War Memorial



# D-Day 75

## events to mark 75th anniversary of Normandy Landings

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### Events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day in June 2019 have been announced at an event at The D-Day Story in Portsmouth.

Vice Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Gordon Messenger announced the official commemorations during a visit to The D-Day Story in Portsmouth. The Ministry of Defence has worked with The Royal British Legion and Portsmouth City Council to organise a series of events to take place in Portsmouth and Normandy.

The centrepiece of the D-Day 75 programme will be a specially-chartered ship which will carry D-Day veterans to key commemorations in Portsmouth and Normandy in June. The ship, chartered with funds from The Royal British Legion and a LIBOR grant from HM Treasury, will offer the veterans and their carers accommodation and travel for the duration of their visit at no cost to them.

Welcoming the announcement, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

*'75 years ago the forces of 13 Allied countries gathered in Britain before launching the historic operation to liberate Europe. Winston Churchill rightly said that D-Day was "undoubtedly the most complicated and difficult" operation that had ever taken place. This June we will show our veterans that the debt to them is never forgotten for the price they paid for the freedom and peace we now enjoy.'*

The key commemoration events will include an inauguration at the site of the Normandy Memorial Trust's British Normandy Memorial and The Royal British Legion's services at Bayeux Cathedral and Bayeux Cemetery. The commemorations will conclude with an evening of music and entertainment for veterans beside the beaches at Arromanches.

Portsmouth, from where much of the D-Day landing force sailed in 1944, will be the focal point of the UK commemorations and will host the UK national event on 5 June 2019. Portsmouth City Council is planning a series of events over five days to reflect the area's unique role in one of the largest and well-known military operations in history.

Cllr Gerald Vernon Jackson, Leader, Portsmouth City Council said:

*'This June the city will be the focal point for reflection on the events of 1944. Veterans, military personnel and civilians will commemorate those lost and celebrate the achievements of the operation that sailed from Portsmouth 75 years ago. It's fitting that we're revealing the programme of events for D-Day 75 at The D-Day Story - the museum which has captured the human stories of those involved in that epic event.'*

D-Day veterans or those who would like to help a veteran attend the commemorations are asked to register with The Royal British Legion using the forms available on their website:  
[www.britishlegion.org.uk/community/d-day-75](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/community/d-day-75)

A Royal British Legion Commemorative Events spokesperson said:

*'As we mark 75 years since the largest seaborne invasion the world has ever seen we salute the bravery and sacrifice of all those who took part in liberating Europe. We invite those who wish to attend the events to commemorate their historic achievements to get in touch with the Legion and join our all-costs-covered journey by ship back to France. The veterans will be the VIPs at this event and we will make sure their every need is catered for as they travel back to Normandy to take part in this landmark event.'*



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MESSAGE FROM  
**THE RT HON THERESA MAY MP**  
PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY



2019 marks the 75th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings. The Anniversary is an opportunity to remember and honour veterans of the campaign - their sacrifice must never be forgotten.

The historic significance of what took place in Normandy 75 years ago still resonates and is a great source of national pride. The sheer size and scope of the operation which included the largest massed airborne landing yet attempted anywhere and successfully made; the boldness and imagination of the concept; months of painstaking planning; the endless training and waiting; and then the ferocity of the day itself and the campaign that followed.

None of this meticulous preparation would have achieved anything without the courage and fortitude, and the dogged determination, of the hundreds and thousands of Servicemen who landed on the beaches and then fought their way inland in the face of determined opposition.

What is for Normandy veterans a haunting memory of danger and sacrifice is for our country, and for generations of our countrymen to come, one of the proudest moments in our long national history. Our whole nation owes them an immense debt of gratitude.

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP  
MARCH 2019





# SPIRIT OF NORMANDY

## NORMANDY 75 - THE REUNION

Throughout 2019 there will be a great deal happening across the UK and in France to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings and the subsequent battles for the liberation of Europe.

Across the weekend of Friday 6th September to Sunday 8th September the Spirit of Normandy Trust will be running a number of events held in Portsmouth to bring together veterans and their families to commemorate the anniversary year, remember the fallen and provide an opportunity for veterans to meet together. The Trust is currently fund raising to help offset the expenses and costs to assist many veterans, widows and carers to attend.

A Gala Dinner will be held on the Friday evening specifically for veterans and their families and invited guests. There will be a superb meal followed by entertainment with Amanda Jane singing songs from the past.

The main reunion event will be held in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, by kind permission of the Captain of the Base and The National Museum of the Royal Navy. The whole of Saturday 7th September will be used to hold a veterans' reunion for every available Normandy veteran in the UK. The day will include exhibitions of period military vehicles, stage acts including a big band sound, stalls and sideshows, flypasts and arena shows. The day will end with the parade of veterans. The Historic Dockyard is full of interesting displays and things to do and the reunion event will provide an extra incentive to visit the Dockyard, so do come along and join in a full and fascinating day.

On Sunday 8th September there will be a commemorative service and wreath laying held in St Anne's Church in the Historic Dockyard. After the service veterans will be able to enjoy the exhibits and activities of the Dockyard and, if they wish, take advantage of a bus transfer to the D Day Story to see the refurbished museum.

Veterans, their families and supporters can get up to date information on plans for the weekend and book to attend by visiting the Spirit of Normandy web site [www.spiritofnormandy.org.uk](http://www.spiritofnormandy.org.uk)



# THE SPIRIT OF NORMANDY



A CHARITABLE TRUST TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT TO PRESERVE FREEDOM IN 1944

## A History of the Trust

In May of 1994 The Spirit of Normandy Trust was founded by Major General Peter L.de C.Martin,CBE, and General Sir John Mogg, GCB, CBE, DSO, DL. The Trust has two objectives, benevolence and education. Sir John Mogg was President of the Trust and General Martin was Chairman. At their invitation a body of Trustees was appointed to administer and carry out the business of the Charity. On the retirement of Sir John, General Martin continued as Chairman until ill health dictated that he took the honorary role of President in March 2005.

When the Normandy Veterans Association (NVA) laid up their Standard and closed the Association in 2014 the Trust was handed responsibilities formerly delivered by the NVA. These responsibilities included the maintenance of the statue of Montgomery at Colleville Montgomery in Normandy and the Normandy Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas as well as providing the Normandy Plot at the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey each November. The Trust has also taken on the task of running regular reunions for veterans of the Normandy campaign . **The Spirit of Normandy Trust, is a registered charity No. 1038121.**

## The Trustees

**The Chairman - Richard Palusinski** worked in public service roles for over 40 years. He also served with the Police within the Special Constabulary for 42 years, including holding the post of Commanding Officer for Wiltshire Special Constabulary for over 10 years. He worked with the Wiltshire Branch of the Normandy Veterans Association for 10 years, serving as Branch Secretary for the last 5 years.

**Ian H. Stewart, CM,** former co-Director of Award Productions Ltd. He served on the original NVA 50th Anniversary Committee, and Award Productions Ltd raised more than £10,000 through the company for the Royal Albert Hall Concert in 1994. He served in the Royal Navy and was appointed as a Trustee in October 1995.

**Ray Spurr FCMA CGMA** is recently retired as an accountant for the Ministry of Defence and joined the Trust in 2013. For the past ten years he has been Treasurer and an Honorary Member of the Wiltshire Branch of the Normandy Veterans Association. With his wife Jacqui they have escorted the veterans at both the 60th and the 70th D Day Commemorations in Normandy.

**Colonel Dickie Winchester** joined the Army in August 1978, following in the footsteps of his father. He was commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Artillery (RA), serving 37 years in the Regular Army, joining the Reserves in November 2015. His military service has taken him all over the world, including 2 tours with the United Nations and all the major theatres of conflict in which the British Army has engaged. Throughout his career, his principal extramural interests have concerned horses and drill. He is currently Chairman of the Army Equestrian Association, Chairman of RA Equestrian and RA Polo, and Chairman of the Larkhill (Army) Racecourse.

**Mark Waring** A former SNCO in the Fleet Air Arm, having completed 27 Years service he now works in the City of London for a Major Insurance Assistance Company as Aviation Director. Mark has organised several trips back to Normandy for Veterans and is now leading on Legacy Trips where children visit the battlefields alongside Veterans that fought there. Mark will primarily be working on the SONT Events, including the Reunion and D Day 75 Dinner in 2019.

**Peter Lankester** completed a full and varied career as a Royal Navy officer in 2007. A commando helicopter pilot, executive officer of both a frigate and a training establishment, he completed his career with attaché posts in the United States and South Africa. In 2008 he joined the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), with responsibilities for some 100 redundant churches in the South West. He is now a consultant and volunteer with the CCT and the National Trust. A Francophile with links to the Normandy landings (his father helped design and build the Mulberry Harbour), he became a trustee in 2018.

**Phil Terry** is currently both Secretary and Vice Chairman of the Southend on Sea Veterans of Normandy, Formerly NVA branch 30. Phil's interest in WW2 and Normandy in particular stem from his dad who enlisted on 29th April 1942 in Saskatoon Canada. Taking part in the Normandy Invasion he went on through to Germany with the 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade. In his spare time Phil is an active member of a WW2 Display Group who attend numerous events educating the public and collecting for the Trust.

**Warrant Officer Class 1 Baz Firth MBE** joined the Royal Navy in 1990, specialising in the Fleet Air Arm on the Lynx maritime helicopter, and has enjoyed a varied and active career spanning 29 years. With tours worldwide he has travelled to over 40 countries in his time with the Lynx helicopter and more recently has been employed in engineering capability teams, quality assurance and engineering training. Outside of his Royal Navy role he is the South West Regional Organiser for the Sporting Bears Motor Club, helping raise over £2M for children's charities across the UK. Named on the 2013 New Year's Honours list for his charity work and invested to MBE in 2014 he has proudly been the Trust's Cenotaph Platoon Commander since 2014 and is very humbled to have been invited to join the Trust as a Trustee. He will be working closely with Mark Waring on the HMS Victory dinner and the main reunion and events of a wider interest and support to the Trust and the Veterans and families.

**Flaminia Martin** is granddaughter to Major General Peter Martin who founded the Trust. Having joined the Trust in 2016 she manages the website and social media for the charity. Flaminia works as an Active Schools Lead in Surrey, working to increase opportunities in sport and physical activity across the County.

There is one non trustee officer:

**Honorary Secretary, Mary R. Stewart** formerly Company Secretary and a co-Director of Award Productions Limited with her husband Ian. In 1986 the company set up the funding and continued to fund the Normandy Veterans Welfare and Benevolent Fund (subsequently transferred to the Trust) and supported the Normandy Veterans Association since the striking of the Normandy Commemorative Medal in 1986. Served on the original Normandy Veterans Association 50th Anniversary Committee.

**Email: [info@spiritofnormandy.org.uk](mailto:info@spiritofnormandy.org.uk)**

**Tel: 01428 605672**

**Web: [www.spiritofnormandy.org.uk](http://www.spiritofnormandy.org.uk)**



75<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary



*Picture courtesy of The Spirit of Normandy Trust/Richard Paluszinski*

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# THE SPIRIT OF NORMANDY



A CHARITABLE TRUST TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT TO PRESERVE FREEDOM IN 1944

## Objectives

### Benevolence

*To provide financial assistance for veterans of the three Services and their dependents who are in need.*

The Trust became the “charity arm” of the Normandy Veterans Association, primarily for assistance to WWII veterans especially those who served in Normandy. Since the closure of the Association in 2014 the Trust has continued with welfare assistance under its own remit.



### Requests for assistance

Such requests should be channelled through SSAFA Forces Help which can be contacted at;

**SSAFA Forces Help**  
4 St Dunstan's Hill  
London EC3R 8AD

**Tel: 0800 731 4880**  
**Website: [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk)**

Information on local branches and how to proceed is available at these sites. In turn SSAFA will assess the individual case and channel the details to the appropriate charities including The Spirit of Normandy Trust.

### Education

*To increase the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the general public concerning the events leading up to and culminating in the Normandy Landings and their historical significance.*

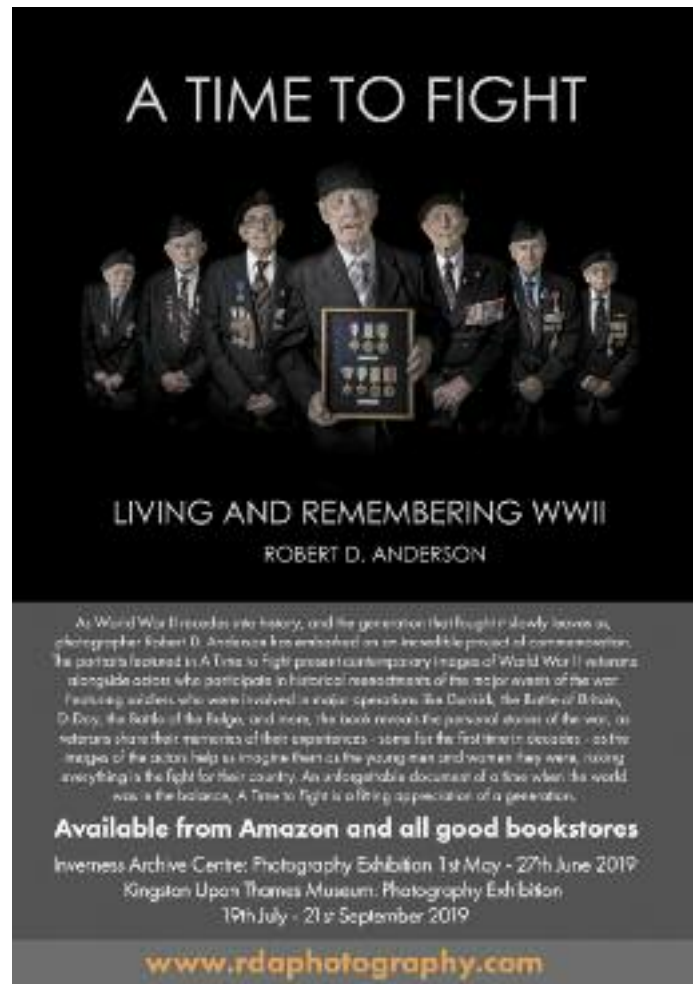
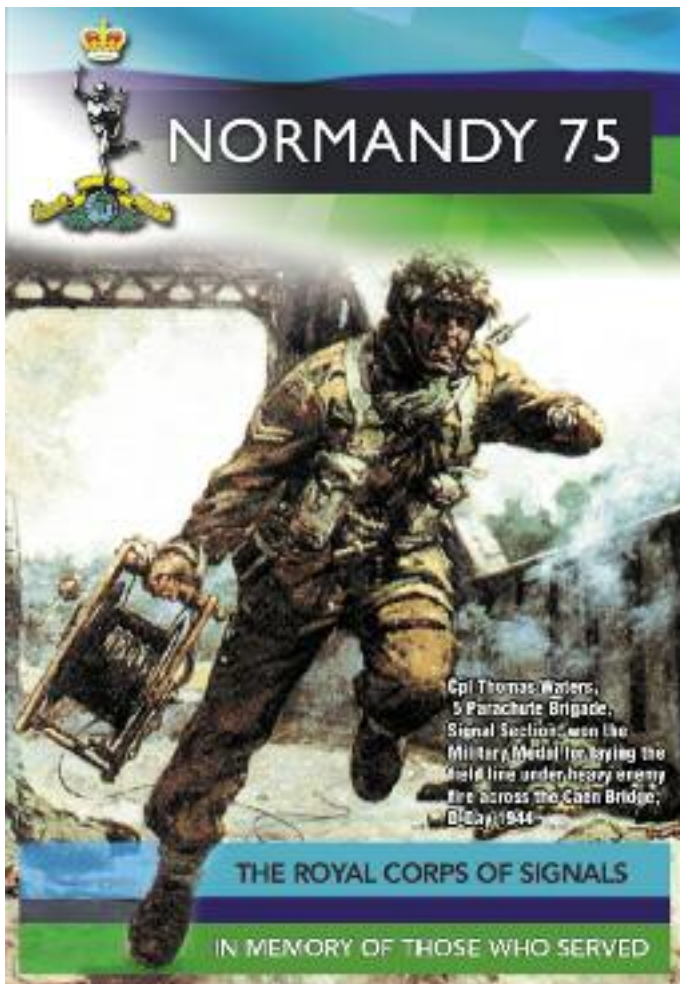
Working in close liaison with the Young Historian Project, the Trust awards annual prizes for essays submitted by schools throughout the country.

These prizes are for groups and individual pupils in three categories at Primary, Key Stage 3 and Senior levels. The veterans are especially keen that young people should know what the War meant to Servicemen and their families.

There are a number of veterans who remain fit and well and who are happy to visit local schools by invitation to talk to children and answer their questions. This “living documentary” has been shown to inspire the children and to ignite their imagination. This has been most apparent in the content of many of the essays written in response to the Trust’s essay competition run in conjunction with the Young Historian Project.







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[www.thecoinconnection.co.uk](http://www.thecoinconnection.co.uk)



# THE SPIRIT OF NORMANDY



A CHARITABLE TRUST TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT TO PRESERVE FREEDOM IN 1944

## Fundraising & Projects

In the past, the Trust had traditionally raised funds with the direct assistance of the Normandy Veterans Association Branches who have organised street collections in their own districts. With the passing of time and the closure of the NVA this source of funding has certainly diminished as the years have passed, and the veterans have been less able to help.

Company and individual donations including personal bequests have, in the past, enabled the Trust to fund many important exhibits such as The Normandy Experience in the Land Warfare Hall at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford and to provide funds toward the restoration of the original briefing models installed in the Airborne Assault Exhibit in the Airspace building.

Another project undertaken, funded by donations raised by the Trust, was the installation the Normandy Campaign Memorial in 2014 situated in The National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas. The Memorial was designed by Ian Stewart who oversaw the project as a gift to the Normandy Veterans.

The Trust is grateful to all who contribute, enabling the Trust to meet its objectives and is keen to encourage companies and groups to consider the Trust in their fundraising plans. Groups wishing to raise funds in the name of The Spirit of Normandy Trust, for example by way of car boot sales, school plays or summer fetes, are asked to seek the permission and guidance of the Trust before any use of the registered name is made. Contact can be made through the website by clicking on the "contact us" button.

Donations to the Spirit of Normandy Trust also be made via our website:  
[www.spiritofnormandy.org.uk](http://www.spiritofnormandy.org.uk)



## Benevolence

In addition to the projects mentioned the Trust has the on going commitment to consider requests for assistance for the welfare of individual veterans and their dependants.

These requests are directed to the Trust through the offices of SSAFA Forces Help. With teams of trained field workers throughout the country SSAFA can supply the Trustees with an assessment of the veteran's case that is essential when a welfare decision has to be made by the Trust.

A range of life improving equipment such as stair lifts, motorised scooters, electric wheelchairs, walk-in-showers etc. has been partly or completely funded by the Trust. As veterans age, more of these requests are anticipated.

The ability to help fund a better quality of life for those injured in the fight for freedom and peace is a fundamental way of a country expressing its gratitude for the service that the veterans have given.





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D-DAY  
75

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# THE SPIRIT OF NORMANDY



A CHARITABLE TRUST TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT TO PRESERVE FREEDOM IN 1944

## Study Links - Sites

### **Imperial War Museum:** [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

The web site of the Imperial War Museum including links to the five museum sites : IWM London, IWM North, The Cabinet War Rooms, HMS Belfast and IWM Duxford. The Imperial War Museum's Collections Online. This site offers access to material covering all aspects of twentieth century conflict, including Second World War material.

### **Spartacus:** [spartacus-educational.com](http://spartacus-educational.com)

This is a history educational web site aimed at schools. The Second World War history resources History resources from the BBC including historical background to key battles, the Home Front etc with links to maps and veterans testimony.

#### *BBC's Educational History*

Includes sections on Wars and Conflict and World War Two.

#### *BBC's Peoples War*

Online collection of stories and memories about the Second World War.

#### *Battlefields of the Second World War*

Online information about battlefields of the Second World War.

#### *School History*

History resources including many useful links.

#### *The Second World War Experience*

The Second World War Experience Centre in Leeds is a dedicated centre for collecting and preserving evidence about the Second World War.

#### *War Detectives*

War Detectives is a big part of The Big Lottery Fund's "Their Past Your Future" scheme. The site invites young people to explore the experience of the Second World War.

### **Emsource:** [www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/military-history/world-war-two](http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/military-history/world-war-two)

On line teaching and learning resource for the East Midlands, includes archive materials relating to the experience of WW2 in the East Midlands along with 5 National Curriculum linked teaching and learning packages.

#### *Recollections of WW2*

This site has been created to highlight the existence of thousands of oral history recordings that have been carried out with people who experienced the Second World War.

### **Museums**

Ministry of Defence's principal UK Service Museums Links to the Ministry of Defence's principal UK service museums.

#### *The 24 Hour Museum*

This is UK's national virtual museum, includes a teachers' section and links to a zone for children.



### **Show Me:** [www.show.me.uk](http://www.show.me.uk)

Online museum zone for children (part of the 24 Hour Museum).

### **The Jewish Museum:**

<https://jewishmuseum.org.uk>

The Jewish Museum in London covers Jewish experiences during the Second World War.

### **The Royal Marines Museum:**

[www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk](http://www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk)

The Royal Marines Museum in Portsmouth.

### **The D-Day Story:**

<https://thedaystory.com>

The D-Day Story in Portsmouth.

### **Juno Beach Centre:**

[www.junobeach.org](http://www.junobeach.org)

An online museum on the Canadian war effort with information on the new visitor centre at Juno Beach, Normandy ( available in French or English).

### **The Caen Memorial peace museum in Normandy:**

<http://normandy.memorial-caen.com/>

(available in French or English).

### **Musée du Débarquement at Arromanches:**

[www.arromanches-museum.com](http://www.arromanches-museum.com)

The D-day Museum overlooks the very spot where one of the Mulberry Harbours was constructed and where its remains can still be seen today, just a few hundred metres from the shore.

### **Bletchley Park Museum:**

<https://bletchleypark.org.uk>

Web site of Bletchley Park, the UK's wartime Code Centre and nerve-centre of British intelligence during the Second World War.

**THIS LIST PROVIDES A SAMPLE OF RESOURCES AND IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE. A FULL INTERNET SEARCH IS RECOMMENDED.**



## 75th Anniversary of D-Day

Set of 6 stamps



### Presentation Pack



### First Day Cover



# Stamps



Miniature Sheet



6 June 2019 marks the 75th anniversary of The D-Day Landings, one of the most remarkable Allied wartime operations.

General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces chose 5 June, 1944, as the original D-Day. The requirements were very specific, including the phase of the moon, the tides, and the time of day, making only a few days in each month ideal for the operation. However, the weather was far from ideal on the 5th which caused the operation to be delayed 24 hours.

Preceding the amphibious landings were extensive aerial and naval bombardment and an airborne assault. Allied infantry and armoured divisions began landing on the coast of France at 06:30 on 6 June. The target 50-mile (80 km) stretch of the Normandy coast was divided into five sectors – Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword.

Among the British military forces taking part in the operation were individuals from Alderney. William John (Kelly) Barker joined the Navy with SS Bohan in 1941 and was involved with the American landings. Private Charles Edmund Benfield, a member of 1st Battalion, The Dorset Regiment, landed on Gold Beach (Jig sector) and Signaller George Patridge of 4 Commandos landed on Sword Beach.

The operation gained a foothold which the Allies expanded over the coming months and it began the process through which victory was eventually realised.

Guernsey Post are proud to produce this superbly illustrated set of stamps depicting some of the key events of D-Day. These detailed stamps have been illustrated by Brian Byron and can be purchased from Guernsey Stamps via the website or direct from the bureau.

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# THE PROTAGONISTS

## *Operation Overlord*

**General Dwight D Eisenhower**  
Supreme Allied Commander

**Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder RAF**  
Deputy Supreme Allied Commander

**Admiral Sir Bertram H Ramsay RN**  
Allied Naval Commander

**General Sir Bernard L Montgomery**  
Allied Land Commander

**Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory**  
C-in-C Allied Air Forces

**Lt General Omar Bradley**  
Commander 1st US Army

**Maj General L Collins**  
Commander 7th US Corps - Utah Beach

**Major General Raymond D Barton**  
Commander 4th Inf Division - Utah Beach

**Lt General LT Gerow**  
Commander 5th US Corps - Omaha Beach

**Major Gen R Huebner**  
Commander 1st Inf Division - Omaha Beach

**Major General H Gerhardt - Omaha Beach**  
Commander 29th Inf Division

**Major Gen MB Ridgway**  
Commander 82nd Airborne Division - Sainte-Mère-Eglise

**Major Gen MD Taylor**  
Commander 101st Airborne Division - Sainte-Maire-du-Mont

**Lt General Sir Miles C Dempsey**  
Commander 2nd British Army

**Lt General C Bucknall.**  
Commander 30 Corps - Gold Beach

**Maj General Douglas AH Graham**  
Commander 50th British Division - Gold Beach

**Lt General John T Crocker**  
Commander I British Corps

**Major General Rod FL Keller**  
Commander 3rd Canadian Inf Division - Juno Beach

**Major General Tom G Rennie**  
Commander 3rd British Inf Division - Sword Beach

**Major General Richard N Gale**  
Commander 6th Airborne Division - Pegasus Bridge, Ranville



# HAS THE WORD 'HEROES' EVER BEEN MORE DESERVED?



The Daily Mail honours the bravery of all who served in WWII, 75 years on from the D-Day landings. That's why we've partnered with the Normandy Memorial Trust to raise over £250,000 towards a British D-Day memorial, thanks to the generosity of the Mail's readers.

Daily Questions

Daily Answers

Daily Mail



# MESSAGE FROM GENERAL THE LORD DANNATT GCB CBE MC DL PATRON, THE SPIRIT OF NORMANDY TRUST



The historical significance for the world of D Day and the subsequent battle for Normandy can never be overemphasised.

On the face of it that is an enormous statement to make, but it is one that is absolutely true. The 61,000 British, 21,000 Canadians and 73,000 Americans who stormed ashore on 6th June and in the days which followed undoubtedly changed the course of history. Had the Allies not had the courage and confidence to launch Operation Overlord in 1944, or had the operation failed, there is no doubt that the map of Europe, and probably the map of the World, would look very different today. It is with that realisation that we owe so much to the tens of thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who took part in the biggest combined arms operation that the World had ever seen, or is likely to see again, and then took part in the overall Normandy Campaign from the sea to the River Seine. We owe enormous thanks to them and to the memory of the 22,442 servicemen and women from 30 nations who fought under British command and paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom today.

Those who came ashore on 6th June 1944, and fought right through the campaign, did so with common purpose and great determination. This is now our moment to stand with them and to honour the memory of the generation who fought and fell for the freedom of successive generations in Europe. And there is a real urgency about this.

Standing at the site that has been selected and acquired for the British Normandy Memorial at Vers sur Mer provides a perfect amphitheatre for moments of reflection. Looking out to sea one can imagine the horizon filled with the great armada of ships on 6th June 1944 moving relentlessly towards the shore, one can look to the east towards Gold Beach where 50th Northumbrian Division stormed ashore and to the west towards the Mulberry Harbour off Arromanches – a harbour through which flowed the logistic lifeblood of the Campaign. And just yards from the Memorial site are the remains of the Mont Fleury Battery, captured with supreme gallantry by CSM Stan Hollis of D Company, 6th Green Howards, in one of two actions that day that won him the only Victoria Cross awarded on D Day itself. Stan's VC might indeed have been the only one awarded on 6th June, but countless actions of great courage and selfless commitment took place that day and throughout the Campaign, most unrecorded, but witnessed by small groups of individuals fighting with common purpose and great determination.

This was the generation that literally "saved the world". We owe them nothing less than to salute their courage and honour the memory of those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

MARCH 2019





A team of riders enjoying the 2018 Ride through Normandy.

## HELP FOR HEROES TO MARK D-DAY ANNIVERSARY WITH ICONIC RIDE

This June, Help for Heroes is taking to the roads of Northern France to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

Over five days, a team of more than 150 fundraisers, as well as some of the Charity's very own cycling Heroes, will tackle the tarmac for an epic five-day journey to honour the bravery of our Heroes past, whilst raising funds to support our Heroes present.

The ride, which will see cyclists of all ages and abilities cover more than 60 miles a day, is part of the Charity's annual Big Battlefield Bike Ride ('BBBR'). Each June, supporters of Help for Heroes use pedal-power to raise funds in support of wounded, injured and sick Veterans and their families.

June's ride will see the Charity's budding cyclists retrace the steps of those who fought, taking in Normandy's beaches, the Bayeux War Cemetery and many other iconic battle sites along the way. Some of the UK's top historians will join in to tell stories of the brave men who put their lives on the line for us 75 years ago.

The Help for Heroes BBBR really is an experience like no other, and registrations are now open for the June 2020 ride to mark 80 years since the Dunkirk evacuation.

If you'd like to find out more about how you can be part of an extraordinary journey through time, whilst raising funds to support Veterans, please contact the **Help for Heroes Event Team** on **01725 514106**, email [events@helpforheroes.org.uk](mailto:events@helpforheroes.org.uk) or visit [h4hweb.com/dunkirk80](http://h4hweb.com/dunkirk80)

Help for Heroes is a limited company registered in England (06363256), and a charity registered in England and Wales (1120920) and Scotland (SC044984). Registered with Fundraising Regulator.

**HELP** for  
**HEROES**  
SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED



# PLANNING FOR D-DAY

During the first months of 1944, the Western Allies gathered their strength for the great enterprise to liberate occupied Europe. In southern England and in the Channel, an immense force gathered.

In May 1943, a joint UK-US planning team known as 'Chief-of-Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (Designate)' or COSSAC, was established and British Lieutenant-General Frederick Morgan was tasked with conducting research and planning for "D-Day". Working without a Commander meant that Morgan was working without knowing of his Commander's intent and he was constrained in the forces he would have available and was given limited objectives for the proposed operation. Morgan did, however, have the detailed work (Plan SKYSCRAPER) undertaken earlier under the direction of General Sir Bernard Paget to refer to. Paget's plan proposed the same ground and virtually the same forces that finally took part in OVERLORD, but Morgan had been told to plan for an initial assault of only 3 Divisions, amounting to a Corps only, to be followed-up by 2 further Divisions.

By July, Morgan had settled on a 30-mile stretch of the Normandy coast between the Orne and Vire rivers as the objective. This area was close to the port of Cherbourg, which had been assessed as being critical to post-invasion supply and Normandy was less heavily defended as the Pas de Calais, albeit Calais would have allowed a much shorter sea-crossing. Without a nominated Supreme Commander and with a very small staff, Morgan assumed [correctly] that the operation would need more than 3 Divisions in the initial assault and it was under his watch that the British-built 'MULBERRY' artificial harbours and the Pipeline-Under-The-Ocean (PLUTO) for supplying petrol, oil and lubricants to the beaches, were developed from ideas to reality.

On 12th September, the British Admiralty designated the naval activity within OVERLORD as Operation NEPTUNE and in October, Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force (ANCF) and the first of three Britons to be appointed as the invasion's Component Commanders, resumed his planning. Three months later, COSSAC submitted its initial plan to the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff in London and Washington proposing an invasion between Ouistreham and Grandcamp by three divisions, supported by an airborne division dropping on Caen.

In December 1943, General Dwight D Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander with Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder as his deputy and General Sir Bernard Montgomery commanding all ground forces. Both Montgomery and Eisenhower considered the planned invasion area to be too narrow and the force too small, so at their insistence the plan was expanded to an initial assault by five-divisions with each of the five landing beaches being an objective assigned to a nominated Corps Commander, with three airborne divisions deployed to the flanks. The landing area would spread along fifty miles of the Norman coast, with a boundary between the Anglo-Canadian and American armies around Port-en-Bessin.

By May 1944, the south of England was a huge military camp containing no fewer than 39 Allied divisions supported by 5,049 fighter aircraft, 3,467 heavy bombers, 2,343 other combat aircraft, 2,316 transport aircraft and 2,591 gliders. More than 6,000 warships including 7 Battleships, merchantmen and

different types of landing craft were assembled off-shore. There were also British-designed specialist tanks (nicknamed 'Hobart's Funnies' after the inspiration behind the modified tanks Major-General Sir Percy Hobart) to swim, clear minefields, cross soft ground, 'bust' bunkers and bridge gaps and 70 ancient merchant ships and 4 obsolete warships were to be towed-out and scuttled to form artificial breakwaters to protect the MULBERRY floating harbours. From the sky, 66,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Normandy during the three-months immediately preceding D-Day, with three times that dropped somewhere else in Europe to mask Normandy as an objective. These preparations were to be boosted by 14,000 tons of bombs dropped on radar installations on 'D minus 1' and by complex deception operations undertaken by both naval and air forces elsewhere on the coast of Europe and inland, behind enemy lines, by Special Forces.

As D-Day drew near, General Montgomery visited all the troops in southern England, briefing large gatherings no matter what their nationality on the forthcoming operation and allowing them to look their commander in the eye. And with his infamous soldierly brevity he summed everything up in a few simple words:

*"We have a long sea journey, and at the end of it all we will have to land on an enemy coast in the face of determined opposition. The violence, speed and power of our initial assault must carry everything before it."*

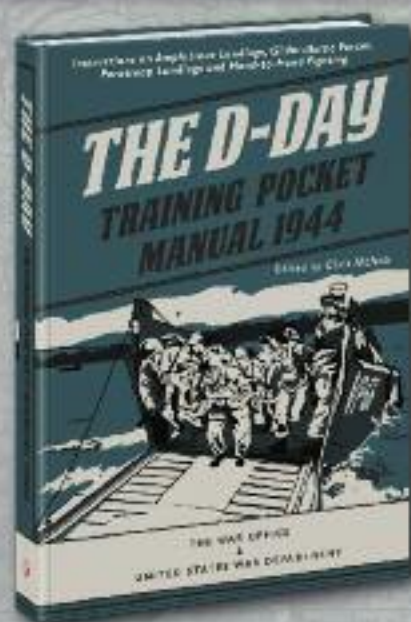
The Allied wave was about to break on Normandy's beaches.





# BOOKS ON D-DAY

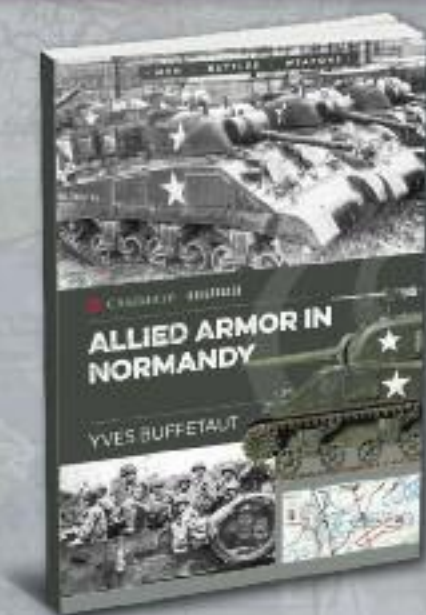
WORLD WAR TWO'S MOST DARING GAMBLE FROM BOTH ALLIED AND AXIS PERSPECTIVES



## THE D-DAY TRAINING POCKET MANUAL 1944

This pocket manual uses excerpts from rarely seen materials and first-hand accounts to showcase how the troops prepared for Operation Neptune.

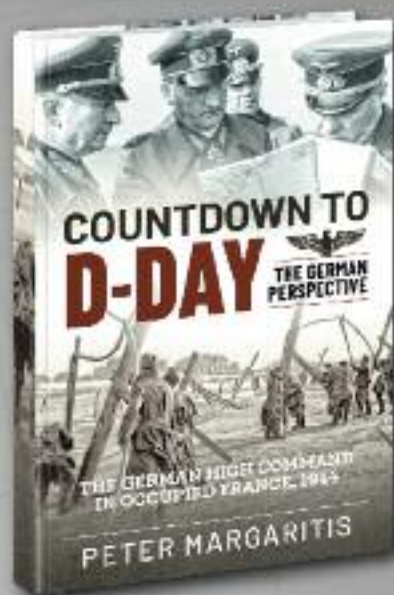
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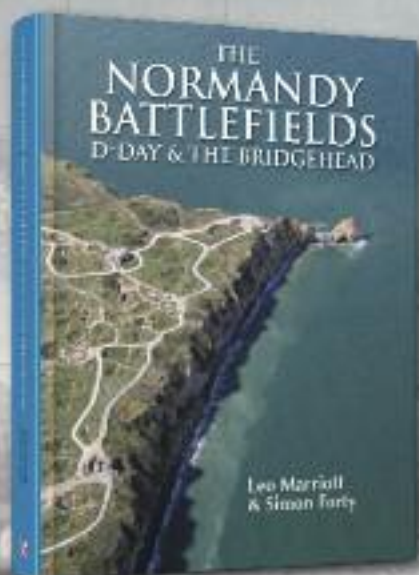
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The enthralling, diary-like story of the German commanders tasked with the daunting challenge of preparing for the Allied invasion of Normandy.

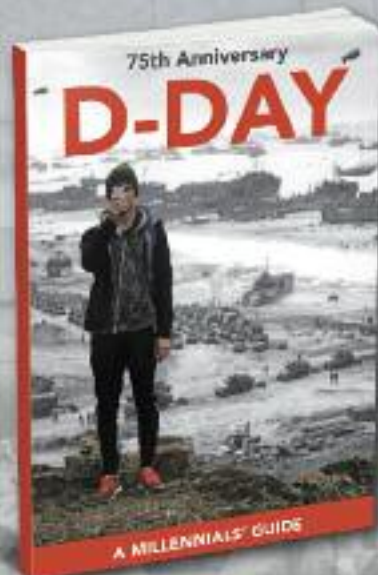
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# IN DESPERATE BATTLE

## THE NORMANDY CHRONICLES 1944

**5 June**

**2200 hrs**

Commencement of Operation NEPTUNE - 5 naval assault groups depart English ports

**6 June**

**(D-Day)**

**0005 hrs**

Allied air forces begin bombing enemy coastal batteries between Cherbourg and Le Havre

**0010 hrs**

Reconnaissance groups dropped by parachute and Lieutenant "Puddle" Poole of Britain's Special Air Service (SAS) becomes the first allied soldier to set foot on German-occupied French soil on D-Day

**0020 hrs**

British Army Commandos under the command of Major John Howard land by glider and capture Pegasus and Horsa bridges (Operation DEADSTICK) over the River Orne

**0100 hrs**

U.S. 82nd Airborne Division lands by parachute west of Saint-Mère-Église

**0111 hrs**

First reports of U.S. airborne assault reach German Headquarters 84th Army Corps at Saint Lô

**0130 hrs**

U.S. 101st Airborne Division lands by parachute near UTAH Beach

**0150 hrs**

Main Body of the British 6th Airborne Division lands by parachute east of the River Orne

**0245 hrs**

Troops bound for OMAHA Beach embark Landing Craft

**0300 hrs**

Allied warships arrive at their assigned bombardment and disembarkation stations for the initial assault

**0320 hrs**

Heavy equipment and reinforcements for airborne forces arrive by glider

**0325 hrs**

German naval observers report presence of Allied Task Force off the coast of Normandy

**0350 hrs**

British paratroopers begin their attack on the village of Ranville

**0430 hrs**

Saint-Mère-Église is captured by 505th Regiment, U.S. 82nd Airborne Division and Marcouf Islets off UTAH Beach occupied by Americans

**0445 hrs**

Royal Navy Midget Submarines drop off beachmasters and equipment for signalling Landing Craft and British paratroopers knockout German shore battery at Merville

**0530 hrs**

Allied warships begin shelling German coastal fortifications

**0600 hrs**

SUNRISE and aerial bombardment of German fortifications along UTAH and OMAHA beaches







Image reproduced courtesy THE DDAY STORY PORTSMOUTH

- 0630 hrs American landings begin on UTAH and OMAHA beaches
- 0652 hrs First reports of conditions on the beaches reach naval Allied Navel Commander-in-Chief Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay
- 0700 hrs German radio broadcast an initial report of the landings
- 0710 hrs U.S. Army 2nd Ranger Battalion begins assault on the Pointe du Hoc
- 0725 hrs British landings begin on GOLD and SWORD beaches
- 0735 hrs Anglo-Canadian landing begins on JUNO Beach
- 0900 hrs General Eisenhower authorises release of communiqué announcing the commencement of the invasion
- 0913 hrs U.S. General Omar Bradley, fearing it may become necessary to abandon OMAHA Beach, calls for reinforcements
- 0930 hrs The Casino building at Riva Bella is taken by Free French Commandos led by Commandant Kieffer
- 0945 hrs UTAH Beach cleared of all enemy forces
- 1200 hrs In the House of Commons, Prime Minister Churchill reports on the landings and the 'most complicated and difficult' operation ever launched adding that the battle plan was 'to furnish the enemy with a succession of surprises'. Members of Parliament applauded after Churchill reveals how commanders had reported 'that every thing is proceeding according to plan...and what a plan!'
- 1300 hrs Troops from UTAH Beach link-up with paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division
- 1330 hrs Troops on OMAHA Beach begin moving inland
- 1430 hrs 21st Panzer Division launches a counter-attack against the Anglo-Canadians
- 1500 hrs 12th SS Panzer Division (Hitler Youth) falls into position south of Caen to face Britain's 3rd Division
- 1800 hrs Saint Laurent, beyond OMAHA Beach, liberated
- 2000 hrs 21st Panzer Division reaches the coast at Luc sur Mer between JUNO and SWORD Beaches and British patrols reach the outskirts of Bayeux
- 2200 hrs Rommel returns to his Headquarters from leave in Germany for his wife's 50th Birthday. 21st Army Group's attack on Caen stalls against fanatical German opposition
- 2207 hrs SUNSET
- 7 June** At 0400 hrs DBST, US President Roosevelt leads the nation in prayer on a radio broadcast at 10 p.m. 6th June Washington Time and Follow-on Forces start to land



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<b>8 June</b>	Bayeux is liberated by British troops
<b>12 June</b>	By 0800 hrs, Carentan is captured linking all the invasion beachheads for the first time and extending the allied bridgehead into a continuous front 50 miles long and up to 12 miles deep. The Anglo-Canadian advance on Caen stalls. Winston Churchill lands on JUNO Beach to meet General Sir Bernard Montgomery
<b>14 June</b>	Brigadier-General Charles de Gaulle arrives in Bayeux to establish a 'Provisional' Government of France
<b>19 June</b>	A violent storm, the worst for 80 years and lasting 4-days, damages the British-manufactured Mulberry Artificial Harbours threatening the Allied ability to land enough supplies and reinforcements to withstand German counterattacks
<b>26 June</b>	2nd British Army launches Operation EPSOM to establish a bridgehead on the River Odon, west of Caen. The Germans contain the attack by committing all their strength, including two Panzer Divisions just arrived in Normandy. The stalemate continues so General Montgomery devises a sacrificial plan to draw German tanks towards Caen allowing American Units to outflank them on south
<b>27 June</b>	Cherbourg liberated by U.S. 79th Division, but extensive damage to port facilities prevents full utilisation until September
<b>2 July</b>	Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt is sacked as Commander-in-Chief (West) by Hitler and replaced by Field Marshal Günther von Kluge
<b>7 July</b>	Anglo-Canadians launch Operation CHARNWOOD attacking Caen from the north
<b>9 July</b>	Caen is liberated by Anglo-Canadian Forces
<b>17 July</b>	Field Marshal Rommel is seriously wounded in an attack by two Spitfire fighters
<b>18 July</b>	Saint Lô is liberated by U.S. 29th Division
<b>24 July</b>	Lieutenant-General Bradley launches Operation COBRA
<b>30 July</b>	Major-General Le Clerc's Free French 2nd Armoured Division lands at UTAH Beach
<b>1 August</b>	American 3rd U.S. Army under Lieutenant-General George Patton breaks out through German positions at Avranches
<b>6 August</b>	3 U.S. Army reaches the outskirts of Brest and turns east towards Germany
<b>7 August</b>	Germans launch Operation LÜTTICH around American positions near Mortain. Operation TOTALIZE is launched by 1st Canadian Army on the Caen-Falaise front and the encirclement of surviving German troops begins
<b>12 August</b>	Alençon is liberated by Free French and Argentan liberated by the Americans
<b>16 August</b>	Canadians and Polish enter Falaise
<b>18 August</b>	Field Marshal von Kluge commits suicide. Field Marshal Walter Model assumes command
<b>22 August</b>	The 'Falaise Gap' is closed trapping remaining German armoured formations and units
<b>25 August</b>	The Free French enter Paris



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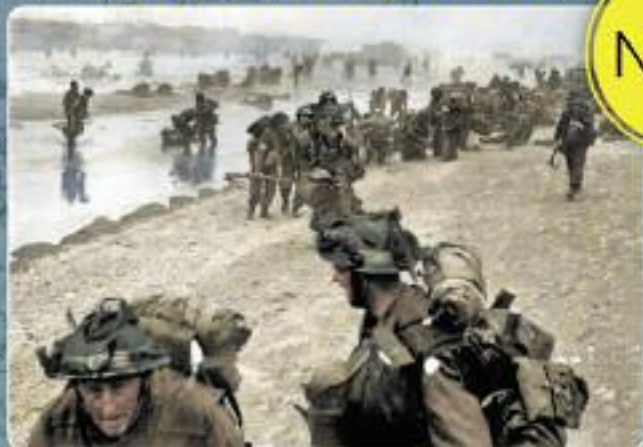


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75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORMANDY LANDINGS

# TRAVELLERS TALES



**FIELD MARSHAL  
THE LORD BRAMALL  
KG GCB OBE MC JP**

In early May 1944 I was sent, a 20 year old Lieutenant, to join the 2nd Battalion of my Regiment, the King's Royal Rifle Corps or 60th Rifles, at Worthing, whence they had recently returned from Italy, to prepare for and take part in the 'second front'.

The Battalion had been fighting in North Africa, and then Italy, since before the Battle of Alamein, and was full of battle-wise veterans who, unlike this newly joined Subaltern, thought they knew everything there was to know about fighting battles, although a few of them also felt that it was about time that others rather than themselves should now stick their necks out.

CAEN: Anti-tank platoon of the  
1st King's Own Scottish Borderers



We were billeted in the little houses and villas clustered round the bowling green in west Worthing and we did our final preparations up on the Downs behind the town in the cloudless days of that exceptionally hot May. However, on 2nd June, the invasion date having been then selected as the 5th of June, we were moved to an assembly area around the village of Botley, just north east of Southampton and there, surrounded by barbed wire, we were incarcerated and allowed no contact with the outside world. It was here - and I remember it so well - that we were given a little child's attache case full of maps and found out for the first time that our destination was to be Normandy- a very exciting moment.

### Germans were counter-attacking

So in the early hours of 6th June - D-Day, having, in the meantime, been postponed by one day because of bad weather - we moved out of our camp on a slightly circuitous route via the Winchester By-pass to Southampton, to what is now the Isle of Wight ferry terminal. On the way we heard the first reports that at dawn on that day and even earlier, Anglo-American forces had landed under the land command of General Montgomery and the Supreme Command of General Eisenhower, that progress was being made from the beaches inland but that the Germans were counter-attacking vigorously (not yet thankfully strictly true). On approaching Southampton, a lot of civilians digging air raid trenches, fearing no doubt German counter air strikes, shouted at us asking if we were downhearted. Naturally, we shouted back 'No!'. 'Well, you bloody soon will be' came back the not exactly encouraging reply.

### Juno Beach

However, later that afternoon, just as the first casualties were coming back from the beaches, we boarded a United States flat bottomed tank landing ship - we ourselves were motorised infantry in International half-tracks and tracked carriers - and set sail across a pretty rough Channel arriving off Juno Beach, at a place called Courseulles-sur-Mer the next day - D+1; where, after a certain amount of jockeying for position we landed, later that evening in six feet of water and in the middle of a desultory air raid.

### Omaha Beach

We were clearly taking part in the biggest combined operation the world had ever seen or, thankfully, was ever likely to see, and the armada of ships, as far as the eye could see, as those taking part in it will remember so well, was fantastic with the heavier warships using their guns to engage targets inland. All the beaches had had their problems, and had to be fought hard for; and indeed there were many signs of battle on the beach on which we landed with wrecked landing craft destroyed or damaged by underwater obstacles or mines, burnt out tanks and charred pill boxes. Only on the American Omaha Beach, however, had there been anything approaching a disaster, which took a



By late afternoon Courseulles was finally cleared of the enemy and Canadian armour began moving inland to support the drive onto Caen.

whole day to rectify and as a result incurred a disproportionate number of the overall casualties. Had the whole operation failed, however, the end of the war in Europe could have been postponed almost indefinitely. Hitler could have devoted all his energies to stabilising the Eastern Front; the V weapon terror attacks on London and the south east of England, soon to cause terrible casualties, and Hitler might have discovered the secret of the atomic bomb with untold consequences. It was therefore undoubtedly one of the decisive battles of the world. And two things particularly have since struck me about this great event. First of all, what we all owed to the professional leadership of General Montgomery, as he was then. I think he contributed enormously to the success of this great and ambitious enterprise, by his clarity of thought in the planning stage, his professional competence in controlling a battle, and his overwhelming confidence that everything was going to be alright, which communicated itself right through the ranks and was typified by he himself going ashore on D+2 and putting his headquarters right forward under artillery fire and in front of many of his subordinate commanders. Prime Minister Churchill, General Eisenhower and the Chiefs of Staff all had doubts, but he had none, and he exercised leadership of the highest quality.

### Courseulles

The second point is the enormous contribution made by the Allied Air Force, both tactical and strategic, in winning the air battle over Germany which not only kept the Luftwaffe 'off our backs' but ensured that German reinforcing formations, many of them SS and very fanatical, were severely damaged before they entered the battle. Otherwise it might have been a different story. Of course, by the time we reached Juno Beach the 3rd Canadian division who had landed ahead of us had not only cleared the beach defences and the town of Courseulles on the flank but

had advanced some miles inland. So, urged on by the splendid Beach Masters shouting instructions, we were able to negotiate our way through the clutter of the beach area, move inland some two miles or so and harbour up for the night in a small apple orchard. The very next day, D+2, we were in action a few miles north west of Caen, as the Germans started to counterattack in earnest.

### Fearsome multi-barrelled Nebelwesfer

From then on, things did not always go exactly according to plan. The Germans, (mainly SS) although outgunned on land and in the air, nevertheless fought fanatically, with their Tiger tanks, self-propelled guns, Panzerfaust anti-tank weapon, Spandau machine guns and the fearsome multi-barrelled Nebelwesfer, or 'moaning minnies', as beautiful pastoral Normandy, increasingly ravaged by the appalling sights, noise, stench of dead cattle and horses and the destruction of every town and village, became a brutal battlefield with casualties, for a time, on the level of the First World War.

### The 'Caen Hinge'

But the very hard battling around the 'Caen Hinge' drew the bulk of the best German division onto that Eastern flank, which made it that much easier for the Americans to break out and outflank the German 7th and Panzer Armies from the west and soon also from the south, which they did quite brilliantly, trapping what was felt of these armies near Falaise. As a result, the Allied Armies were able to line up on the Seine in under the 3 months that Montgomery (Monty) had exactly predicted. It was a great victory, both in conception and execution.

*Bramall*  
RM





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# ATLANTIC WALL

After its defeat of France in June 1940, the German Army stationed its troops along the European coast from the Pyrenees on the Spanish frontier to the North Cape in Norway.

In Normandy and in the Pas de Calais, preparations were made for the invasion of Great Britain (Operation SEALION) in the summer of 1940, but after the defeat of the German Air Force in the Battle of Britain and Hitler's eye cast eastwards towards the Soviet Union, SEALION was postponed and troops remaining in France, Belgium and Holland were garrisoned in coastal areas and port defences partially fortified.

On 23rd March 1942, Hitler issued Directive Number 40, which outlined the defence of what was to be known in Nazi propaganda as 'Festung Europa' (or Fortress Europe):

*"The European coasts will be to a large measure exposed for the foreseeable future and vulnerable to Allied landings.*

*The defence of these coasts is the Army's mission which entails close co-operation between the various arms of the services. An enemy that lands must be annihilated by an immediate counter-attack and thrown back into the sea.*

*The fortified sectors and the strong-points, must, by the distribution of forces, the construction of fortifications and their provisioning, be capable of resisting for a considerable period, even in the presence of an enemy superior in numbers. The strong points must be able to resist to the ultimate degree and must never see themselves hindered by lack of munitions, food and water.*

*In addition, the Navy, in case of attack, will engage naval targets with its artillery."*

Several British Commando raids kept the garrisons along the coast on alert during 1940, but the threat became real with the Anglo-Canadian raid (Operation JUBILEE) in Dieppe in August 1942. Although a costly failure, the lessons learned at Dieppe would help those landing in Normandy almost two years later, the raid did force the Germans to re-organise their coast defences with the most powerful batteries located in the Pas de Calais region, where it expected an Allied landing.


Until the end of 1943, apart from the key ports and a few coastal batteries, the 'Atlantic Wall' in Normandy was far from formidable and it was far from representing the image presented by German propaganda.

Everything was to change, however, in November 1943, when Hitler issued Directive Number 51, ordering the Western Front to receive priority in the allocation of resources. At the same time Hitler gave Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, the Commander of Army Group B whose responsibilities would include the presumed main threat areas of Pas de Calais and Normandy, a special commission to inspect the defences of 'Fortress Europe' from Denmark to the Bay of Biscay. It was when visiting 716th (Static) Infantry Division responsible for the coastal defensive sector around Caen in Normandy, that Rommel told the Division's commanders:

*"Gentlemen, I have known the British since North Africa and Italy, and I am telling you that they will choose a place to land where they suppose we are not expecting them. And that will be here, in this area."*


That was why, in great haste, Rommel set about reinforcing the defences of the Normandy coast in the months immediately prior to the Allied landings so that any invasion force from the sea could expect a formidable and ferocious reception. And so, it proved.





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# THE NORMANDY PATHFINDERS

by Lt Commander Ian E Fraser VC DSC JP RNR

*I had known Ian for many years and had the pleasure of his company at our offices, not far from his home on the Wirral, on numerous occasions. He provided this unique editorial piece concerning the Normandy Pathfinders: which is a story seldom heard or told. He was a painfully modest man and a gentleman in every sense of the word. I know that he would be pleased at this article being included. The Editor.*

The preparations and planning for the D-Day Landing were meticulous. It was of great importance to the invasion force to ensure that every navigational aid at their disposal was utilised. The X-Craft Submarines: crewed by colleagues and friends of mine, were given the hazardous task of ensuring, undetected by the enemy, that the force landed precisely within the pre-planned perimeters.

#### Op Postage Able:

*X20: Lt KR Hudspeth DSC RANVR and Sub Lt B Enzer RNVR, with the COPP (Combined Ops Pilotage Party) comprising Lt Cdr Nigel Willmott DSO DSC RN, Major Logan Scott-Bowden DSO MC and Sergeant Bruce Ogden-Smith DCM MM.*

X20 was to spend four days off the French coast. During the day, time was spent in conducting periscope reconnaissance of the shoreline and taking bottom soundings: using the echo-sounder. Each night X20 would close the beach and ScottBowden and Ogden-Smith would swim ashore. Each was weighed down with a shingle bag, brandy flask, sounding lead, underwater writing pad and pencil, compass, beach gradient reel and stake, .45 revolver, trowel, auger, torch and bandolier. Soil samples were collected in condoms. The divers went ashore on two nights to survey the beaches at Vierville, Moulins St Laurent and Colleville in what would become the American

'Omaha' beach. On the third night they were due to go ashore off the Orne Estuary, but by this stage fatigue (all five men had been living on little more than benzedrine tablets) and the worsening weather caused Hudspeth to shorten the operation, returning to Dolphin on 21 Jan 1944. Hudspeth received a bar to his DSC.

#### Op Gambit:

*X20: Hudspeth and Enzer, as on Op Postage Able, plus ERA L Tilley, with COPP Lt Paul Harbud RN, Sub Lt. R Harbud RNVR.*

*X23 - Lt George Honour RNVR, Sub Lt JH Hodges RNVR, ERA George Vause. COPP – Lt G Lyne DSC RN and Lt JGM, both RNVR.*

For Op Gambit, X20 and X23 arrived in position 4 June and, due to the delay caused by bad weather, remained in position until 0430 on 6 June (D-Day) when they surfaced,



**Commander Fraser commanded His Majesty's Midget Submarine XE-3 in a successful attack on a Japanese Heavy Cruiser of the Atago Class at her moorings in Jahore Strait, Singapore, on the 31st of July 1945. (London Gazette, 13th October 1945)**

put up the navigational aids, an 18-foot telescopic mast with a light shining to seaward, a radio beacon and echo sounder tapping out a message for the Minelayers approaching 'Sword' and 'Juno' beaches. (The Americans had been given a demonstration of beach marking techniques by the X-Craft but had declined their help, trusting the accuracy of their navigation. On the morning of 6 June the American force heading for 'Utah' beach was driven to the west by strong tides and currents and went ashore in the wrong place).



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# NORMANDY ALLI

Northern Limit of Assault Area

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FORCE 'O'

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USS Tuscaloosa (CA-37)

USS Bayfield (APA-33)  
TASK FORCE U HQ

USS Quincy (CA-71)

USS Augusta CA-31  
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HMS Enterprise (D52)

USS Ancon (AGC-4)  
TASK FORCE D HQ

HNLMS Soemba (A-891)

USS Texas (BB-35)

UTAH

HMS Glasgow (C21)

Leagues

Montcalm

ST MARTIN  
DE VARREVILLE

POINTE  
DU HOE

OMAHA

USS Arkansas (BB-39)

MAISY

ST LAURENT

PORT EN  
BESSIN

LONGUES

VAUX SUR A

### TASK FORCE U Destroyers

USS Barton (DD-722)  
USS Glennon (DD-620)  
USS Jeffers (DD-621)  
USS Laffey (DD-724)  
USS Meredith (DD-726)  
USS O'Brien (DD-725)  
USS Walke (DD-723)  
USS Fitch (DD-462)  
USS Forrest (DD-461)  
USS Corry (DD-463)  
USS Hobson (DD-464)  
USS Butler (DD-636)  
USS Gherardi (DD-637)  
USS Herndon (DD-638)  
USS Shubrick (DD-639)  
USS Bates (DE-68)  
USS Rich (DE-695)  
Aconit  
Renoncule

### TASK FORCE O Destroyers

USS Baldwin (DD-624)  
USS Carmick (DD-493)  
USS Doyle (DD-494)  
USS Emmons (DD-457)  
USS Frankford (DD-497)  
USS Harding (DD-625)  
USS McCook (DD-496)  
USS Murphy (DD-603)  
USS Plunkett (DD-431)  
USS Satterlee (DD-626)  
USS Thompson (DD-627)  
HMS Melbreak (L73)  
HMS Talybont (L18)  
HMS Tanatide (L69)  
Aventure (K236)  
Escarmouche (K267)

### TASK FORCE G Destroyers

HMS Nith (K215)  
HMS Kingsmill (K484)  
HMS Albrighton (L12)  
HMS Emerald (D66)  
HMS Catbstock (L35)  
HMS Grenville (R97)  
HMS Jervis J (G00)  
ORP Krakowiak  
HMS Pytchley (L92)  
HMS Ulster (R83)  
HMS Ulysses (R69)  
HMS Undaunted (R53)  
HMS Undine (R42)  
HMS Urania (R05)  
HMS Urchin (R99)  
HMS Ursa (R22)

### TASK FORCE I Destroyers

HMS Faulknor  
HMS Fury  
HNLMS Glasdale  
La Combattante  
HMS Kempenfelt  
HMCS Sioux  
HMCS Algonquin  
HMS Stevenstone  
HMS Venus (R50)  
HMS Vigilant

### TASK FORCE E Destroyers

HMS Dacres  
HMS Goathland  
HMS Kelvin (F37)  
HMS Middleton (L74)  
HMS Saumarez (G12)  
HMS Scorpion (G72)  
HMS Scourge (G01)  
HMS Serapis (G94)  
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HMS Swift S  
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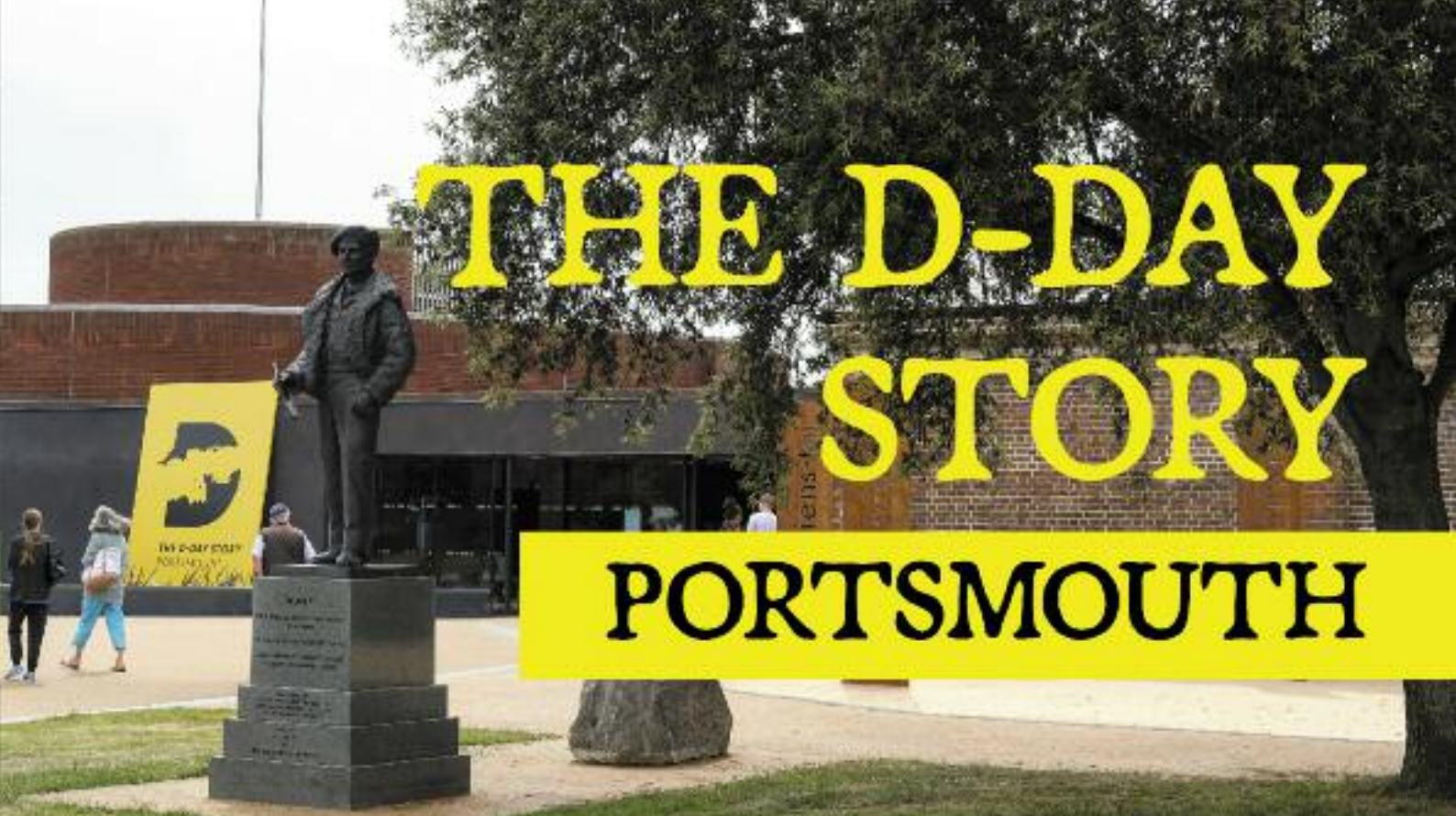
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# THE D-DAY STORY PORTSMOUTH



The D-Day Story is the only museum in the UK dedicated to the Allied Invasion in June 1944. It's located in Portsmouth on England's south coast. It tells the unique personal stories behind this epic event. Following a £5 million transformation project, with thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the museum has now been transformed, to provide an engaging insight into the lives of those who took part in D-Day, whether they were individuals on the shore in Portsmouth, or those who went over to Normandy.

The story is told in three parts, Preparation, D-Day and the Battle of Normandy, Legacy and the Overlord Embroidery. The museum contains many exhibits not previously displayed to the public, in refurbished galleries that feature the words and perspectives of those involved - from both a military and a civilian viewpoint. There are also spaces for learning, events and interactive displays.

Told through the personal accounts of people who were there and the museum's iconic collections, from landing craft to Betty White's coat, brought to life with stunning audio visual presentations: this is the story of the liberation of France from Nazi Germany.

The museum's unique and dramatic film show uses archive film to bring back memories of the wartime years. There are also extensive displays featuring maps; uniforms and other memorabilia; several vehicles and even a real LCVP landing craft. Discover more about 'The Plan', how those in charge made the crucial decisions around when and where to cross the channel and the secrecy and deception required.

The Legacy Gallery features the magnificent Overlord Embroidery



commissioned to remember those who took part in D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. The Overlord Embroidery has 34 panels and was commissioned by Lord Dulverton of Batsford (1915-92) as a tribute to the sacrifice and heroism of those men and women who took part in Operation Overlord. The embroidery is 272 feet (83 metres) in length, and is the largest work of its kind in the world.

The D-Day Story is full of personal stories of courage and determination, comradeship and sacrifice, secrecy and deception, innovation and tactics. It is a story in which ordinary people worked together to achieve an extraordinary outcome, exemplifying 'the epic made personal; the personal made epic'.

To buy tickets and to find out more about the museum visit [www.theddaystory.com](http://www.theddaystory.com)







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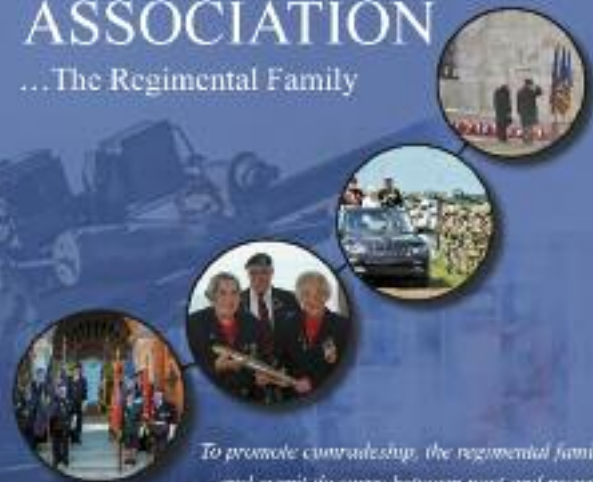
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Paratroops of 22 Independent Parachute Company, British 6th Airborne Division, waiting to board the Armstrong Whitworth Albemarle Mk V that will drop them over Normandy, RAF Harwell, 5 June 1944.

# OPERATION TONGA

## 6th Airborne Division 'Go To It!'

6th Airborne Division, commanded by Major-General Richard ("Windy") Gale, was selected to execute airborne operations on the left (eastern) flank of the invasion area and as the Division was new, having been activated on 23rd April 1943, Operation OVERLORD would provide the elite Formation's first experience of combat.

The Division was the first British Army Formation to be created for the sole purpose of undertaking Airborne Operations on a Divisional-scale as opposed to contributing Units piecemeal to a range of smaller operations and there had been some heated debate as to how precisely this new Formation should be employed on warfighting-operations.

With the strategic responsibility of protecting the left flank of the Allied seaborne landings by establishing a buffer zone between the Caen Canal and the River Dives.

To achieve this the Division was also given three specific tasks under the collective codename of 'Operation TONGA':

- To capture intact bridge crossing the Caen Canal at Bénouville and another spanning the River Orne near Ranville (codenamed DEADSTICK);
- To neutralise the heavily-fortified Coastal Artillery Battery at Merville to prevent its shelling of the landings at SWORD Beach some 8 miles away; and
- To destroy several bridges spanning the River Dives at or near the towns of Bures, Robehomme, Troarn and Varaville.

## OPERATION DEADSTICK:

*"Hold Until Relieved!"*

The first Unit of 6th Airborne Division to land in Normandy, was Major John Howard's coup-de-main force of 'D' Company, 2nd Battalion The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (2OBLI), with two Platoons from the Battalion's 'B' Company and a party of Royal Engineers, landed in five gliders in a five-minute period: three landing near a cantilever bridge (codenamed PEGASUS) over the Caen Canal and the other two landing near a swing bridge (codenamed HORSAS) spanning the River Orne.

Once on the ground, the troops emerged from the wrecked gliders and assaulted the enemy positions. At PEGASUS the troops assaulted German trench positions, attacked sentries, and threw grenades into a concrete bunker believed to hold the triggering equipment for the bridge pre-planned demolition charges.


At HORSAS, a machine-gun was suppressed with mortar fire, but no other defenders were found, and the two platoons of airborne infantry captured the Bridge before radioing Howard and reporting of their success. Both bridges had been secured within fifteen minutes at the cost of only a small number of casualties. It was later discovered that the bridges had not been wired for demolition as thought originally.

While Howard's force waited for the rest of the division to land and for 7th Parachute Battalion to arrive to reinforce them, they repelled several ill-planned attempts by the Germans to re-take the bridges. At 01:30hrs, two German tanks attempted to drive onto the bridge, but were repelled with the loss of one tank to a Projectile Infantry (Anti-Tank) (PIAT) anti-tank weapon.

At 10:00hrs, the German Air Force attempted to destroy PEGASUS Bridge and a lone aircraft dropped a 1,000 lb bomb, which luckily failed to explode. Later, two coastal craft attempted to attack the bridge, but were repelled.

continued on page 56



  
 'Utrunque Paratus'  
*'Ready for Anything'*

# 12 PARA

# RANVILLE, NORMANDY

Men of the 12th Parachute Battalion's Machine-Gun Platoon give the thumbs up for the camera during a break on the 10th June. Left to right: Corporal Dave Weightman, Phil Gudgeon, Jack Thorpe, Bill Armstrong, Willy Watkins, Fred Browning, Tom Matthews, Unknown, and Spike Walker (kneeling). Corporal Weightman.

*Copyright: Imperial War Museum.*

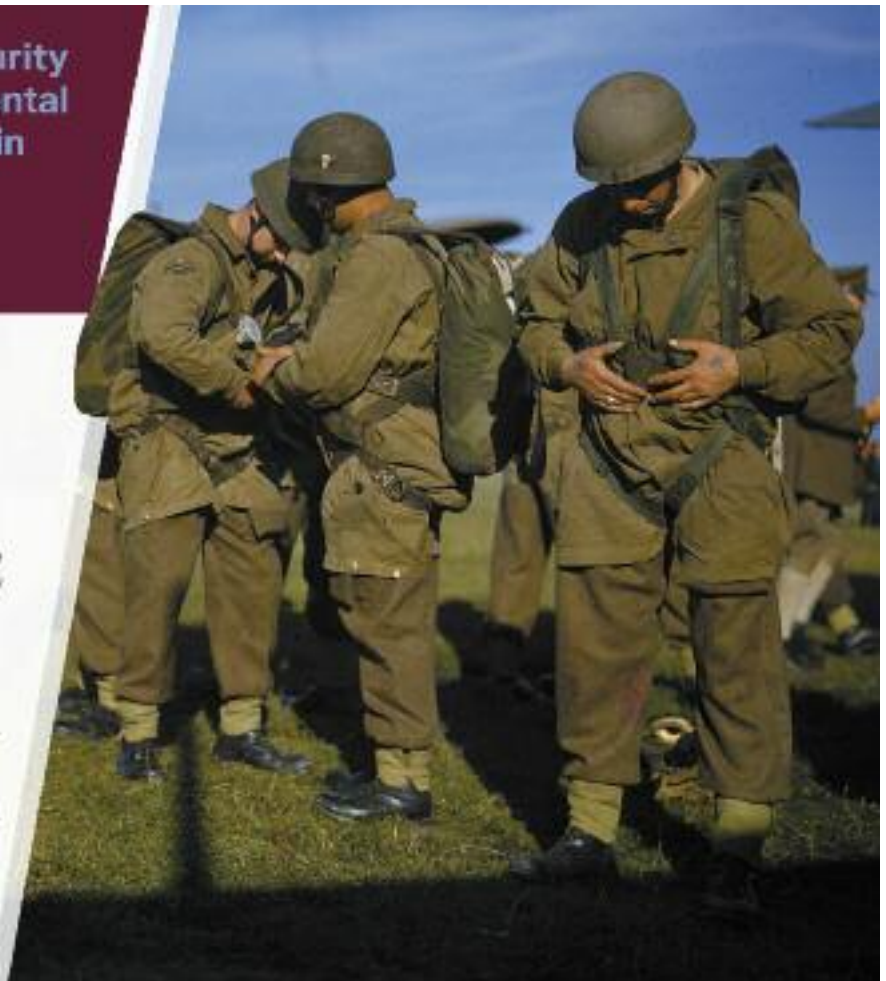
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Contact Gwen Appleton at RHQ PARA for details on how to apply:  
[syfund@parachute-regiment.com](mailto:syfund@parachute-regiment.com)





## OPERATION TONGA

Once those objectives had been achieved, the Division was ordered to 'go firm' on the ground it had taken and then repel any German counterattacks from the south and east.

As D-Day approached, training stepped up a pace and became even more intensive with glider pilots spending hours in the air practicing the precise and complex manoeuvres required to land glider borne troops immediately next to the bridges over the Orne, the Caen Canal and the Dives and once sufficiently practiced by daylight, the pilots rehearsed their drills at night. Pilots of gliders and transport aircraft, together with the Pathfinders of the Parachute Regiment who would be the first to land to mark Drop Zones (DZ) and Glider Landing-Zones (LZ), studied thousands of maps and photographs and dozens of scale models of landing areas and primary objectives. A colourised film was produced from aerial reconnaissance photographs that when played at the correct speed and height over a scale model, simulated the approach-path a glider pilot would take towards his landing-zone.

On the ground, dozens of vertical wooden poles, similar to the ad hoc obstacles made by the Germans in potential glider landing fields in Normandy were erected so that Royal Engineers ('Sappers') could practice how to demolish and then clear the obstacles on D-Day; and the 9th (Eastern and Home Counties) Parachute Battalion (9 PARA), assigned to neutralise the guns at Merville,

spent two-weeks rehearsing their attack on a replica of the Battery; and the soldiers from the 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (2OBLI) and the Sappers, tasked to capture the bridges at Bénouville and Ranville, conducted intensive training in Devon around the River Exe and a nearby canal.

Operation TONGA began at 22:56hrs (Double-British Summer Time) on the night of the 5th June (D-1), when six Handley Page Halifax Heavy-Bombers took off from RAF Tarrant Rushton in Dorset, towing six Airspeed Horsa Gliders carrying the operation's coup de main assault force consisting of 'D' Company, 2OBLI, with two Platoons from the Battalion's 'B' Company and a party of Royal Engineers, all under the command of Major John Howard. Their mission: to capture the two vital bridges at Bénouville and Ranville.

A few minutes later, between 23:00 and 23:20hrs, six Armstrong Whitworth Albemarle (Mark V) bomber, specially adapted to despatch parachutists and supplies took-off carrying the 'Pathfinders' of 22nd Independent Parachute Company, who would mark the Division's three DZs (designated 'K', 'N' and 'V' respectively). Later, sixteen further Albemarles followed with elements of 9 PARA, 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion and 3rd Parachute Brigade Headquarters. Thirty minutes later, aircraft from the Royal Air Forces' 38 and 46 Groups carrying the remainder of the Division began to take off from the RAF airfields at Blakehill Farm, Brize

Norton, Broadwell, Down Ampney, Fairford, Harwell, Keevil, Tarrant Rushton and in three groups numbering:

- 239 Douglas Dakotas multi-purpose transport aircraft and converted Short Stirling bombers and seventeen Horsa Gliders, carrying the bulk of 3rd and 5th Parachute Brigades and their heavy equipment enplaned;
- Sixty-five Horsa and four Hamilcar Gliders transporting Divisional Headquarters and an Anti-Tank Battery; and
- Three Horsa Gliders carrying Royal Engineers and men from 9 PARA, were to land next to Merville Battery at 04:30hrs.

## PATHFINDERS

Because of heavy cloud cover and poor navigation, only one Pathfinder team was dropped correctly and the aircraft carrying the remainder of these 'key enablers' had to make up to three approaches over the DZs before their Pathfinders could 'Jump': one team reached its 'DZ' thirty minutes late; another dropped into the wrong DZ and without realising their error, set up radio beacons and markers that caused a number of troops to land in the wrong place; and the Pathfinders of 9 PARA were all but wiped-out when Lancaster bombers missed the Merville Battery and bombed the area where the team was lying-up.

continued on page 58



Major-General Richard Gale, commanding British 6 Airborne Division addressing his men.



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### 5th PARACHUTE BRIGADE

As the Pathfinders had been prevented from doing their job, Brigadier Nigel Poett's 5th Parachute Brigade had been scattered with 7th Parachute Bn (7 PARA) dispersed so widely that by 03:00hrs its Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Pine-Coffin, could muster only 40 per cent of the battalion, although more men arrived throughout the night and during the next day. Additionally, few supply containers had been found, which meant that the Paratroopers had few heavier crew-served support weapons or radios. But the Battalion did rendezvous with Major Howard as planned and established defensive positions in Bénouville and Le Port even though Pine-Coffin did not have radio contact with his companies.

As the day progressed, elements of the Wehrmacht's 192nd Panzergrenadier Regiment counterattacked near Bénouville to get through to the bridges, but Howard's force and 7 PARA held their positions, knocking-out 13 of 17 tanks trying to get through. The British then moved into Bénouville to clear out the Germans in fierce house-to-house fighting. By midday, most of the Battalion's missing men had arrived at the bridges and despite ferocious attacks, Howard and 7 PARA were able to hold until 19:00hrs when the lead elements of the British 3rd Infantry Division arrived to relieve the airborne troops: a process completed at about 01:00hrs on 7 June (D+1).

The Brigade's 12th and 13th Battalions commanded by Lieutenant-Colonels Alexander Johnson and Peter Luard respectively, were also scattered and when they moved away from their Rendezvous Points neither had more than sixty percent of their war-fighting strength, which made their assigned missions even more challenging, but

12 PARA secured the village of Le Bas de Ranville by 04:00hrs and 13 PARA captured Ranville at about the same time even though it had faced heavier resistance.

### 3rd PARACHUTE BRIGADE

3rd Parachute Brigade commanded by 31-year old Brigadier James Hill, began to land at the same time as the Lead Airborne Elements of 5 Brigade and faced all the same problems, with its Units scattered widely. 8th Parachute Battalion, tasked with destroying two bridges near Bures and another near Troarn, found paratroopers had landed in the other Brigade's area and when the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Alastair Pearson arrived at the Battalion's Rendezvous Point at 01:20hrs he could find only thirty paratroopers, a handful of Sappers, together with a solitary Jeep and its Trailer.

Two hours later, numbers had increased to just over 140 Paratroopers, but there was still no sign of the Engineers who had been tasked to the bridges, so Pearson sent a small force forward to destroy the bridges at Bures, while he led the rest of the battalion to a crossroads north of Troarn to await reinforcements. At Bures, it was soon discovered that both bridges had been demolished by engineers who had arrived a few hours earlier, so the demolition party re-joined the Battalion near Troarn. A reconnaissance party was then sent into the town to ascertain the status of the bridge and coming under fire, captured several Germans. Making their way forward, the group discovered that the bridge had been partially demolished so once the sappers had widened the breach with explosives, the force withdrew, re-joining the rest of the Battalion at the crossroads. Having achieved its primary objective, 8 PARA then moved north to take up positions near Le Mesnil to widen the Airborne bridgehead.

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**The 6th Airborne Division suffered a total of 800 casualties between the 5th & 7th of June.**

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### THE BATTLE OF MERVILLE BATTERY

9 PARA commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Terence Otway had been given three objectives:

- The destruction of the Merville Battery;
- The capture of the village of Le Plein and the blocking the roads leading to the village; and
- The capture of a German naval Headquarters at Sallenelles.

However, just like all the other Battalions that night, 9 PARA was scattered widely and many paratroopers landed a considerable distance from the designated DZ. Otway had landed with the rest of his 'Stick' 400 yards from the DZ on a farmhouse being used as a Command Post by a German battalion and after a brief 'fire-fight', he arrived safely at the DZ at 01:30hrs. By 02:35hrs there were still only 110 paratroopers out of the 750 that had assembled, with only one heavy machine-gun





Part of 6th Airlanding Brigade, 6th Airborne Division, waiting to leave RAF Tarrant Rushton on the evening of 6 June 1944. On the runway are Hamilcar heavy gliders, preceded by two Horsa troop-carrying gliders, while parked on each side of them are Handley Page Halifax glider-tugs of Nos. 298 and 644 Squadrons RAF.

Copyright: © IWM (CL 26)

and a small number of the explosive 'Bangalore Torpedoes' that were essential if the attack were to succeed.

This was a significant set-back as the plan for the assault on the battery was predicated on the entire battalion being present with specialist Sappers and a large quantity of heavy equipment including mortars, anti-tank guns, demolition stores and flamethrowers. Under strict orders that the enemy Battery was to be destroyed no later than 05:30hrs, Otway felt he could wait no longer and set off for the battery with just 150 paratroopers, arriving at the Battery at 04:00hrs, where he linked-up with the survivors of the Pathfinder party who had marked out areas in the Battery's perimeter of barbed-wire entanglements where Bangalore Torpedoes were to be placed. Having divided his force into four assault groups, one allocated to each of the four concrete casemates of the Battery, all was ready for the off at 04:30hrs when two gliders carrying the Royal Engineers passed silently over the Battery.

Of the three gliders assigned to the sappers, only two had arrived in France as one had to abort and land back in England and the other two had been hit with anti-aircraft fire on their run-in with one landing 2-miles away and the other at the edge of the Battery's protective minefield. On landing, the troops from this glider became involved in a fire-fight with German troops heading to reinforce the Battery's garrison.

Otway launched the assault as soon as the first glider overshot the battery, ordering the

explosives to be detonated in order to form two paths through the outer-perimeter through which the paratroopers attacked. The defenders, alerted by the explosions, opened fire inflicting heavy casualties and only four men, assigned to assault Casemate 'Four', survived long enough to reach it, which they then disabled by firing into its apertures and throwing grenades through its air vents. The other casemates were cleared with fragmentation and white phosphorus grenades as luckily the German crews had neglected to lock the doors leading into the Battery. Several prisoners were taken and explosives readied to disable the artillery pieces inside, where it was discovered that the pieces were not modern 150mm calibre weapons, but First World War-era Czech 100mm Field Howitzers. The Paratroopers did the best they could with the explosives they had, using Gammon Bombs to disable one gun and hammering shells into the muzzles of the others, however, the job was less than thorough as at least one gun went back into action when the Germans re-occupied the Battery.

The assault over, the Paratroopers gathered the prisoners and their wounded and withdrew quickly because at 05:30hrs the light cruiser H.M.S. Arethusa would start to shell the Battery as a contingency and the Battalion had no radios with which to signal the ship and stop the naval bombardment.

The paratroopers had achieved their primary objective, but at a heavy cost, with fifty dead and twenty-five wounded; a casualty rate of fifty percent of those that attacked. The

understrength Battalion then attacked Le Plein as planned, securing the village by expelling a Platoon-sized German force.

### Operation MALLARD

At 03:35hrs, Headquarters 6th Airborne Division landed with only a few gliders missing the LZ and once the Headquarters staff and accompanying troops had been gathered together, they moved to the Le Bas de Ranville area. Contact was established with the 5th Parachute Brigade at 05:00hrs and with 3rd Parachute Brigade at 12:35hrs and the Division linked up with 13:53hrs 1st Special Service Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Simon Fraser, 15th Lord Lovat, after its march from SWORD Beach.

At 21:00hrs, Operation MALLARD, the landing of the final elements the Division consisting of 220 Horsa and Hamilcar Gliders, carrying the 6th Airlanding Brigade commanded by Brigadier The Honourable Hugh Kindersley, and other Units, came under heavy small-arms and mortar fire as the gliders landed. Thankfully, casualties were light and within ninety minutes the glider-borne troops had gathered at their Rendezvous Pont. By 00:01hrs on 7 June, the entire Division, less 12th Battalion the Devonshire Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Dick Stevens, which was due to arrive by sea later that day, was established in a defensive perimeter on the eastern flank of the invasion area beaches in accordance with General Montgomery's plan.



The Division ended the day with 3rd Parachute Brigade holding a 4-mile front with 9 PARA at Le Plein; 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Bradbrooke, at Les Mesneil; and 8 PARA in the southern part of the forest of Bois de Bavent. 5th Parachute Brigade had: 12 PARA occupying Le Bas de Ranville; 13 PARA holding Ranville; and 7 PARA 'in reserve'. 6th Airlanding Brigade was about to send 2OBLI, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Roberts, to capture Escoville some 3 miles to the south of Ranville and 1st Battalion The Royal Ulster Rifles, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel R Carson to capture Longueval 2.5 miles south-west of the village of Le Bas de Ranville in order to extend the bridgehead. Lord Lovat's 1st Special Service Brigade, which was under Major-General Gale's command temporarily, was holding villages to the north and north-east of DZ 'N'.

## THE AFTERMATH

Operation TONGA was a success and 6th Airborne Division had achieved all it had been

asked to do despite the Division's dispersal on landing owing to the weather and some navigational errors, but luckily the scattered drops had confused the enemy who were unable to determine the size and extent of the airborne landings and plan effective counter-measures.

Between 7 June and 10 June, 6th Airborne Division repulsed a number of determined German attacks, retaining control of the area between the Rivers Orne and Dives until 14 June, when the 51st (Highland) Infantry Division took over the southern part of the bridgehead. On 10 June, it was decided to expand the bridgehead to the east and beyond the Orne, but the Airborne Division was not strong enough and 3rd Parachute Brigade was reinforced with 5th Battalion the Black Watch commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel C Thomson.

On 11 June, the 5th Black Watch launched an attack on the town of Bréville but met extremely strong resistance and was repulsed.

The next day, 3rd Parachute Brigade's entire front was subjected to fierce artillery bombardment and assaults by German tanks and infantry, with the Germans focusing on the positions held by 9 PARA. Both 9 PARA and the remnants of the Black Watch defended Chateau Saint Come, but gradually were forced to withdraw and when Lieutenant-Colonel Otway reported that he would be unable to defend his position much longer, Brigadier Hill and led a counter-attack with the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion and forced the Germans to retreat.

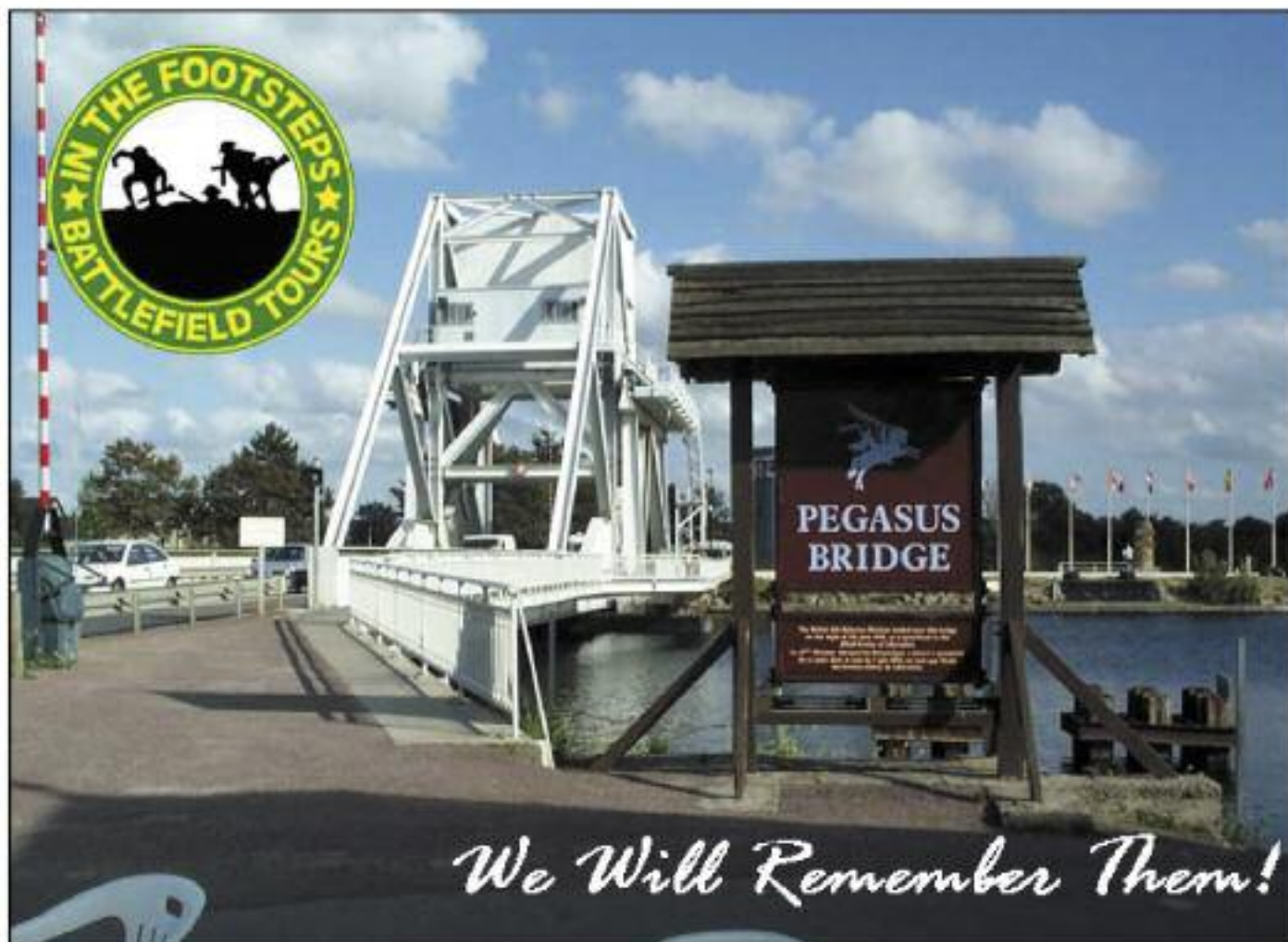
During the Normandy Campaign (6 June - 26 August), the Division's casualties were 4,457 men of which 821 were killed including Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson commanding 12 PARA, 2,709 were wounded, and 927 reported missing. On the 27 August, the date when the River Seine was crossed and ending the bloody Normandy Campaign, the Division was withdrawn from the Frontline and embarked for England at the beginning of September.



Pegasus Bridge: built in 1934, that crossed the Caen Canal, between Caen and Ouistreham.



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## INTRODUCTION

### Major General A R Freer OBE, Chair Airborne Assault Museum

When the Regiment moved its museum from Aldershot to Duxford in Dec 08 it also introduced a digital archive, ParaData, and, in keeping with our history, this was innovative in respect of a regimental museum and it remains so today. ParaData's primary purpose is to provide a commemoration and remembrance of those members of The Regiment and Airborne Forces who have died while in service and the encouragement of public recognition of the sacrifice made by such persons. Yet it does so much more. It is simply the Regiment's digital soul and whilst embracing one of our charitable objects it now enables the Museum to record, in perpetuity, those who have served and their record of service. It is also retrospective and content, whether about individuals or events, can be added to at any time. However, in order for ParaData to fulfil its purpose it needs the interest and support of not only those who have retired but, importantly, the members of the serving regiment. We have been extremely fortunate with a most generous donation with which to upgrade ParaData's software. I would ask that you note the Friends Scheme as it is through many small donations towards ParaData that we will be best placed to preserve and project our history in the years to come.

## What is ParaData?

ParaData is much more than just the museum website, it is an online archive which brings together the experiences of the men and women of airborne forces and combines them with official records and regimental history. Through looking at extremely rare documents, tracing airborne units and, importantly, the people who served in those units, and their campaigns, ParaData offers a wide variety of things to do and acts as an invaluable resource for everyone who has served in airborne forces. Through the hard work of the museum's dedicated volunteers and staff the archive has more than quadrupled in size since it was launched nearly 10 years ago and now contains over 40,000 digital records. In 2017, ParaData was visited over 300,000 times, with users viewing over 1.35 million pages of content.

## Friends Scheme (Premium Content)

One of the biggest changes we have made to the new website is the introduction of a Friends of the Museum and ParaData Scheme to access additional premium content. Alongside our regular uploads onto ParaData, there is now the option to donate a small annual fee of £9.99 per year to gain access to thousands of documents, interviews, images and video files. These include every Pegasus Journal from 1946 to 2008, which will be available for Friends to read and search. This section is continually updated with fresh content, as is the normal site.

Maintaining and developing this valuable archive for the Regiment and the Airborne Forces community costs the museum around £25,000 a year. The income generated from the 'Friends Scheme' will all be used to support ParaData's running and development costs, allowing us to keep adding more content and telling The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Force's story.

Please show your support by contributing to the heritage of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces and becoming a Friend of the Museum and ParaData!

**Website:** [www.paradata.org.uk](http://www.paradata.org.uk)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/airborneassault](http://www.facebook.com/airborneassault)

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# AIRBORNE ASSAULT



## ParaData



Explore the history of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces through 5 sections on our digital archive: People, Units & Organisations, Equipment & Weaponry, Timeline & Events, Explore More.

Additional content available exclusively to Friends of the Museum.

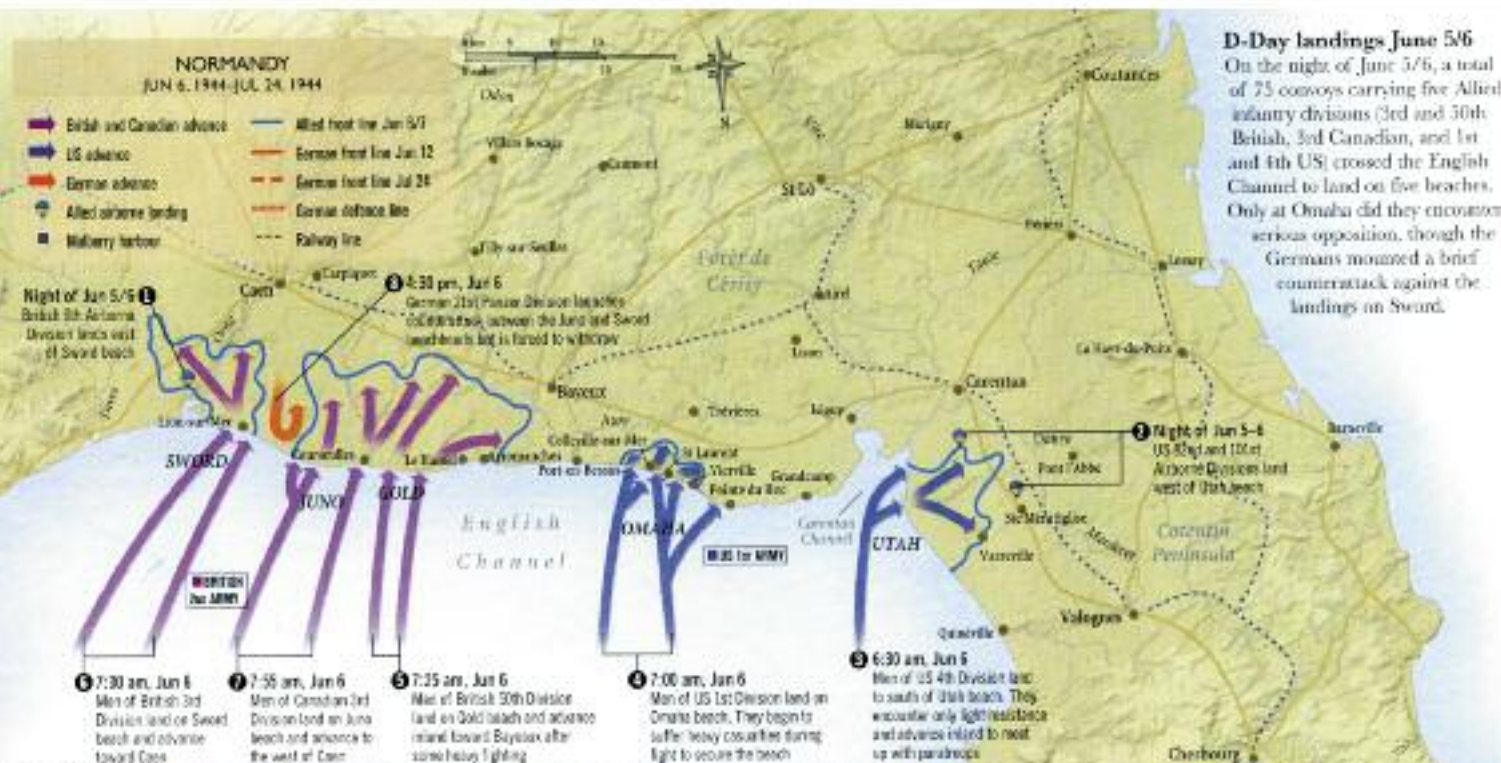
Visit: [www.paradata.org.uk](http://www.paradata.org.uk)

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# D-DAY NORMANDY

## 75th ANNIVERSARY THE NORMANDY LANDINGS



**D-Day landings June 5/6**  
 On the night of June 5/6, a total of 75 convoys carrying five Allied infantry divisions (3rd and 50th British, 3rd Canadian, and 1st and 4th US) crossed the English Channel to land on five beaches. Only at Omaha did they encounter serious opposition, though the Germans mounted a brief counterattack against the landings on Sword.

**June 6-12**  
 Having established themselves on the five beaches, the next task for the Allied forces was to link up the individual beachheads. This was finally achieved on June 12, when the US troops from Omaha joined with those from Utah. Beyond the beachheads the main British objective was Caen, where the Germans were preparing to counterattack.



**June 13-July 24**  
 As British and Canadian forces struggled to capture Caen, tying down the German armour, the Americans captured the port of Cherbourg and made preparations to break out of Normandy.





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Stretching between the towns of Port-en-Bessin and La Rivière, GOLD Beach was divided into four main landing sectors: 'HOW' in the extreme west, followed to the east by 'ITEM', 'JIG' and 'KING'. Each sector was divided into sub-beaches designated 'GREEN' and 'RED'.

# GOLD BEACH

The main assault force landed in the 'ITEM', 'JIG' and 'KING' sectors between Asnelles-sur-Mer and La Rivière so as to minimise damage to the town of Arromanches, which would be key to the future functioning of MULBERRY 'B' (for British), the artificial harbour to be built there once the bridgehead was secured.

On landing on 'JIG', 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment (which lost both its Commanding Officer and Battalion Second-in-Command as the landing craft ramps went down) and 1st and 2nd Battalions The Dorsetshire Regiment, found that none of the German defences had been silenced and were met by a torrent of machine-gun, mortar and shellfire.

Trooper Joe Minogue of the Westminster Dragoons witnessed from the comparative safety of his tank The Hampshire's assault on the enemy's defences and recalled:

*"It was a sobering sight as the Hampshire's left their smaller craft: men were dropping while still in shallow water, to be dragged forward by mates and left on the sand, while their comrades ran on in a purposeful, steady jog-trot, which betrayed no sign of panic."*

Elsewhere, the bravery of Company Sergeant-Major Stanley Hollis, of 6th Battalion The Green Howards, who landed on GOLD's 'KING' Beach, would earn him the only Victoria Cross to be awarded on D-Day.

A Cromwell tank leads a column of armour from 4th County of London Yeomanry, 7th Armoured Division, inland





Infantrymen of 50 Division inland past the village of Crépon, on the afternoon of D-Day.



Standartenführer Kurt Meyer ('Panzer-Meyer') [left] briefing Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt. Brigadeführer Fritz Witt, Commander of 12 SS Panzer Division (Hitlerjugend) who was killed near Caen on 14 June, stands between them.



# D-DAY

## 75TH ANNIVERSARY

# SIGNED COVERS

**PRE-ORDER** for issue date **6th June 2019**

To mark the 75th anniversary of D-Day we will be producing a range of covers featuring the new Royal Mail stamps that will be issued on the actual anniversary date of 6th June. A number of these covers will then be signed by people closely connected to the event. Quantities will be limited but we are giving you a priority opportunity to reserve these special covers.

### 'Hawker Typhoon'

The cover bears the new Royal Mail stamps against a backdrop of the painting 'Typhoons Over Normandy' by Ivan Berryman. The cover will be signed by an actual

**Normandy Veteran.**

**BLCS783A £24.95**

### 'D-Day 6 June 1944'

Bearing the new issue stamps the cover features the 1984 D-Day painting by Terence Cuneo. The cover will be signed by his daughter

**Carole Cuneo.**

**BLCS783B £24.95**

### 'Field Marshal Sir Bernard L Montgomery'

The new D-Day stamps are affixed to the cover which features the Frank Salisbury 1945 painting of Montgomery. It also encapsulates a Isle of Man £2 coin featuring Montgomery. The cover will be signed by **General The Lord Dannatt GCB CBE MC DL**. Patron The Spirit of Normandy Trust. **C19480 £28.95**

N.B. All new issue covers offered may take up to 28 days after the date of issue to be signed.



*Victor Sigafoos*

75th Anniversary  
Normandy Landings



*Carole Cuneo*

D-DAY 6 JUNE 1944



*Lord Dannatt*

Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery  
75th Anniversary Normandy Landings 1944-2019



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### Spirit of Normandy Trust

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### 'Normandy Maps'

We will be producing a set of six covers, each cover featuring one stamp from the set, that will then be signed by six veterans from the D-Day landings. A very special set that we are extremely honoured to be able to offer you. SBS19262 **£59.50**

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### 50TH ANNIVERSARY SIGNED COVERS - ONLY 7 SETS AVAILABLE



1994 Set of 5 covers marking the 50th anniversary of the D-Day Landings. Each bears a BFPS handstamp and the signature of a veteran of the D-Day landings: **Richard Todd** English actor who participated in Operation Tonga during the D-Day landings. He then later played John Howard in the film *The Longest Day* whilst another actor played him. **Brigadier James Hill** who took command of the 3rd Parachute Brigade during Operation Tonga. **Major General Glyn Gilbert** OC 'C' Company 2 Lincolns, one of only two Bermudians on the beaches. **Major John Howard** who led a glider borne assault on two bridges on D-Day codenamed Operation Deadstick. **Lt. Colonel Terence Otway** Commander of the paratroop assault on Merville Battery on D-Day. **All the signatories are sadly no longer with us making this collection a poignant and highly collectable set of signatures.** SIGM0053 **£165**



# 151 BRIGADE

## IN NORMANDY

*from the Durham Light Infantry Association*



The 6th and 9th Battalions, The Durham Light Infantry, part of 151 Brigade, 50th Infantry Division, landed in a rough sea on King Beach, Normandy between 1020 hours and 1100 hours on the 6th June, 1944. Both battalions assembled in the neighbourhood of Ver-sur-Mer. They moved off at 1500 hours. The 6th reached Esquay-sur-Seulles and dug in at about 2030 hours.

The 9th Battalion, operating on the right of the 6th, reached the area around Sommervieu and dug in. At about 0600 hours, on the following morning, both battalions continued to advance, crossing the Bayeux-Caen road on the way. The 9th Battalion reached Cachy and was in contact with enemy units around Ellon. German infantry and tanks were driven off.

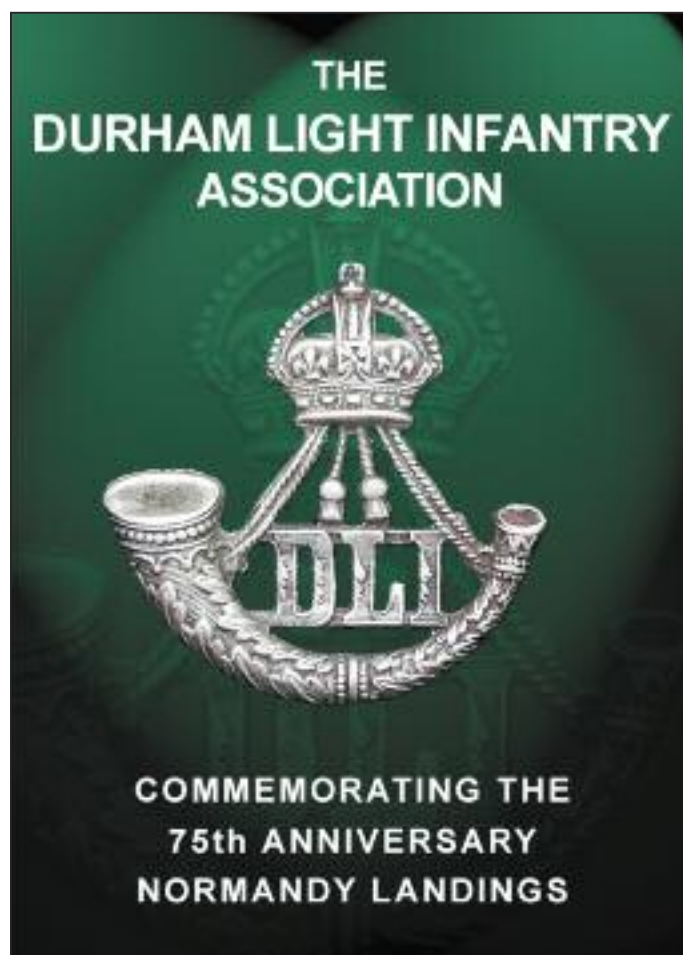
On the evening of the 13th June, each Battalion lined the edge of the woods facing fields of full grown corn. On the far side of each field there were wooded areas and deep ditches immediately in front of both villages. Each field was split by a country road and these formed the axes of the attacks.

continued on page 72

Meanwhile, 'D' Company of the 6th Battalion occupied Condé on the 7th and a platoon was sent forward to maintain a joint post with 69 Brigade who were advancing on the left. It took three days of fighting to establish the post and drive off the enemy. On the 10th June, 'A' Company, with 'B' Company between it and 'D' Company, was astride the road from Bayeux and Tilly-sur-Seulles. In this position both 'A' and 'B' Companies were attacked by advance elements of the 130 Panzer Lehr Division. The fighting was intense but with the assistance of artillery support from ship and shore, the German advance was held.

On the 13th June, 6th Battalion moved down the Bayeux-Tilly road, 'A' Company leading. As the leading Company left the road at Le Pont-de-Guillette, it received intense fire from a strong German force occupying the farm buildings. 'A' Company lost 7 killed and 42 wounded before the Battalion was withdrawn to Folliot. The Battalion was then given the objective of taking the small village of Verrières standing on a ridge on the La Senaudières-Tilly-sur-Seulles road.

9th Battalion objective was the village of Lingèvres which lay on the right flank of the 6th Battalion's objective. The terrain over which both Battalions would advance was almost identical.





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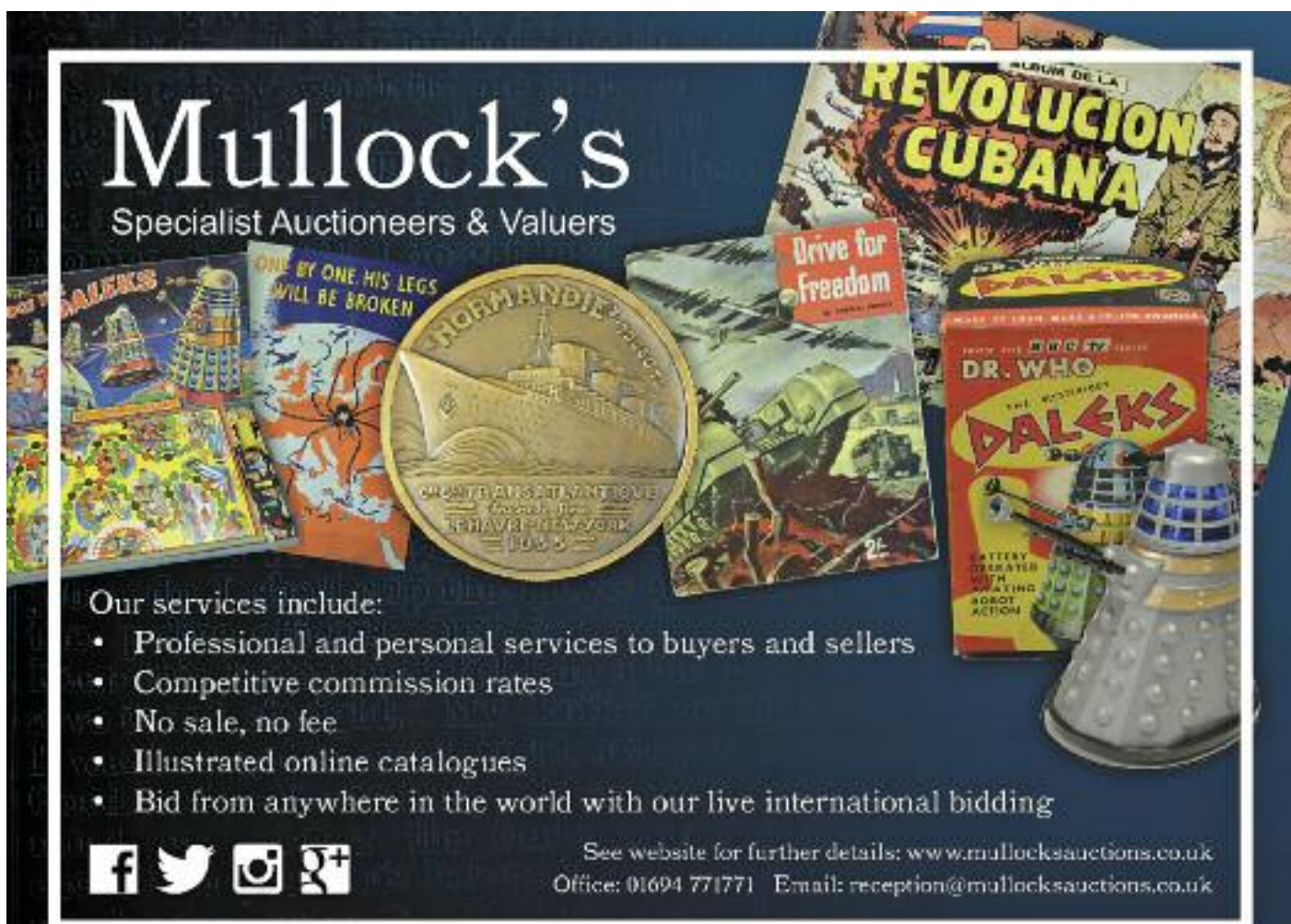
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The Germans were well dug into the sides of the ditches, with snipers in the trees. It was discovered at the end of the action that the Germans had their machine guns sited on fixed lines, the triggers fastened by pieces of string which enabled them to be operated whilst the gunners sheltered in the bank sides. These were officers and men of the Panzer Lehr Division infantry. The Germans had had time to prepare for the forthcoming action. They had cut down the corn in front of their positions leaving open stubble for about 60 yards – a killing ground. On the night of the 13th, 'B' Company of the 9th Battalion, commanded by Major J. Kennedy was ordered to carry out a reconnaissance in force of the German positions. The Company advanced across the cornfield and, as it neared the German lines, came under fierce tank and rifle, machine gun and mortar fire. Losses were heavy. It was obvious the enemy were alert and in some strength.

Just before the attacks started on the morning of the 14th June, the German positions and both villages were bombed and strafed by rocket-firing American Typhoons. At about 1000 hours, the two Battalions commenced the advance across the cornfields, aided by a creeping barrage by the Divisional artillery and tank support on the flanks. The 9th Battalion moved off with 'A' Company on the left followed by a much weakened 'B' Company. On the right, 'D' Company led with 'C' company following. The country road leading to Lingèvres was the axis of the attack. All was quiet for a short time until the front lines reached the stubble. The Germans opened up with all weapons and casualties amongst the Durhams were heavy. Lt. Col. Humphreys DSO, MC was standing in his carrier urging his men forward when the vehicle was hit by a mortar bomb and he was killed. Major John Mogg, 2 i/c, took over command. 'D' Company had lost a number of men,



Officers inspect a German Mk IV tank knocked out by the Durham Light Infantry - 11 June 1944. The tank is equipped with Schürzen ("aprons"), armoured plates adopted during the Russian campaign to protect the tanks against Soviet AT rifles. In due time Schürzen became also useful to pre-detonate HEAT bazooka warheads. Copyright © IWM (B5375)

but 'C' Company had suffered few casualties. The latter got into the village along with survivors and Mogg placed his men East and South-East watching the road from Tilly. Carriers guarded the western approaches to the village and a platoon of 'C' Company those from the south. The 4/7th Dragoon Guards gave excellent support and destroyed a number of enemy tanks attempting to enter the village. During the remainder of the day, German tanks and infantry attempted to drive the Durhams from the village, all failed. Total Battalion casualties numbered 22 officers and 226 men.

The 6th Battalion advanced in open order with 'C' and 'D' Companies leading followed by 'A' and 'B' Companies. The men carried their rifles and bayonets held at the port and moved through the corn in similar order to the 9th Battalion. Again, as they approached the ditch and trees, the Germans opened up with a devastating fire. Casualties were heavy. The advance stalled but restarted following an intense barrage on the German positions by the supporting artillery. Pressing on despite the losses

the enemy began to give way. The fighting had lasted 5 hours. The Battalion re-organised and Verrières was taken. 'B' and 'D' Companies moved onto the Verrières-Tilly-sur-Seulles road but were held up by the enemy at the Les-le-Gallois crossroads. Major G.L. Wood, commanding in place of Lt. Col. Green retained ill in England, decided to withdraw the Companies to the track just North of the village, where they dug in for the night. Total casualties were 23 other ranks killed, 62 wounded (including 3 officers) and 15 missing.

Majors Wood and Mogg received the DSO for this action. John Mogg retained the command of 9 D.L.I. until the end of the war and received a Bar to his D.S.O. He had joined the Army in the 1930's, attended the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. He was with a Battle School when he asked for a fighting command and joined 9 D.L.I. as 2 i/c on 27th May 1944. From 1973-76, As General Sir John Mogg, he was Deputy Supreme Commander Allied Forces Europe and A.D.C. to H.M. Queen from 1971-74. His 'wonderful Geordies' set him on his road to high command.



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# CSM STANLEY HOLLIS VC

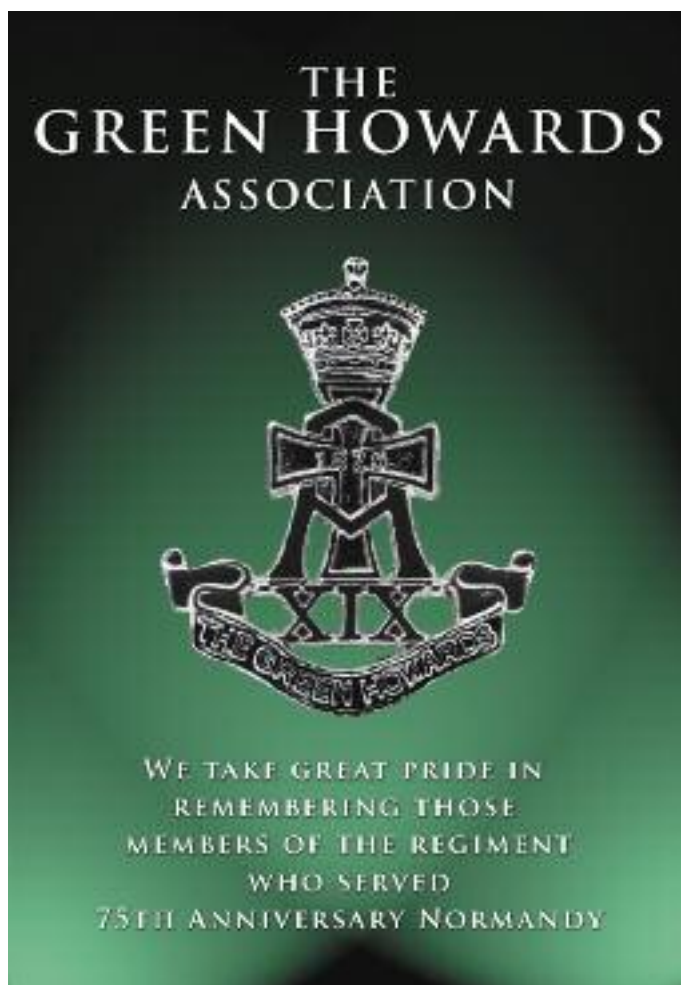
*6th Battalion, The Green Howards*



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**In Normandy on the 6th, 1944, during the assault on Gold Beach and the Mont Fleury battery, CSM Hollis's Company Commander noticed that two pill-boxes had been passed and went with CSM Hollis to see that they were clear.**

When they were twenty yards from the pill-box, a machine gun opened fire from the slit, CSM Hollis rushed straight at the pill-box, firing his Sten gun he jumped on top of the pill-box, recharged his magazine, threw a grenade in through the door and fired his Sten gun into it, killing two Germans and taking the remainder prisoner. He then cleared several Germans from a neighbouring trench. By his actions he undoubtedly saved his Company from being fired on heavily from the rear and enabled them to open the main beach exit.



Later that same day in the village of Crépon the Company encountered a field gun and crew armed with Spandaus at one hundred yards range. CSM Hollis was put in command of a party to cover an attack on the gun. Hollis pushed right forward to engage the gun with a PIAT from a house across at fifty yards range. He was observed by a sniper who fired and grazed his right cheek and at the same moment the gun swung around and fired point-blank into the house. To avoid the falling masonry CSM Hollis moved his party into an alternative position. Two of the enemy gun crew by this time had been killed and the gun was destroyed shortly afterwards.

He later found out that two of his men had stayed behind in the house and immediately volunteered to get them out. In full view of the enemy, who were continually firing at him, he went forward alone using a Bren gun to distract their attention from the other men. Under cover of his diversion, the two men were able to get back. Wherever fighting was heaviest, CSM Hollis appeared. In the course of a magnificent days work he displayed the upmost gallantry and on two separate occasions his courage and initiative prevented the enemy from holding up the advance at critical stages. It was largely through his heroism and resource that the Companys objectives were gained and casualties were not heavier. By his own bravery he saved many lives. Though many acts of bravery took place during D-DAY, Hollis was the only Victoria Cross winner.

*Special thanks to Major Roger Chapman, Curator The Green Howards Museum.*





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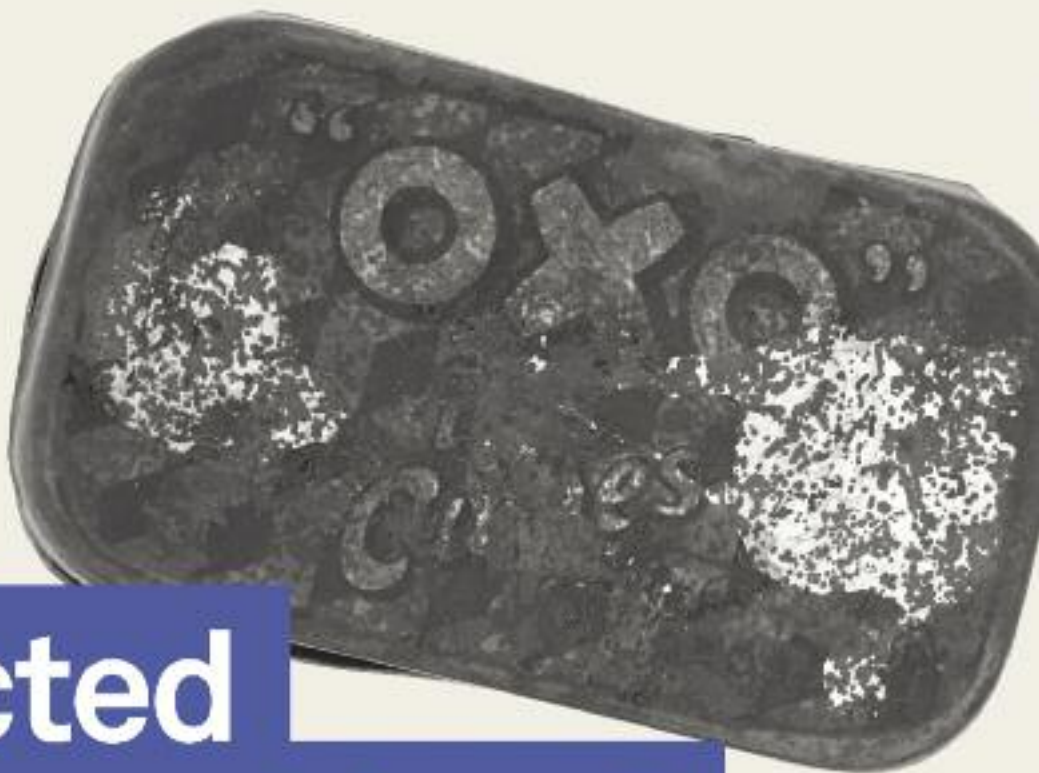


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MESSAGE FROM

GENERAL JONATHAN VANCE CMM MSC CD  
CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF  
OF THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES



The Battle of Normandy and the D-Day landings are a poignant reminder of the formidable strength and determination of Canadian and Allied troops, as well as the devastating human cost of war.

We are proud of what was accomplished that day, but we will always remember the pain that went along with it. Without the sacrifices made on D-Day, we might not be enjoying the freedom we cherish today.

This commemorative journal pays tribute to those brave soldiers, sailors, and aviators who fought for Canada, and who fought for a better future for us all. I am grateful for this 75th Anniversary Journal, and for all those who continue to keep alive the memory of our fallen.

February 2019



Bretteville-sur-Laize Commonwealth Cemetery

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BRETTEVILLE-SUR-LAIZE  
CANADIAN WAR CEMETERY

---

BENY-SUR-MER  
CANADIAN WAR CEMETERY

---

*Their Name Liveth For Evermore*





# JUNO

Spanning 5 ½ miles from Courseulles just east of GOLD Beach to Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer just west of SWORD Beach, JUNO Beach was the responsibility of the Canadians.

Divided into three landing sectors: 'LOVE', 'MIKE' and 'NAN', MIKE was sub-divided into sub-beaches designated 'GREEN' and 'RED' and NAN which were split into 'GREEN', 'WHITE' and 'RED'.

The attack was delayed by a strong tidal swell and a lack of visibility, which prevented landing craft from manoeuvring and many struck mined defences. The Duplex-Drive amphibious tanks were also swamped by waves passing over the tank's floatation skirt.

Of the 306 landing craft launched, some 90 were damaged or destroyed before reaching firm ground and both the Canadian 7th and 8th Brigades suffered heavy losses and serious delay: 10 minutes for the 7th, 20 for the 8th. The infantry landed initially without any

armoured close-support in front of Bernières-sur-Mer to face a two-metre-high sea wall and dyke enfiladed by German machine-guns.

The Canadians tried to overcome this obstacle for more than a quarter-of-an-hour at great loss and without success and only the arrival of the tanks allowed the first waves to

---

**Canadian Casualties:  
1,074, including 359  
killed**

---





# BEACH

attack enemy positions inland and for reinforcements to land.

It is said that JUNO Beach was originally named 'JELLY' as the code-words for the beaches to be taken by the Anglo-Canadian forces were named after types of fish namely: GOLD(FISH), JELLY(FISH) and SWORD(FISH), abbreviated to GOLD, JELLY and SWORD respectively, but Winston Churchill, who took a close personal interest in the use of code-words, disapproved of the codename "Jelly" for a beach on which so many men may die and directed a change in name.



Leyland Cruiser 'Centaur' Passing Through Courcelles, Normandy  
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Rollalong Ltd located in Wimborne in Dorset is the South's largest offsite design and build contractor of modular buildings.



Established in 1932, Rollalong started out manufacturing caravans for recreational use, and even had the privilege of supplying the Royal Family with a caravan which was displayed at Buckingham Palace for the Royal Childhood Summer Exhibition in 2014 which is now available to view at The National Motor Museum in Beaulieu, Hampshire.

Achieving balanced growth, the business has increased turnover past £50m, diversifying into the manufacture of modular buildings for school facilities, classrooms, site offices for Local Authorities, mobile hospitals, dentistry units for the NHS and apartment block solutions and housing for local Housing Associations, which has set the platform for today's work within similar sectors. Rollalong now has long term relationships within the Defence, Education and Residential sectors to supply permanent modular buildings.

The MOD sector requires a rapid and risk-free delivery of quality and bespoke buildings for the British Army. Rollalong has a proven track record of supplying the British Army with modular buildings since 2004 including a medical centre to Bordon Garrison, an Inshore Sail Training Centre on Thorney Island, various buildings for the Falkland Islands and in more recent years permanent Single Living Accommodation across various garrisons throughout Aldershot, Warminster and Salisbury Plain.

In 2006, Aspire Defence won a 35-year Private Finance Initiative contract known as Project Allenby Connaught to provide over 500 new or refurbished buildings and deliver a range of services across the garrisons of Aldershot and Salisbury Plain. Under this project, ADCW appointed Rollalong as one of the key suppliers of the Single Living Accommodation to be built as modular construction due to the time saving and certainty of programme against traditional construction methods. Our contract formed part of a wider £1.6 billion Joint Venture contract, aimed to improve the quality of life for 18,000 soldiers living and working at the garrisons.

In 2016 Aspire Defence won a £1.1 billion extension to the contract under which it will deliver a further 130 new buildings, as well as extensions and alterations to existing buildings, as part of the Army Basing Programme in order to allow the return of 4,000 service personnel from Germany by 2019. Under this project, ADCW appointed Rollalong, this time as the sole supplier of the Single Living Accommodation.

During the course of this contract, Rollalong have manufactured and installed almost 1500 modules, creating 52 accommodation buildings with over 2400 en suite single living bedrooms across Salisbury Plain and Aldershot for Junior Ranks and Officers. The modules were built offsite in the Dorset factory, and delivered to site for installation. Modules are lifted onto pre-formed foundations via mobile cranes and installed. A typical 30 module building takes 5 days to install and 5 days to weatherproof.

ABP is a significant construction project for Rollalong as a business, but it also has the best interests of the UK at its heart, by reducing costs in the long term for the Ministry of Defence as well as providing high quality levels of accommodation and single living areas for service men and women relocating back from Germany to their home in the UK.







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MESSAGE FROM  
**GENERAL JOSEPH F DUNFORD JR USMC**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF



On the seventy fifth anniversary of the Normandy Landings, we express our utmost gratitude to our Normandy World War II veterans. Your unwavering dedication and devotion to our country and our way of life cannot be overstated. As we remember your sacrifices on the beaches of Northern France, we are reminded of a simple adage: "Weapons of war come and go, but the great constant is the people." You answered the world's call for help without hesitation or indecision in the midst of great peril to yourselves and your fellow service members. Without your immeasurable sacrifices, this experiment we call democracy would no longer exist. Your audacity on the battlefield proves why your legacy as the 'Greatest Generation' will be everlasting.

Seventy five years ago, in the face of an existential threat, the Allied Powers stood resolute in support of one another and a shared objective. Currently, our Nation and its Allies confront new challenges to the international order you fought so courageously to attain. Rest assured, no matter the threat, our brave service men and women stand ready to support our enduring alliances and defend our common values with the same commitment and loyalty as you did seventy five years ago.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff and I thank you for your sacrifice and your service. May God bless you, your families, and the men and women who served and continue to serve the Allied cause.

November 2018





# NORMANDY AMERICAN CEMETERY

*Colleville-sur-Mer*

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## D-DAY INNOVATIONS

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SOLD PROOF COIN





2nd Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment land at Queen Red Sector, Sword Beach, following a Duplex-Drive Sherman Tank.

# SWORD BEACH

Stretching 5 miles from Ouistreham to Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer, SWORD Beach was the easternmost landing site of Operation OVERLORD and was divided into four main beach landing sectors: 'OBOE', 'PETER', QUEEN' and 'ROGER' and like NAN on JUNO Beach, each sector was sub-divided into 'GREEN', 'WHITE' and 'RED' landing areas.

continued on page 92





# THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT



The Royal Anglian Regiment salutes the brave men of their forebear regiments who took part in the D Day Landings and fought in the Battle of Normandy. Men of the 1st and 7th Battalions The Royal Norfolk Regiment, 2nd Battalion The Lincolnshire Regiment, 1st Battalion The Suffolk Regiment, 1st Battalion The Leicestershire Regiment, 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment and 2nd Battalion The Hertfordshire Regiment. Their deeds and sacrifice are honoured on The Regiment's visits to Normandy, visits on which veterans and serving soldiers revisit the battlefields and together maintain the link with our friends in the villages and towns that they liberated.



The Royal Norfolk Regiment



The Royal Lincolnshire Regiment



The Suffolk Regiment



The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment



The Leicestershire Regiment



The Essex Regiment



The Hertfordshire Regiment

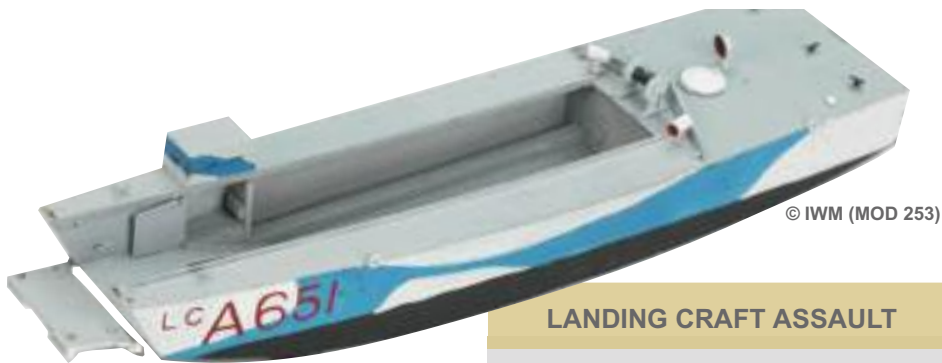


The Northamptonshire Regiment



The initial assault was concentrated on QUEEN-RED and QUEEN-WHITE in front of Hermanville-sur-Mer, as other approaches had proved to be impassable due to shoals.

At 0725 hours, amphibious Duplex-Drive Sherman tanks of the 13th/18th Hussars, followed closely by 8th Infantry Brigade and the Royal Engineers in their specialist armoured vehicles, landed and the Sappers quickly set to work clearing mines and obstacles under a steady hail of small arms and artillery fire from Périers Ridge just south of Hermanville.



© IWM (MOD 253)

German resistance on the beach was initially fairly strong, with wrecked vehicles piling up and casualties mounting on the beach however, with most of their armoured vehicles landed successfully, the British were able to secure the beach and by 0930 hours the engineers, assisted by Military Policemen, had

**continued on page 94**

**LANDING CRAFT ASSAULT**

Derived from a prototype designed by John I Thornycroft Limited, of Southampton in England, the Landing Craft Assault was the most common British and Commonwealth landing craft of the Second World War and the humblest vessel admitted onto the books of the Royal Navy on D-Day.

Prior to July 1942, these craft were referred to as "Assault Landing Craft" (ALC), but "Landing Craft: Assault" (LCA) was used thereafter to conform with the agreed system for joint UK-US military nomenclature.

Typically constructed of hardwood planking and clad selectively with armour plating, this shallow-draft barge-like boat with a crew of four, could ferry an infantry platoon of 31, and with space to spare for five specialist troops, to shore at 7 knots (13 km/h). The LCA's sturdy hull, load capacity, low silhouette, shallow draft, slight bow wave and silenced engines were all assets that benefited the occupants. The extent of its light armour, proof against small arms fire and shell splinters with similar ballistic power, further recommended the LCA.

On D-Day, LCAs enabled the pre-dawn landing on Îles Saint-Marcouf to secure the approaches to UTAH Beach and the landings on UTAH Beach itself, carried US infantry to either flank of OMAHA Beach and the US Rangers who assaulted Pointe du Hoc and disembarked troops at GOLD, JUNO and SWORD beaches.

- Displacement:** 9 long tons (9,144 kg)
- Tons burden:** 4 long tons (4,064 kg)
- Length:** 41.5 ft (12.6 m)
- Beam:** 10 ft (3.0 m)
- Draught:** Light: 1 ft 1 in (0.33 m) forward, 1 ft 9 in (0.53 m) aft  
Loaded: 1 ft 9 in (0.53 m) fwd, 2 ft 3 in (0.69 m) aft
- Ramps:** 1
- Propulsion:** 2 × 65 hp Ford V-8 petrol
- Speed:** 10 knots (19 km/h; 12 mph) (light)  
6 knots (11 km/h; 6.9 mph) (loaded)
- Range:** 50–80 miles
- Troops:** 36 troops or 800 lb (363 kg) cargo
- Crew:** Four: coxswain, two seamen and a stoker plus one officer per group of three boats
- Armament:** 1 × Bren light machine gun possibly 2 × Lewis Gun  
2 × 2-inch mortar fitted aft (later models)
- Armour:** 10 lb. DIHT (.75 in (19 mm)) on bulkheads and sides  
7.8 lb. DIHT (.25 in (6.4 mm)) on decks above the troop well and engine space.

Commandos of 1st Special Service Brigade led by Brigadier Lord Lovat, lands on 'Queen-Red' beach, at about 0840 hours. Sherman DD tanks of 13th/18th Royal Hussars and other vehicles can be seen on the beach. Lovat's personal piper, Bill Millin, is in the foreground about to disembark. Copyright: © IWM (B 5103)





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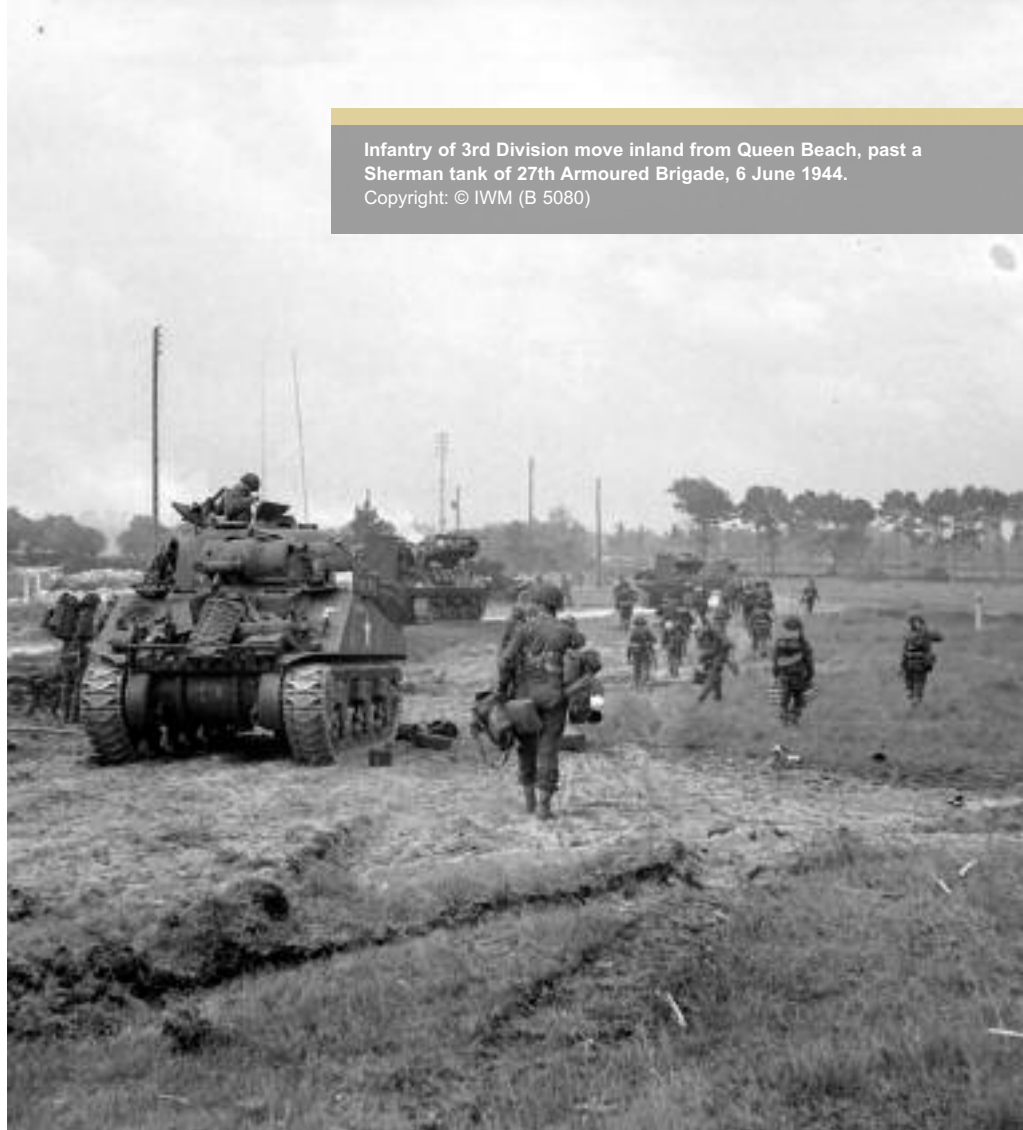
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## Casualties: 683

cleared seven of the eight planned exits from the beach, thereby enabling the advance inland to start.

*The 15th Lord Lovat, commanding 1 Special Service Brigade, took his personal piper Private William ("Bill") Millin onto QUEEN-RED Beach, where he played 'Highland Laddie', 'The Road to the Isles' and 'All the Blue Bonnets Are Over The Border' as his comrades fell around him. Millin said that when he later spoke to captured German snipers they claimed that they had not shot him because they thought that logic and common sense demanded that any man playing "die Dudelsäcke" while wearing a skirt (a Cameron tartan kilt) in battle, had to be stark, staring mad!*



Infantry of 3rd Division move inland from Queen Beach, past a Sherman tank of 27th Armoured Brigade, 6 June 1944.  
Copyright: © IWM (B 5080)

# THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS



Remembering Those Who Served - Normandy 75

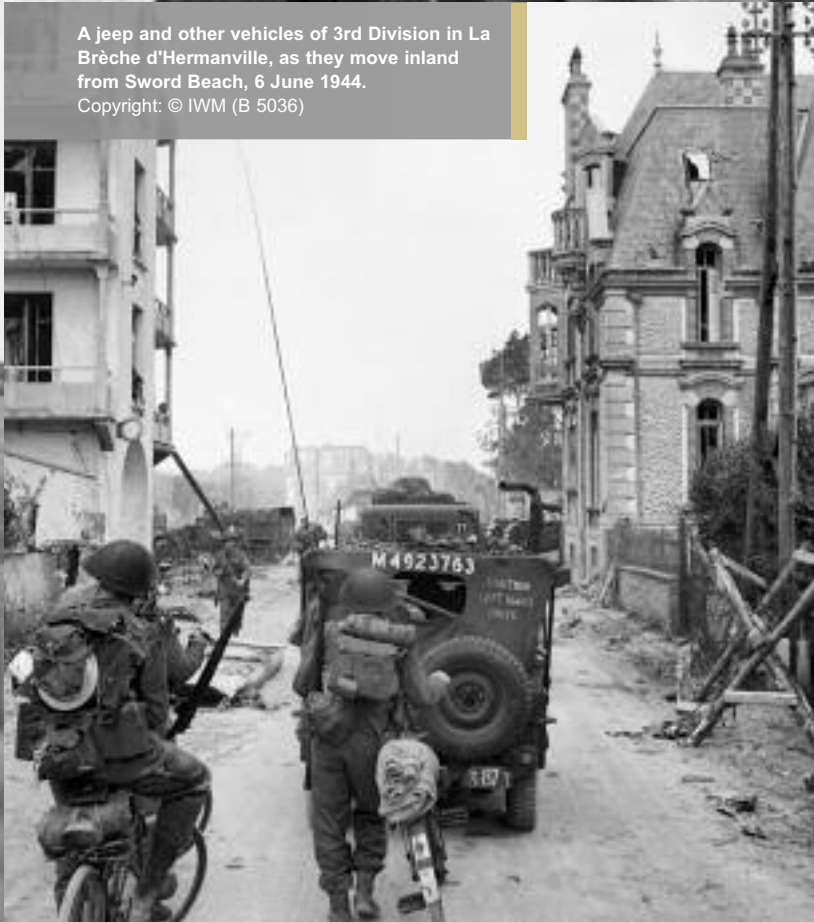




Troops of 3rd Infantry Division on Queen Red Beach, about 0845 hrs, 6 June 1944. In the foreground are sappers of 84 Field Company Royal Engineers, part of No.5 Beach Group, identified by the white bands around their helmets. Behind them, medical orderlies of 8 Field Ambulance, RAMC, can be seen assisting the wounded men. In the background commandos of 1st Special Service Brigade can be seen disembarking from their LCI(S) landing craft. Copyright: © IWM (B 5114)



A screen of 6-pdr anti-tank guns in position by the side of the Rue de la Croix Rose in Hermanville-sur-Mer, 6 June 1944. The Route de Caen can be seen going off to the right. Copyright: © IWM (B 5020)



A jeep and other vehicles of 3rd Division in La Brèche d'Hermanville, as they move inland from Sword Beach, 6 June 1944. Copyright: © IWM (B 5036)



# VOICES FROM THE LONGEST DAY

**Lieutenant DJ Wood, 24th Platoon Commander, D Company, 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. Coup-de-main group for Pegasus Bridge**

"We were seated, arms interlocked, facing each other in silence, lest the enemy below were alerted by our voices.

Not a sound, except for the swishing of air rushing past the open door of the Horsa glider, flying through the night at 90mph over Normandy, just after midnight on the morning of D-Day.

Without warning the pilot shouted, 'Christ, there's the bridge!' The glider's nose tilted sharply down then sparks, which we thought were enemy tracer, flew from the skids as they struck the ground.

A series of violent bumps and the sound of splintering wood, followed by my being ejected through the side of the aircraft.

Relieved to find I was still in one piece, still holding the sten with its bayonet fixed and gratified that none of the extra grenades, which I was carrying in my camp kit canvas bucket, had gone off. Pulled myself together, collected my platoon and doubled off to report to my Company Commander."



**Major Patrick A. Porteous, VC. KA No 4 Commando. Landed on Sword beach**

"0600hrs, 6th June 1944. Reached lowering position - grey sky - sea very choppy - ships of every shape and size as far as the eye can see. As my landing craft hit the water, we took a large wave over the side. A foot of water swilling round our feet.

Get pumping - Damn! The bilge pumps not working, so get bailing with tin hats. Difficult in very cramped conditions on board, especially as some men being sick. Still making water as every wave slops some more in. Approaching the beach all hell going on but anything preferable to this horrible boat. As the front ramps went down, she finally sank in three feet of water."

**Brigadier Nigel Poett, Commander 5th Parachute Regiment who dropped with pathfinders east of the Orne**

"My brigade task was to seize, intact, the bridges over the River Orne and the Canal de Caen at Bénouville and Ranville and establish a bridgehead. As my small aircraft skimmed over the defences of the Atlantic Wall, not a shot was fired. The red light came on and then the green. I was 'out', seconds later a bump. It was the soil of France. The time some 20 minutes after midnight on the 5th/6th June 1944.

The darkness was complete; the silence unbroken except for the sound of my disappearing aircraft. A few minutes later the sky to the west was lit up - firing, explosions, all the sights and sounds of battle. It was John Howard's assault.

He also had been timed to land at 20 minutes after midnight. Now I must get to the bridges as quickly as possible and be able, if need be, to adjust the Brigade plan. Would the bridges be in the hands of friend or foe? Intact or damaged? Indeed Howard's Company had achieved a splendid success. The bridges were now in our hands, intact. All was well!"



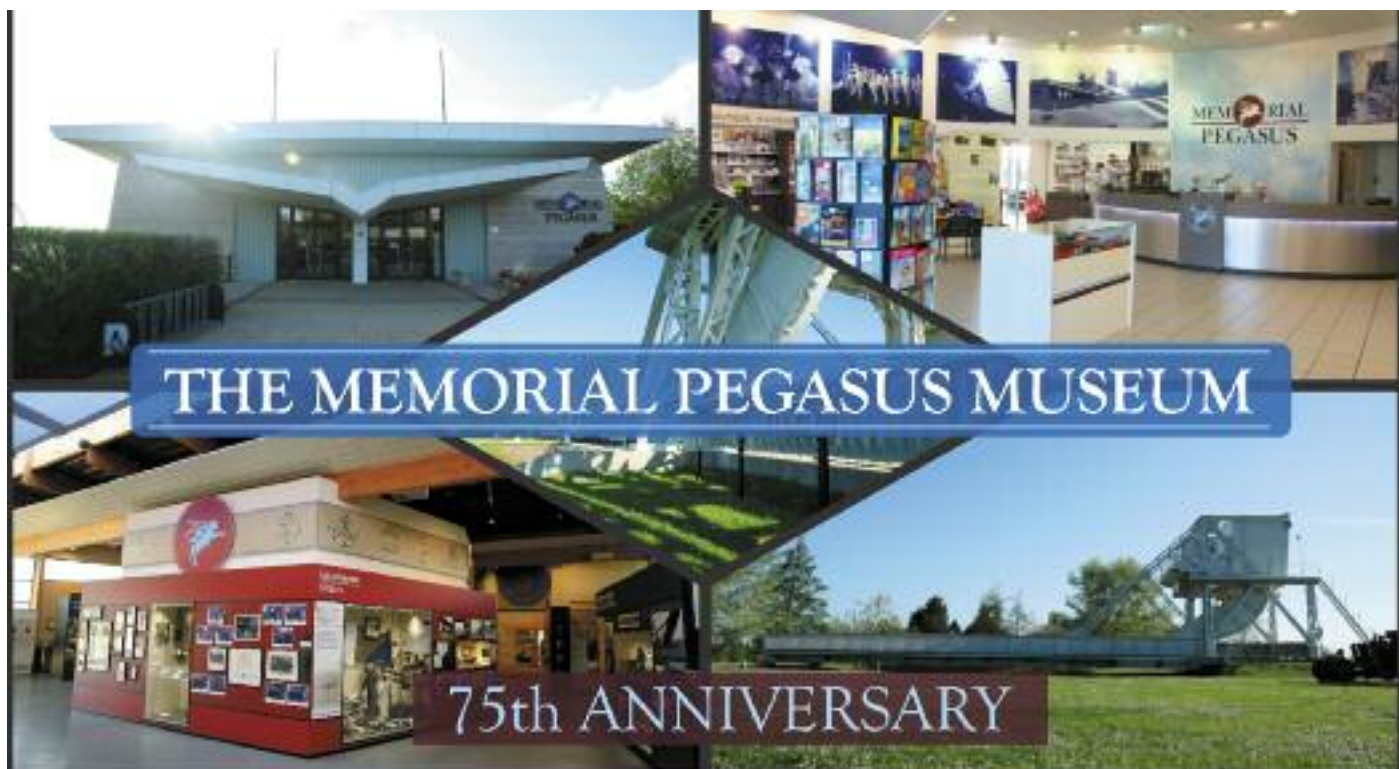
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**Lieutenant Commander Rupert Curtis RNVR Commander LCI (S)519. Ferried Lord Lovat's Commandos ashore onto Sword Beach**

"My mind concentrated on finding a path through the underwater obstructions. Fortunately at that state of the tide, the tops of many of them were still visible sprouting above the surface of the sea, many with lethal attachments. Working completely by instinct...I felt I could discern a clear path through the menacing stakes. It looked a bit of a zig-zag but I backed my instinct and took 519 through with rapid helm orders. We emerged unscathed and I called for more power from the engine room to thrust our bows hard on the beach to ensure as dry a landing as possible.

Then we kept both engines running at half ahead to hold the bows in position. At that moment we were hit by armour-piercing shells which zipped through the port Oerlikon gunshield but fortunately missing both gunners and our Commandos. 502 (Lieutenant John Seymour, RANVR) carrying the remainder of Brigade Headquarters, beached very close on our port hand as she did so she was hit by armour-piercing shells which penetrated four petrol tanks and hit the port engine and put it out of action. Perhaps I should explain that each of our landing craft carried 4,000 gallons of high octane petrol in non-

**Lance Corporal PLM Hennessey. A Sqn 13th/18th Royal Hussars DD tank. Landed on Sword Beach**

"My Regiment led the assault on Sword Beach, at Lion-sur-Mer, in amphibious tanks, (DD), swimming in from 5,000 yards in a very rough sea. On the beach we dropped our canvas screen and opened fire.

The tide was coming in and the water where we stood was getting deeper. We could not move further inland because the mines had not yet been cleared. A large wave swamped the engine, the tank was immobilised and was becoming flooded.

We took to the rubber dinghy, but, hit by machine gun fire we were sunk

sealing tanks just abaft the bridge. Had the enemy had used incendiary or high explosive ammunition 502 would have blown up and disintegrated in a sheet of flame which would have engulfed them and us in 519. The Brigade would have almost certainly lost its trusted leader, Lord Lovat, and most of the Headquarters Group. At the end of the day I estimated that half of the Brigade might not have got ashore but for the fact that the Germans used solid shot on us which was really meant for tanks. I gave the order for our troops to land.

The ramps were manhandled over the bows by our well trained ramp crew under Sub-Lieutenant Stephen Garrett, RNVR, and our Commandos began to land in about 3 feet of water as calmly as though on exercise.

Each man carried some 80lb of weaponry and gear and clambering down our narrow landing bows on to a danger-laden strip of sand could have been no fun. We bade goodbye to Lord Lovat and wished him good luck...as pipes gave heart and encouragement to all.

Then we began the tricky task of coming off the beach stern first through the obstructions to make way for our second wave of LCI(S) to come in to land No 3 Commando and No 45 Commando Royal Marines."

and obliged to swim for the shore, now some 300 yards away. Halfway there I clung to a post sticking out of the water and looking up I saw a large black Teller Mine attached to the top of it - I swam on. We reached dry land where we lay wet and exhausted.

One of our tanks came up beside us and the commander threw us a tin of self-heating soup, which we gratefully shared between the five of us.

The beach was now an inferno of machine-gun, shell and mortar fire, but we reached the promenade behind it and met up with some other unhorsed tank crew. Later we were directed to make for the village of Hermanville where we found the survivors of 'A' Squadron and our five remaining serviceable tanks."

**Lieutenant HJ ('Tod') Sweeney. 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. Coup-de-main group for the Orne river bridge**

"As the glider in which I was travelling broke through the clouds I saw clearly in the pale moonlight the River Orne, the Caen canal and two bridges we had to capture - exactly as on the model we had studied so carefully over the last few weeks.

The glider pilot called out, 'There's the bridge straight ahead, better strap up.' But I had one more task to carry out before I sat down and strapped up - to open the door for a quick exit. I struggled with the door for a few seconds and then it shot up.

As it did so, to my horror, the glider made a final bank to the left and I found myself peering down the fields and cattle 100ft below. Luckily my batman grabbed my belt and clung onto me until the glider righted itself and I was able to get into my seat.

A minute later we were bumping over the fields of France towards the bridge over the River Orne. We had arrived, and for me and my platoon the invasion had started."

**Major CH Giddings, Troop Leader in 626th Field Squadron**

"On going on deck as we approached the Normandy coast the first thing I saw was a destroyer which had been mined going down by the stern - and at that moment a sten gun was let off accidentally on the mess deck and three men were unfortunately killed. Not an auspicious beginning.

As I was to follow the flails through the gap I asked my gunner to lay the log carpet in the gap, but this and the turret had jammed and I had to cut it loose - the log carpet fell in a heap and formed more of an obstacle than a road. While I was doing this there was a bang, flash, red lights, blue lights, etc., and I found myself lying on the sand, having been hit by a hand grenade thrown from the house alongside the tank. I was assured later by the flail commander that the thrower had a 90mm shell all to himself in return."



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**Second Lieutenant  
Bryan Samain of E Troop,  
45 (Royal Marine Commando)**

Had become a reasonable shot at the age of 19, thanks to good solid training. "After landing on a section of Sword beach on D-Day plus 7, we travelled to our unit areas, over dusty country roads with all ditches and verges bearing evidence of battle wreckage. The remains of crash landed gliders littered the countryside like broken toys.

"We reached a clutch of villages to the east, not so much attacking as holding the position like a coiled spring. It was a lonely war of nerves. You didn't dare show yourself. Church spires could conceal snipers, so could woods. The Germans had a favourite trick. Their line faced west so they would snipe at us in the mornings with their backs to the sun which meant they were difficult to detect in the foliage. One outstanding memory has stayed down the years with Brian Samain. "I visited the outskirts of Caen soon after the fierce battle to capture it had raged. Virtually every building had been smashed to the ground and reduced to rubble as far as the eye could see. The only structure that had been left intact was a tall wayside crucifix, white and towering. I think its survival was meant to tell us something."

**Major (later General)  
Tony Dyball,  
Commanding D Company  
Royal Ulster Rifles,  
6th Airlanding Brigade,  
who landed east of the Orne**

"I had a most unfortunate experience when we got into the gliders. If you can imagine - they were all lined up astern down the runway with the tug aircraft and then the glider. When we were about 100ft from the ground the tow rope broke and so we had to land - an emergency landing - on the grass.

We just sat around until some kind person brought round a tractor to drag us back and there we were at the end of the queue. Now perhaps you should understand that in those days we had six gliders for one company. At that particular time I was commanding D Company of the Royal

Ulster Rifles. I had six officers and 128 riflemen. Anyway there I was and half an hour later I got off with another tug aeroplane. Well you can imagine what was going through my mind. What am I going to do? They've all gone there. I'm going to arrive. I don't know if I've got a company or anything at all. So I talked to the tug aeroplane pilot and said 'could you catch up?' He said 'Well, I'll do my best. I'll slide down 400ft and I'll give full throttle.' So there we were chugging over Brighton, everybody waving like mad. Then he said 'We've got to get up a bit because I've to let you off over Ouistreham.' There were a few puffs of anti-aircraft fire but nothing serious. We got up and released and landed exactly where I'd shown the pilot on an aerial photograph that I'd wanted to be. There was the Company all lined up and ready to go. The Second in Command came up to me and said, "What kept you?"

**Sergeant Harris, of the 1st  
Battalion, Sussex Regiment**

Attacked German infantry who were holding a number of strong points on the road to Caen. Two of which, codenamed Hillman and Morris, were situated on rising ground and proved to be formidable obstacles.

He recalls: "Hillman had an underground of network defences in

the hands of the Germans and a lot of the action involved our men dropping grenades on them below. Fifty prisoners were taken and I suppose we were lucky that our casualties were light. We pressed on to the Chateau de la Londe, near Caen, which was taken but not before we had moved through sodden cornfields and been mortared most of the way. On D-Day my platoon had numbered 33 men. In the end, there were only six of us left in action"



The Spirit of Normandy encapsulated. Pegasus Bridge, June 5th, 2004



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At Pegasus Bridge **Major Howard** jumped from his glider to see that he was just 50 yards away from it, instantly recognising the distinctive tower from the model made in the UK during training preparations for the operation.

The surprise of the *coup de main* attack was total and the assault party from the Ox & Bucks, led by Major Howard, raced for the bridge. They ran into German small-arms fire but in true airborne tradition stormed on and overwhelmed the defences. Very soon both the canal and river bridges were in British hands.

"My main memories are of Lieutenant Don Brotheridge, who was the commander of my leading platoon. He led the attack and was shot in the neck as he ran across the bridge. He died an hour later, the first casualty of D-Day. I had been sitting next to him in the glider just a few minutes before and I knew his wife was expecting a baby in a fortnight's time. It was very sad.

It was a great honour and privilege of course, to be chosen for Pegasus Bridge. They called it the spearhead of the invasion. We always boasted that we were the best company in the 6th Airborne Division and when we were chosen for this we felt we had been noticed after all.

There were six gliders each carrying 30 men, which gave us a fighting force of 180. One of the gliders, which had my second-in-command, Captain Brian Priday, on board, landed by the wrong river, the Dives, some 10 miles away. He was commanding D Platoon and didn't come into the battle at all. The 7th Battalion, the Parachute Regiment was our relief.

They arrived soon after 3 o'clock and we were very pleased to see them. But they were in very depleted numbers, because they had not had a good landing: instead of 650 men there were only 150. But as luck would have it the enemy hadn't made a proper attack.

They sent some tanks down which we had put out of action and that rather stalled them. They might have been waiting for daylight, I don't know, but by the time daylight came the Paras that had arrived were in position ready to meet them. They did a very good job. The bridges weren't attacked from then on and were in our hands right through the battle of Normandy."

**Piper Billy Millin. 1st Special Service Brigade. landed on Sword Beach.**

"Lord Lovat got into the water first...I followed closely behind him ...he's a man about six feet tall and , of course, the water came up to his knees. I thought it would be alright for me so I jumped into the water and it came up to my waist...anyway I managed to struggle forward and then I started playing the bagpipes.

I played Highland Laddie towards the beach which was very much under fire. At that time there were several... three...burning tanks, there were bodies, lying at the waters edge, face down floating back and forward. Some (men) were frantically digging in... others crouched behind a low sea wall. No one could get off the beach. The road and the exits were under heavy fire. I made for cover at an exit...a narrow road and I just got there behind a group of soldiers and

seeing me with the kilt and the bagpipes they shouted, 'Jock! Get the medics'. Then I looked around and to my horror I saw this tank coming off a landing craft with the flails going and making straight for the road.

I tried to catch the commander's attention...his head was sticking out of the turret...but he paid no attention and went straight in and churned all the bodies up. Then I saw Lovat and the Brigade Major standing by the waters edge.

Everyone else was lying down. So I joined them. He (Lovat) asked me to play. That sounded rather ridiculous to me to play bagpipes and entertain people just like on Brighton sands in peacetime. Anyway...I started the pipes up and marched up and down. This Sergeant came running over, 'Get down you mad bastard. You're attracting attention on us.' Anyway I continued marching up and down until we moved off the beach."

**Eric Brown** landed on King sector of Gold beach as a Royal Artillery Subaltern and lived to survive the Normandy campaign - just.

He describes the day he almost died along with his comrades. "I was a commander of a troop of M10s (re-equipped fairly light and mobile American tank destroyers).


I took charge of the gun of one M10 which had lost two of its Sergeants. There were five blokes crammed into each machine and my over-whelming memory is of the stench of fuel. We suddenly found ourselves facing a Panther which was surrounded by enemy infantry. We opened up and brought it to a halt. Within seconds it was hit from behind and exploded in a mighty roar. I was blown out of the

turret. The driver and wireless operator I had been talking to moments before had no chance and were killed.

I landed on the corn stubble below and rolled over and over to put the flames out, which is what we had been taught to do. Blackened skin hung from my hands and face and only my steel helmet saved my hair from catching alight.

I was eventually picked up by a Troop Sergeant of an adjacent troop and rushed to a field station." When Eric Brown come to in hospital after three days of unconsciousness, he thought he had gone blind because his face was masked, his hands bandaged and both his legs in plaster.






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## HMS Belfast

### Able Seaman Denis Wilkinson

We sailed down through the Irish Sea from Greenock to join the invasion fleets although, of course, we didn't know this at the time. We now know that the invasion was delayed for twenty-four hours because of bad weather in the Channel; we didn't know that either, but we did wonder why we turned round and sailed back the way we had come for twelve hours.

Belfast crossed the Channel on the night of 5th/6th June in support of the landings on Juno Beach.

**Peter Rudd, Able Seaman** *The first we heard of any invasion was when we were in the Channel and we were given two leaflets, one from Churchill and one from Eisenhower. It seemed a very long night and eventually we went to Action Stations at the start of the Morning Watch. By 5 o'clock we were in position, together with Diadem, and at about half past five we opened up with a full broadside to port. The first shots of the Normandy Landings. We were broadside to the shore so had a grandstand view of what was going on. By half past seven the first troops were going ashore and the whole area was alive with landing craft of all shapes and sizes; rocket launchers, destroyers, everything.*

### Bob Embleton, Able Seaman

*There were Landing Craft full of soldiers and as they passed us we gave them a cheer. Later in the day there were bodies in the sea and we hoped they weren't the same lads.*

### Peter Rudd, Able Seaman

*During the afternoon of 6th June casualties started to come aboard, ferried over by motor launches specially titted to evacuate the wounded. At the same time Belfast closed with the shore in the hope of regaining contact with the*

*Forward Bombardment Officer, but unhappily he had been killed on the beach. The dead were taken aboard the now empty landing craft for a quick and decent return to the English coast. There was nothing for the close range weapons to do except keep an aircraft watch and E Boat lookout. A watch was kept by marksmen around the ship, a watch which was taken very seriously when we saw a Liberty ship explode and saw her deck cargo of lorries rolling into the sea and men jumping overboard.*

### Denis Watkinson, Able Seaman

*A Polish cruiser, I think 'Dragon', took up the berth we had just left and got mined. The Germans were nothing if not active, what with air raids and attacks by human torpedoes and explosive motor torpedo boats. We had to keep on the move so as not to be a target for the E Boats from Le Havre.*

By D Day + 1 air raids were becoming frequent: Emerald had a near miss and Bulolo was hit, but tension had relaxed sufficiently for the 4" and close range personnel to go to Cruising Stations. Meanwhile the bombardment continued, mostly directed against troop and tank concentrations and especially the German probe, which had discovered the gap between the edges of Sword and Juno beaches.

**Peter Rudd, Able Seaman** *Things had been quiet for a few hours when a stick of bombs exploded right alongside. I was in the Mess at the time and it sounded just like being in a biscuit tin and someone banging the outside. There was some damage to the Beef Screen which gave those in the 4 "shelter above it a bit of a surprise.*

**Bob Embleton, Able Seaman** *The ship was swinging at anchor which gave the Marines in X turret an unfair share of the target practice. Somebody on the bridge must have heard the complaint because*

*Belfast's Log Book reads 'commenced swinging ship to bring all 6" to bear... opened fire with all 6" ...check fire owing to gyro compass failure .... recommenced firing .... ceased firing, German infantry dispersed'.*

**Bob Slater, Able Seaman** *By now the beaches were strewn with debris and working parties from the ships were sent ashore to help clear things up - but not me, as I was a Radar rating and it was considered too dangerous to risk us getting captured! First time I've ever been considered too valuable! The radar wasn't working anyway, in case our transmissions could be read.*

### Denis Watkinson, Able Seaman

*We were sent ashore as working parties to tidy up the mess the army had made. We were landed on one of the many wrecks and then taken ashore by DUKWs. The beaches were still being shelled or bombed, and Boy Jones had a shell within a few yards of him, but he got off without a scratch. We spent a full day ashore clearing obstacles but were recalled eventually because of the shelling.*

By mid-June, the troops ashore were learning how to call down the fire-power of the ships at sea onto local targets. Belfast supported the 3rd Canadian Division at Courcelles, the Royal Marine Commandoes at Port en Bessin, and strategic targets such as the bridges over the River Orne.

Belfast was up in the Arromanches area when the bits and pieces of the Mulberry harbour started to arrive, but as the armies forced their way inland, the enemy got beyond the range of bombardment from the sea, and Belfast's usefulness in the European war was at an end.






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WAS  
BETTER  
THAN US.  
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THE  
KINGPINS.**

**WE WERE  
THE  
BELFAST.**

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**HMS BELFAST**

**D-DAY  
75**



**Eric Scholes  
Flight Sergeant Navigator**



I was the Flight Sergeant Navigator of a Lancaster of No.12 Squadron based at Wickenby near Lincoln.

Early during this period, the 'powers-that-be' decided that the heavy bombers of Bomber Command should be deployed to assist the aims of Operation Overlord.

This meant a big change for Lancaster crews from long-range, high level, mainly night operations, to

short-range, low level, mainly daylight operations and this lasted approximately from mid-July to mid-August 1944.

During a period of 10 days between 30th July and 8th August, the crew of which I was a member carried out 8 mainly daylight attacks on flying bomb sites, oil refineries and in close support of ground forces.

The two operations carried out in close support of Allied ground forces were against German troop concentrations which were delaying the breakout from the Caen area and consisted of low level attacks against these enemy forces

with fragmentation type bombs. The first was at Gaumont, a few miles west of Caen, in daylight at 2,000ft, each aircraft carrying 18 x 500lb bombs.

The Squadron Operations Record Book record of that raid was: *"Army co-operation was the object of this mission to Gaumont and 15 aircraft of this Squadron participated in this daylight attack.*

*A splendid concentration of bombing was reported, opposition both from ground and fighters was negligible - no casualties."*

The second was at Fontenay-leMarmion, a few miles east of Caen, at night at 6,000ft, each aircraft carrying 11 x 1,000lb and 4 x 500lb bombs.

The Squadron Operations Record Book record of that raid was: *"Air support - a past-time much appreciated by this Squadron - was the allocation for the night of 7th August and 15 aircraft were detailed as part of the 1,000 bombers of Heavy Command.*

*Good weather persisted, careful and accurate marking was essential but the results fully justify the exactitude of the details. No opposition was encountered and it is felt this attack by this very large force has been the absolute answer to co- operation between the services".*

After these events, my crew returned to strategic bombing operations.



Eric Scholes, fifth person from the left



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# D-DAY

## BY THE NUMBERS

### OPERATION OVERLORD

**JUNE 6, 1944**

*Largest Amphibious Invasion in History*

An invading army had not successfully crossed the English Channel since 1688

Originally planned for **MAY 1** and then **JUNE 5** but was delayed by bad weather

In military operations, D-Day is the day on which an operation or major plan of attack is set to start

Operation Bodyguard created 6 decoy invasion plans to obscure the real landing location, including having General Patton "commanding" a fake mission to invade Pas-De-Calais

Commanded by General Eisenhower

**156,000**

Allied troops

**5,000**

ships and landing craft

**58,000**

vehicles

**11,000**

aircraft

**13,000**

paratroopers

**58 MILES**

of Normandy coastline

Utah  
**22,350**  
TROOPS



Omaha  
**34,250**  
TROOPS



Gold  
**24,970**  
TROOPS



Juno  
**21,480**  
TROOPS



Sword  
**28,845**  
TROOPS







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*"Operation Neptune"*

JUNE 6<sup>th</sup> - SEPTEMBER 1944

*They manned the merchant ships that provided the supply line for the Armies, and as such they were a prime target in "Operation Overlord"*

*the Normandy Landings; the fifth phase in the "Liberation of Europe"*

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*Look out to sea and say a prayer*

*For those who rest beneath,*

*They gave their lives that you may share*

*A Europe that is free.*

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*Arramarches Memorial to Merchant Navy Seamen*



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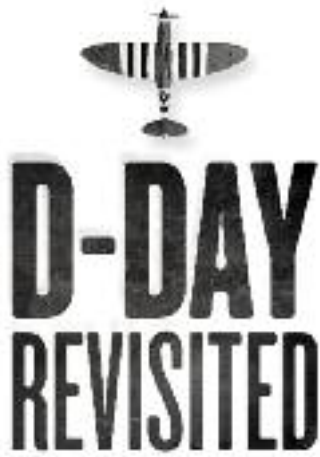
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D-Day Revisited was first established as a family charity in October 2008 for the primary purpose of funding a 65th anniversary visit for Normandy veterans wishing to return to the D-Day landing sites and surrounding region. 11 years on, the Charity will be making its final pilgrimage to Normandy in June 2019 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Operation Overlord.

Although these visits to France are inevitably filled with difficult moments of reflection, the veterans enjoy making the journey with a large group of comrades; recalling old memories and forming new friendships.

To commemorate this important anniversary, D-Day Revisited is also embarking on two additional ambitious projects: the 'D-Day 75 Garden' and the 'MASB 27 Restoration'.

## The 'D-Day 75 Garden'

will be a national garden tribute to our Normandy veterans at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, 21st-25th May 2019. Designed by multi RHS gold medal winner, John Everiss, the Garden will give British people an opportunity to celebrate the last surviving veterans of our wartime generation in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

75 Normandy veterans will be invited to take part across the week and share their incredible stories with the Chelsea pensioners and the public. The 'D-Day 75 Garden' will then be gifted by the veterans to a permanent site in Normandy, where they will unveil it on 6th June 2019.

The central figure in the 'D-Day 75 Garden' will be a life-size statue of D-Day veteran Bill Pendell MM, carved from a single piece of

stone by renowned sculptor Thompson Dagnall. Bridging 75 years, the statue of 97-year-old Bill looks across at a fragile metal figure of himself as a 22 year old; pausing before rushing up the beachhead. In this moment the 75 years which separates one man from another is bridged and visitors are invited to consider how it must feel for veterans to reflect on the intense experiences they endured on D-Day and the days that followed in June 1944.

Backed by the families of Field Marshal Montgomery and General Eisenhower, the 'D-Day 75 Garden' has received support from advertising executive and Normandy veteran supporter, Trevor Beattie, as well as high profile celebrities including Stephen Fry, Piers Morgan, Amanda Holden and the D-Day Darlings.

D-Day Revisited is seeking £250,000 to create this tribute to the nation's Normandy veterans. To ensure their story is passed on to future generations, the 'D-Day 75 Garden' will be permanently sited in Normandy as a gift from the veterans to the communities they fought to liberate 75 years ago. Charity Secretary, Victoria Phipps, says: "We hope the nation will come together to support this project on what will be the final opportunity to do so with any significant number of men and women who experienced D-Day first hand."

**To support the 'D-Day 75 Garden' project and create a lasting tribute to our Normandy veterans visit the crowdfunding page [www.gofundme.com/dday-75-garden/](http://www.gofundme.com/dday-75-garden/) or TEXT "DDAY" to 70500 to donate £2.**

# 75 REASONS TO THANK OUR D-DAY VETERANS

AT ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA DURING RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2019





Royal Artillery “Gold Beach” veteran Joe Cattini - greeting french school children in the town of Thury-Harcourt in Normandy.



**In April 2016 D-Day Revisited embarked on its MASB 27 Restoration project having acquired a genuine wartime Motor Anti-Submarine Boat (MASB or MA/SB) and moved it by road to its current location just outside Chester.**



Their aim is to restore the boat to its former glory in time for the 75th anniversary of D-Day in 2019, when it will join fellow Coastal Defences veteran vessels in its first cross-Channel journey to Normandy since the war!

Commissioned into the Royal Navy in 1941, MASB 27 took part in mixed deployment of air/sea rescue and spent much of its time between Cornwall and Brittany on clandestine operations. Under the direction of the Special Operations Executive, she was engaged in dropping agents into France and collecting RAF crew members assisted by the Resistance.

On the early morning of D-Day, research indicates that the boat was part of the Coastal

Forces squadron engaged in support of the US 1st Division in its assault on Omaha Beach. After the beachhead was secured and troops could move inland, MASB 27 remained in that area using its ASDIC to direct construction of 'Mulberry A' which was the artificial harbour established off Omaha. This area of the coast was hit by a rare force 7 storm 19th-22nd June, which sadly caused so much damage to the American harbour the Allies were forced to abandon the installation.

As far as the Charity understands no other Royal Navy Motor Anti-Submarine Boat has been restored and only one other salvageable vessel exists. Therefore once completed this will be the only surviving MASB in the world restored to wartime condition.

MASB 27 arrived in Chester as little more than a hull, full of debris, with several internal bulkheads and a small area of original decking. The restoration to proper wartime seaworthy condition was scheduled to take 2 years, aiming for practical completion by the end of 2018. Lifting into the water is planned for Spring 2019 to undergo extensive sea trials before its historic journey back to France in June 2019.

The final destination of MASB 27 is planned to be the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, where its future in national ownership and care can be assured. It is hoped the gunboat will also travel further afield and be used more extensively as an educational tool, further spreading awareness of the D-Day story.





# THE ROYAL AIR FORCE NORMANDY 1944

The Normandy Landings are normally thought of in terms of Army personnel performing their various functions, and Royal Naval personnel to get them to the scene of operations. The full part played by the Royal Air Force is not generally known, and extends far beyond the activities of Second Tactical Air Force, which had the duty of covering and assisting operations of 21 Army Group.

continued on page 114





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## Second Tactical Air Force

Under command of Air Marshal Sir Arthur ("Mary" a corruption of his nickname Maori) Coningham, previously Air Officer Commanding North-West Africa Tactical Air Forces, the Second Tactical Air Force consisted of:

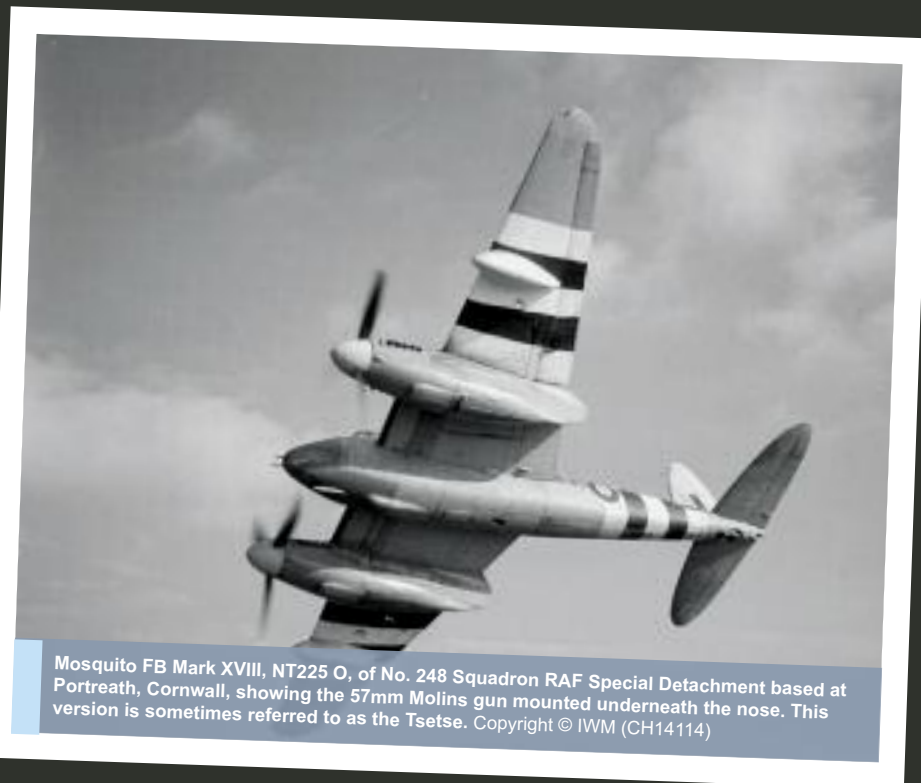
- 83 Group under command of Air Vice Marshal (later to be Air Chief Marshal Sir) Harry Broadhurst, previously AOC Desert Air Force, to cover the advance of British 2nd Army.
- 84 Group to cover the advance of Canadian 1st Army.
- 85 (Base Defence) Group, including nightfighters.

2 Group of medium Bombers (Four Wings of three Squadrons each, with Boston, Mitchell or Mosquito aircraft) commanded by the legendary Basil Embry. It was previously part of Bomber Command.

83 and 84 Groups were identical in composition, each consisted of ten Wings of three Squadrons and a number of Air Observation Post Squadrons. Each Wing consisted of up to three Squadrons, a total 28-30 Squadrons per Group. The 85 Group Air Spotting Pool included four Fleet Air Arm Squadrons. The aircraft were a mixed bag of Typhoons, Tempests, Spitfires and Mustangs. The AOP Squadrons were equipped with Austers. 85 Group had a mixture of Spitfires and Mosquitos. The crews were of many nations, including Canadians, Poles, French, Norwegian, Czech, Belgian, Dutch and New Zealand.

Before the invasion 83 and 84 Groups operated from advance landing grounds in the South of England, personnel living in tents to acclimatise them for the campaign to come. The Operations of each group were directed by a Group Control Centre.

Following daytime sorties over France, 83 Group units established themselves on French landing grounds created from metal strips by Royal Engineer Airfield Construction Companies. From D+1 or 2 the aircraft landed



Mosquito FB Mark XVIII, NT225 O, of No. 248 Squadron RAF Special Detachment based at Portreath, Cornwall, showing the 57mm Molins gun mounted underneath the nose. This version is sometimes referred to as the Tsetse. Copyright © IWM (CH14114)

on French soil to be re-armed and re-fuelled by RAF Beach Servicing Commandos, returning to UK every evening for a week, after which 83 Group as a whole moved to Normandy.

The Typhoon aircraft, nicknamed "Tiffy," was the workhorse of the RAF in Normandy and deserves a special mention. It came to prominence in the air support system for the Army known as "cab rank" where RAF air controllers travelled in the lead tank of armoured formations, calling down support from circling aircraft as necessary.

On occasion Artillery could also summon air support by firing yellow smoke shells, with a quick response. Coming into service in August 1941, the aircraft endured many teething troubles, some due to it being fitted with not the best available engine.

Further troubles endured in Normandy. It had not been foreseen that dust from the soil was sucked into engine air scoops which could wear out an engine in less than 10 hours flying time. The problem was overcome by fitting special filters. Originally fitted with cannon, it was modified to carry rockets or bombs, in a fighter-bomber capacity and distinguished itself in operations as diverse as ground sweeps, precision bombing, counter-action against flying bombs and their

launching sites, and attacks on German armour. Typhoons, in their attack on armour during the German counter-attack at Mortain intended to reach the coast at Avranches, were instrumental in defeating it and paving the way for the Allied break-out from Normandy to the Seine. In bomber mode it was known as "Bombphoon."

## Bomber Command

Main force squadrons were transferred from command by C-in-C Bomber Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, to command by the Supreme Commander, General Dwight D Eisenhower, assisted by the Deputy Supreme Commander, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder from April to August 1944.

They carried out precision bombing by day as well as at night, on tactical targets in support of the Army, to destroy radar sites far beyond the Normandy beachhead, and assisted decoy operations to confuse the Germans as to where the landings might take place. They also had the task of attacking transportation targets, destroying railway lines, bridges and facilities within a wide radius. In all of this their overriding brief was to avoid French casualties.

- Nos 617 Sqn (The Dambusters) and 218 took part in a deception operation over the Pas de Calais by dropping *Window* at

continued on page 116



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PPG proudly salutes our  
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# RAF D-DAY AIRCRAFT PROFILES



### HAWKER TYPHOON

Length: 31 ft 11.5 in (9.73 m)  
Wingspan: 41 ft 7 in (12.67 m)  
Height: 15 ft 4 in (4.64 m)  
Wing area: 279 ft<sup>2</sup> (25.8 m<sup>2</sup>)



### NA P51 MUSTANG

Length: 32 ft 3 in (9.83 m)  
Wingspan: 37 ft 0 in (11.28 m)  
Height: 13 ft 0 in (3.96 m)  
Wing area: 225 sq ft (20.8 m<sup>2</sup>)



### ARMSTRONG WHITWORTH ALBEMARLE

Capacity: 10 paratroopers  
Payload: 4,000 lb (1,820 kg)  
Length: 99 ft 11 in (30.36 m)  
Wingspan: 77 ft 0 in (23.47 m)  
Height: 15 ft 7 in (4.75 m)  
Wing area: 804 ft<sup>2</sup> (74.5 m<sup>2</sup>)



### SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE

Length: 29 ft 11 in (9.12 m)  
Wingspan: 36 ft 10 in (11.23 m)  
Height: 11 ft 3 in (3.50 m)  
Wing area: 242 ft<sup>2</sup> (22.48 m<sup>2</sup>)



### NA B-25 MITCHELL

Length: 52 ft 11 in (16.13 m)  
Wingspan: 67 ft 7 in (20.60 m)  
Height: 16 ft 1 in (4.90 m)  
Wing area: 610 sq ft (56.7 m<sup>2</sup>)



### DOUGLAS BOSTON

Length: 67 ft 11.75 in (20.66 m)  
Wingspan: 61 ft 4 in (18.70 m)  
Height: 17 ft 7 in (5.38 m)  
Wing area: 454 ft<sup>2</sup> (42.1 m<sup>2</sup>)



### HAWKER TEMPEST

Length: 32 ft 8 in (10.00 m)  
Wingspan: 41 ft 0 in (12.50 m)  
Height: 16 ft 1 in (4.90 m) (tail down)  
Wing area: 302 ft<sup>2</sup> (28 m<sup>2</sup>)



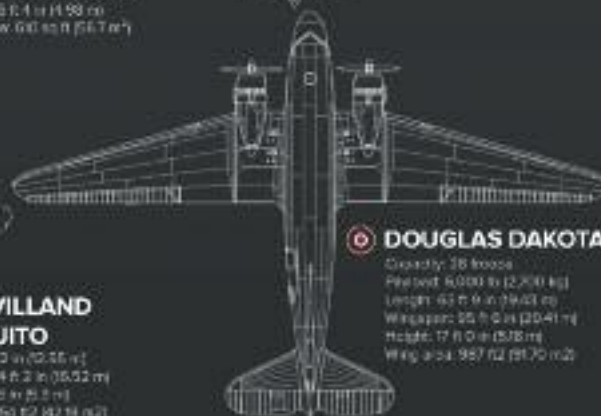
### HAWKER HURRICANE

Length: 32 ft 1 in (9.84 m)  
Wingspan: 40 ft 0 in (12.19 m)  
Height: 13 ft 10 in (4.2 m)  
Wing area: 257.5 ft<sup>2</sup> (23.93 m<sup>2</sup>)



### DE HAVILLAND MOSQUITO

Length: 41 ft 3 in (12.58 m)  
Wingspan: 54 ft 2 in (16.52 m)  
Height: 17 ft 5 in (5.3 m)  
Wing area: 454 ft<sup>2</sup> (42.1 m<sup>2</sup>)



### DOUGLAS DAKOTA

Capacity: 38 troops  
Payload: 6,000 lb (2,700 kg)  
Length: 63 ft 6 in (19.43 m)  
Wingspan: 55 ft 0 in (16.81 m)  
Height: 17 ft 0 in (5.18 m)  
Wing area: 957 ft<sup>2</sup> (88.70 m<sup>2</sup>)



Armstrong Whitworth Albemarle Mk V

**Invasion stripes** were alternating black and white bands painted on the fuselages and wings of Allied World War II aircraft, for the purpose of increased recognition by friendly forces (and thus reduced friendly fire incidents) during and after the Normandy Landings.

height/in quantity to simulate another invasion fleet and deceive the Germans into thinking that it was heading in that direction. The Special Duty Squadrons,

Nos 138 and 161, based at Tempsford part of 3 Group Bomber Command, continued their normal activities of conveying SOE agents to and from France and gave particular help to the Resistance, also taking part in deception operations.

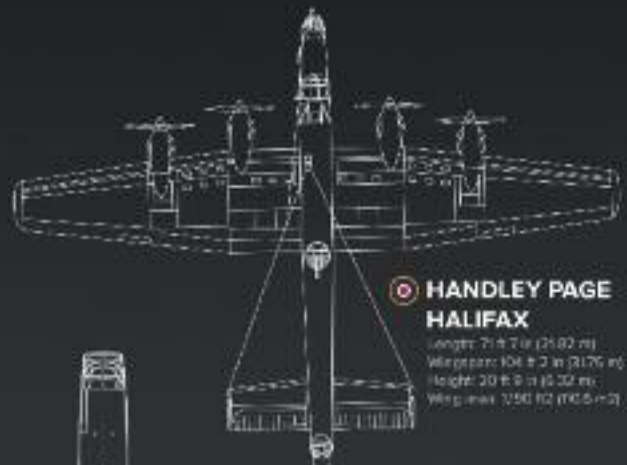
- No 100 (Bomber Support) Group, eleven squadrons based in north Norfolk and equipped with a variety of Mosquitos, Fortresses, Wellingtons, Stirlings, Halifaxes and Liberators, carried out radio counter measures, in particular to jam German *Freyja*





**AVRO LANCASTER**

Length: 69 ft 4 in (21.1 m)  
 Wingspan: 102 ft 0 in (31.09 m)  
 Height: 20 ft 6 in (6.25 m)  
 Wing area: 1,297 sq ft (120.5 m<sup>2</sup>)



**HANDLEY PAGE HALIFAX**

Length: 71 ft 7 in (21.82 m)  
 Wingspan: 104 ft 3 in (31.76 m)  
 Height: 20 ft 9 in (6.33 m)  
 Wing area: 1,561 sq ft (143.5 m<sup>2</sup>)



**TAYLORCRAFT AUSTER**

Length: 22 ft 5 in (6.83 m)  
 Wingspan: 36 ft 0 in (10.97 m)  
 Height: 8 ft 0 in (2.44 m)  
 Wing area: 167 sq ft (15.41 m<sup>2</sup>)



**AIRSPED HORSA**

Capacity: 25 troops  
 Length: 67 ft 0 in (20.43 m)  
 Wingspan: 88 ft 0 in (26.83 m)  
 Height: 19 ft 6 in (5.95 m)  
 Wing area: 1,045 sq ft (96.6 m<sup>2</sup>)



**SHORT STIRLING**

Length: 67 ft 3 in (20.5 m)  
 Wingspan: 99 ft 1 in (30.2 m)  
 Height: 22 ft 9 in (6.96 m)  
 Wing area: 1,460 sq ft (135.6 m<sup>2</sup>)



**GENERAL AIRCRAFT HAMILCAR**

Capacity: 7 tons  
 Length: 63 ft (20.72 m)  
 Wingspan: 110 ft (33.53 m)  
 Height: 20 ft 3 in (6.17 m)  
 Wing area: 1,677.5 sq ft (154.86 m<sup>2</sup>)

radars over a wide area of France on the night of 5/6 June 1944. They carried German-speaking "Special Operators."

- No 26 (Signals) Group generally acted as a cover for "funnies" and administered all the home intercept stations of RAF Y Service, including West Kingsdown, Chicksands and Cheadle.

- No 80 Wing, with headquarters at Radlett, and a ground control at Beachy Head, had the duty of intercepting German beam transmissions from the ground and in the air and jamming them. Total Bomber Command effort for the night of 5/6 June was 1211 sorties and 1160 sorties followed in the next 24 hours.

**Transport Command**

No 38 Group of ten Squadrons, and No 46 Group of five, based in the West Country, conveyed Airborne Forces to Normandy on the night of 5 June, towing gliders or dropping paratroops of 6 Airborne Division.

**Combined Operations**

This included RAF as well as Navy and Army personnel. Their duties were varied and Beach Servicing Commandos have already been mentioned.

The Headquarter Landing Ships *HMS Bulolo* ('Gold' Beach) *HMS Hilary* ('Juno') and *HMS Largs* ('Sword'), as well as their back-ups, carried permanent RAF crews to man the air operations rooms and signalling equipment.

These ships had operated in support of assault landing operations in the Mediterranean and were on notice to proceed to the Far East in early 1945. Fortunately this became unnecessary by the cessation of hostilities.

Only "Hilary" carried a representative of RAF Y Service (Signals Intelligence.) Three Fighter Direction Tenders, No 13, 216 and 217, were converted LST (Landing Ships Tank), with the bow doors welded up, and carried large RAF crews as part of their complement. By some quirk all the radar mechanics were from the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The ships were fitted out as floating operation rooms with radar, signalling and Y service



interception equipment. Because of the huge aerial arrays the ships were top heavy, and an attempt was made to stabilise them by lashing quantities of pig iron to the top deck. This led to their being dubbed " Floating Death Traps."

The relevant file at the National Archive states there was no German air activity on D-Day until 1859hrs. It does not mention the attack on Sword Beach at around 0830 hrs by the Wing Leader of JG26 and his wingman, flying FW 190s from Lille Nord, resulting in damage to a LST. So unexpected was the D-Day Landing that a few days previously the three Gruppen of JG26 had been transferred to Reims, Metz and Mont-de-Marsan for training exercises.

Early on D+1 a glider bomb from an experimental Henschel 123 destroyed HMS Lawford, HQ Ship of Force 'J' Group 1, with large loss of life. The pilot claimed wrongly to have also sunk HMS Bulolo but British records state it was hit by a 250 lb. phosphorous bomb. HMFDT 216 was torpedoed by a Ju 88 on 7 July but the crew were rescued by HMS Burdock.

The little known SCU/SLU (Special Communications Units/Special Liaison Units) formed by Group Captain Fred Winterbotham, MI6 Air Liaison, to disseminate Ultra



intelligence, gleaned from Enigma intercepts, were manned largely by RAF personnel, whose duties it was to transmit the ultra Secret Intelligence to selected recipients including Army commanders.

### Air Defence of Great Britain

Fighter Squadrons, of former Fighter Command, gave cover of various kinds to the Normandy operations, not least protecting the British bases from which the invasion fleet sailed.

Sources include:

#### Typhoon Pilot

by Group Captain D J Scott  
DSO OBE DFC Arrow 1987

#### Aircraft of World War II

Parkgate Books 1999

#### Prelude to Overlord

by Humphrey Wynn and  
Susan Young Airlife 1983

#### Operation Overlord

Salamander 1993

#### Public Archive

File Air 29/163b

File Air 37 1439 'Neptune' Report

ASO HQ Ships and FDT



257 Squadron, Normandy 1944





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Two Humber light reconnaissance cars of 2806 Armoured Car Squadron RAF Regiment, acting as a forward observation post close to the Wilhelmina Canal near Eindhoven, Holland, on 10 October 1944. Flying Officer WE Wallace of Annan, Scotland, and his gunner, Leading Aircraftmen E Midgley of Leeds, man the foremost vehicle.

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Courtesy of Air Historical Branch (Royal Air Force).

# OPERATION 'OVERLORD'

## *The Royal Air Force Regiment in Normandy and the Liberation of Europe*



by Dr Nigel Warwick,  
Corps Historian  
RAF Regiment

Thursday 6 June 2019 marks the 75th Anniversary of the Allied landings in Normandy in which the RAF Regiment participated.

The role of the Allied Air Forces during Operation Overlord was vital to the success of General Sir Bernard Montgomery's 21st Army Group land operations. Second Tactical Air Force (2TAF), comprising 2, 83, 84 and 85 Groups RAF, under the command of Air Marshal Sir Arthur 'Mary' Coningham, was to maintain air superiority over the beachhead and provide air support to the British and Canadian ground forces.

A vital component of success over the following weeks was the establishment of advanced airstrips and landing grounds for fighter and ground support aircraft and these would have to be defended from attack from the ground and air.

The primary role of the Royal Air Force Regiment in the days following the landings was to provide light anti-aircraft (LAA) protection to the forward airfields that were to be captured or constructed within the Normandy beachhead. In later weeks, rifle and armoured car squadrons were to deploy on airfield ground defence and escort and reconnaissance roles for RAF engineering, construction and intelligence specialists. From the earliest stages of preparation in summer 1943, it was intended that the RAF Regiment should be included in the D Day landings, and consequently a Regiment officer was assigned to the planning staff for Overlord at Norfolk House in St James's Square. Later a Regiment Branch was formed within Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF).

### ALLIED TROOPS LANDED

The RAF Regiment component of 2TAF for Operation Overlord was to consist of LAA squadrons, each equipped with 12 Bofors

40 mm L60 anti-aircraft guns, rifle and armoured car squadrons, all controlled by nineteen Wing HQs. The rifle squadrons, each with four 3 inch mortars and well-endowed with Bren LMGs, had the firepower to hold forward airfields and dominate the surrounding ground. The armoured car squadrons, each equipped with 24 Humber 4 x 4 light reconnaissance cars, added a mobile and flexible element that could provide long-range reconnaissance, convoy escorts and rapid reinforcement. Regiment Mobile Wing HQs would fulfil a control and coordination role.

In the early hours of 6 June 1944, Allied troops landed successfully in Normandy, and despite some setbacks, by nightfall the British, Canadian and US divisions had linked up with their airborne troops and held a bridgehead five miles deep.

### ARRIVING OFF JUNO BEACH

The Commander, RAF Regiment in 83 Group RAF, Colonel R.L. Preston, Coldstream Guards, and his staff, had sailed with the first assault troops. Despite the first elements of the Regiment arriving off 'Juno' Beach at H+4, the beaches were heavily congested, and they were unable to land until the morning of D+1. They were soon joined by two Mobile Wing HQs, 1304 and 1305, suffering casualties from

continued on page 122



# COMMEMORATING THOSE OF THE **ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT**

Kurdistan 1922-24  
Iraq 1923-25  
Transjordan 1924  
Kurdistan 1930-31  
Palestine 1936-39

Home Defence 1940-45  
Egypt & Libya 1940-43  
Iraq 1941  
Syria 1941  
Habbaniya  
El Alamein  
North Africa 1942-43  
Arakan 1942-44



South East Europe 1942-45  
Italy 1943-45  
Burma 1944-45  
Manipur 1944  
Normandy 1944  
Gustav Line  
France & Germany 1944-45

South Atlantic 1982  
Gulf 1991  
Iraq 2003  
Iraq 2003-11

**WHO LANDED ON THE  
NORMANDY BEACHES**  
*and those who paid the  
Ultimate Sacrifice*

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a mine in the run in to the beaches. 2834, 2809 and 2819 LAA Squadrons also disembarked across 'Juno' and 'Gold' Beaches, the former Squadron having been bombed by enemy aircraft twice during a night raid on the waiting landing ships, killing one gunner and seriously wounding another. Many RAF Regiment gunners had manned the AA guns on the assault ships in the trip across the Channel. With the need to land 25,000 troops alone on 'Juno' Beach there were long delays due to the lack of ferries to transport men and materiel ashore, vehicles being 'drowned', and considerable frustration for the airmen whose orders had been to establish their guns ashore and on the airstrips within 12 hours of the first landings.

## BAZENVILLE

At Bazenville airfield, 'A' Flight of 2834 Squadron had the first RAF Regiment Bofors guns in action before midnight on the 7 June, and by late on 8 June, all five LAA Squadrons in the first tranche had been landed. Following the deployment drills that had been regularly rehearsed over the last few months, the Squadron and Flight Commanders carried out their reces and directed the gun detachments rapidly to their allotted airfields at Bazenville, St Croix-sur-Mer, Beny-sur-Mer, Camilly and Coulombs.

Fierce fighting was still occurring within a mile of one airfield and 'overs' from nearby actions were frequent. Small arms and sniper fire from enemy parties concealed in the woods overlooking the airfields were a frequent problem. As the original plan for the RAF Regiment had not envisaged the need for rifle squadrons to provide close defence for the airfields, the LAA squadrons also had to assume responsibility for local ground defence and anti-sabotage measures, made all the more difficult with 100% manning of the Bofors guns.

A week later, a second tranche of five Regiment squadrons and Wing HQs were landed as more airfields were opened up. Two of those LAA squadrons, 2817 and 2876, landed after their convoy had been attacked by 'E' Boats off the coast near Le Havre. A tank landing craft carrying squadron vehicles and guns was sunk, three airmen were killed, and three more seriously wounded.

The build-up continued apace, and by D+12, there were ten Mobile Wing HQs and LAA squadrons deployed across the ten airfields in the beachhead. Landing strips were the highest priority, and the Airfield Construction Groups, which had also arrived on D+1, moved out to establish and construct new landing grounds with bulldozers, graders and steel track. This was done under the protection of the Regiment's Bofors guns, and once the work was completed the aircraft were called in. The first aircraft flew in to Coulombs on the morning of 17 June, and within hours it was being strafed by three Bf 109s, to which the Regiment guns responded with some effect. Forward airfields, were frequently shelled by enemy 88 mm and 210 mm guns; the former, firing air-burst shells, being particularly unpleasant. 2834 LAA Squadron at Christof found itself only three miles from the enemy gun line. On one day, more than 100 shells fell on the airstrip causing casualties among RAF personnel and damaging aircraft. So heavy was the shellfire at this airstrip on one day that the aircraft were flown off and sent back to the UK until matters quietened down.

## EARLY THREATS

The early threat from the Luftwaffe over the beachheads is often downplayed in popular accounts, but enemy aircraft soon appeared in numbers over the airfields. Between 9 June and 11 July,

Coulombs was attacked by a total of 77 sorties by Bf 109s and Fw 190s. Hits were claimed at times by 2876 Squadron, but the deterrent effect of the Bofors barrage was inestimable. By the end of the month, however, the Regiment LAA squadrons could claim 14 enemy aircraft destroyed and 13 damaged. Further supplementary LAA support was provided by two Army LAA regiments, which had been planned to arrive after the RAF Regiment on D+4. When not fighting off air attacks, the Regiment airmen were also called on to assist with refuelling and rearming of fighter aircraft with the high intensity of air operations.

The British and American forces had linked up and the Allies now set about enlarging their foothold and defeating the enemy counterattacks around Caen and the Brittany peninsula. The rifle and armoured car squadrons of the RAF Regiment had been held back in the United Kingdom until late July and early August. Seventeen squadrons and nine Mobile Wing HQs were then despatched to France. Two rifle squadrons and one armoured car squadron arrived in late July as reinforcements, and deployed with the fighter, ground attack and reconnaissance squadrons of 83 Group RAF. The remainder went to 84 Group, which had also arrived, and it was allocated eight LAA, two rifle and two armoured squadrons. Three more rifle squadrons were assigned to special duties with 2 and 85 Groups, bringing the total RAF Regiment deployment in France to nineteen Wing HQs, eighteen LAA, eight rifle and four armoured car squadrons.

The rifle and armoured car squadrons were employed on a number of tasks, some of a ground crew or engineering nature, including  
**continued on page 124**



RAF Regiment Bofors LAA gun Carpiquet airfield, near Caen, Normandy after capture 9th July, 1944. UK CROWN COPYRIGHT / MOD. Courtesy of Air Historical Branch (Royal Air Force).



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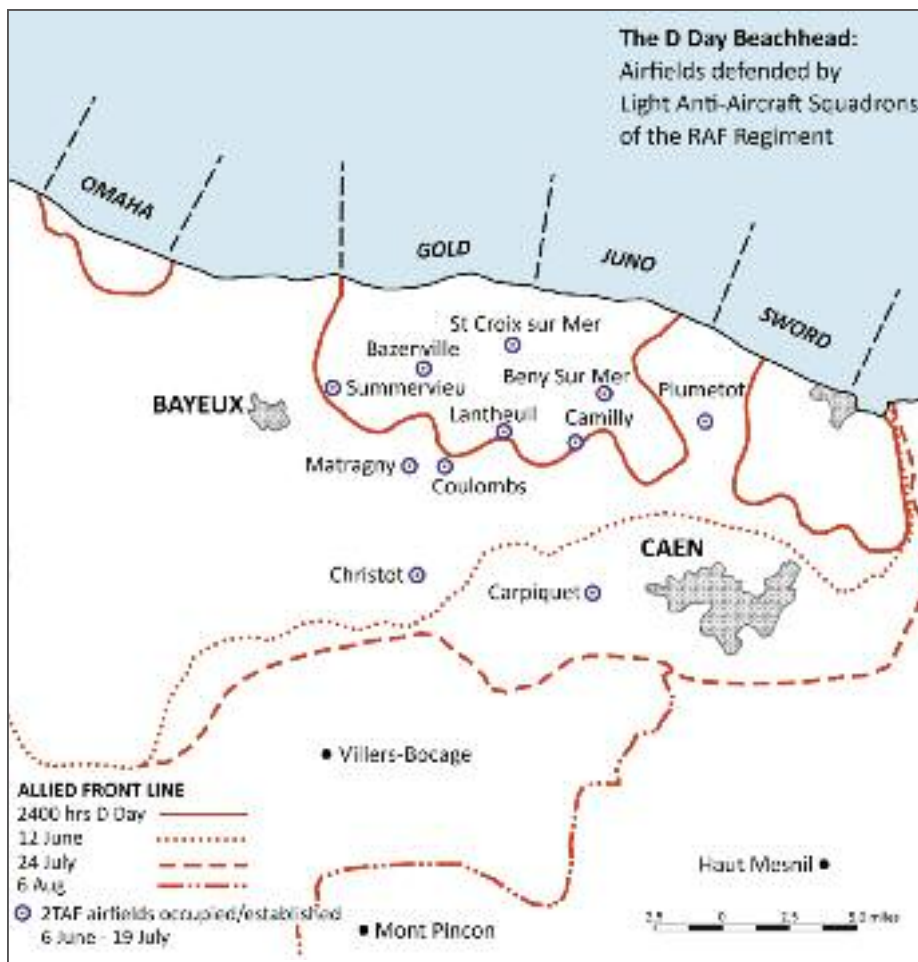
assembling rocket projectiles, breaking down and re-belted ammunition for fighter aircraft, laying steel tracking on new strips, constructing aircraft dispersals, but most importantly on mine clearance, and as escorts to the three Airfield Construction Groups. A rifle flight of 2726 Squadron lifted out and neutralised 115 'Teller' and 20 'S' type mines without a single casualty from the recently captured town of Villers-Bocage, which had been the scene of bitter fighting.

**BREAKOUT**

Following the breakout from the Normandy bridgehead, the RAF Regiment planned to use fast moving mobile detachments of armoured car and rifle flights to provide escorts to RAF Air Technical Intelligence (ATI) teams to investigate crashed enemy aircraft, captured airfields and radar installations. One mission of note, followed the launch of Operation Bluecoat by 2nd Army on 30 July. The main aim was to capture the high ground to the south-west of Bayeux. Moving with 214th Infantry Brigade Advanced HQ was an ATI reconnaissance team, escorted by a flight of 2806 Armoured Car Squadron and a rifle flight from 2726 Squadron. Their task was to examine technical equipment in an enemy radar station located on Mont Pincon, at the earliest opportunity. It was not known if the enemy was in occupation, and the airmen came under mortar and shell fire as they approached the crest. They proceeded through the infantry forward positions and entered the radar station. A counter-attack caused their withdrawal, and it wasn't until three days later they reoccupied the site, and with the assistance of five sappers set about de-lousing the area of mines and booby-traps. Spasmodic shelling continued and a sniper gave trouble, but was located and eliminated. Only a few days later, following up on an attack by the Canadians, two flights of 2827 Rifle Squadron and a flight of Humber light reconnaissance cars of 2806 Armoured Car Squadron escorted an ATI Team to a V-1 Flying Bomb installation located in a quarry at Haut Mesnil, 10 miles south-east of Caen. A complete search was made, punctuated by mortar, shell fire and small arms fire. The force withdrew without casualty, only to see the quarry overrun by a German counter-attack.

**LONGCHAMPS RACECOURSE**

With the Allied breakout from Normandy in mid-August, the RAF Regiment deployed the detachments of armoured car and rifle flights to move on to captured airfields and other installations. 2798 Squadron, which had been protecting radar stations and doing ATI work in the American sector around the Cherbourg Peninsula and Brittany, joined the rapid advance of Patton's 3rd US Army, and early on 25 August, became one of the first Allied units to enter Paris. Assisted by the French Maquis, it followed a circuitous route owing to sniping and skirmishing on the outskirts of the city, and secured the Longchamps racecourse as a potential radar site.



The Nazi regime had unleashed the first V-1 flying bombs in mid-June, and later in August, the V-2 rockets. To neutralise these new 'terror' weapons, 'Bow' Force, composed of three RAF Regiment armoured car squadrons and a rifle squadron, was despatched with ATI teams in rapidly moving mobile columns to secure and investigate launching sites from Le Havre, Rouen to Calais, and then Antwerp and Bruges.

**SEPTEMBER 1944**

By September 1944, with the advance reaching the Netherlands, there were Regiment armoured car and rifle squadrons on the front line. With the shortage of ground troops due to heavy casualties in the Normandy fighting, the RAF Regiment was asked to provide squadrons to go into the line, fighting alongside the units of Guards Armoured Division, 43rd Wessex Division, the Czechoslovak Armoured Brigade and the 1st Canadian Army. Other Regiment squadrons were involved in protecting RAF signals and radar units during the Ardennes offensive and had an exciting but successful time protecting their charges from encirclement during the German offensive that became known as the Battle of the Bulge.

The LAA Squadrons continued their vital work as the Allies advanced into Germany, with 2875 Squadron being credited with destroying the first jet fighter, a German Messerschmitt Me 262, by ground fire. The worth of these squadrons was made all the more apparent when the Luftwaffe launched Operation

Bodenplatte, a mass air attack on New Year's Day 1945 against the Allied airfields in northern France, Holland and Belgium. The RAF Regiment claimed 46 destroyed and 42 damaged of the 335 attacking aircraft.

By VE Day, 8 May 1945, 75 squadrons (six armoured car, 28 LAA and 41 rifle squadrons) of the Regiment were deployed on the Continent. RAF Regiment task forces played a major role in taking the surrender of thousands of German military personnel in the Schleswig-Holstein region in northern Germany, Denmark and Norway. This included tense confrontations, and some persuasion, by Regiment task force commanders with determined parties of the Waffen SS and German Kriegsmarine who refused to cede following the formal announcement of the ceasefire. Young Flight Lieutenants found themselves responsible for large airfields, holding up to 5000 officers and men of the Luftwaffe, as well as Army units, and large parties of Russian prisoners of war, while Admiral Karl Dönitz, Hitler's designated successor, was arrested by Squadron Leader Mark Hobden.

Operation Overlord and the liberation of Europe had absorbed the greatest proportion of RAF Regiment in overseas theatres. The vital contribution of Regiment Wings and Squadrons to the success of air operations by the 2nd TAF had made the case for permanent retention of the RAF Regiment in the post-war Royal Air Force.





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# CAEN INFERNO

The advance by Anglo-Canadian armies was held up in the vicinity of Colombelles northeast of Caen, particularly where enemy troops of the 21st Panzer Division had occupied the steelworks at Mondeville, establishing a number of Artillery Observation Posts and Gun Positions on the site. A request was received from the 51st Highland Division, via its Air Liaison Officers, that the steelworks be bombed.

## No ordinary tactical operation

This was to be no ordinary tactical bombing operation as a very high degree of accuracy was needed with British ground forces a mere 1,500 yards away from the target. Taking part in the attack was Nos. 98, 226 and 320 (Netherlands) Squadrons Royal Air Force, flying Mitchell bombers. The latter was formed from members of the Royal Netherlands Naval Air Service.

The operation against the steelworks was planned for the early evening of 22nd June, using 48 Mitchells supported by 24 Boston bombers. The approach was to be made from the sea with the planes dropping a mixed load of 284 x 500lb and 48 x 1,000lb bombs on the factory before turning east to head home, thereby avoiding the heaviest of German anti-aircraft defences, which at the steelworks alone consisted of some twenty to thirty 88mm guns.

## Intensity of the defensive fire

As the run-in was made over St Aubin, it was clear that early reports of good visibility were accurate: there was only a slight grey haze hanging over the sea and at a range of ten



Caen suffered several huge air attacks

miles, the entire coast from Cherbourg to Le Harve, between which all five of the invasion beaches lay, was visible. The Mitchells flew in five boxes of six machines each, twelve of them belonging to No. 320 Squadron, but despite the intensity of the defensive fire, only one of the high-explosive bombs dropped that evening failed to find its mark, falling outside the designated 'yellow' area.

## The enemy suffered severely

As the final aircraft delivered its load, the enemy sent up a crimson smoke-shell signalling to the guns to concentrate on the attackers as they re-formed, but the groundfire seemed to lose accuracy at that point and a only few bombers sustained some minor damage and among the crews, only two air-gunners were wounded. However, the enemy suffered severely, the situation being summed up in a subsequent report, which claimed that the steelworks had been completely cleared of 'enemy grenadiers'.

## 450 RAF heavy bombers

Six days later the British 2nd Army crossed the River Odon, south-west of Caen and on the 7th July, the area was subjected to a night attack by 450 heavy bombers of the RAF, saturating the defences with 2,300 tons of high explosives. So deep were the bomb craters that each posed serious problems for the troops of 2nd Army, which would capture Caen on the 9th July, having advanced some three miles under cover of darkness during the previous night against fierce German opposition.

But now the enemy was attempting to repulse the allies without the advantage provided by the Mondeville steel factory with its multitude of observation points. Small wonder that the 51st Highland Division was to send a signal of congratulations to the RAF with thanks for a job well done.

The professionalism of the bomber crews' accomplishment is illustrated by the fact that a bombing error of less than one per cent was achieved and given the close-proximity of British troops so close to the RAF's target the bombing could easily have resulted in a 'friendly fire' calamity of massive proportions.



Three North American Mitchell Mark IIs, of No. 226 Squadron RAF based at Hartford Bridge, Hampshire. Copyright © IWM (CH13071)



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MESSAGE FROM  
**GÉNÉRAL FRANÇOIS LECOINTRE**  
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF, FRANCE



Seventy-five years have passed since D-Day, the momentous military operation that heralded France's return to freedom. For generations of local people, memories of those Landings and the ensuing 80-day Normandy Campaign remain as vivid as ever, such as were the tumult and turmoil, as our many monuments and steles show.

In the darkest hours of their history, British and French have always been shoulder to shoulder in adversity. In these dramatic days, our veterans have woven indissoluble bonds that bear testimony the fraternity of our two peoples.

The French Commando Kieffer took part in the D-Day and in the whole campaign. Likewise, the French Resistance was a key element for the success of the D-Day landings. General Dwight D. Eisenhower wrote after the War, "Throughout France the Resistance had been of inestimable value in the campaign. Without their great assistance the liberation of France would have consumed a much longer time and meant greater losses to ourselves.

General de Gaulle, in an address to the French people declared: "Whatever happens, the flame of the French resistance must not be extinguished and will not be extinguished". These words still resonate today.

That is why we in France remain so determined to remember those young men who selflessly came here to give or risk their lives in order to liberate our country. On the occasion of the 2019 commemorations, we intend to pay a solemn tribute to "our veterans", many of whom continue to travel here each year. This is the "raison d'être" of our mission today.

I take great pride in honouring both the Allied forces who helped liberate France and the French people of Normandy who suffered heavy losses.

February 2019





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*The French Legion of Honour - We Will Never Forget*

In June 2014 the French government offered to honour all surviving Allied servicemen who fought to liberate the country in the war with the medal.

The government of France had advised the Ministry of Defence that it wished to award the *Legion d'Honneur* to all surviving veterans. Now, the French Embassy says there are just 100 more to be given out. *The Legion d'Honneur* is France's highest military and civilian honour. The process has been handled jointly by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the French Embassy, which says 5,500 have been awarded in the last four years.

An application form is available for any veterans, including Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel who operated in support of the landings, who have not already received this award from the French government, or have not been identified to take part in award ceremonies during the events in Normandy.

In the section headed "reasons justifying the proposal", brief details should be given of service in France.

The application form can be found on the UK government information website on:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/d-day-70-application-form-for-award-of-the-legion-dhonneur](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/d-day-70-application-form-for-award-of-the-legion-dhonneur)



MESSAGE FROM  
**SUSAN EISENHOWER**  
GRANDDAUGHTER OF  
ALLIED SUPREME COMMANDER GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER  
AND 34TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES



Operation Overlord and the liberation of Western Europe were campaigns of unimaginable scale, requiring an Allied effort unseen in the annals of history.

It cemented forever the special bond between the United States and the United Kingdom and brought to an end the horrors of Nazi occupation.

It is difficult to overstate what was at stake on D-Day: the fate of democracy in Western Europe; the German effort to develop nuclear weapons; and the right of people simply to exist.

At the heart of this monumental achievement were millions of people whose sacrifices and valor ensured victory. They will never be forgotten.

**JANUARY 2019**





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A Military Police Sergeant challenges a member of the 1st SS Panzer Division "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler" about the large amount of currency in his possession.  
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# ROYAL MILITARY POLICE

by Colonel J T Green OBE, Regimental Secretary Royal Military Police

**The first Corps of Military Police (CMP) to land in Normandy, dropped by parachute with 6th Airborne Division across the Orne River in the early hours of D-Day and 22-year old "Para-Provost" Lance-Corporal Thomas Nimmo was the first Military Policeman to be killed in the campaign. Military Police from the Provost Companies of 50th (Northumbrian) Division landing on GOLD Beach and 3rd Division on SWORD Beach followed with the first wave of assault troops on the first tide of 6th June to establish control in the beach-heads with the Beach Groups.**

The most important duty for the Military Police was the saving of life on the beaches, which depended on well executed and controlled dispersal inland. The immediate task therefore was reconnaissance and the signing of paths off the beaches to Assembly and Beach Maintenance Areas, but in the first few minutes of landing, Military Police were found to be mine detecting, clearing barbed wire, collecting wounded and rounding up Prisoners-of-War. 37-year old Corporal William Tweedale and 23-year old Lance-Corporal George Hillard were killed undertaking such work on SWORD Beach on D-Day. By D+50

nearly 8,724 British and Commonwealth Military Policemen and a number of Military Policewomen had been landed in France.

On JUNO Beach the Military Police found that they had lost all of their traffic signs, but luckily they each carried a pot of sign paint and a brush so they improvised by painting traffic directions on walls and posts and any other flat surface in order to get the troops quickly out of the killing zone. Traffic flow on the Anglo-Canadian beaches was such that a census revealed that 18,836 vehicles had passed a particular point in one day,

continued on page 134



# THE ROYAL MILITARY POLICE ASSOCIATION



*Commemorating the  
75th Anniversary*

The President, National Chairman and  
Association take pride  
in paying tribute to all those members who  
served with distinction during the  
Normandy Campaign



## THE ROYAL MILITARY POLICE

representing to the Military Policeman on Traffic Post duty, one vehicle passing him every 4 seconds all day long. In order to be readily distinguished and more easily identifiable, all Military Policemen operating on the beaches were ordered to whiten their green webbing with sign paint and this is why the modern Royal Military Police (RMP) wear white belts when in Service Dress to this day.

Entering Bayeux in July 1944, a visitor would encounter one of over 400 Information Posts set up by the Military Police which handled up to 2,000 inquiries per day and Straggler Posts, intended to handle soldiers separated from their Units when in-contact, were deployed immediately behind the fighting troops. The Special Investigation Branch (SIB) CMP accompanied advancing troops in order that accurate statements could be taken when British troops were accused of misdemeanours before 'imagination could be given time to develop'. One enterprising and entrepreneurial British soldier sold a Bren Gun Carrier for the equivalent of a £100 (worth over £4000 today) to a local French farmer so he could draw his plough.

On the 17th June, Sergeant Monty Satchell was driving his armoured car through a badly damaged village to join the 7th Battalion Duke of Wellington's Regiment, which was expecting a counter-attack, when he was guided,

under 88 mm airbursts, past a minefield and two burning German tanks by a lone Military Policeman on Traffic Point duty, his motorcycle left in a ditch. This picture was replicated countless times where a Military Policeman, always highly visible in his 'Red Cap' and 'blancoed' white webbing, gaiters and traffic sleeves, was stationed in the open without any cover at every river crossing, roadblock, mined verge and crossroad, which were all pre-recorded and designated targets for the enemy's artillery and a hunting ground for the highly organised sniper system employed by the Germans, without even the scant comfort of a steel-helmet. Reflecting on the fighting in 1944, General Sir Myles Dempsey KCB, KBE, DSO, MC, who commanded the 2nd British Army from the beaches of Normandy to the German surrender on Lüneburg Heath, paid the Military Police the following tribute:

"The military policeman became so well known a figure on every road to the battlefield that his presence became taken for granted. Few soldiers as they hurried over a bridge, which was a regular target for the enemy, gave much thought to the man whose duty it was to be there for hours on end, directing the traffic and ensuring its rapid passage."

The job was not a glamorous one, but demanding and vital.

*Exemplo Ducemus.*



Military Policemen greet an inhabitant of La Brèche d'Hermanville, 6th June. Copyright: © IWM (B 5028)



German prisoners under the watchful eye of a Military Policeman. Copyright: © IWM (B 7663)

Military Police supervise movement of traffic in La Brèche d'Hermanville, 6th June. Copyright: © IWM (B 5040)



Lance-Corporals Burton and Barnett of 6th Airborne Division Provost Company guarding a Glider Landing Zone. Copyright: © IWM (B 5291)



# TOGETHER WE CAN CHANGE LIVES

**When (Major) Bernie Broad** was blown up in an IED explosion in Afghanistan in 2009 he was left with life-changing physical injuries. Flown back to the UK where doctors fought to save his legs, nine months later they amputated his left leg, then three years later, he lost his right leg as well.

Bernie spent the next few years being treated at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, where he spent up to six weeks at a time. He and his wife stayed at SSAFA's Norton House, a home-from-home for injured serving personnel and their families.

Bernie explains. "The SSAFA staff are just so friendly, they don't see you as an injury or a problem. As the accommodation is free, my wife and family could stay nearby, so they could support me during my recovery. For me, SSAFA's Norton House became my home."

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MESSAGE FROM  
**GENERAL EBERHARD ZORN**  
GERMAN CHIEF OF DEFENCE



Seventy-five years ago, the Allies landed in Normandy under Operation Overlord to liberate Europe from the terror of Nazi rule.

This joint effort caused almost half a million casualties on both sides, but it was a key milestone in the fight to restore a peaceful European order.

Today, we want to honour and pay tribute not only to those who stood up for freedom and justice and gave their lives for the success of D-Day but to all fallen soldiers and killed civilians from all over the world. Over 60 million people lost their lives in the course of the deadliest military conflict in history.

As the German Chief of Defence I am grateful for what we have achieved today. We no longer face each other on the battlefield but are close friends and partners who share the same values and commemorate and remember side by side.

Peace and stability are not a matter of course and we are still seeing and feeling the impact of crises and conflict. We will keep our promise to stand together in order to defend human rights, freedom, democracy and the rule of law and international law.

OCTOBER 2018



21,222 German soldiers, sailors and airmen  
interred at La Cambre

# LA CAMBRE GERMAN MILITARY CEMETERY

*Bayeux, France*

*In Erinnerung an die Gefallenen*

*In remembrance of the fallen*







Number 4 Company during the attack on Cagny, July 1944. The Company Commander, Major JDA Syrett, is seen indicating a mortar target to Sergeant Vessey. Guardsman Kitchen is in the foreground and Guardsman Fenwick is the Bren gunner. Major Syrett was killed a few days later.

# THE WELSH GUARDS IN NORMANDY 1944

By Brigadier JF Rickett CBE formerly Welsh Guards

Both Battalions (the 2nd being armoured), formed part of the Guards Armoured Division, which was complete in Normandy by the 26th June. They had landed at Arromanches at one of the two artificial harbours, which had been constructed in England and towed across the Channel. Vivian Wallace described, in his rather inimical style, how every man in the Battalion had to carry an anti-tank mine which, in his own words, was the brilliant idea of some clever staff Officer! The story had an amusing twist, as one of his Guardsmen was found to have placed his anti-tank mine against the safe in someone's house, luckily he was stopped just before he blew it. It subsequently turned out that the Guardsman concerned had been a professional safe breaker in civilian life.

The 1st Battalion arrived first as part of 32nd Guards Brigade, which was detached from the Division and on June the 28th took up its position in and around the small village of Cheux. This was about 8 miles west of Caen and had previously been the scene of heavy fighting during and after Operation Epsom, General Montgomery's second attempt to outflank and get behind Caen. They held their position for the next 12 days and experienced some very unpleasant shelling and mortaring, which resulted in many more casualties than had been anticipated. Among the casualties on the 29th of June were the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Browning, the Second in Command, Major Smart, the anti-tank Platoon Commander and the Signals Officer, while on the 30th, Lt Colonel Fass, who had taken over as the Commanding Officer, was killed in almost the exact place. The Battalion had thus lost three of its senior officers and a number of key personnel before even going into action. Lt Colonel Heber-Percy thereafter took over the command of the Battalion.

On the 11th of July, the 32nd Guards Brigade, with the 1st Battalion under command, re-joined the Guards Armoured Division in the peaceful atmosphere in and around Bayeux. It had been a difficult time for them but they had gained valuable experience of life under almost constant shelling and also some knowledge of the Wehrmacht and how it operated. It turned out that they had had the 12th SS Panzer Division against them, commanded by the youngest Divisional Commander in the German Army, known as "Panzer Meyer", who, together with his fanatical young SS troopers, made a truly formidable opposition.

On July the 14th the Division received the warning order that they would take part in a major attack under the command of VIII Corps to the East of Caen, which was to be known as "Operation Goodwood". The problem was that this area was very narrow owing to the gap between the Orne and Dives Rivers, which was made even more narrow by a large

minefield, which had been laid by the 6th Airborne Division after their highly successful operations in and around the Brévil Ridge and beyond; this had secured the left flank of the British 2nd Army both during the initial landings on D Day and subsequent operations afterwards. Because of this the operation was to be made on a single Divisional front with the reserve divisions coming into echelon behind them. The 11th Armoured Division was to lead with the 7th Armoured behind and lastly the Guards Armoured Division would follow. The whole operation would be preceded by a massive aerial bombardment because as the divisions moved forward they would become out of range of some of their artillery.

On Sunday the 16th of July, Major General Adair, the Divisional Commander, addressed a large number of officers on the impending battle. He stressed that it would be the first battle that the Division as a whole was to take part in. He spoke so much from the heart that



all who heard him were deeply moved and were inspired with much needed confidence. At dusk on the 17th July, the Division moved off for their approach march to the bridges over the River Orne, which was to be completed by dawn.

The 5th Guards Armoured Brigade led the way and the Division, as a whole, had an outstanding view of the bombing which was preceding their advance. The Allied air forces laid a carpet of bombs and created a landscape which must have resembled the craters of the moon. Vivian Wallace later recalled that there was complete desolation and bemused and shell shocked German soldiers, shaking their heads, rose from the desolation seemingly unable to grasp what had happened.

There wasn't much fighting for either of the Welsh Guards' Battalions that day as the brunt of the fighting was borne by the 5th Guards Armoured Brigade. They had managed to reach Cagny by late afternoon of the 19th and the 1st Battalion was sent in to clear the village. The Germans, who were left, were only too keen to surrender and many prisoners were taken. To the west of Cagny the 11th Armoured Division was having a comparatively tough time, losing many tanks in their advance. The problem was lack of infantry in flushing out the Germans from the network of villages which were everywhere within a 1000 metres radius of each other. The 7th Armoured Division was ordered to reinforce them but also lost a number of tanks in the process.



Cromwells in action in Normandy 1944

There was a wonderful story from the German side of the battle that a Major Von Lutzig, who had just returned from visiting his girlfriend in Paris and still wearing his dinner jacket, appeared in the area of Cagny. He was extremely angry that a Luftwaffe officer was still using his 88mm gun in the anti-aircraft role when it should have been directed at enemy tanks. He threatened the Luftwaffe officer with his pistol to correct the balance. Unfortunately, the Luftwaffe officer's tank recognition wasn't very good and he knocked out 5 Tiger tanks which were withdrawing

towards the Bourguebus Ridge. The Tiger Troop Commander, who had managed to escape, reported directly to the SS Divisional Commander, General Sep Dietrich, that the British had a new anti-tank weapon. This 'intelligence' winged its way immediately to Berlin and the Allies were credited with this myth for the rest of the war!

On the 19th the 1st Battalion was ordered to capture Le Poiriet only some 600 yards south west of Cagny. The opposition was light and the village was captured with little difficulty;

# THE WELSH GUARDS (THE GUARDS DIVISION)



Proudly remembering all those in the  
1st and 2nd Battalion Welsh Guards  
75th Anniversary Normandy



several prisoners were taken. Major Syrett, commanding No 2 Company, was killed by mortar fire on the 20th, with which the Germans continued to be extremely adept. The Battalion remained there until the 23rd. Meanwhile the 2nd Battalion had been acting as screen to the Division and they covered the ground between Cagny and Emmerville. They had lost a number of tanks by mines, anti tank guns and indeed through tank battles. It was during this period that Lt Whistler was killed by mortar fire when he had got out of his tank to talk with one of his tank commanders. His was a great loss, as he was much loved by so many, not only within the regiment but also throughout the Division as a whole.

The weather broke on the 20th July and torrential rain ruled the day. The ground became totally sodden and any further advance was out of the question. VIII Corps was taken out of the line and the Armoured Divisions were replaced by infantry. The 2nd Battalion, under command of the 32nd Guards Brigade, remained in the line until the July the 22nd when they were relieved by the 154th Brigade of the 51st Highland Division.

While Goodwood had not been the total success it might have been, General Montgomery's aim of keeping the great majority of the German Panzer Divisions opposite the 2nd British Army had succeeded. The cream of the Wehrmacht was facing them and they fought tooth and nail to prevent any advance on the obvious direct route to Paris. Only two Panzer Divisions faced the American 1st Army to the west thus enabling them more easily to break out of the Bocage country on the 25th July.

The immediate plan after the ground had dried out sufficiently was for the Guards Armoured and the 7th Armoured Divisions to push on in line with the Canadians on the direct route towards Falaise and beyond. This was changed and both Divisions re-crossed the Orne River to join the 11th Armoured in the general advance through the Bocage to the south of Bayeux. This country was ideal for the defence; it consisted of high banks, overgrown hedgerows with very narrow twisting lanes interspersed with tiny fields. The Germans used this to its fullest advantage and any advance was to become painfully slow as every inch of the way was hotly contested.

On the 30th July both Battalions moved south from Bayeux. The 1st Battalion cleared the village of St Denis Maisoncelles with little difficulty and made contact with the Americans, who were moving to their right. The 2nd Battalion took on the task of guarding the Division's left flank. No 3 Squadron under Major Consett made very good progress towards Estry bypassing several villages held by the Germans. He found that the village of Estry was also strongly held so he deployed on the high ridge to the north keeping the village under observation and patrolling



The 1st Battalion moves forward, Normandy 1944

aggressively. His squadron was joined by the other two and together they held the area for 48 hours without supporting infantry and against determined enemy patrolling and of course severe shelling. Getting up supplies at night was a major problem with the Germans having infiltrated behind the Battalion's positions and ambushing anything that moved.

The 1st Battalion was fighting its way forward towards the Vire-Vassy road. The hand to hand fighting was intense in the close country and at one time the RAP dealt with 68 casualties from 8 different units in one period of three hours. It was very clear that the enemy was everywhere and it was impossible to guarantee that any stretch of country was free of them.

On August the 3rd the Battalion was put temporarily under the command of 44 Brigade of 15th Scottish Division and ordered to take the village of Montchamp where they had one hell of a battle losing many casualties to shelling even before they had crossed the start line. After some bitter fighting the village was secured and the Germans were driven out of the far end. As the two leading companies were reorganising the Germans put in an extremely heavy counter attack, which the Battalion faced with neither its supporting tanks nor its anti-tank guns, which had not yet arrived on the position. Both Prince of Wales and No 2 Companies were cut in half and overrun. Little ad hoc groups of guardsmen managed to exfiltrate themselves out of the mêlée and escape but Captain

Powell, Major Miller's Second in command was captured. Both Officers were carrying wounded Guardsmen at the time. Captain Powell later managed to escape after a series of adventures and re-joined the Battalion a few weeks later, via Paris, in a captured German staff car!

Just before this German counter-attack began the Commanding Officer was wounded by a sniper in civilian clothes, who was promptly caught and shot. Major Fowke then took over command of the Battalion and by nightfall he had succeeded in withdrawing all the companies to a strong position with proper support from both tanks and artillery. For an hour, the Battalion had been in a truly hazardous position. The German counter attack had caught them at their most vulnerable time when they were reorganising after their successful attack on the village. Good leadership and stout defence had saved the day. The Battalion had its reward as the Germans had crept away from Montchamp during the night, leaving the village in their hands. Casualties on both sides were heavy with over 100 being inflicted on the Battalion by the Germans.

The 2nd Battalion, in company with the Irish Guards 2nd Battalion and the Coldstream 5th Battalion, attempted to continue the advance from the area of La Marvindièrre only to find that the 9th SS Panzer Division had arrived and had occupied the villages of Estry and Le Busq before them. This strong position dominated the Aunay-sur-Odon to Vire main



road; the Battalions persisted with their attack on these two villages but had to withdraw back to La Marvindiere with severe losses. The Germans were attacking all along the line and the position at La Marvindiere was becoming critical because of the lack of ammunition and supplies being able to get through; this, together with the evacuation of the wounded, the numbers of which were increasing by the hour due mainly to the heavy shelling, made the situation extremely precarious. By August the 4th, matters were very serious indeed as it was impossible to spare any infantry to clear the road short of evacuating the position.

A supply column had been brought through the 29th Armoured Brigade's positions however and was waiting about a mile north of the difficult area to try and get through. At this moment Lt Ferguson-Cunningham, a Liaison Officer from the 5th Guards Brigade, arrived in a scout car and immediately offered to guide an ambulance column through and bring the supplies back. After reconnoitring a possible route, slightly wounded by a spent bullet and full of enthusiasm he, together with Major Vandeleur, led the ambulance convoy away to safety despite intense German fire which thankfully failed to hit anyone. For the return of the supply convoy they managed to get it through by calling up single vehicles one at a time and telling the drivers to drive like hell! The traverse of the Panther tanks 75mm guns were no match for this skulduggery!

Further attacks by these three battalions on Estry came to very little as the Germans were obviously determined to prevent any further penetration south. The reason for this almost maniacal fighting by them was because General Von Kluge had been ordered by Hitler to counter-attack the Americans in the area of Avranches. This it was hoped, would cut off the head of General Patton's 3rd US Army which was streaming both into Brittany and

hooking around the German line, which was hinged back towards the South East from Vire. Thus the safe corridor for Operation Lutlich, as it was called, had to be held in order for this to happen. A surprise attack by three divisions was launched on the American 30th Division at Mortain, which, although being a completely green Division with no battle experience, managed to hold its positions with great courage before the Germans had to pull back. That having been said the Germans had succeeded in getting within 9 miles of Avranches and the sea; it seemed a close-run thing at the time although Allied airpower itself would have finally stopped them.

Now of course the shoulders of the corridor used for Operation Lutlich still had to be kept open for the remnants of these Divisions to escape to the East. Hitler had at last agreed that Von Kluge could withdraw behind the River Dives. By August the 8th the flanks of the Guards Armoured Division were secure for the first time since the operation had started. Mount Pinçon, a formidable feature, had been captured by the 43rd Division and thus all our forces now held the complete stretch of territory west of the Orne River. The long awaited Canadian attack towards Falaise had also begun that morning.

After five days, the 1st Battalion moved south around le Bas Perrier area. The position was not pleasant as villages to its front and along a north-south ridge nearby were held by the enemy. On August the 10th, Lt Colonel Gresham, now commanding the Battalion, made his plan to attack Le Haut Perrier and Housse-magne with Numbers 2 and 3 Companies to take the former and Prince of Wales and No 4 Company to take the latter. The attack was to be supported by the 3rd Battalion Scots Guards and the 2nd Battalion Irish Guards. Despite clever tactics by the 10th SS Panzer Division, who were putting up a suicidal defence, the attacks on both

villages were a success. Over 100 casualties were sustained in this the last battle fought by them in Normandy. From now on the Guards Armoured Division was simply ordered to act as infantry and hold the line with some of its tanks dug in to repel any possible German counter attack, with the remainder of its tanks held in reserve to meet this eventuality. On August the 15th, patrols found definite signs of German withdrawal and on the 16th the Division's front was completely clear of enemy except for a mesh of mines and booby traps, which despite every precaution, took its bloody toll.

The final stages of the Normandy campaign were played out on the River Dives around August the 21st when some 50,000 men, the remnants of a once proud army, fled in petty packets in what vehicles they could get hold of through the gap which had been held open for them by the 2nd SS Panzer Division, Das Reich. Over 10,000 German soldiers, some 10,000 horses and hundreds of armoured vehicles of one sort or another lay in the so called Falaise Pocket. The stench of all these corpses was terrible and the water was all poisoned on account of this. As can be imagined the clearing up of all this debris afterwards must have been horrific.

Paris fell to the French 2nd Light Armoured Division under General Leclerc with the Americans in close support; politically it was essential that the Free French should establish firm control of the capital over the heads of the Resistance, some of which was communist orientated and would have made life very difficult if they had succeeded in gaining control. The next phase was about to begin. "My intention is to advance and capture Brussels" said General Adair, the Divisional Commander, "and a very good intention too" he added. The fastest Armoured advance in history was about to begin.



Cromwell tanks of Number 3 Squadron advancing through the Bocage country, Normandy 1944



# HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES



IMAGE COURTESY OF CLARENCE HOUSE

## HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE CHARLES, PRINCE OF WALES



### CLARENCE HOUSE

I was delighted to learn of plans to create a long overdue, permanent and fitting National Memorial in Northern France to the 22,000 service personnel who gave their lives during the D-Day landings and Battle of Normandy in 1944.

I have long been concerned that the memory of these remarkable individuals should be preserved for generations to come as an example of personal courage and sacrifice, for the benefit of the wider national – and, indeed, international – community. That is why, after attending commemorations of the 70th anniversary of D-Day in 2014, I commissioned a series of portraits of veterans from those Regiments of which my wife and I are either Colonel or Colonel-in-Chief. And it is why I take great pride in offering my wholehearted support for a new Normandy Memorial to be constructed on a highly evocative site overlooking Gold Beach, near Arromanches.

The Memorial will provide a place of private and perpetual contemplation, where visitors can reflect on what we owe to all those who so gallantly carried out their duty with such extraordinary selflessness and resolve; in other words, the kind of qualities that we, our children and grandchildren would surely hope to emulate in the service of others.





PROUD TO BE DESIGNING  
THE  
BRITISH NORMANDY  
MEMORIAL







# THE BRITISH D-DAY NORMAN



It has taken 75 years but, finally, there is to be a national memorial on the D-Day beaches dedicated to the part played by the United Kingdom in securing the freedoms of western Europe.

Alone among the major wartime allies, Britain has not had its own D-Day/Normandy memorial. In the words of HRH the Prince of Wales such a national memorial is “long overdue”. To address that omission and, most importantly, to fulfil the ambitions of the remaining Normandy Veterans, the Normandy Memorial Trust was formed in 2016.

The support of the British government was secured through a grant of £20 million from the LIBOR fund.

The trust retained the architect Liam O'Connor, creator among other things of the acclaimed Bomber Command Memorial in London, and asked him to design the memorial.

Work was begun to bring together the names of the 22,442 servicemen and women under direct British command who lost their lives in the landings and in the subsequent Battle of Normandy. This has been an original and important piece of historical research.





# NORMANDY MEMORIAL - VER SUR MER

All the names will be inscribed on the memorial.

An outstanding site was identified on a hillside overlooking “Gold Beach” in the town of Ver sur Mer. The choice of site was overwhelmingly endorsed by Normandy Veterans consulted by the trust.

The site’s spectacular position above Gold Beach has meant that it is subject to tight environmental and planning restrictions. The trust has been working closely with the local and regional authorities to secure the necessary planning permissions.

The formal inauguration of the site is scheduled to take place on 6 June 2019 as part of the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

The French President and British Prime Minister have publicly committed themselves to attend this ceremony when a Foundation Stone will be laid and the “D-Day Sculpture” by British sculptor David Williams Ellis will be unveiled.

Construction work will begin after the inauguration. It’s hoped to have the Memorial in place for June 2020.

At the same time the trust has launched a public appeal, “the 22,442 campaign”

to raise the further funding needed to complete the memorial to the standard that is appropriate.

The D-Day anniversary is a significant moment for Europe to look back and reflect on its recent history.

The British Normandy Memorial will help to ensure that future generations are fully aware of the sacrifice made by Britain so that Europe might be free from tyranny.

To support the British Normandy Memorial please go to:


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# D-DAY SPEARHEAD BRIGADE

*The Story of the Hampshires, Dorsets & Devons on 6th June 1944*



More than 156,000 Allied soldiers landed on D-Day. But, to get a feel for what it was like, we need to zoom in and hear the experience of individual soldiers on that single, cataclysmic day. D-Day Spearhead Brigade does just that, focusing on the 2,500 men of 231 Malta Brigade who landed on Gold Beach and deploying the testimony of seventy veterans to portray what they did and what they saw.

The first infantry battalion to land on D-Day was the 1st Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. A Company, led by Major Dick Baines, waded ashore to the east of Le Hamel at about 0730. They were very closely followed by B Company, led by Major Tony Mott, and A and B Companies of the 1st Dorsets, commanded by Majors Tony Jones and Pat Chilton. These were the Brigade's four assault companies, which would be followed by C and D Companies of both battalions and then by the reserve battalion, the 2nd Devons.

As their title suggests, the Brigade had formed in the early days of the three-year siege of Malta, where they had fought with distinction, enduring blockade, starvation and the heaviest bombing in history. At the end of the siege, instead of being sent somewhere quiet to recuperate, they were chosen to lead the assault on Sicily on 10th July 1943. At the end of the bitter campaign on Sicily, on 8th September they landed ahead of Montgomery's 8th Army on the toe of Italy and fought a battle there. They had so impressed Monty that he sent them home to the UK and chose them as one of his brigades to spearhead the Normandy landings.

Many of the officers and men of the Hampshires, Dorsets and Devons who landed

on D-Day were experienced, pre-war Regular soldiers. Some had served on the North West Frontier and in Palestine in the 1930s, many had fought in Malta, Sicily and Italy and taken part in two previous assault landings. They knew the vital importance of speed in attack and of getting off the beach as rapidly as possible. They also knew that battles seldom go as planned and that good troops must react flexibly and pragmatically.

The plan required the Hampshires to turn west along the coast to take Arromanches, the Dorsets to take three German positions on hills behind Arromanches, and the Devons to capture the village of Ryes and the naval guns at Longues before linking up with the Americans just to the west on Omaha Beach.

Having forced a postponement, the freakish storm in the Channel prevented the Sherwood Rangers' amphibious tanks from landing until later. Because the preliminary bombardment had missed the German defences, one 77mm gun wreaked havoc, knocking out tanks (when they did arrive) and landing craft as they approached the shore. Without tank support, the Brigade had to fight an infantry battle against determined defenders armed with machine guns and mortars in entrenched positions surrounded by mines.

Within an hour Dick Baines was dead, all three of his platoon commanders killed or wounded and his Company had ceased to exist. By mid-morning Tony Mott's Company had lost all three of its platoon commanders and was reduced to fifty men. The survivors in all three battalions fought on.

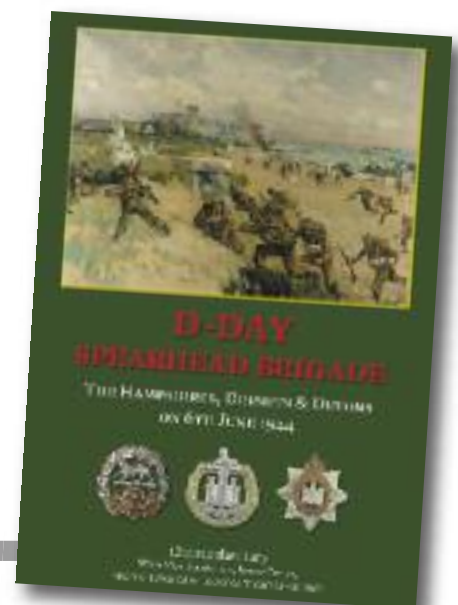
By evening, the Hampshires had lost 182 killed and wounded but had achieved almost all of their objectives. The Dorsets had lost 135 killed and wounded but had achieved all of theirs. The Devons had lost 88 killed and wounded and taken Ryes; next day they would capture the guns at Longues.

Weaving its account around the words of the men who did it, D-Day Spearhead Brigade tells how, despite setbacks and losses, they successfully established the beach-head and began the liberation of Europe and the final destruction of Nazism. Theirs is a proud, often tragic story. Fifty years later, Private Ron White of the Hampshires, a veteran of the Brigade's landings on Sicily and Italy, remembered:


*We'd done it twice.  
We couldn't see us failing.  
We could have done, but we never did.*

Published in a handsome hardback edition on 6th June 2019 to commemorate the 75th anniversary, *D-Day Spearhead Brigade* contains fifty photographs and ten maps. It will cost £22.50 from bookshops and will be available, at a special price of £20 (including postage within the UK) from the publisher:

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### The Falkland Islands in WWII


11% of the Islands' population travelled overseas to join the war effort during WWII (some of these men are pictured below.) Meanwhile back at home, the people of the Falkland Islands were heavily involved in wartime fund raising.

On October the 24th 1940 the first of 11 Falkland Islands funded Spitfire aircraft was delivered to the RAF. The Falkland Island Government voted a donation of £70,000 to Britain towards the war effort in 1940, £50,000 of which was expressly for the purchase of Spitfire aircraft.



**Missing in Action**

Rt Honorary Air Vice Marshal  
The RAF in September 1942.  
In 1942 he joined 222  
Squadron and destroyed a BF  
109 on 26th July and added to  
the destruction of a BF 109 the  
following day. He was shot  
down in combat over the  
canopy of Fleet's south of  
the Isle of Wight on August  
8th 1940 in Hurricane P9822  
and was reported missing.



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Photo: Frank Allen collection



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RIFT works hard for former and serving MOD personnel, from running fundraising events to promoting the immense value of ex-Forces candidates to employers. We've put tens of millions in tax refunds back into their pockets already, and helped with everything from calculating expenses to setting up their own businesses.

RIFT understands that a life after the Armed Forces can be every bit as challenging as the one you're leaving behind. We work with former MOD personnel every day, many of them recent service leavers. From claiming tax refunds to starting their own businesses, we help them find their way and make it pay. Whatever future you're planning after the service, keep talking to RIFT.

In 2018, we were proud to be awarded Armed Forces Covenant Silver status for upholding the military's values and supporting its families.

Earning this meant looking hard at ways to promote employment of ex-Forces candidates in our own business and beyond. We've created new roles for veterans, added paid leave for military spouses and built specialist teams to give financial briefings to unit personnel. At the same time, our Military Engagement events are reaching out and building relationships across the UK.

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# The Royal Yeomanry

*The Royal Yeomanry is a light cavalry regiment of the Army Reserve. It is made up of six squadrons and a band, based in Nottingham, Dudley, Croydon, Telford, Leicester, Fulham and in the City of London. Nine of the Royal Yeomanry's antecedent regiments took part in Operation OVERLORD. For that reason, the Royal Yeomanry bears the battle honour "Normandy Landings" among the 40 honours on its guidon.*

## **Westminster Dragoons**

The WDgns landed at 0725 on Gold (Jig and King) Beach in Sherman Crab flail tanks along with AVREs of the Royal Engineers. They started their mine-clearance work at 0750. On Jig, they cleared the first lane by 0830. The first lane on King took until 1100, in part due to a German 88mm antitank gun in a casemate at La Rivière which was ultimately destroyed by a tank of C Squadron. The WDgns sustained only 4 casualties on D-Day at Gold Beach, with none missing or killed. A Squadron landed successfully on Sword Beach at

1255. They were tasked immediately to support the Staffordshire Yeomanry in engagements at Hermanville (in which a corporal and two troopers were wounded) and with enemy tanks near Bieville.

## **Nottinghamshire Yeomanry (Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry)**

The amphibious Sherman Duplex Drive tanks of the Notts Yeo swam or deep waded ashore or were landed 'dryshod' onto Gold (Jig Green) beach at 0758 on D-Day. C Squadron lost five of their twenty tanks and B Squadron three of theirs, swamped in the heavy seas. Four more were knocked out by gunfire. A Squadron landed at 0855 without casualties. Together with 1st Hampshires and AVREs of the Royal Engineers, the Notts Yeo assisted in capture of Le Hamel, whose defenders held out until 1600 that day. They also assisted 1st Dorsets' capture of Puits d'Herode and a 105mm gun battery position further inland near Le Buhot. In total, the Notts Yeo sustained 21 casualties in the landings. On D+1, A and B Squadrons participated in

the liberation of Bayeux, the first European city to be freed by the Allies in the Battle of Normandy.

## **Inns of Court Regiment**

The Inns of Court Regiment, equipped with Daimler "Dingo" and Humber scout cars as well as Daimler and AEC armoured cars, landed with the 3rd Canadian Division on Juno Beach at 0830 on 6 June. C Squadron plus a small headquarters group and attached Royal Engineers in half-tracked vehicles were tasked to infiltrate rapidly 30 miles inland to demolish bridges over the River Orne so as to prevent counterattack by German armoured units. They were ultimately unsuccessful: on D+1 one of their cars was incapacitated by a British tank and on D+2 they were attacked by USAF Thunderbolts which destroyed one of their explosive-filled half-tracks along with nearby buildings and vehicles. By D+3 it was too late and what was left of the Squadron reverted to reconnaissance duties until the rest of the Regiment arrived later in June.





#### Staffordshire Yeomanry

The Staffs Yeo landed on Sword (White) Beach at 1030 on D-Day equipped with standard Sherman tanks. They left the logjam at the beach and proceeded to the south of Hermanville, engaging and destroying an 88mm anti-tank position before joining with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry in an attack on enemy positions in Lébisey to the northeast of Caen. Succeeding against strong enemy resistance, the KSLI and tanks were however ordered to withdraw from the area as there was a concern that a strong enemy counter attack could push them from their positions. The Staffs Yeo ended the day rallied and leaguered west of Beauville.

#### Worcestershire Yeomanry

The Worcestershire Yeomanry (211 Battery, 53rd (Worcester Yeomanry) Airlanding Light Regiment Royal Artillery), equipped with two-pounder anti-tank guns, landed in 27 gliders near Caen at 2130 on D-Day tasked to seize and hold the high wooded area behind the city. They finished the day at Ranville and went into action at 0130 on D+1, engaging battery targets. The Worcs Yeo was the first British Army Field Battery ever to have flown into action against the enemy.

#### 3rd County of London Yeomanry, 4th County of London Yeomanry, 143rd (Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment Royal Artillery

3 CLY and 4 CLY were equipped with Sherman and Cromwell tanks respectively. 4 CLY began landing at Gold Beach near Arromanches at 2200 on D-Day. The remainder landed the next day along with 3 CLY. On the early morning of D+1, A Squadron 3 CLY was detached to support the 5th Black Watch in an attack on a pocket of resistance just inland at Douvres. In the evening B Squadron 3 CLY moved to Colombiers-sur-Seulles to support the 1st Gordon Highlanders. On D+4, 22nd Armoured Brigade advanced on Tilly-Sur-Seulles, with 4 CLY in the lead. The enemy was first encountered at a small hamlet called Jerusalem, where a Panzer IV was knocked out by 4 CLY. On D+6, at the Battle of Villers Bocage, 4 CLY lost the Regimental Headquarters, all of A Squadron and the Recce Troop in an engagement with four Tiger tanks. The 143rd (Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment Royal Artillery went ashore on the same day as the Battle of Villers Bocage and provided fire support in and around Caen.

#### Derbyshire Yeomanry

Equipped with Daimler armoured cars, Humber and Daimler Scout cars, Universal Carriers and M3 halftracks mounted with 75mm guns, 2 DY were divisional reconnaissance for 51st (Highland) Division. Elements of 2 DY landed on the morning of D+1 on Sword beach, with the remainder on the evening of D+4. The division was moved across Pegasus Bridge to the east bank of the River Orne to strengthen the bridgehead, which had been under extreme pressure since D-Day from 21 Panzer Division and the freshly-arrived 346 Infanterie-Division. 2 DY had a frustrating time. Unlike in the desert, there was no space to lead, roam, harass and destroy. They guarded bridges and took part in the bitter fighting for the villages of Escoville and Herouville, being employed mainly in an infantry role. In four days, casualties were almost 50, including the commanding officer, Lt Col RH Palmer.





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---

Much as The Rifles being at the spearhead of current military operations and tactical development today, many of its Antecedent Regiments led the way into Normandy in 1944. The glider-borne men of 2nd Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry who executed the daring coup de main operation, landing the night before the beach assaults to capture the vital bridges known today as Pegasus and Horsa Bridges, were the first British soldiers in France and in action; they were quickly reinforced by 7th Parachute Battalion (formed from a battalion of The Somerset Light Infantry).

A Company 12th Devonshire Regiment also landed by glider as the Advance Party of the Armoured Reconnaissance Group. Both 2nd Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and 12th Devonshire Regiment were part of the famous 6th Airborne Division which secured the left flank of the whole invasion.


On the beaches, the men of 2nd Devonshire and 1st Dorset Regiments were first ashore in the assault waves; followed quickly by 6th, 8th & 9th Durham Light Infantry in support on Gold Beach; 5th Royal Berkshires and 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry landed as the Advanced Beach Battalions on Juno and Sword Beaches respectively. By air or by sea, the Antecedent Regiments of The Rifles were amongst the first troops into occupied France; in many cases literally leading the way for the British Army.

In the subsequent battles through the Normandy countryside, these units were later joined by many other forebear Battalions: 4th, 7th & 9th Somerset Light Infantry; 2nd Gloucestershire Regiment; 5th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry; 1st Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry; 1st/4th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry; 2nd & 4th King's Shropshire Light Infantry; 12th King's Royal Rifle Corps; 4th & 5th Wiltshire Regiment; 10th & 11th Durham Light Infantry; 1st & 8th Rifle Brigade; 1st Herefordshire Regiment and 5th London Regiment (The London Rifle Brigade) all fought key battles.

In addition to the campaign honours of Normandy Landings and Normandy, the Antecedent Regiments of The Rifles were awarded 26-unit Battle honours in the period 6th June - 28th August 1944, including the notable actions at Pegasus Bridge, Villers Bocage, Caen, Hill 112, Mont Picon and Falaise.

With many of today's Riflemen still hailing from the homelands of these Antecedent Regiments, the deeds of their forbears are commemorated by every serving officer and soldier, with the representative Battle Honours of 'Normandy' and 'Pegasus Bridge' selected to be borne on their Regimental Belt Badge today. This is a fitting and eternal tribute to the endurance, sacrifice and service shown by the men who fought with such honour in the Antecedent Regiments of The Rifles.

## **Swift & Bold**



Staff Sergeant Jim Wallwork landing his Horsa glider at Pegasus Bridge with The 2nd Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry landing at Pegasus Bridge, the first British soldiers in France, 6th June, 1944

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We are delighted to support this publication and its commemoration and tribute to our Armed Forces. There is little doubt in our minds that were it not for the efforts and sacrifices of the Task Forces in 1982 our company would not be here today.

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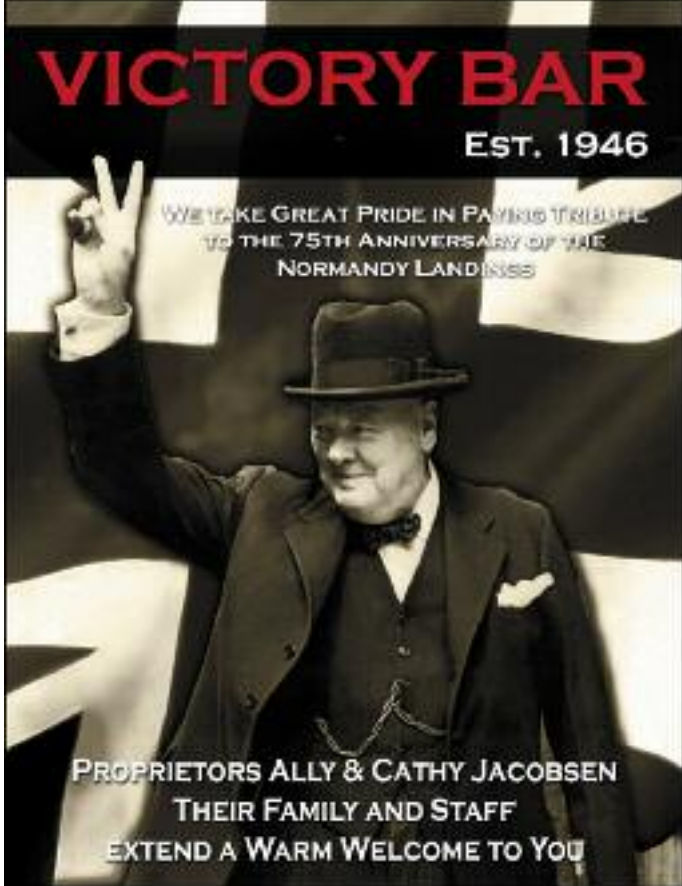
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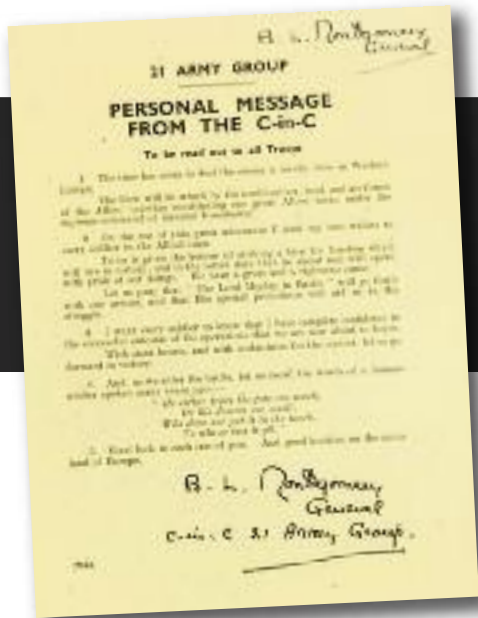
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# MONTY

*Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery,  
1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein,  
KG, GCB, DSO, PC, DL*

Two rousing ‘D-Day’ messages from General Sir Bernard Montgomery were among dozens of original documents reportedly found in a rubbish skip by the war hero's gardener following the Field Marshal’s death in 1976. Both historic documents were signed by Monty.

During the Second World War, the battle-winning General who always sought to instil confidence and maintain the morale of his men which he believed to be 'the most important single factor in war' wrote dozens of messages to his troops. Each one was then typed up, reproduced in the thousands and distributed to all Commanding Officers.

One of the messages from Monty, who commanded all Anglo-Canadian and American ground forces for D-Day and during the bloody campaign that followed in Normandy, was issued on the eve of D-Day when tens of thousands of troops had embarked for the Normandy beaches. The message, headed 'Personal Message from the Commander-in-Chief' and with the order 'To be Read Out to All Troops' said:

*“The time has come to deal the enemy a terrific blow in Western Europe.*

*On the eve of this great adventure I send my best wishes to every soldier in the Allied team.*

*To us is given the honour of striking a blow for freedom, which will live in history; and in the better days that lie*

*ahead, men will speak with pride of our doings.*

*I want every soldier to know that I have complete confidence in the successful outcome. With stout hearts and with enthusiasm for the contest, let us go forward to victory.*

*Good luck to each one of you. And good hunting on the mainland of Europe.”*

In a second message, produced on 10th June, just four days after D-Day, Monty speaks of 'we soldiers', adding:

*“I want personally to congratulate every officer and man in the Allied Armies on the splendid results of the last four days. British, Canadian and American soldiers, fighting gallantly side by side, have achieved a great success.*

*“Much yet remains to be done, but together, you and I, we will do it and we will see the thing through to the end”*

More than 20 similar documents were seemingly found and recovered by Montgomery's gardener who worked at the Field Marshal's home at Isington near Alton in Hampshire.



**“To us is given the honour of striking a blow for freedom which will live in history; and in the better days that lie ahead men will speak with pride of our doings”**



# NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

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Royal Hospital Road, London, SW3 4HT

The National Army Museum tells the stories of our Army at home and abroad for nearly 400 years. The Museum's collections contain a wide variety of things which document the build up to D-Day and the ensuing campaign in Normandy. During this anniversary year the Museum is making these collections available in a number of ways – through our Museum in Chelsea, through digital activity, a travelling exhibition and loans to the D-Day story in Southsea. These objects illustrate the huge variety of activity that the Army undertook prior to the landings, on the day itself, and in the following months.



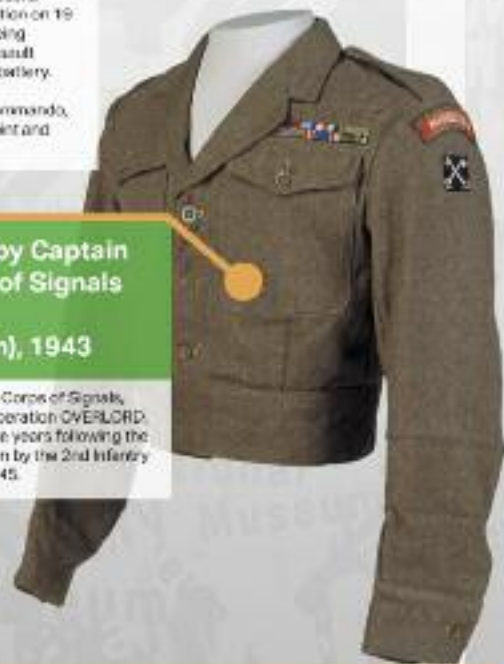
## Beret, Pat Porteous VC

Pat Porteous had already served in France during 1940 with the Royal Artillery. After being evacuated at Dunkirk, he joined No.4 Commando. He was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) for his bravery while on the unsuccessful Dieppe Raid in 1942. The VC citation for the action on 19 August 1942 records that Porteous, despite being wounded twice, took over command of a assault which resulted in the destruction of a German battery.

He landed in Normandy on D-Day with No.4 Commando, whose role was to capture a German strong point and gun battery near Culsbœuf.

## Battle dress blouse worn by Captain Alfred Rowe, Royal Corps of Signals and Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own), 1943

First commissioned in June 1940 into the Royal Corps of Signals, Alfred Rowe served as a Beachmaster during Operation OVERLORD. He used this battle dress blouse during and in the years following the war. The badge depicting crossed keys was worn by the 2nd Infantry Division in the British Army of the Rhine from 1945.



## Medal group of John Groom, MC

Lieutenant John Arthur Groom was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for covert reconnaissance of beach mines and obstacles on the Normandy coastline during Operation TARBRUSH on 16-17 May 1944, prior to the D-Day landings. Working with members of No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando, Royal Engineers personnel were responsible for photographing the defences and bringing back examples of mines and obstacles that had been laid by the Germans.

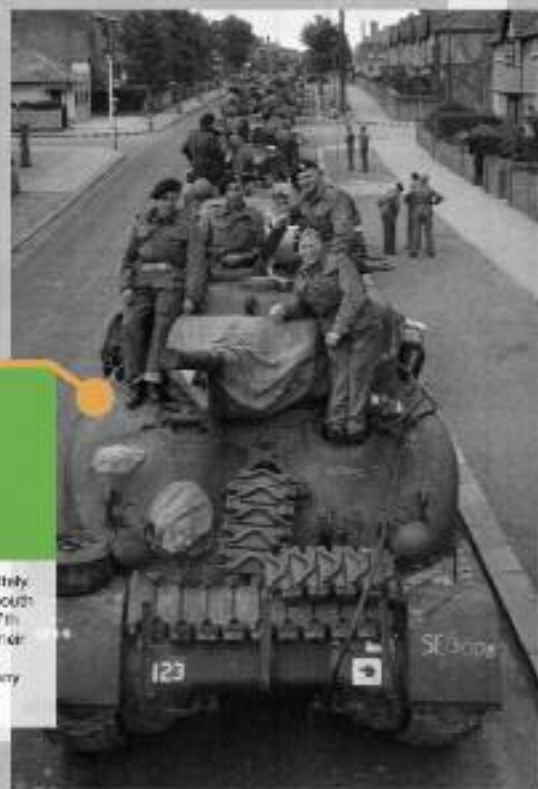


## Denison smock of Sidney Jary, 4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry

Sydney Jary led a platoon of 4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry in Normandy. He joined his platoon on D+5 and was the only platoon commander to serve in Normandy that was still with the Battalion at the end of the war.

## Sherman tanks of 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) in a residential street in Worthing in Sussex, June 1944

The Regiment had already fought in North Africa and Italy. It was stationed in Worthing before moving to Portsmouth for embarkation to Normandy, where they landed on 7th June. The crew of the front tank have waterproofed their vehicle to prepare it for landing. They fought through Normandy and the Netherlands to victory over Germany in 1945.







Chief of the Air Staff Sir Stephen Hillier and Lieutenant General Mika, of the Polish army, lay wreaths at a memorial service held at the former site of Stalag Luft III

# THE GREAT ESCAPE

## RAF leads commemorations on 75th anniversary

The Royal Air Force has led commemorations for the 75th anniversary of the Great Escape.

In 1944, 76 prisoners of war attempted to escape from a Nazi camp through tunnels they had painstakingly dug underground at Stalag Luft III.

Only three of the men managed to escape to safety, while 50 of the 73 who were recaptured were killed.

Many internees at the PoW camp were British airmen and the RAF took part in a flypast and formed a guard of honour alongside the Polish Air Force as part of the commemorations in Poland on Sunday, 24th March.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said: "Today marks 75 years since our prisoners of war performed one of the greatest and most complex escape operations of all time."

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**Only three PoWs managed to escape to safety, while 50 of the 73 who were recaptured were killed.**

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"We must never forget that in the fight for freedom, and in the hopes of liberating themselves and their comrades, 50 courageous lives were lost.

"Their bravery is a testament to the camaraderie and strength of the RAF, who worked tirelessly to liberate Europe from Nazi occupation.

"Sadly, we are slowly losing our heroes of the Second World War, so it is more important than ever that we preserve their legacies by continuing to tell their stories."

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, joined Air Commodore Charles Clarke, a PoW who was held at Stalag Luft III at the time of the escape, in a ceremony on the site of the camp which at the time was in Germany, but is now in Poland.

Relatives of those who escaped and Government representatives were also present at the commemorations, which included a remembrance service at Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery, where 48 of those executed are buried.

The story of the Great Escape heroes, who gave their three tunnels the code names Tom, Dick and Harry,

continued on page 172



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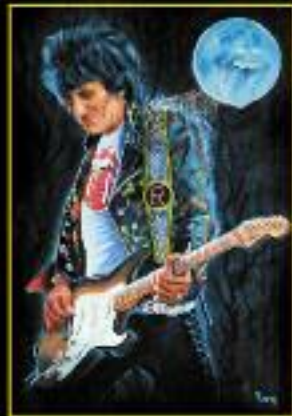
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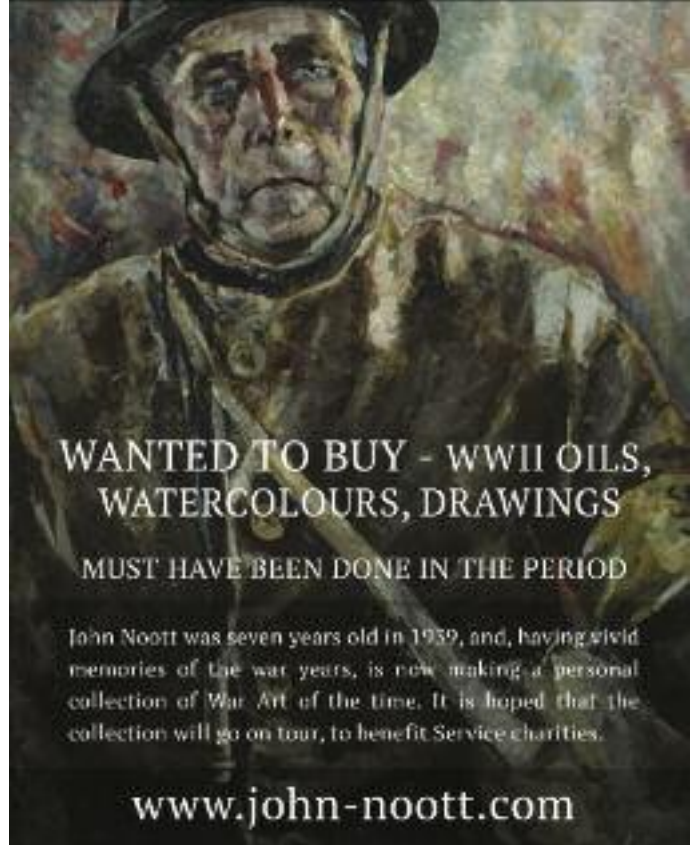
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## THE GREAT ESCAPE

gained even more prominence in 1963 when it became the basis for a Hollywood film of the same name starring Steve McQueen and Richard Attenborough.

A special screening by the RAF Benevolent Fund will be part of a commemorative event, The Great Escape With Dan Snow, hosted by the TV historian, which will be streamed to cinemas across the UK.

Last month Dick Churchill, the last surviving member of the 76-strong group who made it out of the camp, died aged 99.

The former Squadron Leader, who lived in Crediton, Devon, was one of the 73 recaptured by the Germans within three days of the breakout after Hitler became aware and ordered locals to search their land and buildings.

Earlier this month Second World War pilot Jack Lyon, who was in the Stalag Luft III camp after his plane, a Whitley Mk5 was struck by flak near Dusseldorf, died aged 101.

Flight Lieutenant Lyon was recruited by other prisoners to carry out surveillance of the compound, but the plot was discovered before he could make his own escape.



Officers and airmen of the RAF at the Old Garrison Cemetery in Poznan, Poland, where a service of remembrance was held for the 48 members of the Great Escape buried there



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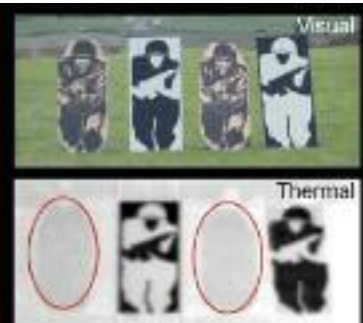
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