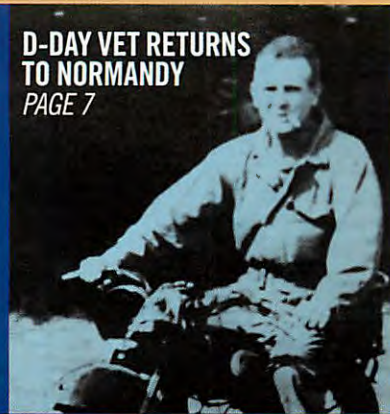


V-MAIL

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

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TO NORMANDY
PAGE 7



Volume 16, Number 2: Summer 2014

WE WANT YOU AT THE GRAND OPENING OF *ROAD TO BERLIN: EUROPEAN THEATER GALLERIES*

Since the beginning, Patriots Circle members have been a key part of every grand opening celebrated at the Museum. That tradition continues this Fall with the opening of the *Road to Berlin: European Theater Galleries* – the first phase of our newest exhibit pavilion, Campaigns of Courage: European & Pacific Theaters.

Enroll as a Patriots Circle member before August 22, 2014, and receive an exclusive invitation for two to the grand opening. Be among the first to have access to these galleries and the extraordinary festivities that are the hallmark of grand openings at the Museum.

Memberships range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 annually and drive the development of new and engaging content at America's WWII Museum. Flexible payment options are available.

Call Patriots Circle Coordinator Michael Sistrunk at 504-528-1944 x 433 for information or enroll today online at www.nationalww2museum.org/give.

Find out more about the *Road to Berlin: European Theater Galleries* on Page 8!

70th ANNIVERSARY SPOTLIGHT:

JUNE 1944

Of the many great transitional times of the Second World War, June 1944 stands as perhaps the most important transition of all, as the pendulum of war swung decisively against the Axis powers and into the favor of the Allies across nearly all fronts. June saw the world convulsing with unprecedented violence which rapidly escalated as the Axis powers desperately fought back against the advancing Allied onslaught.

Since September 1943, the Allied invasion of mainland Italy had been a long, bloody slog up the peninsula. After bogging down behind the Gustav line, the end-run landings at Anzio in January 1944 saw the Allies bottled up on the beaches. But in May, the constant Allied pounding finally brought a breakthrough against the German defenses, and the Allies raced up the Liri valley as the Germans retreated under pressure.

On June 4, 1944, Rome became the first Axis capital to fall to the Allies when American troops liberated the Eternal City. The German army fell back to defensive positions in northern Italy, and a tough war would still have to be fought there. But the long-awaited news of the liberation of Rome was swept off the front pages only two days later.

JUNE 1944 continued on page 15



Tightly packed troops crouch inside their LVT as it plows through a wave. In the distance is the coast of Normandy.



THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American Experience in *the war that changed the world* — why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today — so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM, INC.

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Founder

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A Letter from the President

REMEMBERING D-DAY AT NORMANDY



Soviet ruler Joseph Stalin grew furious at his American and British allies as they repeatedly delayed opening a "second front" in Western Europe that could weaken the sprawling German assault on his country. But when the Allied invasion ultimately did hit the shores of Normandy, France, it rivaled a force of nature — and left Stalin in awe.

"The history of war does not know of an undertaking comparable to it for breadth of conception, grandeur of scale, and mastery of execution," Stalin conceded.

Operation Overlord, the seaborne and airborne invasion unleashed in the early morning hours of June 6, 1944, inspired opponents of Nazi tyranny around the world. It carried special power and meaning in America and Britain — the Allied nations providing the bulk of the men, weapons and machinery employed in the attack that would be a turning point in WWII and the 20th century.

This issue of *V-Mail* coincides with the 70th anniversary of D-Day at Normandy, and at The National WWII Museum we place the highest priority on commemorating this climactic battle.

Were it not for Stephen Ambrose's research and writing on this monumental event, this national Museum would never have been founded. Its location in New Orleans was justified by the fact that many thousands of innovative landing craft essential to this D-Day (and many others) were built here, by Higgins Industries.

While the Museum's education mission now encompasses the entire American WWII experience, the Normandy invasion remains the core story, reflected in our extraordinary exhibits, oral histories, artifacts and travel programs.

As this publication went to print, 300 supporters, including D-Day veterans, broadcaster Tom Brokaw and other notable WWII historians, were preparing for an exceptional Museum cruise aboard the *Silver Cloud* — and for sailing into the midst of 70th anniversary ceremonies in Normandy.

Since long before this Museum's 2000 opening, the celebrated D-Day of June 1944 has commanded international attention. This will always remain true, and we will continue to emphasize this powerful story.

Gordon H. "Nick" Mueller, PhD
President & CEO

THE DIGITAL COLLECTIONS OF
THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

log in sign up my cart

HOME BROWSE SEARCH FAQs CONTACT

MALARKEY, DONALD
Don Malarkey was a paratrooper in the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division.

HEAR THIS STORY

ROSS, WILBURN K
Ross served with the 3rd Infantry Division in Europe and was awarded the Medal of Honor.

HEAR THIS STORY

KLEISS, NORMAN J.
Kleiss was an SBD Dauntless pilot in Scouting Squadron 6 aboard the USS Enterprise (CV6).

HEAR THIS STORY

FEATURED IMAGES

5TH WAR LOAN GATHERING IN NEW YORK CITY DURING WORLD WAR II

A CAPTURED GERMAN 105MM HOWITZER NEAR NAPLES, ITALY IN THE 1945-46

US SOLDIER RELAXING IN NEW CALEDONIA IN 1944-45

NURSES WITH CHILDREN IN NEW CALEDONIA IN NOVEMBER 1944

MUSEUM ADDS TO THE DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

With the launch of our digital collections website earlier this year, researchers, students and enthusiasts gained access to 5,000 Museum images and 150 oral histories. Just in time for the 70th anniversary of D-Day, we have added even more content around the Normandy invasion. Visit ww2online.org to view the collection and purchase rights or reproductions.

This project was funded in part by the Collins C. Diboll Private Foundation, the Ella West Freeman Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



We have a rocking inventory of games scheduled for Heat of Battle VIII! And this year, they include ALL American military history, as well as ANY WWII games. Add to that the Museum admission that's included in the Heat registration fee and the great hotel rates — including free hotel parking — and it's easy to see why Heat of Battle VIII is the place to be August 8–10, 2014.

Go to nationalww2museum.org/wargaming to register or learn more, and follow us on Twitter @wwiigamer.



THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

945 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
www.nationalww2museum.org
504-528-1944 or 877-813-3329

HOURS OF OPERATION

Museum Exhibits and Museum Store

Open seven days a week, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Find out more about the Museum Store at www.shopwwii.org or call 877-813-3329 x 244.

Solomon Victory Theater

504-528-1942, Showing *Beyond All Boundaries*
Seven days a week, hourly,
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Friday and Saturday from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Stage Door Canteen

www.stagedoorcanteen.org | 504-528-1943
View the entertainment schedule online.
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American Sector Restaurant

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A Chef John Besh restaurant
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Jeri Nims Soda Shop

www.american-sector.com | 504-528-1940
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All venues are closed Mardi Gras Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

GROUP VISITS

To schedule your reunion, church, school or tour group, call 504-528-1944 x 222 or go to www.nationalww2museum.org/plan-a-visit. Ask about our *Call of Duty* and *Behind the Lines* VIP tour options!

E-MAIL UPDATES

Sign up for free e-mails about Museum events and exhibits and special discount offers at www.nationalww2museum.org/bulletin

ACCESSIBILITY

All areas of the Museum are wheelchair accessible. A limited number of wheelchairs are available for use on site at no charge. Service animals are welcome.

V-MAIL is published quarterly by The National WWII Museum, Inc. as a benefit to Museum members. Contact us at The National WWII Museum, Attn: *V-MAIL*, 945 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70130 or 504-528-1944 x 357 or email info@nationalww2museum.org.

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GEORGE G. KLEIN

2ND RANGER BATTALION



On June 6, 1944, George Klein and his fellow Rangers of the 2nd Ranger Battalion were finally in landing craft headed for the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc. For months, they had been training to climb cliffs for an upcoming assault on a previously unknown location. As they approached the invasion area, their commander quickly realized that they were headed in the wrong direction and needed to make a quick correction. Their landing craft turned to starboard in an effort to get them back on track, all the while running parallel to the

land. Klein recalled that they were close enough to the land at this point that they started to receive small arms fire. As they approached the correct landing site, the base of the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, each of the boats launched rockets with grappling hooks on the end that were designed to reach the top of the cliff and hook on for the Rangers to climb. Klein recalled that, as they approached, there was enough rubble from the bombing the US Army Air Force had inflicted on the cliffs that it gave them a little less distance to have to climb.

Instead of climbing roughly 100 feet of cliffside as expected, Klein noted, "I would say that there was almost 30 feet that you went up before you got to any point of the cliff." He attributed this to helping them get up the cliffs much faster.

Klein recalled that his company, Fox Company, was lucky because when it landed at the base of the cliffs it hit solid ground. As they disembarked the landing craft, he remembered, "every once in a while a German would stick his head over and take shots at us while we shot at them from the ground." Klein felt that the Germans at Pointe du Hoc were seemingly not prepared for anyone to try to scale the cliffs during an invasion. He remarks, "I would say that within 30 to 45 minutes the entire battalion was on top of the ridge. What we found when we got to the top is that any landmarks we were looking for were no longer there and they had all been blown to hell." A few concrete bunkers had been hit and were hiding German troops who fired on the Rangers. He recalled several Rangers getting close enough to throw grenades in and neutralize the enemy before moving on to their main objective, finding the coastal artillery guns and destroying them. However, as they reached the location where intelligence showed the guns were emplaced, they only found telephone poles and no actual artillery. Klein recalled that F Company then moved to knock out other objectives, such as machine gun nests and an anti-aircraft gun. After taking quite a number of casualties in his company during their attempts, Klein recalled that the USS *Satterlee* (DD-626), which was anchored offshore, fired on the position of the machine guns and knocked them out. He never forgot the actions of the *Satterlee* and remarked, "In my opinion, that saved half of Fox Company!"

Now that most of Pointe du Hoc was secure, Klein and the other men of the 2nd Ranger Battalion were to form roadblocks along the main road connecting Omaha and Utah Beaches in order to keep the Germans from moving reinforcements between them. There was also a need to mop up the area and search the shell holes for Germans possibly hiding in all of the rubble. In one particularly hairy situation, Klein was in a shell hole when a German charged up behind him with a rifle and bayonet. Klein recalled that his Sergeant alerted him of the German and that he spun around in time to see the German charging him at about 10 to 15 feet away. He had just enough time to pull his .45 pistol and shoot the German. He remembered, "I shot him twice. The first one stopped him and the second knocked him over. The only trouble was that his rifle and bayonet kept coming into the shell hole and hit me in the leg." Fortunately, the bayonet only stabbed him and did not go completely through his leg or damage the bone. Klein dressed his wound and returned to combat. For the next two days, Klein led his men into combat in the hedgerow area, but by D+2 had to be evacuated to England with his leg wounds after the 2nd Ranger Battalion was relieved.

Klein spent the next several weeks in a hospital and then received a transfer to his pre-Ranger unit, the 46th Field Artillery, 5th Infantry Division, which was still in Ireland waiting to go to France and was in need of replacement officers with combat experience. He became a forward and an aerial observer, splitting his time between both duties in combat through France. In November 1944, Klein fractured two vertebrae in an explosion from either a mine or artillery round. He had to spend several months in a body cast, ending his combat for the remainder of the war. When he returned to duty, he spent the rest of the war working in a German POW collection area.

Second Lieutenant George Klein was interviewed on July 18, 2013 at his home by Historian/Curator for Digitization Processing Joey Balfour. Klein will return to the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc in June 2014 with the Museum's sold-out 70th Anniversary of D-Day Cruise.

Article written by Historian/Curator Tommy Lofton.



Learning the Lessons of the **MONUMENTS MEN**



On January 23rd, the Museum hosted a webinar with *The Monuments Men* author Robert Edsel. Over 3,700 students tuning in from 39 states and five countries had the opportunity to ask Robert about the discoveries of the Monuments Men, their treasure hunt to recover looted artworks and their mission to protect important structures from wartime destruction. Students viewed photographs and newsreel footage of the massive amount of stolen art tucked away in remote salt mines and castles throughout the European countryside.

Some of the most critical messages Edsel stressed to the students were the enduring lessons, continuing mission and lasting legacy of the Monuments Men. Despite being a small group of men and women, they tackled a tremendous task through their passion, ingenuity and teamwork.

At the beginning of the program, students debated whether or not they believed art was worth risking one's life. By the end, some were eager to join the ranks of the MFAA officers, as one home-school teacher recounted, "My two younger students are already talking about becoming 'Monuments Women'!"

Learn more about Museum webinar opportunities at nationalww2museum.org/learn.



Robert Edsel with Virtual Classroom Coordinator Chrissy Gregg

D-DAY VETERAN RETURNS TO NORMANDY

Months before embarking on his return to Normandy, Tom Blakey, one of the Museum's most beloved WWII veteran volunteers, was eagerly counting down the days to the beginning of the Museum's 70th Anniversary of D-Day Cruise in June.

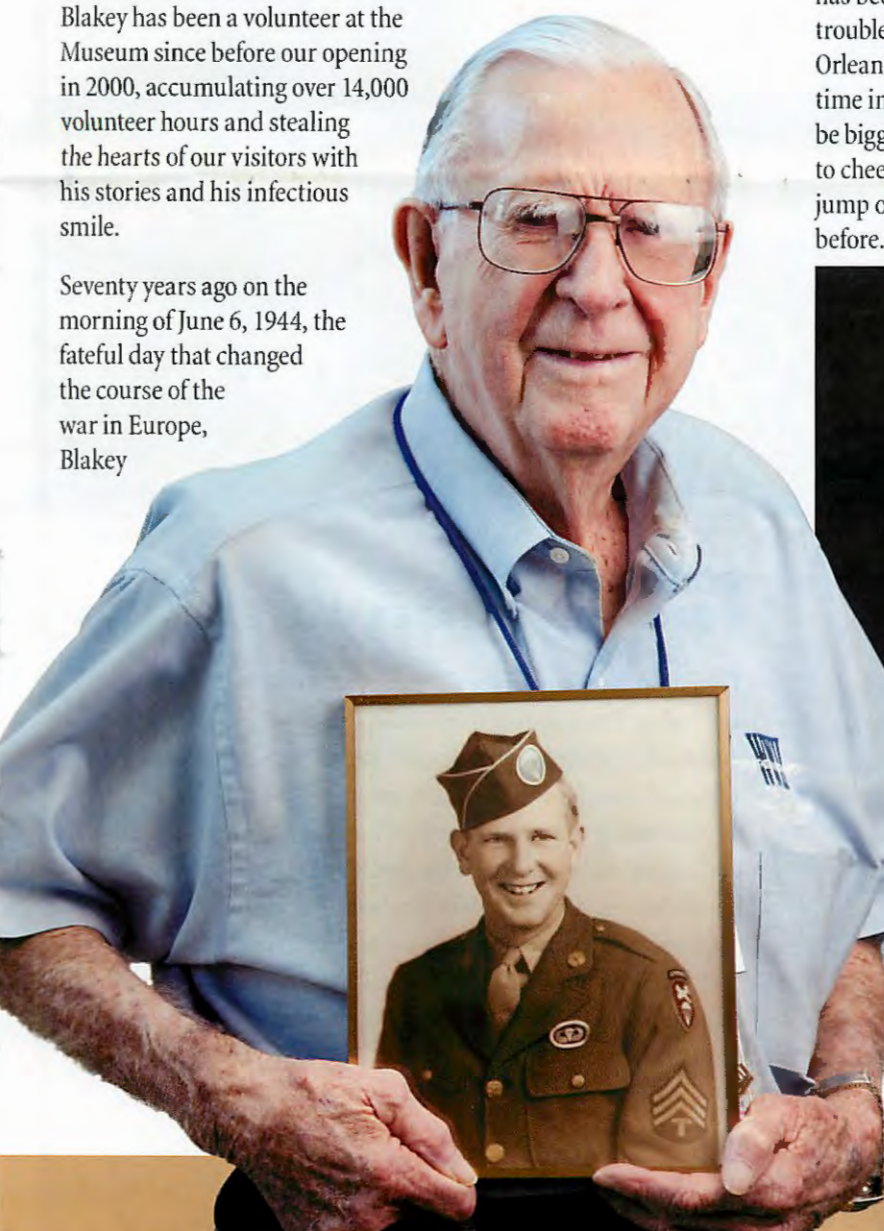
Before leaving on this momentous trip to revisit the battlefields where many of his fellow servicemen fought and fell, Blakey spoke excitedly about experiencing events like the French and American Ceremony at the Normandy American Cemetery and participating in a Veterans Panel monitored by Tom Brokaw onboard the sold-out Silver Cloud cruise ship.

Blakey has been a volunteer at the Museum since before our opening in 2000, accumulating over 14,000 volunteer hours and stealing the hearts of our visitors with his stories and his infectious smile.

Seventy years ago on the morning of June 6, 1944, the fateful day that changed the course of the war in Europe, Blakey

jumped into the D-Day invasion behind Nazi lines as a paratrooper in the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division. During his first four days in Normandy, he was a part of one of the "costliest small-unit actions in the history of the US Army," with more than 500 casualties in a single operation to secure a small bridge at La Fiere from German reinforcements making their way to Utah Beach. This June 6, he's visiting the same bridge to share his stories of battle and explain to visitors what the operation and the war were like.

To help him prepare for his travels back to Normandy, Blakey has been exercising, eating right and, as he put it, "staying out of trouble," to be ready for his trip overseas. This Texas-born New Orleanian spiritedly talks about his return, and says, "At this time in my life this is the biggest event. The only thing that would be bigger is if I could jump one more time." Blakey will be there to cheer on US Army Parachuters and WWII reenactors as they jump out of planes just like he once did at Normandy seventy years before.



Above: Tom Blakey in an undated war-era photo.

Left: Blakey poses in the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion with a service-era photo.



CAMPAIGNS OF COURAGE

EUROPEAN AND PACIFIC THEATERS

Our newest pavilion, Campaigns of Courage: European and Pacific Theaters, will feature two essential stories of World War II — the *Road to Berlin* (opening December 2014) and the *Road to Tokyo* (opening late 2015) — representing the “heart and soul” of the Museum’s expansion. Campaigns of Courage will transport visitors to the far reaches of World War II through immersive exhibits and personal stories that re-create the look and feel of battlegrounds. Through an in-depth exploration of the European-Mediterranean Campaign and the Asia-Pacific Campaign, Campaigns of Courage is designed to portray the bravery, sacrifice, and sense of duty demonstrated by soldiers in each branch of the US military services in all campaigns of World War II. Core exhibits will tell the tales of America’s citizen soldiers who fought and died to bring freedom and democracy to countries around the globe while also detailing the horrendous impacts from the vast military struggle.

ROAD TO BERLIN: EUROPEAN THEATER GALLERIES

The European-Mediterranean Theater spanned several years and engaged hundreds of thousands of people in the air, at sea, underwater, on the beaches, in the mountains and the desert. The *Road to Berlin* will present a comprehensive narrative of the fascinating stories and events in Europe, helping visitors to understand and appreciate what preceded D-Day in June 1944 — the challenges, strategies and operations that secured the path to Normandy, as well as the bloody battles that followed. The *Road to Berlin* will contain eight deep-dive galleries that will make the war come alive through images, oral histories, artifacts, and stunning displays that mimic the environments of the battle scenes.

THE GALLERIES

European/Mediterranean Briefing Room: This gallery explains how the German military conquered territories reaching from northern France to the gates of Moscow.

The Desert War — North Africa: Heeding Winston Churchill's call for securing a base in Africa before challenging Hitler's "Fortress Europe," this gallery explains how the US and British forces invaded North Africa.

Invasion of Sicily: This gallery will explain how the Allies' initial invasion of Axis Europe's soft underbelly at Sicily succeeded.

Italian Campaign: American forces and their allies achieve the surrender of Italian leaders who — amid political turmoil and confusion — switch sides and declare war on Germany and liberate Rome.

Air War: American air power delivered lethal blows to Germany's plants and transportation systems — and to population centers. At the end of the gallery, visitors will view a five-minute video that summarizes Normandy D-Day and launches them into France.

Northern Europe: Breakout and Liberation: The Allies' hard-won success on D-Day is followed by a campaign of dramatic highs and lows, marked by tenacious, slow-advance fighting in the hedgerows and in coastal towns, followed by a race across France and the liberation of Paris.

Breaching the German Frontier Bunker: The Allied advance ground to a halt as it encountered the German Siegfried Line, a network of bunkers, minefields, and barbed wire built into hilly terrain. This gallery mimics the interior of a blown-out German bunker, allowing you to see the infrastructure employed by the Germans in defense of their homeland.

Battle of the Bulge: Hitler launched a surprise winter counter-attack through the Ardennes forest driving the Allies back. This gallery sets the scene for the six-week Battle of the Bulge — the US Army's largest battle of World War II. Grappling with bitterly cold weather, more than 30 divisions and 600,000 men fought desperately to halt the Germans.

Into the German Homeland: American troops advancing into Germany witnessed and experienced unimaginable violence and destruction. *Into the German Homeland* will reveal the last major obstacle of taking German bridges on the Rhine, the discovery of Ohrdruf concentration camp (the first Nazi death camp liberated by American forces), the capture of Cologne and, finally, the ultimate surrender of Germany, thus ending the war in Europe.

THE DESERT WAR — NORTH AFRICA



AIR WAR



NORTHERN EUROPE: BREAKOUT AND LIBERATION



BATTLE OF THE BULGE



INTO THE GERMAN HOMELAND





THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM TOURS **70TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR SERIES**

Travel to the sites where history was made.

It is our mission as America's National World War II Museum to tell the stories of the men and women who defended our freedoms during an epic struggle that shaped world history. There is no better way to learn from or commemorate these heroes and their actions than by exploring the battlefields they fought on, or by visiting the Museum that honors them.

Throughout 2014, we will commemorate the 70th anniversaries of many of the battles and events that took place around the world, eventually leading our Allies to victory. Ever since our first tour in 2004, commemorating the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, the educational travel programs offered by the Museum have grown to accommodate the widespread desire of patriotic Americans to visit the places where their fathers and grandfathers served to secure freedom.



D-DAY TOUR: THE INVASION OF NORMANDY & LIBERATION OF FRANCE FRANCE \$2,995 PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

It should come as no surprise that our Normandy tour is our most popular. 70 years after the Allies landed in Normandy, marking the beginning of the liberation of western Europe, there is still a deep and passionate interest in what took place on D-Day and in the citizen soldiers. Over the past 10 years of leading tours to Normandy, we have refined our program, discovered new sites and forged new friendships with partners in the region that make our tour the best way to visit the sites that bore witness to this epic event.

Join us for upcoming tour dates for *D-Day: The Invasion of Normandy & Liberation of France*. Our in-depth itinerary offers a full week in Normandy at an incredible price. This affordable itinerary is a great value and features top guides, quality accommodations in prime locations, comprehensive dining, and exclusive access to sites unseen on other programs. Sites include Pegasus Bridge, where the first shots of the invasion were fired a few minutes after midnight on June 6, 1944; the British and Canadian sectors, stopping at select sites that are relatively unknown to an American audience, but which played crucial roles in the Allied victory; Ste. Mere Eglise, which American paratroopers descended upon in the early hours of June 6th; Pointe du Hoc, where the Rangers scaled the cliffs and made their brazen assault; Utah Beach, with the wonderful museum; and many others!

The expedition is never complete without paying respects to the 9,387 men and women buried at the American Cemetery above Omaha Beach. This tour is an excellent opportunity to traverse the beaches and battlefields of Normandy, and remember the sacrifices made in the beautiful region of France — 70 years after its liberation.

THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE TOUR BELGIUM - LUXEMBOURG \$4,999 PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY, SPECIAL RATES FOR WWII VETS AVAILABLE

In December, the Museum will host our first-ever winter tour to Europe. We are delighted to offer the opportunity for our guests to view the terrain of the Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxembourg as it was during the frigid fight known as the "Battle of the Bulge."

The 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge Tour, December 11 – 20, 2014, based out of Bastogne, Belgium, will provide a unique opportunity to experience the area 70 years to the day when the Germans launched their massive assault, and commemorate these events with the locals. The Museum, with its network of partners, will have special invitations to ceremonies and exclusive access to sites and institutions throughout the itinerary. Guests will stand on battlefields, both famous and infamous, including: Elsenborn Ridge; Bastogne; Malmedy; Trois Ponts; the Twin Villages; St. Vith; and Luxembourg City.

Stories will be shared of those men who were on the thin first line of defense in the early morning hours of December 16th; the brave defenders of Bastogne; the heroic engineers who repeatedly altered the Nazi plans and timetable; and of Gen. George Patton, whose grave we will visit at the Luxembourg American Cemetery. After departing the area, the tour will head to Brussels for our last day of the tour where we will enjoy the wonderful Christmas Market.

Mark your calendars now to join us for this tour that will both commemorate and celebrate the men who blunted Hitler's last gamble.

For information on all of the Museum's travel programs, visit ww2museumtours.org or call 877-813-3329 x 257.



Behind the Lines Tour EVERY FRIDAY AT THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM \$395 PER PERSON OR \$750 PER COUPLE

For those planning a visit to New Orleans this year, our latest tour opportunity will take you "Behind the Lines" at America's WWII Museum. Every Friday, this one-day, all-access adventure begins with a docent-led tour of the Museum galleries and the Kushner Restoration Pavilion, where our PT-305 is being restored to original WWII condition.

The package also includes the exclusive 4D film *Beyond All Boundaries, Final Mission: USS Tang Submarine Experience* and *Train Car Experience* plus the breathtaking US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center. Explore our extensive collection of artifacts not on view to the general public in the vault, climb inside a Sherman Tank and have lunch with a Museum curator in our private dining room. Complete your day with dinner and a show in the Museum's Stage Door Canteen, a lively 1940s-inspired entertainment venue.

Group size is limited to just 11 guests each week, so advance reservations are strongly recommended.

2014 HIGH SCHOOL QUIZ BOWL

This spring the Museum hosted the tenth annual WWII Quiz Bowl, with teams from 26 high schools competing for World War II knowledge supremacy. This year the Quiz Bowl was sponsored by The New Orleans Advocate newspaper and was televised throughout southeast Louisiana.

Students answered questions about wartime diplomacy and politics, the war in Europe, the war in the Pacific, Japanese Americans, propaganda posters and post-WWII history. Central High School from Baton Rouge and Northshore High School from Slidell finished first and second in the preliminary round, advancing to the live, televised Championship.

Right: Pictured with their Championship trophy are Central High School students Cameron Robertson, Brantley Pike and Landon Disdare with Director of Education Kenneth Hoffman.



ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

For the 2014 Essay Contest, the Museum found inspiration in the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion, asking students, "How did you plan to achieve success in the face of the unknown?" We received more than 2,500 entries from high school and middle school students in 48 states and the District of Columbia, as well as entries from US territories (Guam, Northern Marianas Islands) and US military bases in Europe.

High School Essay Contest Winners:

1st place: Margot Brose, "The War Within," Southaven, Mississippi (12th grade)

2nd place: Seung Hwan An, "Perseverance in the Face of the Unknown: Japanese Americans in the 1940s and Korean Americans Today," Watertown, CT (9th grade)

3rd place: Emily Hess, "Finding My Voice," Elizabethtown, PA (12th grade)

Middle School Essay Contest First Place Winners:

5th grade: Katie Sproles, "Middle School Survival," Brookhaven, Mississippi

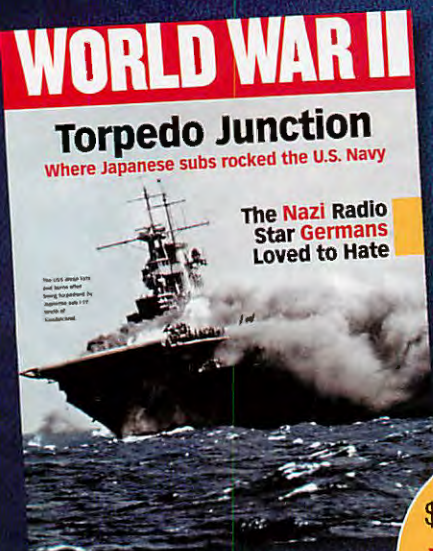
6th grade: Ethan Yan, "Planning to Succeed," Hillsborough, CA

7th grade: Brian Lee, "My D-Day," Cupertino, CA

8th grade: Robert Yampanis, "When Darkness Threatened," Norwell, MA

Read the winning essays at nationalww2museum.org/essaycontests.

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NEW ORLEANS TO NORMANDY: LANDING CRAFT VEHICLE PERSONNEL

If the First World War was characterized by the stalemate of trench warfare on the Western Front, the Second World War was characterized by movement. Advances in technology resulted in new ways to move soldiers onto and around the battlefield. Troops could land behind enemy lines in gliders or jump from planes with parachutes. Forces could race across the battlefield in tanks and other armored vehicles for which the term Blitzkrieg was coined or they could land from the ocean in craft upon the beach. It was this last method of moving soldiers that General Eisenhower credited as changing the whole course of the war. Eisenhower also had high praise for the man who developed these landing craft, Andrew Jackson Higgins of New Orleans, saying “he was the man who won the war for us.”

The US military began developing small boats that could carry troops from ships to open beaches in the 1930s. Higgins, who had been manufacturing shallow-water work boats to support oil and gas exploration in the Louisiana bayous, adapted his Eureka Boat to meet the military’s specifications for a landing craft. Designated the Landing Craft, Personnel (Large), or LCP(L), it was used in the invasions of Guadalcanal and North Africa in 1942.

Initially, separate landing craft were used for troops and vehicles, the LCP(L)s and the LCVs (Landing Craft, Vehicle). The LCP(L) was designed without a ramp. Troops unloaded by jumping over the side, which proved unsatisfactory because it exposed the men to hostile fire. Higgins solved this shortcoming by combining the LCP(L) and LCV’s designs into the Landing Craft, Personnel (Ramped) or LCP(R). But the narrow ramp still made for difficult offloading. The next step was to design a wider version of the ramp which became the Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel or LCVP. The most famous of

Higgins’ designs, this craft is often referred to as the “Higgins Boat” and allowed infantry or small vehicles to exit through a front ramp.

In Europe the ability to land soldiers at any point on the occupied coast forced the Nazis to fortify every foot of the beach. Before the advent of landing craft, armies would assault and capture ports so they could unload their forces. The action at Dieppe proved this was not a viable option in modern warfare. Hitler, understanding the ability of the Allies to land anywhere, was forced to defend everywhere. Reserves were held back from attacking the initial landings which helped considerably in the establishment of the Normandy Beachhead.

In the Pacific, the large number of islands meant that the war against Japan could not be waged without amphibious landings. Over 200 opposed landings were conducted in the Pacific Theater.

When The National D-Day Museum was in the early planning stages, it was decided that an LCVP would be an essential artifact to include in the Museum. But despite the fact that tens of thousands of these craft had been built, very few had survived and all known examples were in museums. The decision was made to construct a new craft. A group of volunteers dedicated themselves to the task, forming the Higgins Boat Society. Original plans were followed with meticulous attention to detail. When possible, actual components were used. For example, the engine, transmission and ramp are all WWII hardware. Today this replicated craft stands proudly in the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion as a testament to the men who gained a foothold on foreign shores in the struggle to secure a peaceful future for the world.

Plan your visit to The National WWII Museum today at nationalww2museum.org/visit, where you can also find information on our new Behind the Lines VIP tours.

Take Your Seat

in the Solomon Victory Theater

This year marks the 5th anniversary of the Solomon Victory Theater. Since the theater opened in 2009, more than a million visitors have viewed the 4D film *Beyond All Boundaries*. Available nowhere else in the world, this multi-sensory cinematic experience has appealed to the broadest possible audience and has changed the way people learn about the war.

You can play a role in this riveting experience by naming a seat in the Solomon Victory Theater. With a gift of either \$5,000 or \$10,000, you can pay tribute to a family member, friend or organization in an unforgettable way while also helping to preserve the stories of World War II. A brass plaque will be permanently affixed to the armrest of a theater seat and the legacy of your hero will be honored for generations to come.

There are only 139 seats left, so be sure to order your special tribute today!

For more information, contact
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lauren.bevis@nationalww2museum.org.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

DEBORAH G. LINDSAY: A COMMITMENT TO HISTORY

The Museum is thrilled to highlight one of our most enthusiastic supporters, Deborah G. Lindsay. Lindsay, a Museum Trustee, Patriots Circle member and generous Capital Campaign donor, recently stepped into the role of Chair of our Theater Seat Campaign. She believes in leading by example to inspire others, and her encouragement has been essential in obtaining additional support for a variety of the Museum's initiatives.

Deborah co-founded and served as Vice-President of a marketing company, the Aegis Group, in Atlanta. A wife and a mother of three grown children, she recently graduated summa cum laude from Kennesaw State University with a degree in history. For the past decade, she has studied World War II in depth, traveling to the major campaign sites in Europe, North Africa and Asia. Currently writing a book on the history of concentration camps, Deborah has been researching the nineteen official Nazi concentration camp sites, traveling throughout Germany and the former Nazi-occupied European countries.

In 2000, when The National D-Day Museum was being constructed in New Orleans, Deborah's father, WWII veteran Bill Grosser, suggested that they plan a visit. Unfortunately, the two were not able to make the trip before he passed away later that year. The next year, her uncle, Harry John Grosser, also a veteran, mentioned that he had visited the Museum and joined as a Charter Member. Finally, in 2005, after a bout with cancer, Deborah was able to tour the Museum. She and her husband, Rick, walked away from their extraordinary visit feeling that the Museum provided a "wonderful tribute" to the Greatest Generation.

The next year, Deborah attended the Museum's first International Conference on WWII. She has traveled extensively with the Museum on a number of tours including the Normandy beaches, the sites of the Battle of the Bulge and a Mediterranean cruise to Tunisia, Sicily and Italy. In addition, she has attended countless lectures. In fact, Deborah says that Dr. Gordon "Nick" Mueller and his wife, Beth, would joke that Deborah was a woman that "just kept showing up at every event!"

On each occasion, Deborah enjoyed being part of a "community of compassionate, appreciative, patriotic Americans," and felt compelled to increase her level of involvement. She and her husband attended the Grand Opening of the Solomon Victory Theater in 2009, and were overwhelmed by the 4D film *Beyond All Boundaries*. Even after numerous viewings, she has "not been able to sit through it without crying."

Now, with Deborah's leadership as Chair of our Theater Seat Campaign, our vision of naming every theater seat will become a reality. With the enthusiasm that she brings and the respect she is accorded, we have marked the beginning of a new chapter for this campaign. We are thankful to Deborah Lindsay for honoring our veterans and their legacies for all future generations. She feels that naming a theater seat is a "great, permanent way to recognize those you love and to contribute to the WWII cause."

Deborah has generously donated a seat in memory of her father, Second Lieutenant William F. Grosser, US Army Air Corps, who served in WWII as a flight instructor. She has named a seat in memory of her uncle, Harry John Grosser of West Palm Beach, Florida, who served with the 15th US Army Air Corps in Italy. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, he successfully completed 35 bombing missions, piloting B-24 Liberators over the Romanian oilfields, including the perilous Ploiesti air raid. She also named a seat in honor of her father-in-law, radioman Robert S. Lindsay, US Navy. Deborah's leadership and support allow us to tell the story of the heroes, such as her father and uncle, who ensured victory for us all. Thanks to her efforts, we will be able to continue to innovate the Museum experience and the visitor's relationship to the WWII story.



On June 6, 1944, the hammer-blow which would decide the fate of Hitler's empire finally fell in northern France. Operation Overlord saw the greatest armada in modern history launch across the English Channel in an operation for which failure was not an option. If the Germans succeeded in driving the Allies back into the Channel, then Hitler would remain the master of Western Europe.

First the Allies came by air, as paratroopers dropped behind German lines to capture key roads and crossings and to disrupt the enemy while ground forces were ferried across the water. Over 6,000 seaborne vessels carried more than 130,000 soldiers to five Normandy landing beaches. Upon landing, the soldiers faced Hitler's daunting Atlantic Wall fortifications, constructed at tremendous cost in materials and money and strengthened by the notorious German General Erwin Rommel. Rommel's "asparagus" barriers, barbed wire embankments, sea and land mines, machine gun nests and artillery were all menacingly directed against the landing sites.

The British and Canadians landed across Gold, Sword and Juno beaches while the Americans strove to take Utah and Omaha beaches. Most infamously at Omaha, a heavy price was paid in blood. At dawn on D-Day, the small community of Bedford, Virginia saw 19 of her native sons perish in the first assault wave. But the young soldiers upon whom depended the fate of the battle, and perhaps ultimately the war, continued to stream ashore, and by the end of the day the Allies had achieved a beachhead in France from which Hitler's forces would not dislodge them.

Hard fighting in the surprising and difficult terrain of the hedgerow country awaited the troops for the remainder of June and nearly all of July before a breakout across France could be staged. But Hitler had missed his opportunity to drive the Allies into the sea and broker a negotiated peace with the Soviet Union.

While June saw Hitler deprived of his erstwhile ally, Italy, and his best geographic advantage lost with the Allies' successful landing in France, his other ally, Japan, was about to feel the full brunt of the Allied war effort in the Pacific. On June 15, American amphibious naval forces assaulted Saipan in the Marianas. The invasion of Saipan was crucial because it would put the Americans within bombing range of mainland Japan through the B-29 Superfortresses which were now streaming off factory lines in seemingly endless quantities.

The first B-29 raid on mainland Japan occurred on the city of Yawata on June 15, flown from bases in China. This route would not prove the most efficient, but if the Americans acquired Saipan, Guam and Tinian in the Marianas, they would be in a superior position to strike mainland Japan regularly with their B-29 fleet. The Japanese navy thus sailed out to staunch the American offensive on Saipan, luring the American fleet to engage at the Battle of the Philippine Sea on June 19-20. The Japanese air fleet launched from carriers was decimated by the American forces, losing 375 planes (and more

importantly, trained pilots) in a battle nicknamed by the Americans "the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot."

After this battle, the Japanese air fleet was incapacitated, incapable of projecting offensive power from their carriers against the American naval forces. This was an ominous turn for the Americans, as the Japanese would soon turn to kamikazes as a result. On Saipan itself, American ground troops again experienced the bitter, fanatical mindset of the enemy. Not only did Japanese troops refuse to surrender, but civilian women and children committed suicide by hurling themselves off cliffs at Marpi Point rather than surrender to American troops. It took the Americans until August to complete their conquest of the Marianas, nonetheless, June 1944 proved a crucial transition point in the Pacific war.

Meanwhile, Joseph Stalin exacted his revenge against Adolf Hitler. In coordination with the US and Britain, the Soviet Union staged a massive assault all along the Eastern Front, bleeding pressure away from Normandy and crushing the German forces in a massive Allied vice. Operation Bagration was launched on June 22, 1944, three years to the day after Hitler had double-crossed his one-time ally and invaded the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa. Bagration led to the nearly complete destruction of the German Army Group Center, and would ultimately see the Soviets reconquer virtually all of western Russia and gain holds in Poland and Romania by August 1944.

In the light of history, June 1944 saw the pendulum of war swing decidedly toward an Allied victory over the Axis, and with this transition hopes rose that the end of the war would soon be in sight. But much uncertainty, violence and pain remained before the Allies could claim the mantle of final victory.

Article by Samuel Zemurray Stone Senior Director of Research and History Keith Huxen.





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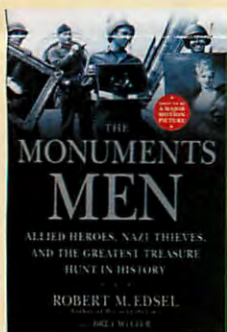
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