

D-Day, Normandy June 6th 1944 and God's Conquest
"Go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire"
Exodus 10:11



Sword Beach¹ - 07:25 a.m. June 6th 1944

Lord Lovat, CO of 1st Special Service Brigade, on the right of the column, wades through the water. In the foreground is Piper Bill Millin

D-Day, Normandy, God's Conquest

This study largely addresses the British effort on D-Day. However, one horrific incident that happened in the American sector of the Normandy invasion will serve to show why D-Day, Normandy was truly *God's* conquest and that it is as well that victory in Normandy was achieved. D-Day consisted of both airborne and seaborne assaults, in that order. Historian Cornelius Ryan describes how in the American sector, to the west of the British and Canadian sector, some paratroopers of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd US Airborne Division landed in the town of Ste. Mère-Eglise. The Germans quickly overwhelmed them but Ryan notes that Lieutenant-Colonel William E. Eckman², commanding officer of the 505th, reported that *"one of the chaplains of the regiment...who dropped in Ste. Mère-Eglise was captured and executed within minutes."*

That is what happens under dictators. That is what will happen before the Lord's Return³ as Paul warns ***"that in the last days perilous times shall come"*** 2 Timothy 3:1 ***"and no man is sure of life"*** Job 24:22 as Job prophesies. The men of D-Day kept that peril at bay for the best part of 70 years but that was what it was like in Hitler's Europe in WW2.

¹ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sword_Beach

² *The Longest Day*, Cornelius Ryan

³ *Mark of the Beast, The Book of Revelation*, Dr Peter S. Ruckman

D-Day, Normandy, Breaking Hitler's Yoke

Historian Chester Wilmot⁴ writes that *"In the summer of 1942 four hundred million people in Europe lay under the yoke of German rule."* In June 1944, the yoke for Western Europe was about to be broken, by D-Day Normandy and God's conquest. **"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"** 1 Corinthians 15:57.

D-Day Invaders, "God-going men"

The British Deputy Chaplain-General, the Rev. Canon F. Llewellyn Hughes⁵, said this about the men who would bring about ***"the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*** *"Indeed, most of the men are not regular church-going men; but they are God-going men, and they have their picture of the King of kings in the sanctuary of their hearts."* That is where the King should be.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" 2 Corinthians 4:6.

C-in-C Commander-in-Chief's Decision

Cornelius Ryan describes how on June 4th 1944, the C-in-C, US General Eisenhower with his senior commanders reviewed the weather forecast, *"a barely tolerable period of fair conditions...would prevail for just a little more than twenty-four hours"* for June 5th-6th. Eisenhower then made his decision. *"Tuesday, June 6, would be D-Day."* This was God's decision. **"For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"** Isaiah 14:27. Not Hitler.

Key Objectives for 6th Airborne Division, the Men of the Red Beret

The British effort for D-Day began on the night of June 5th with the 6th Airborne Division. Wilmot describes 6th Airborne's vital tasks, including *"that of seizing and holding the left flank of the bridgehead"* where key objectives were the bridges across the Caen Canal and the Orne River. Glider-borne troops of 2nd Battalion, the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry⁶, commanded by Major John Howard, would capture the bridges. In one glider heading for the Caen Canal was 19 year-old Private Bill Gray. Ryan states *"Private Bill Gray, a Bren gunner...closed his eyes and braced himself for the crash...there was a splintering, rending crash...the glider screeched across the ground throwing up a hail of sparks [and] smashed to a halt...Someone yelled "Come on, lads!"...everybody stormed the bridge...Stunned by the swiftness of the assault, the Germans were overwhelmed."* The glider troops dug in to hold the bridges. **"Occupy till I come"** Luke 19:13 the Lord says.

"Hobo's Funnies," Beach Assaults' Armoured Spearhead

The specialised 79th Armoured Division, known as *"Hobo's Funnies"* after their commander, Major-General Sir P.C.S. Hobart, led the British and Canadian beach assaults. Its regiments included AVREs, Armoured Vehicles Royal Engineers, Churchill tanks modified to carry equipment for crossing obstacles and a 'Petard,' a device firing 40-lb explosive charges to shatter concrete gun emplacements. They would assault the beaches at 0730 hours, the British being designated Sword and Gold. Isaiah described this battle. **"Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise...but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire"** Isaiah 9:5, that is, God's conquest *via internal combustion engines*.

⁴ *The Struggle for Europe*, Chester Wilmot

⁵ *We Have a Guardian*, W. B. Grant

⁶ *Purnell's History of the 2nd World War*, Vol. 5, pp 1834-1898, *Churchill's Secret Weapons*, Patrick Delaforce

Sword Beach, Skirl of the Pipes and the Men of the Green Beret

Landing at Sword Beach were commandos of 1st Special Service Brigade, led by Lord Lovat, Chief of Clan Fraser. According to Ryan, “As...Lord Lovat’s piper, William Millin [see picture]...floundered towards the shore, Lovat shouted at him, “Give us ‘Highland Laddie,’ man!” *Waist deep in the water, Millin put the mouthpiece to his lips and splashed on through the surf, the pipes keening crazily.*” Lovat’s men were to relieve Major Howard’s men, who had been beating off repeated counter-attacks. In the early afternoon, Bill Gray and his friend Private John Wilkes heard bagpipes. Ryan states “*Down the road came Lord Lovat’s commandos...Bill Millin marched at the head of the column, his pipes blaring out “Blue Bonnets over the Border”...Disregarding the heavy German fire, the [6th Airborne] troopers rushed out to greet the commandos...As the red and green berets intermingled, there was a sudden, perceptible lightening of spirits. Nineteen-year-old Bill Gray felt “years younger.”*” In God’s conquest **“thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s”** Psalm 103:5.

Gold Beach, Advancing AVREs and Infantry

Historian R.W. Thompson states “*The AVREs...fought their way with infantry across the beaches in the face of intense [enemy fire]...petard tanks supporting the infantry blasted the coastal crust of strongpoints with their giant mortars, like ancient cannon...Within the hour, armour and infantry were more than a mile inland...*” As Isaiah said **“For the LORD of hosts hath purposed...and who shall turn it back?”** Isaiah 14:27. Not Hitler.

The Unenvied Infantry

The infantry followed the paratroops, glider troops, special armour and commandos. R. W. Thompson writes that “*They came ashore at Normandy, the slogging, unglamorous men that no one envied...But they had history on their side.*” This was true in that all Allied amphibious operations up until D-Day had succeeded and D-Day would also succeed. It is also true that many slogging, unglamorous individuals are in **“the body of Christ”** 1 Corinthians 12:27 but they have *the future* on their side, the 2nd Advent **“when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels”** 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

Company Sergeant Major Hollis, Teessider, the One D-Day VC

Despite the combined AVREs and infantry advance from Gold Beach, the 6th Green Howards were held up by machine gun fire from a hidden pillbox. CSM Stanley Hollis from Teesside described what happened⁷. “*Major Lofthouse said to me, “there is a pillbox there, Sergeant Major”...So I got my Sten gun and I rushed at it...spraying it hosepipe fashion. They fired back at me and they missed...I got on top of it and I threw a grenade through the slit and...They were quite willing to forget all about the war.*” Hollis won the one D-Day VC. His CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Hastings, said “[CSM Hollis] was absolutely dedicated to winning the war – one of the few men I ever met who felt like that.” God wants such men; **“go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire”** Exodus 10:11.

D, then D plus One

This writer was privileged to receive a signed photograph from one such man, another US paratrooper, Lieutenant later Major Richard D. Winters. See picture. Lieutenant Winters landed in Normandy with the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st US Airborne Division. Historian Stephen Ambrose⁸ writes that at the end of D-Day “*Before lying down, Winters later wrote in his diary, “I did not forget to get on my knees and thank God for helping me to live through this day and ask for his help on D plus one.”*” As the Lord said **“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”** Matthew 6:34, that is D, then D plus one in **“the patient waiting for Christ”** 2 Thessalonians 3:5. As Major Winters said “*Hang tough!*”

⁷ D-Day Hero, CSM Stanley Hollis VC, Mike Morgan

⁸ Band of Brothers, Stephen Ambrose

D-Day to VE Day, “The flags of freedom fly all over Europe”

D-Day June 6th 1944 went on to VE Victory in Europe Day May 8th 1945. US President Harry S. Truman⁹ said “The flags of freedom fly all over Europe.” That was God’s conquest in Europe *but His Return will conquer all.* **“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one”** Zechariah 14:9. Amen.

“Hang Tough!”



**Major Richard D. Winters
506th Parachute Infantry Regiment
101st US Airborne Division**

⁹ *The Last Hundred Days*, John Toland