

In both World Wars, a family which had lost a loved one in uniform hung a banner with a vivid Gold Star in their window—hence the term Gold Star Families. This monument—Virginia's first—recognizes the sacrifices of the families left behind when heroes pay the ultimate sacrifice.



Gold Star Families Memorial Monument

The Overlord Arch in Estes Plaza stands forty-four and one-half feet high (representative of the date of D-Day, 6 June 1944). The Plaza celebrates the breaching of Fortress Europe, the foothold in France.



Overlord Arch

While visiting Gray Plaza, one finds statuary representative of the beach landing and fighting. This includes two obstacles in the reflecting pool, a landing craft representation, and several figural pieces.



Gray Plaza

Co. A, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division



THE "BEDFORD BOYS"

Among the hundreds of thousands massed off the shores of Normandy on the morning of 6 June 1944 were 44 soldiers, sailors, and airmen from the town and county of Bedford, Virginia. Thirty-seven of these young men belonged to Company A of the 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division. For almost all of them, this would be their baptism of fire.

Of the 37 assigned to Company A, 31 loaded into landing craft and headed for Omaha Beach in the first wave; the remainder belonged to supply details and would arrive later. En route, a landing craft struck an obstacle and sank, stranding dozens far from shore, including five of Bedford's boys. The remaining 26 successfully reached Omaha Beach, where 16 were killed and four wounded within a matter of minutes. Three others were unaccounted for and later presumed killed in action. Another Bedford boy was killed in action elsewhere on Omaha Beach with Company F, bringing Bedford's D-Day fatalities to a total of 20. In comparison with its 1940s population, Bedford suffered the nation's severest per capita D-Day loss, a somber distinction for the rural Virginia community.

FROM D-DAY TO TODAY

Rarely has history so greatly been impacted in a single 24-hour period as on D-Day. The Allied success in Normandy not only set in motion the destruction of the Nazi regime, but also positioned the forces of democracy for the struggle that would mark the second half of the 20th century: the Cold War. Since then, D-Day has come to be understood as a watershed event, the first step in a long campaign to replace fascism with freedom, oppression with opportunity, and injustice with equality. It is a struggle that continues to this day; we all live with the legacy of D-Day.

WHILE AT THE NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL

This national memorial stands upon earth consecrated in solemn tribute to the Allied Forces who participated in D-Day, 6 June 1944. The Memorial site is a sacred precinct and visitors are expected to conduct themselves accordingly.

Running, climbing, and yelling are inappropriate. Please supervise children.

Do not play, throw things, or enter the water. Picnicking is permitted in designated areas only. Please refrain from eating within the monument's perimeter. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

Vaping and the use of tobacco products is prohibited, except in the designated smoking area. Dispose of trash and tobacco products in the designated containers located outside the monument's perimeter.

Pets are not permitted with the exception of service animals. If traveling with pets, please inquire about our free kennel service.

Firearms are prohibited. Drone aircraft are prohibited.

SUPPORT

The Memorial does not receive federal or state funding and relies on donations to operate. All proceeds from Gift Shop sales support the Memorial. You are invited to contribute toward the establishment of facilities that will enable the National D-Day Memorial Foundation to continue to expand upon the educational initiatives that have been central in the memorialization effort. By supporting the Foundation in telling the D-Day story today you ensure its retelling tomorrow.

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Memorial Wall

The names of the 2,499 United States service members killed on D-Day are found on the wall on the western side of the plaza. Names of the fallen 1,914 Allies appear on the eastern wall.



Richard S. Reynolds Sr. Garden

The sculpture *Homage* is a symbolic piece, emblematic of those communities across the country that nurtured those who went away to war and grieved for those who never returned.



Homage

You don't want to miss the following major points of interest while you are touring the Memorial...

WELCOME TO D-DAY

GENERAL INFORMATION

ABOUT THE MEMORIAL

The National D-Day Memorial Foundation is a nonprofit educational foundation, operating under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and warranted by Congress to establish, in Bedford, Virginia, and maintain for the nation, a memorial to the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice of the Allied forces that took part in the landing at Normandy, France on 6 June 1944.

Located in Bedford, Virginia, the community suffering the highest per capita D-Day losses in the nation, the National D-Day Memorial honors all Allied forces that participated in the invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944 during WWII. With its stylized English Garden, haunting beach tableau, and striking Victory Plaza, the Memorial stands as a powerful permanent tribute to the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice of D-Day participants.

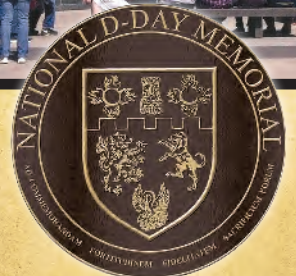
Visiting the Memorial is an educational as well as an emotional experience. As the largest amphibious landing in history, D-Day required unprecedented levels of men and material. More than 5,000 ships and 11,000 aircraft supported the landing of 150,000 Allied troops along a 50-mile stretch of beach in Nazi-held Normandy, France. Weather, combined with strong Nazi resistance, made the invaders' outcome anything but certain. Yet by day's end, the Allies had gained a foothold in occupied Europe. The human cost, however, was also unprecedented; more than 9,000 Allied soldiers were killed or wounded on D-Day alone.

OR VISIT WWW.DDAY.ORG



SCAN TO DONATE NOW

THE NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL



MAP & WALKING TOUR

Overview of the National D-Day Memorial, Dickson Architects and Associates, architect; Jim Brothers, principal sculptor; Matt Kirby, sculptor; Richard Pumphrey, sculptor.



Touring The Memorial

The primary entry into the Memorial grounds is the western gate entrance across from The Bobbie G. Johnson Pavilion. Here one is immediately greeted by a portrait bust of John Robert “Bob” Slaughter, D-Day veteran and founder of the National D-Day Memorial. Portrait busts of Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt may be found at the northeast portal and the northwest portal respectively. Though visitors may begin their walk around the Memorial at any of several entrances, its design reflects a story that begins in Reynolds Garden and culminates at Estes Plaza.

- As you proceed from the John Robert “Bob” Slaughter portrait bust north towards Reynolds Garden, you will pass by *Homage*. This monument is a fitting tribute to those sons of Bedford who served and sacrificed for our freedom but is also emblematic of those communities across our country that nurtured those who went away to war and grieved for those who never returned.

Richard S. Reynolds Sr. Garden

The stylized English garden connects the Memorial with England, where planning and preparation for the Normandy invasion occurred.

- Centered within the garden folly stands *The Supreme Commander*, a sculpture of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander for Operation Overlord. Overhead, a tile mosaic map depicts the plan for the coming invasion. Eisenhower is surrounded by portrait busts of his principal subordinates: Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur William Tedder, Deputy Supreme Commander; Admiral Sir Bertram H. Ramsay, Allied Naval Commander; Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford L. Leigh-Mallory, Allied Air Forces Commander; Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, D-Day Assault Commander; Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, US 1st Army Commander; and Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Chief of Staff.
- The patterned central area of the garden echoes the design of the SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) shoulder patch, worn by those tasked with planning the invasion. An example can be found on the southern wall above the text of the Supreme Commander’s Order of the Day for 6 June 1944. Arranged on either side of the Order are monuments honoring the major ground forces participating in D-Day.
- Plaques along the eastern and western garden walls mark the transition from preparing the invasion to initiating it. Monuments along the eastern wall recognize academies, colleges, and universities that prepared many of the Allied leaders for their wartime service. Along the western wall, plaques honor the infantry regiments that took part in the Normandy invasion.

- For every American who has died in battle, there are grieving family members left behind, who also have made heroic sacrifices. Virginia’s first *Gold Star Families Memorial Monument* pays tribute to parents, children, spouses, and siblings of those who died in service to their nation at any point in our nation’s history. The stirring “missing man” in the center is a reminder of the profound absence felt by the survivors.

Elmon T. Gray Plaza

Gray Plaza symbolizes the channel crossing and landing through a variety of features and sculptures.

- The plaza floor is divided into five segments, alluding to the five D-Day landing beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword.
- Enclosing the plaza are bronze plaques bearing the names of the 4,413 Allied service members killed in action on D-Day. The names of United States service members are on the western wall; the names of the other Allied Expeditionary Force members are on the eastern wall. There is an alphabetical register of names inside the Gift Shop.
- The beach tableau depicts the fierce struggle Allied soldiers waged up and down the landing beaches. A stylized bunker serves as a backdrop for the scene.
- A granite “Higgins Boat” represents the thousands of various landing craft that transported troops from ships to shore on the morning of D-Day. For its versatility, the “Higgins Boat” was later credited by Eisenhower with winning the war for the Allies.
- Nearby, two “hedgehogs” typify the range of obstacles the Germans set in the tidal flats to scuttle landing craft making their way to shore.
- The beach sculptures *Through the Surf*, *Death on Shore*, *Across the Beach*, and *Scaling the Wall* capture troops in various poses of battle; honoring the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice that was the hallmark of Operation Overlord.
- West of the beach tableau, George “Jimmy” Green Circle gives homage to the service and achievements of the naval forces of Operation Neptune, the seagoing component of D-Day. Green Circle’s monuments emphasize major vessels and exceptional leadership. More than 5,000 ships participated in the D-Day invasion.
- East of the beach tableau, Maurice T. Lawhorne Circle pays tribute to the roles and contributions of the AEF’s air forces on D-Day. More than 11,000 aircraft flew in support of the D-Day operations. Lawhorne Circle includes a series of narrative monuments to distinguished units and leaders.

Robey W. Estes Sr. Plaza

Estes Plaza celebrates the success of the Normandy landing and the international effort that made it possible while recognizing the operation’s human toll.

- Final Tribute* is a sober tribute to the more than 4,400 members of the Allied Expeditionary Force who were killed on D-Day. Emblematic of death in battle, the inverted rifle and helmet powerfully address the ultimate sacrifice of the fallen.

- A triumphal arch rises forty-four-and-a-half feet above Estes Plaza – a pointed allusion to D-Day’s occurrence on the sixth day of the sixth month of 1944. The word OVERLORD inscribed on its facade is the official name of the operation now known simply as D-Day. The black and white stripes emblazoned on the arch recalls the alternating black-and-white stripes that made Allied aircraft readily identifiable.
- The National D-Day Memorial Seal is inscribed on the floor of Estes Plaza directly beneath Overlord Arch. Rendered in Latin, the motto *Ad commemorationem fortitudinem, fidelitatem, sacrificiueorum translates to “Remembering their valor, fidelity, and sacrifice.”*
- The flags of the twelve nations of the AEF fly in an arc along the exterior of Estes Plaza. Beginning with the flag of the United States, the flags of the eleven other nations fly alphabetically; Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, and the United Kingdom. Nearby, the allegorical sculpture *Valor, Fidelity, Sacrifice* honors these qualities in all members of the Allied Expeditionary Force at D-Day.

Edward R. Stettinius Jr. Parade

Showing the liberation’s expansion from the beaches to Paris and beyond, Stettinius Parade stretches southward from Estes Plaza to the garrison flag. Located within Stettinius Parade is the Annie J. Bronson Veterans Memorial Walk

- Le Monument aux Morts* was created by French sculptor Edmond de Laheurdiere in memory of the forty-four men of Trévières, France, who died in World War I. In the days following D-Day, shrapnel or a round struck the head of the statue, disfiguring it. This recasting of Laheurdiere’s sculpture preserves the World War II damage that still mars the World War I original, a reminder that despite the hard-won success at Normandy, D-Day was but the beginning of the end of the war in Europe. The damaged statue serves as a silent lesson on the fragility of peace and the transience of victory.
- The Purple Heart Monument* stands in the shadow of the garrison flag. Emplaced by the Military Order of the Purple Heart and National D-Day Memorial Foundation, it is dedicated in particular tribute to those who received the Purple Heart for their service on D-Day.
- Beyond D-Day: Set in the eastern and western quadrants of the smaller circle around the flag staff in Stettinius Parade stand Clement R. Atlee and Harry S. Truman, the respective successors of Churchill and Roosevelt.