

D-Day, 06:30 Hours, the 'Longest Day'

OK, now we're on the beach and I'm running up the beach. I was taking cover under one of the metal obstacles on the beach. The Germans had them all over the beach. The firing was pretty powerful, I could see the sand chipping away where the bullets would hit coming toward you. I thought they were shooting at me, but I looked up over my head and saw they were aiming at a mine tied in that obstacle to blow up the ships if they came in at high tide. But we came in at low tide. So I was lying there, trying to figure out what to do. I saw one of my buddies running, trying to get ahead. They shot him with a Fifty Caliber and just about chopped one of his legs off. He got up three times to try to run and he couldn't do it. But he was trained good. So I kept going. We were trained in England, if your buddy goes down, jump over him and keep going. Let the medics take care of him. So I got up to the wall. The wall wasn't as high on our beach as it was on Omaha beach. I climbed over that wall and got off the beach.

We cleared out the first bunker. We were told which one it was in England. They gave us three bunkers in England which were important objectives. The first one we took was a headquarters with a big gun. The second one was right by the officers headquarters there. We cleared that one out too. It was a communication bunker where they would radio all the big guns, all over Normandy, how to shoot at the ships. That's where the radio communications were sent. When we got them out of there the U.S. Army took it over and it became an American communications center. Now the Americans are radioing the ships how to shoot at the bunkers! It was a trade-off, see. So we cleared them out. That took some time to do those things.

I was still on the beach and I got into the swamp where the Germans had flooded the fields. I could see where the paratroopers had jumped and landed in the swamp. If they were wounded they got killed because they would drown. They couldn't stand up. It was over waist deep. I crawled up along the bank of the swampland, through the shrubs and I saw a small chapel. (La Madeleine) I laid there and looked at it a moment. I laid there and listened and surveyed the the situation. I made sure I looked at every inch of it. When I thought it was safe I went in the back end of the chapel. Slowly. The whole back end of it was blown

out, the roof was blown off, the pews were blown away. The Bible was still on the altar. I stood there and looked at it. I brushed it off because I like the Bible. I read it. Then I kept on going.

I was in the hedge rows, fighting Germans there, and I kept crawling and crawling. I don't know how I did it, but I finally made it to St. Marie du Mont. We were supposed to go to St. Marie d'Eglise to help the paratroopers, but I was going the wrong direction. I didn't know where I was. When I got to St. Marie du Mont, I guess it was about noon time, or later. I don't even remember. You know when you are out there you are by yourself, and everybody is by themselves. They are all lost. So I was in a ditch near St. Marie du Mont. I saw the second wave of paratroopers come in. Those paratroopers came down. The one paratrooper came down late all alone. I was watching him coming down and he landed maybe 25 or 30 feet from me. He was cutting off his parachute and I yelled, "Come over here!" He came over and got in the ditch with me. So, he came over and I ask him, "Why did you get out of that plane so damn late!" He said, "Well, that airplane pilot got so scared he banked the plane around and I rolled all the way back to the tail. I had to crawl on my hands and knees to get out of there. Now I've lost my outfit."