

"You are about to embark on the great crusade toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you... I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle," General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

During World War II (1939-1945), the Battle of Normandy, which lasted from June 1944 to August 1944, resulted in the Allied liberation of Western Europe from Nazi Germany's control. Codenamed Operation Overlord, the battle began on June 6, 1944, also known as D-Day, when some 156,000 American, British and Canadian forces landed on five beaches along a 50-mile stretch of the heavily fortified coast of France's Normandy region. The invasion was one of the largest amphibious military assaults in history and required extensive planning. Prior to D-Day, the Allies conducted a large-scale deception campaign designed to mislead the Germans about the intended invasion target. By late August 1944, all of northern France had been liberated, and by the following spring the Allies had defeated the Germans. The Normandy landings have been called the beginning of the end of war in Europe.

It is hard to conceive the epic scope of this decisive battle that foreshadowed the end of Hitler's dream of Nazi domination. Overlord was the largest air, land, and sea operation undertaken before or since June 6, 1944. The landing included over 5,000 ships, 11,000 airplanes, and over 150,000 servicemen.

After years of meticulous planning and seemingly endless training, for the Allied Forces, it all came down to this: The boat ramp goes down, then jump, swim, run, and crawl to the cliffs. Many of the first young men (most not yet 20 years old) entered the surf carrying eighty pounds of equipment. They faced over 200 yards of beach before reaching the first natural feature offering any protection. Bracketed by small-arms fire and bracketed by artillery, they found themselves in hell.

When it was over, the Allied Forces had suffered nearly 10,000 casualties; more than 4,000 were dead. Yet somehow, due to planning and preparation, and due to the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice of the Allied Forces, Fortress Europe had been breached.

What Does D-Day Mean? The terms D-Day and H-Hour are used for the day and hour on which a combat attack or operation is to be initiated. They designate day and hour for an operation when the actual day and hour have not yet been determined or announced. The letters are derived from the words for which they stand, "D" for the day of the invasion and "H" for the hour the operation actually begins. When used in combination with figures and plus or minus signs, these terms indicate the length of time preceding or following a specific action. Thus, H-3 means 3 hours before H-hour, and D+3 means 3 days after D-day. H+75 minutes means H-hour plus 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Planning papers for large-scale operations are made up in detail long before, specific dates are set. Phased orders are planned for execution on D-Day or H-Hour minus or plus a certain number of days, hours, or minutes. According to the U.S. Army's Center of Military History, the earliest known use of these terms is in Field Order Number 9, First Army, American Expeditionary Forces. It is dated September 7, 1918: "The first Army will attack at H hour on D day with the object of forcing the evacuation of the St. Mihiel Salient." D-Day for the invasion of Normandy was set for June 5, 1944, but it actually occurred on June 6. Therefore, D-Day, as it applies to Overlord, is June 6, 1944.

D-Day veterans describe 'total chaos' of beach landings 74 years later

• When the ramp to his World War II landing craft slammed down onto Utah Beach, then-Cpl. Herman Zeitchik jumped out and dashed across the sand as deadly rounds were shot out from fortified bunkers. With the amphibious assault underway in the early morning of June 6, 1944, Zeitchik and other 4th Infantry Division Soldiers -- who were part of the first wave of troops to land -- desperately tried to find safe passage through the German-occupied beach.

"When the front of these landing crafts went down, we just took off," said Zeitchik, now 93 years old. "We couldn't see where to fire. We just had to get off the beach and try to find the rest of the unit."

Along a 50-mile stretch of coastline in northern France, more than 160,000 Allied troops stormed Utah Beach and four other beaches that day to gain a foothold in continental Europe. By the end of the D-Day invasion, over 9,000 of those Allied troops were either dead or wounded -- the majority of them Americans.

While several in his unit were casualties, Zeitchik and others survived to push on into enemy territory and liberate Paris.

"There were so many of us coming ashore. I was just lucky," he said before attending a remembrance ceremony at the World War II Memorial here that commemorated the 73rd anniversary of D-Day in 2017.

Known as the largest-ever seaborne invasion, more than 5,000 ships and 13,000 aircraft were used in the massive operation, which would turn the tide against Nazi Germany forces entrenched across Europe.

"I don't know that we could have ever done a better job of recreating what happened on this historic day back in 1944," said Lt. Gen. Gary Cheek, director of the Army Staff. Speaking at the ceremony, Cheek said the heroics witnessed on D-Day helped pave the way for an Allied victory in Europe, while also giving Americans freedom for years to come.

"They stormed these beaches so we might stand here free and prosperous," he said.

"They were steadfast and loyal to the mission at hand and met their rendezvous with destiny head-on, and they were successful."

• **TOTAL CHAOS.** Then-Pvt. Arnald Gabriel recalled wading through the cold ocean water after his landing craft failed to make it all the way to Omaha Beach.

"The water, believe it or not, in June was awfully cold and that with the combination of fear, it was quite an experience," he said.

A machine gunner with the 29th Infantry Division, Gabriel described how the chaotic scene unfolded. "With the Air Force overhead, the Navy shelling [enemy positions], the enemy firing at you and we're firing at them, it was just total chaos," he said. Nobody landed where they were supposed to," he added. "I landed way over to the left flank and ended up with the 1st [Infantry] Division. It took me a day to get back and find the 29th Division. It was that kind of chaos."

After storming Omaha Beach, helping liberate parts of France and earning two Bronze Stars with the Army, Gabriel later joined the Air Force as a band director. Before the war he was in his high school band and he always wanted to get back into music, he said.

KEEPING BUSY. Music provided him comfort and kept his mind from dwelling too long on the memories of D-Day and other combat missions. "The way I overcame my post-traumatic stress was to keep so busy that I had no time to look back," he said before the ceremony.

Shortly after the war, he said, it was a lieutenant that gave him the advice about keeping busy. It came at a time when he was struggling to deal with his thoughts of what happened that fateful day. "It's OK to look back, but just don't stare," said Gabriel, who retired as an Air Force colonel after serving 36 years. "What great advice that was. By keeping busy, you don't have time to look back."

Gabriel, who celebrated his 92nd birthday last year, stood at a podium at the ceremony in 2017 and led a band of high school musicians who played patriotic songs during the ceremony.

As a veteran, Gabriel still participates in 25 musical performances each year, and has vowed to return to the memorial to conduct a band again. "I'm going to do the 75th and the 80th [D-Day anniversary] when I'm 100 years old," he said, smiling. "I love it. It's great therapy; it really is."

Performing at these events in front of audiences isn't just about him, though. It's for those who never made it home, he said. "I remember them every day of my life," he said. "They're at the podium with me. I'm up there because of them."

Photo on page 6

Rocky River Baptist VBS

KICK OFF
Monday, June 18
6pm



VBS
June 18 - 22 6-9pm
Bible Study, Crafts
Music, Swimming!

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!!

JUNE 22 COMMENCEMENT *With Homemade Ice Cream & Fireworks following!*

Call 704-826-8588 or 704-695-5916 for questions or transportation!



A CLEAN CUT FOR EVERY BUDGET.

\$0 DOWN, 0% A.P.R. FINANCING FOR 48 MONTHS*



Z400 Series

BROOKS SALES, INC.

3144 Highway 74 East
Monroe 704-233-4242
www.BrooksSales.com



Mon - Fri 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Saturday 8 am - 12 noon

*\$0 Down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 48 months on purchases of select new Kubota Z400 Kommander-Pro Series equipment from participating dealers' in-stock inventory is available to qualified purchasers through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A.; subject to credit approval. Example: 48 monthly payments of \$20.83 per \$1,000 financed. Some exceptions apply. Offer expires 6/30/18. See us or go to KubotaUSA.com for more information. Optional equipment may be shown.



NEW EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT NOW OPEN



NEWER. BETTER. FASTER.

McLeod Health Cheraw is excited to announce that we have opened our new Emergency Department. This expansion underscores our commitment to provide high-quality, leading-edge treatment, services and healthcare to the residents of Chesterfield, Marlboro, and surrounding counties. The new Emergency Department is designed to allow for additional capacity based on our ever-growing population and to serve patients in an efficient and flexible way.

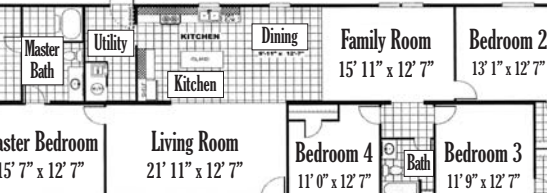
- 23 new beds allow for additional capacity
- Fully private rooms
- Dedicated rooms for specialized emergency treatment
- Enhanced patient flow for access to efficient & flexible emergency services
- Updated equipment and technology
- Enhanced patient waiting area
- Private entrance for walk-in patients and their families

McLeod Health Cheraw

711 Chesterfield Highway, Cheraw, SC 29520 | 843-537-7881
McLeodCheraw.org

\$84,995* Delivered to Site & Set Up
*Plus Tax & Title

4 BEDROOM 2 BATH Price includes heat pump, two 4x6 decks + steps, plumbing under home, concrete footings, brick skirting, electrical 200 amp service (home only), setup, blocked & tied down plus county permit.



No land or land improvements are included.
1st CHOICE HOME CENTERS
2008 E Roosevelt St (Hwy 74)
Monroe • 704-225-8850
www.1stchoicemonroe.com