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. 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 own. 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 soldier 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 wartime population, Bedford suffered a somber distinction for the rural Virginia community.

From D-Day to Today

Rarly 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 strong Nazi resistance, made the invasion’s outcome certain, and gained a foothold in occupied Europe. The human cost, however, was also staggering; more than 9,000 Allied soldiers were killed or wounded on D-Day alone.

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 where 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.

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.

While at the 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 where 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
The primary entry into the Memorial grounds is the western entry 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. 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.

Reynolds Garden

The Richard S. Reynolds Sr. Garden, a stylized English garden, connects the Memorial with England, where planning and preparation for the Normandy invasion occurred.

Centered within the garden freely 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, U.S. 1st Army Commander; and Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Chief of Staff.

Portrait bust of Winston Churchill at the northeast entryway. Churchill was prime minister of the United Kingdom for most of the war, from 1940 to 1945. His tenacity, leadership, and eloquence were crucial to England’s fighting spirit and key ingredients to victory.

Portrait bust of Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the northwest entryway. Roosevelt, United States president from 1933 to 1945, presided over the preparation for the Normandy invasion. He was wounded twice while in France. Roosevelt’s vision for a national memorial to the Normandy invasion led to the creation of the National D-Day Memorial, which was officially dedicated in 2001.

The beach sculptures Through the Surf capture troops in various poses landing through a variety of features and sculptures. Statues of 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.

Gray Plaza

The Elmton T. 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.

Encircling the plaza are bronze plaques bearing the names of the 4,415 Allied service members killed in action on D-Day. The names of American service members are on the western wall; the names of the other Allied Expeditionary Force members are on the eastern wall. Guests can search names using the Memorial app or view an alphabetical register inside the Gift Shop.

The beach tableau depicts the forces 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 landing craft that transported troops from ships to shores on the morning of D-Day. For its versatility, the “Higgins Boat” was later credited by Eisenhower with winning the war for the Allies.

Nearly 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 Throughout the Surf, Death on Shore, Across the Beach, and Seizing the Win capture troops in various poses of battle, honoring the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice that were the hallmark of Operation Overlord.

West of the beach tableau, George “Jimmy” Green Circle pays 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, exceptional leadership, and the U.S. Coast Guard’s role.

East of the beach tableau, Maurice T. Lawhorn Circle pays tribute to the roles and contributions of the AEF’s air forces on D-Day. More than 11,000 aircraft flown in support of the D-Day operations. Lawhorn Circle includes a series of narrative monuments to distinguished units and leaders.

Gray Plaza

The Elmon T. 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.

Encircling the plaza are bronze plaques bearing the names of the 4,415 Allied service members killed in action on D-Day. The names of American service members are on the western wall; the names of the other Allied Expeditionary Force members are on the eastern wall. Guests can search names using the Memorial app or view an alphabetical register inside the Gift Shop.

The beach tableau depicts the forces 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 landing craft that transported troops from ships to shores on the morning of D-Day. For its versatility, the “Higgins Boat” was later credited by Eisenhower with winning the war for the Allies.

Nearly 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 Throughout the Surf, Death on Shore, Across the Beach, and Seizing the Win capture troops in various poses of battle, honoring the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice that were the hallmark of Operation Overlord.

West of the beach tableau, George “Jimmy” Green Circle pays 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, exceptional leadership, and the U.S. Coast Guard’s role.

East of the beach tableau, Maurice T. Lawhorn Circle pays tribute to the roles and contributions of the AEF’s air forces on D-Day. More than 11,000 aircraft flown in support of the D-Day operations. Lawhorn Circle includes a series of narrative monuments to distinguished units and leaders.

Stettinius Parade

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

The National D-Day Memorial Seal is inscribed on the floor of Estes Plaza directly beneath the Overlord Arch. Rendered in Latin, the motto Ad commodum et fortunam, fidelitatem, ascansionem translatas 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 (weather permitting). Beginning with the flag of the United States, the flags of the eleven other nations fly alphabetically: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, and the United Kingdom.

Nearby, the allegorical sculpture Wolf, Fidelity, Sacrifice honors these qualities in all members of the Allied Expeditionary Force at D-Day.

Overview of the National D-Day Memorial: Dickson Architects and Associates: architect Lee Brighly: principal sculptor Matt Kirby: sculptor Richard Punphumy: sculptor