



# The Bugle Call



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Warminster, Pennsylvania

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*Ann's Choice Residents and Guests are invited to attend Veterans Group Programs and Events- (Meetings are open to ALL with no charge)*

## Memorial Day Service Thursday, May 30, 11:00 am Ann's Choice PAC

On Thursday, May 30, the Veterans Group will present a service to honor veterans at Ann's Choice who have passed away in the past year. This memorial service will be in the Chapel.

The speaker will be Fred Ewald. After graduating from college he was drafted into the Army in 1968; he was sent first to Ft. Bragg for basic training and then to Ft. Dix for advanced infantry training. He volunteered for Officer Candidate School and was assigned to Ft. Benning. After completing Jungle School in Panama, Lt. Ewald was sent to Vietnam in November 1969. For 3 1/2 months he led a platoon on search and destroy missions before being wounded by a sniper. He was sent to Japan to begin physical and occupational therapy and then sent home to Valley Forge Military Hospital (VMH). While at Valley Forge Military Hospital (VMH), he assisted in the Medical Evaluation Office where he did one on one communications with soldiers and family concerning medical benefits they would receive upon being discharged from the hospital. Fred was discharged from VMH in December, 1970 and then from the Army in 1971.

At this service, special music will be presented by the Ann's Choice Chorus and there will be a time to remember those who have gone ahead of us.

All members are encouraged to wear their Veterans Group shirts.

### Volunteer and Service Opportunities

Volunteers are also needed to help at meetings residents with mobility devices. For more information or to volunteer for this service call Russ Neiger at 610-930-3077.

## Veterans Group Meeting on Tuesday, June 18

At the June meeting we will remember the D-Day invasion 75 years ago with a video showing clips from June 6, 1944 and interviews with participants at Omaha Beach.

Also, we will have elections for the Veterans Group Board. This year, the elections will be for secretary, treasurer, and directors from each clubhouse. Current officers are shown at the far left. Volunteering to serve on the board keeps our group active in our community. Contact Mary Hurly at 215-420-7472 for more information.

### Program Committee Volunteers

The Veterans Group Board is seeking a few volunteers to help plan the monthly programs during the year. We have a program at each Veterans Group meeting in January through April, June, September and October. We have resources and contacts from previous meetings which can be used again for future meetings. And new ideas for program topics are always welcome. Contact Gordon Larson (215-672-3137) or Mary Hurly (215-420-7472).

### Volunteer and Service Opportunities

There is a continuing need for help with the program to drive veterans to the Horsham VA Center. Volunteers do not have to be veterans themselves in order to assist veterans getting to their appointments. Call Judy Wright at 215-674-2328 for information about the program or to schedule a ride.

Volunteers, who do not need to be veterans, are also needed to help with the Deployable Flags Program to line our streets with flags. For more information or to volunteer call Jerry Wright at 215-674-2328.

## Operation Overlord

An incredible amount of planning and preparation went into getting ready for Operation Overlord. Success was not guaranteed however.

D-Day planning involved massive staging operations of thousands of troops. During the first week of May 1944, massive troop movements occurred throughout Great Britain. From England itself as well as Scotland, Wales, the Midlands, and Northern Ireland, regiments, divisions, and corps were assembled in pre-invasion staging areas for D-Day.

The logistics of D-Day planning for moving hundreds of thousands of men and almost half a million vehicles were enormous. Each division went to a designated staging area along England's south coast. The areas were labeled "sausages," for their elongated shape; each was surrounded by a wire fence patrolled by military police. Security was tight; no one could get in or out without written permission. Yet if the troops felt confined and resented the order against warming fires, conditions were tolerable. They ate better than almost anyone in the United Kingdom; steaks, eggs, pies, even ice cream were abundant. The task of feeding so many men was a major chore, and the U.S. Army produced some four thousand newly trained cooks to meet the need.

The magnitude of that plan, worked out by persons Herr Hitler once called "military idiots," staggers the imagination. It embraced the air, ground and sea forces of this nation and our allies. It hurdled problems of supply and transport, of pre-invasion training, of production and improvement of weapons, of photoreconnaissance and mapping on a scale that makes the battle plans of Napoleon look like a game of checkers. More than 125,000,000 maps alone, just to mention one item, were used in perfecting the master invasion plan.

Parachute and airborne divisions, spearheading the invasion, filled the sky over Normandy. As a climax to the "combined operations" attack on German coastal defenses, Allied planes dropped 11,000 tons of bombs in the eight hours preceding the landing and big naval guns pounded the coast before the troops went ashore. In 10 minutes, 600 naval guns fired 2,000 tons of shells at Nazi batteries.

By one reckoning nearly 175,000 soldiers were housed, largely under canvas and camouflage netting. The staging areas were crammed with supplies and equipment, and there was plenty to do. New weapons were issued to assault troops; vehicles and equipment were waterproofed; final organization and tactics were confirmed.

From the staging areas (except for airborne units), troops from five nations walked or rode to their embarkation ports. Ordinary traffic in England came almost to a stop during early June, as routes toward the coast often became one-way. Transport ships and landing craft were boarded in numerous harbors including Bournemouth, Eastbourne, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Torquay, and Weymouth. Next stop: France.

## The Five D-Day Beaches



### UTAH BEACH

The westernmost of the D-Day beaches, extending some eleven statute miles running north-northwest to south-southeast. Utah joined the west end of Omaha Beach in a line projecting through tidal flats beyond the mouth of the Vire River.

Utah was the last landing area selected for Overlord, but its position afforded the U.S. VII Corps an excellent start at the vital port of Cherbourg, only thirty-five miles away. Though

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lightly defended, Utah Beach posed some difficulty in the flooded country and rough terrain to the north, in the direction of Cherbourg.

### OMAHA BEACH

Omaha was the most heavily defended of all the D-Day beaches; its bunkers, fighting positions, and obstacles were intended to repel any Allied landing. Omaha spanned ten statute miles, bounded by the Douve Estuary separating Utah Beach on the west and by Gold on the east.

Omaha was by far the toughest assignment in Overlord. Inland from the tidal flats, with their mines and booby-trapped obstacles, was a line of barbed wire and an artificial seawall. Next came a level, grassy plain between 150 and three hundred yards wide, also strewn with mines and providing almost no cover. Dominating the entire scene was a line of bluffs about 150 feet high, defended by a dozen primary concrete bunkers, including concrete casemates for 50, 75, and 88 mm artillery. There were also innumerable fighting holes for riflemen and machine gunners, with carefully designed interlocking fields of fire. Additionally, mortars and artillery behind the bluffs, largely invulnerable to naval gunfire, could cover almost any part of Omaha Beach.

### GOLD BEACH

A ten-mile stretch between Omaha Beach to the west and Juno to the east, Gold was one of the largest of D-Day beaches. Gold would be assaulted by the British Fiftieth (Northumberland) Infantry Division and 47 Royal Marine Commandos. Two good-sized towns fronting Gold Beach were La Rivère and Le Hamel, but the major objective was Arromanches at the west end, selected as the site of one of the Mulberry piers, meant to improve Allied logistics as soon after the landings as possible.

Gold Beach was held by elements of the 716th Infantry Division, with the 726th and 915th Regiments deployed north and east of Bayeux. However, they included a large proportion of Ost truppen (troops from the East), Poles and Russians who had been conscripted to serve in the Wehrmacht. A battery of four 155 mm guns was sited about half a mile inland.

Scheduled H-hour for Gold Beach was 0725, nearly an hour after the American D-Day beaches, owing to different tides.

### JUNO BEACH

Smallest of the D-Day beaches, Juno covered two miles between Gold Beach to the west and Sword to the east. Juno was “the Canadian beach”.

Allied planners were concerned about a reef and reported shoals, which required a high tide landing at 0745, later than the other D-Day beaches. As it developed, the “shoals” were accumulated banks of seaweed and probably would have posed little problem to most landing craft.

### SWORD BEACH

Easternmost of the landing D-Day beaches, Sword covered three miles adjacent to Juno Beach. Like all the British or Canadian beaches, Sword was fronted by vacation homes close to the sea wall. Some of the houses had been razed to improve the Germans’ field of fire, while others had been reinforced and turned into makeshift bunkers. An antitank ditch had been dug behind the seawall, but paved city streets lay beyond, some blocked by concrete walls.

Sword would be assaulted by the British Third Division, with attached units of British and French commandos plus the Twenty-seventh Armored Brigade. Objectives of the Sword assault were important bridges three and a half miles inland.

The meticulous staff planning had tried to anticipate every contingency. But some aspects



were out of their control. A chance, random leak of the target beaches and timing might

occur. German units might be ordered to move closer to the invasion site. Two or three innocent comments might coincide and wreak havoc.

The invasion of France had been scheduled for June 5, 1944. To bring off the invasion, General Dwight D. Eisenhower needed a full moon, a low tide, little cloud cover, light winds, and low seas. (The low tide was necessary to allow soldiers to see, avoid, and disarm the mined obstacles that the Germans had placed in the surf.) He could have had the full moon and low tide on June 5,

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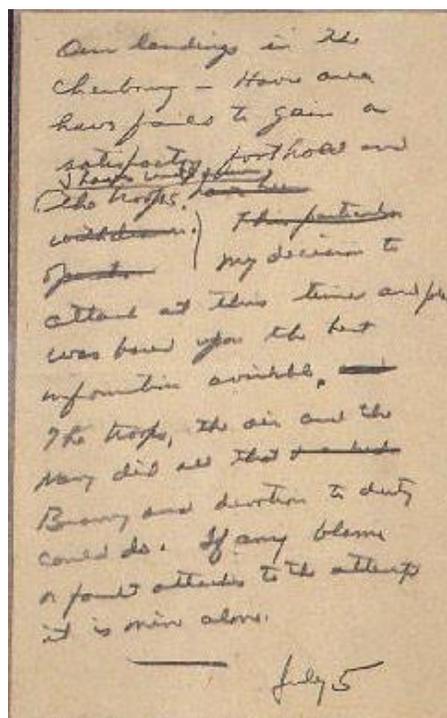
6, or 7. He could have had the low tide without the full moon on June 19 or 20. But what about the weather, which nobody controls.

Perhaps the most important weather forecast ever made was the one for D-day, the Allied invasion of France. It succeeded not because of the brilliant work of any solitary forecaster, but because a group of forecasters imitated the weather. They jostled, yelled, scribbled, and cast malevolent looks at one another. They fought it out and voted. And in the end, they were just right enough.

Outside, on the morning of June 4, the weather was mostly clear, with a light breeze blowing. May had been a pleasant month on the English Channel, but June was not shaping up to be so. The Azores High, a semipermanent high-pressure zone in the mid-Atlantic that moved north during the summer and south during the winter, had not come as far north as usual. When its influence dominates the weather, Europe and the south coast of England experience dry warm summer days. Where it stood then, however, it was steering a series of low-pressure troughs across the North Atlantic and into the English Channel.

The first ships for the invasion had left Scotland, steaming south, on May 28. They were now in midcourse, forming their convoys, and the preparation to move three million armed souls from the south of England to the north of France was far advanced. Landing craft were jostling in Portsmouth Harbor, which was so crowded that you could walk from one shore to the other without touching water. Sherman tanks had been fitted with flotation skirts to help them wallow ashore. Supply vessels were following to bring in howitzers and materiel. Other ships were towing long jetty-like caissons to create temporary ports.

General Eisenhower's experience and the Allied troops' preparations were finally put to the test on the morning of June 6, 1944. An invasion force of 4,000 ships, 11,000 planes, and nearly three million soldiers, marines, airmen, and sailors was assembled in England for the assault. His doubts about success in the face of a highly-defended and well-prepared enemy led him to consider what would happen if the invasion of Normandy failed. If the Allies did not secure a strong foothold on D-Day, they would be ordered into a full retreat, and he would be forced to



make public the message he drafted for such an occasion.

"Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all

that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone."

"D-Day Planning: Preparing for Operation Overlord" History on the Net, © 2000-2019, Salem Media., April 19, 2019 <https://www.historyonthenet.com/d-day-planning> .

"The Five D-Day Beaches" History on the Net, © 2000-2019, Salem Media. April 19, 2019 <https://www.historyonthenet.com/the-5-d-day-beaches> .

From Business Insider - <https://www.businessinsider.com/d-day-in-case-of-failure-letter-by-general-eisenhower-2012-6> .

From the National Archives.

Excerpt from *Air: The Restless Shaper of the World* by William Bryant Logan.

### Veterans Group Movie Program

Save the dates July 16 and August 20 on your calendar for special movie presentations by the Veterans Group in the PAC. We will be screening *The Story of G. I. Joe* and *The African Queen*. Details will be published in the June edition of *The Bugle Call*.

### Discounts for Veterans

Many area merchants have discount programs for veterans and service members. Bucks County Dept. of Veterans Affairs issues a Bucks County Veterans Discount Card ID valid at many local merchants. For more information, go to <http://www.buckscounty.org/government/CommunityServices/MilitaryAffairs>.