Captured: The 65th Anniversary of D-Day on the Normandy Beaches

Saturday, June 6th, marks the 65th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, Allied troops departed England on planes and ships, made the trip across the English Channel and attacked the beaches of Normandy in an attempt to break through Hitler's "Atlantic Wall" and break his grip on Europe. Some 215,000 Allied soldiers, and roughly as many Germans, were killed or wounded during D-Day and the ensuing nearly three months it took to secure the Allied capture of Normandy. Commemoration events, from re-enactments to school concerts, were being held in seaside towns and along the five landing beaches that stretch across 50 miles (80 kilometers) of Normandy coastline. The big event is Saturday, when Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the Canadian and British prime ministers and Prince Charles gather for a ceremony amid the rows of white crosses and Stars of David at the American cemetery, which is U.S. territory. (AP)

American Soldiers equipped with full pack and extra allotments of ammunition, march down an English street to their invasion craft for embarkation on June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)

Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower gives the order of the day "Full victory - Nothing else" to paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division at the Royal Air Force base in Greenham Common, England, three hours before the men board their planes to participate in the first assault wave of the invasion of the continent of Europe, June 5, 1944. (AP Photo)

Lieutenant Harrie W. James, USNR, of New York, N.Y., briefs officers and men who participated in landing operations during the invasion of Southern France June 5, 1944 on the day before D-Day. (AP Photo)

Airborne troops prepare for the descent on Europe of D-Day invasion June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)

American paratroopers, heavily armed, sit inside a military plane as they soar over the English Channel en route to the Normandy French coast for the Allied D-Day invasion of the German stronghold during World War II, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)
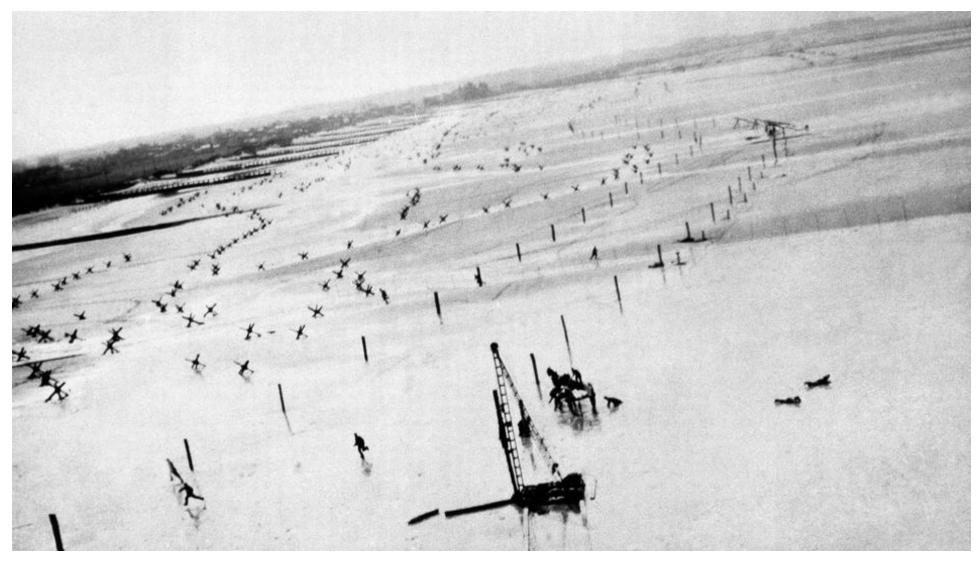
U.S. paratroopers fix their static lines before a jump before dawn over Normandy on D-Day June 6, 1944, in France. The decision to launch the airborne attack in darkness instead of waiting for first light was probably one of the few Allied missteps on June 6, and there was much to criticize both in the training and equipment given to paratroopers and glider-borne troops of the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions. Improvements were called for after the invasion; the hard-won knowledge would be used to advantage later. (AP Photo/Army Signal Corps)

U.S. serviceman attend a Protestant service aboard a landing craft before the D-Day invasion on the coast of France, June 5, 1944. (AP Photo/Pete Carroll)

U.S. reinforcements wade through the surf from a landing craft in the days following D-Day and the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied France at Normandy in June 1944 during World War II. (AP Photo/Bert Brandt)

Sight of a low-flying Allied plane sends Nazi soldiers rushing for shelter on a beach in France, before D-Day June 1944. Their fears were premature; the fliers were taking photos of German coastal barriers in preparation for the invasion, which took place June 6. (AP Photo)

After landing at the shore, these British troops wait for the signal to move forward, during the initial Allied landing operations in Normandy, France, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)

This June 6, 1944 photo released by Nathan Kline, shows a B-26 Marauder flying toward France during the D-Day invasion. (AP Photo/ Courtesy of Nathan Kline)

U.S. Army medical personnel administer a plasma transfusion to a wounded comrade, who survived when his landing craft went down off the coast of Normandy, France, in the early days of the Allied landing operations in June 1944. (AP Photo)

Wounded British troops from the South Lancashire and Middlesex regiments are being helped ashore at Sword Beach, June 6, 1944, during the D-Day invasion of German occupied France during World War II. (AP Photo)

American soldiers and supplies arrive on the shore of the French coast of German-occupied Normandy during the Allied D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944 in World War II. (AP Photo)

Carrying full equipment, American assault troops move onto a beachhead code-named Omaha Beach, on the northern coast of France on June 6, 1944, during the Allied invasion of the Normandy coast. (AP Photo)

Sitting in the cover of their foxholes, American soldiers of the Allied Expeditionary Force secure a beachhead during initial landing operations at Normandy, France, June 6, 1944. In the background amphibious tanks and other equipment crowd the beach, while landing craft bring more troops and material ashore. (AP Photo/Weston Hayes)

Canadian troops in landing crafts approach a stretch of coastline code-named Juno Beach, near Bernieres-sur-mer, as the Allied Normandy invasion gets under way, on June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)

Members of an American landing unit help their exhausted comrades ashore during the Normandy invasion, June 6, 1944. The men reached the zone code-named Utah Beach, near Sainte Mere Eglise, on a life raft after their landing craft was hit and sunk by German coastal defenses. (AP Photo)

A U.S. Coast Guard LCI, heavily listing to port, moves alongside a transport ship to evacuate her troops, during the initial Normandy landing operations in France, on June 6, 1944. Moments later the craft will capsize and sink. Note that helmeted infantrymen, with full packs, are all standing to starboard side of the ship. (AP Photo)

Men and assault vehicles storm the Normandy Beach of France, as allied landing craft arrive at their destination on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Note men coming ashore in surf and vehicles starting inland. (AP Photo)

Out of the open bow doors of a Landing Craft, American troops and jeeps go ashore on the beach of the Normandy coast of France, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)

Under the cover of naval shell fire, American infantrymen wade ashore from their landing craft during the initial Normandy landing operations in France, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo/Peter Carroll)

A U.S. Coast Guard landing barge, tightly packed with helmeted soldiers, approaches the shore at Normandy, France, during initial Allied landing operations, June 6, 1944. These barges ride back and forth across the English Channel, bringing wave after wave of reinforcement troops to the Allied beachheads. (AP Photo)

Under heavy German machine gun fire, American infantrymen wade ashore off the ramp of a Coast Guard landing craft on June 8, 1944, during the invasion of the French coast of Normandy in World War II. (AP Photo)

US assault troops approach Utah Beach in a barge, 06 June 1944 as Allied forces storm the Normand beaches on D-Day. D-Day, is still one of the world's most gut-wrenching and consequential battles, as the Allied landing in Normandy led to the liberation of France which marked the turning point in the Western theater of World War II. (STF/AFP/Getty Images)

A tribute to an unknown American soldier, who lost his life fighting in the landing operations of the Allied Forces, marks the sand of Normandy's shore, in June 1944. (AP Photo)

(Note: Although this photograph was in an Associated Collection on D-Day, it is most likely a photo from Iwo Jima. We've left it in the collection because so many have commented on it.)

German prisoners of war are led away by Allied forces from Utah Beach, on June 6, 1944, during landing operations at the Normandy coast, France. (AP Photo)

U.S doughboys are brought ashore on the Northern Coast of France following the D-Day invasion of Normandy in World War II on June 13, 1944. The exhausted soldiers on the rubber life raft are being pulled by a group of comrades. (AP Photo/U.S. Army Signal Corps)

Allied forces camp out in fox holes, caves and tents on this hillside overlooking the beach at Normandy, France, during the D-Day invasion in World War II. (AP Photo/Bede Irvin)

One year after the D-Day landings in Normandy, a lone U.S. soldier guards a knocked out German gun position on "Utah" Beach, France, May 28, 1945. (AP Photo/Peter J. Carroll)

One year after the D-Day landings in Normandy, German prisoners landscape the area around a former German pill box at Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, France, near "Omaha" Beach, May 28, 1945. The pill box, with a knocked out gun still visible, will be made into a monument dedicated to U.S. assault forces. (AP Photo/Peter J. Carroll)

One year after the D-Day landings in Normandy, German prisoners landscape the first U.S. cemetery at Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, France, near "Omaha" Beach, May 28, 1945. (AP Photo/Peter J. Carroll)
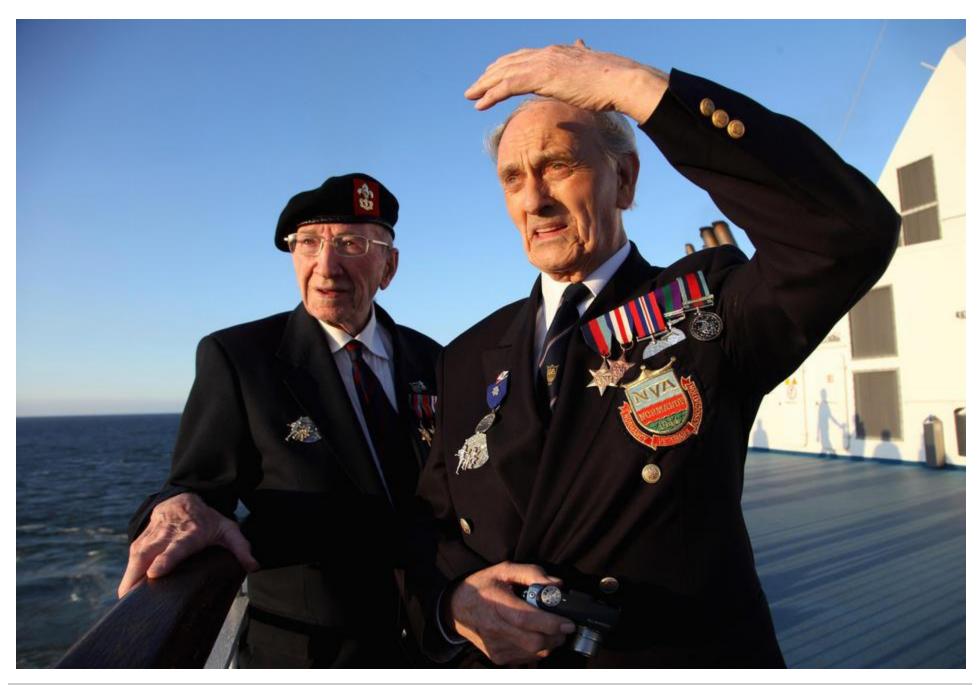
Gen. Dwight Eisenhower stands on the cliff overlooking Omaha Beach on the Normandy coast in France as he makes an anniversary visit to the scene of the 1945 D-Day landing of the Allied troops, June 9, 1951. (AP Photo)

Pointe du Hoc. Omaha Beach, pocked by D-Day bombardment. On June 6th. 1944, five Normandy beaches were stormed by British, Canadian and American troops to free Europe from the German occupation. Ever since, each year on June 6th, Normandy coast lures veterans and pilgrims. (Ph: Alexandra BOULAT)

Pebbles with poppies painted on are seen on the beach of Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer on June 5, 2009 during a ceremony in memory of Canadian troops which landed in 1944 at the Nan Red point on Saint-Aubin beach. Each poppy painted by students represents a soldier killed here during World War II. Preparations are underway for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (DANIAU/AFP/Getty Images)

Normandy veterans Frank Allen (R), 85, and Cyril Askew, 92, both from Liverpool, England, look at the French coastline on a cross channel ferry on June 4, 2009 from Portsmouth, England to Caen, France. Several hundred of the remaining veterans of the Normandy campaign are travelling to France to take part in commemorations to mark the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings in 1944. (Photo by Matt Cardy/Getty Images)

BAYEUX, FRANCE - JUNE 05: The sun shines on headstones in the British Cemetery on June 5 2009 in Bayeux, France. Several hundred of the remaining veterans of the Normandy campaign are travelling to France to take part in commemorations to mark the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings in 1944. (Photo by Matt Cardy/Getty Images)

ASNELLES, FRANCE - JUNE 05: British school children help to place 4000 Union Jack flags bearing messages on Gold Beach on June 5, 2009 in Asnelles, France. The Royal British Legion has raised 1.8 million for veterans and tomorrow on the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings a further 6000 flags will be placed on Gold beach, the location where British forces landed on 6th June 1944. (Photo by Peter Macdiarmid/Getty Images)

A US jeep drives by Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer beach, Normandy, western France on June 4, 2009 during preparations for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (JOEL SAGET/AFP/Getty Images)

A US veteran wears his medals during a commemoration ceremony on June 5, 2009 at the German Military Cemetery of La Cambe, Normandy. Preparations are underway for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (JOEL SAGET/AFP/Getty Images)

France-Longues-sur-Mer, The German artillery battery situated at Longues-sur-Mer is a classic example of the Atlantic Wall fortification. The actual guns are still in place, the west of Arromanches, installed by the Germans in September, 1943. The Battery is in an ideal position, 215 feet above sea level and was well able to threaten the Invasion fleet. It consists of 4 Krupp 150mm, TbtsK C/36 (L/45) cannons from a de-commissioned destroyer, in type M272 Casemates with a range of 12.5 miles and a large, range-finding and observation post type M262. From late 1943 onwards, the site was bombed several times including two heavy raids in the week before D-Day when 1500 tons of bombs were dropped on it. France will be celebrating the 60th anniverseay if the D-DAY landing of allied forces to liberate Europe from Germany.

A child plays with a map of the landing beaches in the American Cemetery of Colleville, western France, Thursday, June 4, 2009. (AP Photo/Francois Mori)

A US veteran takes pictures of German soldiers tombs during a commemoration ceremony on June 5, 2009 at the German Military Cemetery of La Cambe, Normandy. Preparations are underway for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (JOEL SAGET/AFP/Getty Images)

A remembrance cross left by British Royal Navy veteran, Harry Buckley, 84, is pictured on the beach of Colleville-Montgomery on June 5, 2009 where he landed during the 1944 allied operations in France. Preparations are underway for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (MYCHELE DANIAU/AFP/Getty Images)

British veteran John Lang, 90, visists the American cemetery on June 5, 2009 in Colleville-sur-Mer. Preparations are underway for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (MARCEL MOCHET/AFP/Getty Images)

The broad sands of Utah Beach lead to a country side scarred by remains of German fortification. On June 6th, 1944, five Normandy beaches were stormed by British, Canadian and American troops to free Europe from the German occupation. Ever since, each year on June 6th, Normandy coast lures veterans and pilgrims. (Ph: Alexandra BOULAT)

A bird is seen at the American cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, Normandy, western France, on June 4, 2009 as take place the preparations of the ceremonies commemorating the 65th anniversary of the D-Day Allied landings on the beaches of Normandy. US President Barack Obama will meet his French counterpart Nicolas Sarkozy and attend a ceremony at a cliff-top US war cemetery. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Prince Charles and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper will also attend the solemn commemoration at Colleville-sur-Mer, which overlooks the US landing zone dubbed, Omaha Beach. (JOEL SAGET/AFP/Getty Images)

The remains of the World War II Mulberry dock at Arromanches in Normandy. The Mulberry dock consisted of a huge pre-fabricated steel and concrete landing system, built in England and towed by ship across the Channel, greatly aiding the allied landings at Arromanches in 1944.

65th Anniversary of D-Day landings. D-Day veteran George Taylor (left), 86, a Sapper in the Royal Engineers during World War Two, with Percy Lewis of the 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion, walk along the beach in Arromanches, France, ahead of the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings on Saturday. Picture date: Thursday June 4, 2009. Thousands of Second World War veterans landed in Normandy in a peaceful invasion of the beaches where they fought for the greatest victory in naval history on D-Day 65 years ago. (Gareth Fuller)

65th Anniversary of D-Day landings. Eric Toylon (right), a 6th Airbourne glider pilot during World War Two shares his memories with war enthusiasts during a wreath laying ceremony at the Bayeux Military Cemetery in Normandy, France, ahead of tomorrow's 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings. Picture date: Friday June 5, 2009. (Gareth Fuller/PA Wire)

British paratroopers from the 3rd Parachute Battailon, England, land in a wheat field outside the village of Ranville, near Caen, Western France, Friday, June 5, 2009, as troops re-enact part of the bloody allied landings of D-Day, the Allied armada which fought its way inland in the unfolding World War II Battle of Normandy, France. President Barack Obama and French President Nicolas Sarkozy will attend with other leaders the 65th Anniversary of the D-day landings on June 6 in Normandy. (AP Photo/Francois Mori)

British Royal Navy veteran, Harry Buckley, 84, wipes his tears on the beach of Colleville-Montgomery on June 5, 2009 where he landed during the 1944 allied operations in France. Preparations are underway for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (MYCHELE DANIAU/AFP/Getty Images)

France-Omaha beach. American War Cemetery, Arial view of the landing beaches.

See more photos from World War II: The Pacific and Adjacent Theaters.

See more photos from World War II: The Story behind the most famous war photograph in History, The raising of the Flag on Iwo Jima and the AP photographer Joe Rosenthal.

More from Plog

- Pictures of the Week: July 23, 2010
- Pictures of the Week: July 16, 2010
- On War: Joe Rosenthal & Iwo Jima
- Captured: The Gulf Oil Spill
- Pictures of the Week: June 4, 2010

Plog Recommends

- More on the fate of Colorado's greyhound racing and its tracks (All Things Colorado Sports)
- Day trip to top of the mountain (All Things Colorado Sports)
- The Physics of Meaning, Eleanor, Wire Face @ the Lion's Lair (Reverb)