

**D-Day, Normandy June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 and God's Conquest**  
***"Go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire"***  
**Exodus 10:11**



**Sword Beach<sup>1</sup> - 07:25 a.m. June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944**

**Lord Lovat, CO of 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Brigade, on the right of the column, wades through the water. In the foreground is Piper Bill Millin**

**D-Day, Normandy, Breaking Hitler's Yoke**

Historian Chester Wilmot<sup>2</sup> writes that *"In the summer of 1942 four hundred million people in Europe lay under the yoke of German rule."* In June 1944, the yoke for Western Europe was about to be broken, by D-Day Normandy and God's conquest. **"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"** 1 Corinthians 15:57.

**C-in-C Commander-in-Chief's Decision**

Historian Cornelius Ryan<sup>3</sup> describes how on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1944, the C-in-C, U.S. General Eisenhower with his senior commanders reviewed the weather forecast, *"a barely tolerable period of fair conditions...would prevail for just a little more than twenty-four hours"* for June 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. Eisenhower then made his decision. *"Tuesday, June 6, would be D-Day."* This was God's decision. **"For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"** Isaiah 14:27. Not Hitler.

**Key Objectives for 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, the Men of the Red Beret**

The British effort for D-Day began on the night of June 5<sup>th</sup> with the 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division. Wilmot describes 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne's vital tasks, including *"that of seizing and holding the left flank of the bridgehead"* where key objectives were the bridges across the Caen Canal and the Orne River. Glider-borne troops of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry<sup>4</sup>, commanded by Major John Howard, would capture the bridges. In one glider heading for the Caen Canal was 19 year-old Private Bill Gray. Ryan states *"Private Bill Gray, a Bren gunner...closed his eyes and braced himself for the crash...there was a*

splintering, rending crash...the glider screeched across the ground throwing up a hail of sparks [and] smashed to a halt...Someone yelled "Come on, lads!"...everybody stormed the bridge...Stunned by the swiftness of the assault, the Germans were overwhelmed." The glider troops dug in to hold the bridges. **"Occupy till I come"** Luke 19:13 the Lord says.

### **Hobart's 'Funnies,' Beach Assaults' Armoured Spearhead**

The specialised 79<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division, known as "*Hobo's Funnies*" after their commander, Major-General Sir P.C.S. Hobart, led the British and Canadian beach assaults. Its regiments included AVREs, Armoured Vehicles Royal Engineers, Churchill tanks modified to carry equipment for crossing obstacles and a 'Petard,' a device firing 40 lb explosive charges to shatter concrete gun emplacements. They would assault the beaches at 0730 hours, the British being designated Sword and Gold. Isaiah described this battle. **"Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise...but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire"** Isaiah 9:5 i.e. God's conquest *via internal combustion engines*.

### **Sword Beach, Skirl of the Pipes and the Men of the Green Beret**

Landing at Sword Beach were commandos of 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Brigade, led by Lord Lovat, Chief of Clan Fraser. According to Ryan, "As...Lord Lovat's piper, William Millin [see picture]...floundered towards the shore, Lovat shouted at him, "Give us 'Highland Laddie,' man!" *Waist deep in the water, Millin put the mouthpiece to his lips and splashed on through the surf, the pipes keening crazily.*" Lovat's men were to relieve Major Howard's men, who had been beating off repeated counter-attacks. In the early afternoon, Bill Gray and his friend Private John Wilkes heard bagpipes. Ryan states "Down the road came Lord Lovat's commandos...Bill Millin marched at the head of the column, his pipes blaring out "Blue Bonnets over the Border"...Disregarding the heavy German fire, the [6<sup>th</sup> Airborne] troopers rushed out to greet the commandos...As the red and green berets intermingled, there was a sudden, perceptible lightening of spirits. Nineteen-year-old Bill Gray felt "years younger."" In God's conquest **"thy youth is renewed like the eagle's"** Psalm 103:5.

### **Gold Beach, AVREs, Company Sergeant Major Hollis, Teessider, the One D-Day VC**

Historian R.W. Thompson states "The AVREs...fought their way with infantry across the beaches in the face of intense [enemy fire]...petard tanks supporting the infantry blasted the coastal crust of strongpoints with their giant mortars, like ancient cannon...Within the hour, armour and infantry were more than a mile inland..." However, the 6<sup>th</sup> Green Howards were held up by machine gun fire from a hidden pillbox. CSM Stanley Hollis from Teesside described what happened<sup>5</sup>. "Major Lofthouse said to me, "there is a pillbox there, Sergeant Major"...So I got my Sten gun and I rushed at it...spraying it hosepipe fashion. They fired back at me and they missed...I got on top of it and I threw a grenade through the slit and...They were quite willing to forget all about the war." Hollis won the one D-Day VC. His CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Hastings, said "[CSM Hollis] was absolutely dedicated to winning the war – one of the few men I ever met who felt like that." God wants such men; **"go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire"** Exodus 10:11.

### **D-Day to VE Day, "The flags of freedom fly all over Europe"**

D-Day June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 went on to VE Victory in Europe Day May 8<sup>th</sup> 1945. U.S. President Harry S. Truman<sup>6</sup> said "The flags of freedom fly all over Europe." That was God's conquest in Europe *but His Return will conquer all*. **"And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one"** Zechariah 14:9. Amen.

#### **References**

<sup>1</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sword\\_Beach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sword_Beach)

<sup>2</sup> *The Struggle for Europe*, Chester Wilmot

<sup>3</sup> *The Longest Day*, Cornelius Ryan

<sup>4</sup> *Purnell's History of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War*, Vol. 5, pp 1834-1898, *Churchill's Secret Weapons*, Patrick Delaforce

<sup>5</sup> *D-Day Hero*, CSM Stanley Hollis VC, Mike Morgan

<sup>6</sup> *The Last Hundred Days*, John Toland