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CADETS CONTINUE ANNUAL TRADITION

Each fall hundreds of freshmen in the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets tour the Memorial, and for many it is their first meaningful introduction to the D-Day story. In September, they were joined by upperclassmen and together they discovered more about their predecessors journey, nearly 75 years ago.

Last academic year, twelve junior and senior cadets completed the Corps' Global Scholars course, focusing on military history and leadership, with an emphasis on the D-Day invasion and subsequent Normandy campaign. The course culminates in a week-long journey to Normandy, starting on the beaches and following a tour of all the sites they learned about during the previous semester.



"To actually be able to stand on Omaha Beach and to look back at the length of the beach and what the people who landed there had to do that day was a very humbling experience," said Cadet Major Gavin Moore, a senior from Lake Frederick, Virginia. "Even after having been through the entire class physically being there brings a new element to it."



Each cadet selects a report topic, which they present as part of the course. Moore, who will become a Naval submarine officer after graduation, focused on the operations on Omaha Beach. But despite all the reading and research, Moore was not fully prepared for how he felt standing there himself, faced with full-scale reality.

"Just to see the physical distance that someone needed to travel, landing in a landing craft at low tide, the distance that they needed to travel just to get to the edge of the sand... then to go up the bluffs there and actually secure any kind of ground and to do all that with all the obstacles and being fired upon... it's mind blowing," said Moore. "That moment hit me specifically just ►►



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standing on the beach and looking back.”

“Getting the opportunity to be there, see the specific battle sites in person and really put a physical understanding to the distances, the obstacles they had to overcome, the scope of the whole mission was really incredible,” said Cadet Major Ashton Hershon, a senior from Vienna, Virginia.

Hershon’s coursework focused on the airborne component of D-Day. He’s commissioning as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force upon graduation.

“To realize those men who were our age, if not a little bit younger than us, that they would have to charge across this narrow road strewn with the shells of tanks, craters from mortars, explosives and dead bodies from fallen Germans and their comrades, they had to run across, secure that town and then hold their position for reinforcements to come over the course of several days... that was when it really hit me,” said

Hershon. “I was kind of at a loss for words just looking down this road and realizing the magnitude of what their task was at the time.”

For the upperclassmen cadets, their Normandy experience enhanced their return visit to the Memorial, allowing them to appreciate the sacrifice of those who fought and our mission to honor and remember their valor, fidelity, and sacrifice.



“I have a much deeper appreciation of being here now that I have been to Normandy,” said Moore. “It’s added a layer of understanding of just how much went into Operation Overlord.”

“To realize what’s come before us, all of the brave men and women who’ve sacrificed so much for us to be here, understanding the values that they fought and died for that we are still upholding today, training in their wake, I think it’s incredibly important that we come back here and recognize everything that they’ve done and continue to do that we will one day be a part of,” said Hershon.

In all, 403 cadets and instructors toured the site during the annual visit. The Memorial is grateful for our long-standing partnership and the support of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets.

LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

As a donor to the National D-Day Memorial, you are making it possible to preserve the lessons and legacy of D-Day. Each day students, veterans, family members, and visitors learn about the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice of our D-Day and WWII veterans because of you. **You have made this a priority because of your giving.**

Your continued support through a legacy gift will ensure we never forget the incredible courage and sacrifice of our veterans.

You can leave a legacy that will ensure their stories live on.

A charitable gift in your estate plan is a great way to create a lasting legacy. There are a number of legacy giving options that may be ideal for you. These include leaving the Memorial in your will, charitable gift annuities, trusts, life insurance gifts, and real estate, just to name a few. Please consider leaving your legacy — our future generations will benefit from your generosity today.



Our Director of Development, Brandon Gregory, would be happy to talk with you about your legacy giving options. Please feel free to give him a call at (540) 586-3329 or email bgregory@dday.org. If you have already planned to leave a gift in your will, we'd love to hear about it!

PREPARING FOR THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY

As we get closer to the 75th anniversary of D-Day, Memorial staff members are making preparations to ensure the Memorial is in top shape. You are making this work possible. Thank you!

The Bobbie and Peggy Johnson Q-hut Gift Store and Bobbie G. Johnson Pavilion have been dedicated. Gray Plaza has a fresh coat of blue paint leading to the invasion tableau. Kiwanis Key Club members (high school students) have helped spruce up the nature trail and Team Rubicon will be adding 3 decks along the trail so visitors can take a break and enjoy the surrounding beauty.

Liberty University Aviation students and instructors are volunteering their time and talents to refurbish the L-3 Grasshopper. The wings and interior are being restored and it will get a fresh coat of paint before June 6.

Because of your continuing support there will be much more to come to ensure the site looks its best for our veterans. The Necrology Plaques on the Memorial Wall will receive a fresh clear coat. Lines in the parking lot will be repainted. The entire site will be pressure washed. Lighting will be replaced.

All of this is made possible through your generosity and also guarantees the Memorial is operational daily so that veterans, students, and visitors have a memorable experience while on site.

Thank you for ensuring the National D-Day Memorial is in the best possible condition leading up to the 75th anniversary!

REMEMBERING A FAITHFUL SUPPORTER

Fleda Ring

She loved animals (especially dogs), the holidays, gardening, cooking, her family and her country. Fleda Ring grew up knowing the sacrifices that were made to keep her country free, and she never forgot it. After all, her father was a Normandy veteran who landed on Utah Beach with the 9th Infantry Division on D+4. He fought his way through the hedgerows until he was wounded just prior to the fall of St. Lo.

As the president of the *Roanoke Times and World News* newspaper, he rarely spoke of his experiences in Normandy. The 9th Division had the crucial task of cutting off the Cotentin Peninsula and assisting in the capture of the French port city of Cherbourg. Her father received a Purple Heart for his actions in the Normandy campaign.

Ironically, he would work with and greatly admire another unassuming Normandy veteran, John Robert “Bob” Slaughter, who eventually sought to build the National D-Day Memorial with the help and inspiration of fellow veterans and supporters. Bob Slaughter worked at the *Roanoke Times* from the 1940s until his retirement.

Fleda grew up among such giants. Only four months old at the time of the invasion, the father she knew, would be one touched by war and its unshakeable effects.

An only child to Bill and Mary Ragan Armistead, she attended Jefferson High School in Roanoke, Virginia and boarding school at Penn Hall in Pennsylvania. In 1966, she married Peter Huff Ring, a young man with a talent for his picturesque illustrations of nature and a love of farming. Peter became an accomplished artist and his collections were in demand across the country. The two of them built a comfortable life together and Peter continued to illustrate, creating numerous drawings for such outdoor magazines as *Field and Stream*, *Sports Afield*, and *Outdoor Life*. This year would have marked their 52nd wedding anniversary.

Fleda believed in supporting causes dear to her and one of the most important among them was the Memorial. “Peter and Fleda have been faithful supporters since the beginning,” notes April Cheek-



Messier, president of the Foundation. Aside from their general support for the Memorial, they also funded the Bob Slaughter bust that was dedicated in 2014 and prior to that, they underwrote the cost of the Truman bust in 2010.

Sadly, Fleda passed away in July this year. She was anxiously awaiting the installation of the next Q-hut. The Rings contributed generously to the gift store Quonset which was dedicated in 2016. The interior of the Memorial’s current gift store is named “The Ring Community Room” in anticipation of it becoming a more multi-functional room in the future (after the Memorial builds the education center and moves the current store into the new facility) – still several years away.

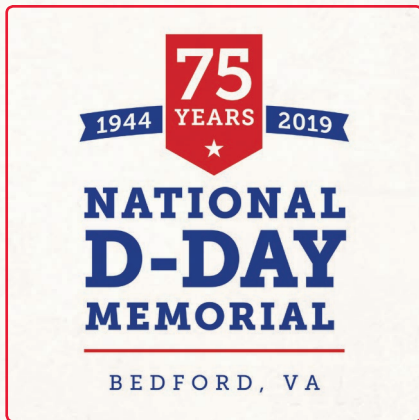
Fleda had hoped to see the 3rd and final Q-hut completed in time for the 75th anniversary in 2019. With a recent significant contribution to the Foundation by Peter Ring himself, it appears this will be dedicated in time for the large commemoration next year.

Her deepest wish was to ensure the lessons and legacy of D-Day and World War II are passed on for generations to come. The new Education Q-hut will allow for the installation of climate-controlled display cases where the Foundation can exhibit a portion of its extensive artifact collection for the first time in its history.

Fleda and Peter Ring have made a tremendous impact on the way the Memorial can share D-Day’s pivotal history. They have left a lasting imprint on the education initiatives and possibilities for the future. They have ensured the stories of our veterans are remembered, cherished and passed on. As Peter Ring noted recently, “Fleda would be proud. The ‘Fleda Hut’ will be a perfect way to honor her.”

The education Q-hut will be dedicated on June 6, 2019 in time for the 75th Anniversary of D-Day.

75TH ANNIVERSARY



As we draw nearer to 2019, plans are fully underway for what will be the commemoration of our lifetime – the 75th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy.

In what is being hailed as “The Final Salute”, the Memorial will welcome the last large gathering of D-Day and World War II veterans still among our ranks – the youngest of those surviving heroes are now in their middle 90s. The six-day commemoration will truly be a fitting tribute to the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice they exhibited as young men and women; in the quest that secured the freedoms we enjoy today.

Visitors begin arriving in Bedford on Wednesday, June 5. Events that day include an afternoon veteran reception, the dedication of a plaque

saluting the U.S. Naval Academy, an art exhibit featuring the D-Day sketches of Ugo Giannini (the only known sketches created that day), and a dinner where Normandy veterans will be the honored guests.

The June 6 commemoration starts with a spectacular display of World War II-era aircraft over the Memorial site; to include a P-51 D Mustang, a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, a Douglas C-47, and others – the same planes flying on that fateful day 75 years prior – attacking ground objectives, bombarding German emplacements on the beach, and dropping paratroopers in the pre-dawn hours of D-Day.

Following the impressive aerial tribute; the commemorative observance includes a veteran roll call, so that we may recognize all D-Day veterans in attendance. Veterans will enjoy the company of their fellow service members – while recalling their own war stories – in reunion tents. Living history exhibits will bring 1944 to life for visitors too young to have memories of their own.

The feeling moves from commemorative to celebratory as we head into the weekend with a USO inspired outdoor concert and canteen the evening of Friday, June 7. On Saturday, June 8 a victory parade reminiscent of a post-war homecoming will make its way through downtown Bedford – complete with living historians, bands, and antique cars. The mood returns to solemn by Sunday, June 9 as we hold an authentic WWII Ecumenical outdoor service on Memorial grounds.

Check www.dday.org/75 for regular updates including answers to frequently asked questions, veteran and guest registration, and hotel information.

FLAMES OF MEMORY



It's never too early to purchase your Luminary for this year's Flames of Memory event! Over the years, the Memorial has worked diligently to place 4,413 luminaries (the number of Allied fatalities on June 6, 1944) throughout the Memorial grounds. These luminaries can be purchased in honor or in memory of anyone, D-Day veteran or not, and will be placed at the Memorial from December 8 through December 10. It truly is a sight to behold as evening falls over the horizon at the Memorial.

The cost for each luminary is \$20 or \$100 for 6; all gifts are tax-deductible and all proceeds benefit the National D-Day Memorial. A printed program will be distributed throughout the weekend with the names of those luminaries purchased in honor or memory of specific men and women who have served. To purchase a luminary please contact our office at (800) 351-DDAY.

NAMES OF D-DAY FALLEN TO BE PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME



It is, when you think about it, the most “memorial” part of the National D-Day Memorial. It’s the sobering curved wall with hundreds of bronze plaques, together bearing the names of 4,413 Allied dead from June 6, 1944. It reflects the only effort ever made to identify every Allied soldier, sailor, and airman who gave his life on that

fateful day. The Necrology Wall, as it’s called, bears powerful witness to the valor, fidelity and sacrifice that made eventual victory possible in Europe.

Anyone who has ever visited the Memorial knows the wall and has been moved by the sheer volume of names, placed randomly on the bronze plaques, just as death randomly visited the heroes of D-Day. Fewer understand that the Necrology project is an ongoing one, that research continues to learn more about these 4,413 men.

Next year, the complete list of names will be published for the first time in a special commemorative publication to mark the 75th Anniversary of D-Day.

The Necrology project dates back to the early years of the National D-Day Memorial, when researcher Carol Tuckwiler took on the challenge of naming the fallen of D-Day. No one had ever made such an attempt before—there was not even an authoritative number to use as a starting point. But after years of pouring over cemetery records, after-action reports, lists of missing aircrew, and countless other documents, Carol had compiled THE authoritative registry of D-Day fallen.

But Carol, by admission and design, did not complete the work. The Necrology database continues to evolve as more information is discovered about the men on the list. Internet resources not available at the beginning of the project are especially lucrative for researchers. As staff and interns (and history students from nearby Liberty University) continue to dig in preparation for next year’s book release, previously unknown biographical material helps to round out what we know about the men of D-Day.

Though only the names appear on the plaques, the database includes much more information, such as unit, rank, and nation of origin (eight of the twelve Allied nations participating in Operation Overlord had fatalities on D-Day). For the American names, the home state of all 2,499 men have now been identified, as has the home province for the majority of Canadian losses. In addition, burial information which was previously unknown has been discovered for dozens of men.

Some other interesting facts, recently uncovered, about the names on the Wall:

- There are two Medal of Honor recipients on the plaques: John Pinder and Jimmie Monteith (a Virginia Tech alumnus).
- Two American fatalities are on the East Wall with the Allies, since they served in the Canadian armed forces.
- At least five African-Americans are named on the wall. As military death records do not necessarily identify race, we were aware of only three until a few weeks ago.
- At least one Native American is listed: Chester Courville, a paratrooper from Washington state.
- One general died on D-Day (Don Pratt), but a US Navy coxswain named General Jackson also is on the wall. So is also a sergeant by the name of name Major McCanless.
- The Allied cause was even more international than originally believed—men born in Mexico, Switzerland, South Africa, and Cuba have been identified. There are certainly others awaiting discovery.

In addition to the ongoing research, the “Faces of the Fallen” project also continues. This is the effort to put faces to the names, uncovering and identifying photographs of as many D-Day fatalities as possible. For several semesters, history students of Dr. David Snead at Liberty University have assisted with the research and have uncovered images and other biographical information of names lacking complete data.

The publication of the Necrology in 2019 is slated to include primary source material to illuminate the significance and dramatic events of D-Day. The goal is to offer an important reference work for those interested in Operation Overlord, but also to pay suitable tribute to the ones who gave their all in the “Great Crusade.”

Thank you for making this possible!

TIRELESS ADVOCATE



Adrian Cronauer at a fundraising event at the Memorial in 2014. He thanked donors for their commitment to the Memorial and the importance of recognizing our veterans. (L to R – Adrian Cronauer, his wife Jean, April Cheek-Messier, and D-Day veteran Hayden Furrow)

This July, we lost a dear friend and one of our country's staunchest advocates for ensuring those who are missing in action are accounted for and not forgotten. A former U.S. Air Force sergeant and disc jockey, Adrian Cronauer co-authored the story for the major motion picture *Good Morning, Vietnam!* The late Robin Williams garnered an Academy Award nomination for his loose portrayal of Cronauer in the 1987 film.

Cronauer's broadcasting style was similar to what you would hear on Stateside radio. At the time, military radio was far different with its own rigid rules and regulations. As noted by author Gordon Zernich in a 2001 publication of *Vietnam Magazine*, "military broadcasts were tough to listen to or watch without falling asleep. It seemed as though its mission had very little to do with improving the morale of the American community in Vietnam." Adrian's mission however, did.

Zernich noted, "Cronauer balanced innovation, imagination and enthusiasm with practicality and realism. He pushed as much as he could for reforms within the military broadcasting hierarchy....He met resistance from those who were deeply invested in military broadcast operations, from those who worked without incentive or motivation and from those who simply feared making waves."

Adrian was one man who changed the lives of untold thousands in Vietnam by lifting them up and providing hope, laughter, and a sense of home. He was not afraid to take a risk when it meant making a difference to those he served with – a trait that endured the rest of his life.

Adrian would continue to touch lives throughout his career. He served as a confidential advisor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) from 2001 through 2009. He represented the POW/MIA Office at meetings and at various outside functions including liaison with the leadership of veteran's service organizations as well as family and activist groups. In fact, he had lead responsibility for the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) dealing with international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Tripartite Commission in efforts to recovery or identify those still missing in action. He made it his mission to work with families and veteran's groups to achieve the fullest possible accounting for missing Americans. For his efforts, he received the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service.

Cronauer served on the National D-Day Memorial Foundation Board of Directors from 2012-2014. He believed in our mission and the need to recognize our veterans whenever possible. He was an active and engaged board member, appearing at events on the Foundation's behalf and thanking our donors along the way. In 2013, Cronauer gave the keynote address at the Memorial's annual POW/MIA Awareness Ceremony, speaking on the importance of accounting for America's heroes.

April Cheek-Messier, president of the Foundation, notes, "In spite of his fame, Adrian was one of the most humble men I've ever met. He always put others before himself and would assist veterans' causes in any way he could. Many will think of him through his depiction in the film. We will remember him for his selfless service, sense of humor, dedication, and generosity."

On Memorial Day 2019, the Memorial will dedicate a brick in the Annie J. Bronson Veterans Walkway in his memory.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL

- ★ **Monday, November 12, 11:00 AM—Veterans Day Observance:** Take time to honor all who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces during this moving tribute. The program will include special music, guest speaker Brigadier General Lapthe Flora, and recognition of all veterans. Guests are asked to bring their own chair. The latest installment of veteran bricks will also be dedicated. Free admission 10AM until noon.
- ★ **December 14-16, 6:00-9:00 PM—Flames of Memory and Christmas in Wartime Presentation:** As twilight deepens and obscures the surrounding mountains, the Memorial will honor the 4,413 men killed on D-Day. Arranged throughout the monument, thousands of luminaries will shine in recognition of Overlord's fallen and in tribute to the ultimate sacrifice each made to relight the lamp of freedom. Luminaries are sold throughout the year and may be purchased in honor or in memory of anyone who has served. A printed program will be distributed during the event and will include the tributes. Call (540) 586-3329 for information or email giving@dday.org.
- ★ **Saturday, December 15, Time TBD—Wreaths Across America:** Each year in December, Wreaths Across America lays thousands of wreaths throughout the country; a moving tribute to remember, honor, and teach the sacrifices made by our nation's service members. In 2018, the National D-Day Memorial will participate in this moving display which coincides with our annual Flames of Memory and Christmas in Wartime Presentation. Call (540) 586-3329 or visit www.dday.org for more information.

Stay up to date on event announcements and additional programs throughout the year by checking www.dday.org and social media!



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