

MEMORIAL » From 1A

Regiment, the “Bedford Boys” lost 19 of their men in the first 15 minutes of battle, the largest per capita loss of any unit in America that day. Roy O. Stevens’ twin brother Ray was in the unit with him, but they loaded into two different LCA’s (Landing Craft Assaults) for the landing. On the way into the beach, Roy’s LCA was hit and quickly sunk, leaving him clinging for 2 ½ hours to his life preserver before being rescued. Ray’s LCA made it in, but shortly after landing, Ray was killed. Roy credits the LCA sinking with saving his life that day.

Back home, the town waited anxiously for a word about their husbands, fathers and sons. On July 15, 1944, the first telegram arrived bearing the terrible news. For the next several days, the telegrams came streaming in with families, one after another, hearing the dreaded news of their loved one’s death. One wife described that awful time as “hell on earth ... there was so much grief and sadness in our small close-knit community.”

Bedford today

Bedford is still a small, quiet town with a fierce patriotic pride in its past and also in its new generation of “Bedford Boys.” In 2004, A Company, for the first time in more than 60 years, once again posed in front of the Bedford Courthouse. One soldier described his mixed feelings about posing for the picture. “It felt kind of strange doing that picture. I was thinking about what happened to the other A Company. I didn’t want that to happen to us.” Deployed to Afghanistan for 18 months, the National Guard unit returned intact to a rousing hero’s welcome.

In spite of the costs, Bedford citizens remain loyal and patriotic, proud of their brave fighting men, past and present. It is fitting that the D-Day Memorial overlooks this small Blue Ridge community. Bedford is an enduring symbol of the way of life they fought to preserve.

A pilgrimage

I wish every American could visit the D-Day Memorial and re-live the events of that day through the interpretive talks and the walks along commanders’ row and across the blue expanse of the plaza depicting the English Channel. To look down the lowered grates of the LCA into the water as it periodically shoots into the air (simulating Nazi gunfire) and see the soldiers wading onto the beach, guns held high above their heads, others dying before they make it. Brave men scaling the trenches trying to make it to the top to stop the Germans deadly rain of firepower on the beaches below. Step by step, you walk through that day and you realize what a debt of gratitude you owe those men. We enjoy the freedoms we have today because



Photo by Tamra Bolton

A chilling glimpse of what the troops saw that June 6th morning looking out of the LCA's (Landing Craft Assault vehicles) at the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Va.

they were willing to give their lives to try and stop the tyranny and injustice of a madman’s deadly regime.

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz said it best, “They fought together as Brothers-In-Arms. They died together and now they sleep side by side, to them we have a solemn obligation.”

As we reflect on this 70th anniversary of D-Day, we need to ask ourselves “are we living a life that is a tribute to what they’ve given ... do I make their sacrifice worthwhile?”

The National D-Day Memorial is supported by private donations and receives no government funding. If you would like to find out more about how you can help support the Memorial or need information on visiting, you can contact Melanie Sexton at 540-587-3619 or you can go to www.dday.org. If you would like information on visiting Bedford, you can contact Sergei Troubetzkoy, director of tourism at 540-587-5682 or go to www.visitbedford.com.

Tamra Bolton is a freelance photojournalist who travels the globe in search of adventure, historical artifacts, out of the way places and great food! She makes her home in East Texas. You can follow her ramblings through her blog “The Permanent Tourist” at www.tpt-jtx.com.

“There’s something visceral about that loss. We are losing first hand accounts. Even if we know memories are fuzzy, even if we know minds can play tricks and stories can be crafted and changed over the years, we know the first hand account has value and meaning.”

DR. PAUL SANDUL • SFA ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

D-DAY » From 1A

to attack from the West, while the Soviets advanced on Germany from the East.”

The United States joined the war in December 1941, and their involvement in World War II of course altered the outcome.

“From the moment the United States entered the war, the question had been when and where would the Americans open a ‘Second Front’ in Europe,” Catton said. “Landing in France was the most logical way to strike at Germany, but early in the war the United States simply did not have the ability to do that. It took time for the Americans to mobilize their military forces, build them up in Britain, and overcome the threat from German submarines operating in the North Atlantic.

“By D-Day, U.S. forces had fought in North Africa and were fighting in Italy, but the intention had always been to strike at the Germans by landing in France. Thus, D-Day was a very important moment in the war.”

There were more than 2,000 American casualties, and estimates are more than 4,000

allied troops died as a result of the D-Day invasion, with thousands more wounded or missing.

Even so, 156,000 Allied troops had successfully stormed Normandy’s beaches. The following spring, the Allies formally accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany.

Revered as the “Greatest Generation” — a term coined by journalist Tom Brokaw — few of those who made it through the Great Depression and on to WWII battlefields remain.

“There’s something visceral about that loss,” said Dr. Paul Sandul, assistant professor of history at SFA. “We are losing first-hand accounts. Even if we know memories are fuzzy, even if we know minds can play tricks and stories can be crafted and changed over the years, we know the first-hand account has value and meaning. It is a loss we are dealing with.”

Though many of those in the “Greatest Generation” no longer live to share their experience, few will forget their sacrifice.

OBITUARIES

DEATH NOTICES

Harold Dean Clark

Graveside service for Harold Dean Clark, 79, of Center will be at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 7, 2014, at Oaklawn Memorial Park in Center with Bro. Gordon Vaughn officiating.

Mr. Clark died Wednesday, June 4, 2014, at his residence. He was born Aug. 8, 1934, in Paul’s Valley, Okla. Watson & Sons Funeral Home.

Gerline Brewer

Memorial service for Gerline Brewer, 59, of Nacogdoches will be at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 7, 2014, at Colonial Mortuary Chapel, Lufkin.

Mrs. Brewer died Friday, May 30, 2014, in Nacogdoches. She was born Sept. 26, 1954, in Nacogdoches. Colonial Mortuary.

Bobbie Jo Garner

Funeral for Bobbie Jo Garner, 75, will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, June 7, 2014, at Mount Zion Baptist Church with the Rev. R.L. Cotton and the Rev. Kenneth Cotton officiating. Burial will be in Mount Zion Cemetery, San Augustine.

Mrs. Garner died Monday, June 2, 2014. She was born Oct. 16, 1938.

Visitation will be from 1 to 5 p.m. Friday, June 6, at 3535 S.E. Stallings Drive. A second visitation will be from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 7, at Mount Zion Baptist Church.

DISD » From 1A

He also had formerly worked as a math teacher and baseball coach for three years before becoming principal.

Lowery said the board held a special meeting Thursday night to hire Arrow Educational Services to conduct the search for a new superintendent. There is no time frame to hire a new superintendent, Lowery said.

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dailysentinel.com

FESTIVAL » From 1A

by the Nacogdoches Convention and Visitors Bureau, based on 1,500 participants over three nights, the festival is projected to generate \$207,900 for hotels, \$627,598.13 in sales-tax revenue, \$14,553 in hotel occupancy-tax revenue and \$760,725 in other revenue.

In Nacogdoches, Ramser plans to use Liberty Bell, Mast Hall and Banita Creek Hall as main venues for 40 bands and 50 shows in the evenings, and “pop up” venues for free shows during the day. About 700 hotel rooms are expected to be sold for three nights during the festival.

Ramser approached CVB in December about possibly adding a festival similar to Viva Big

Bend in Nacogdoches. He visited several sites and met with business owners and others before choosing this city over Conroe.

On May 21, members of the CVB’s board of directors unanimously voted to contribute \$45,000 to Texas Music to promote the event. Hosting the Nacogdoches festival will cost the magazine between \$100,000 and \$150,000.

“Promotion and advertisement of this event through Texas Music magazine and its resource-

es will not only create buzz about (the festival) ... but several long-term benefits” as well, according to the CVB. “(It will) help establish Nacogdoches as an East Texas music capital (and as) a great location for the (35-44) age group to visit.”

The festival would be the first of its kind in East Texas, and will also be marketed in Texas Music’s newsletter, on its website, on a Facebook page designed for the Nacogdoches festival, and on other social-media sites. Additionally, Texas Music, with a circulation that exceeds 100,000, will produce a Nacogdoches video for target audiences in

Houston, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio, and will use “the combined reach of (Texas Music) magazine, Big Bend Records and Austin Signal social-media platforms.”

Genres will include country, rock, blues, Latin, Americana, bluegrass and others, and a list of 40 bands will be announced in December. Beginning in September, tickets will be sold online for \$50, allowing participants to attend every paid event over four days.

For more on the West Texas music festival, visit vivabigbend.com. The website for Ramser’s magazine is txmusic.com.

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