



AUGUST 22 & 23

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AND 15TH YEAR OF EVENT***



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Record numbers expected for milestone event

Anniversaries highlight 2014 D-Day Conneaut

By MARK TODD

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — It's a momentous year for D-Day Conneaut, one of the country's largest World War II re-enactments.

Organizers will not only be observing the 70th anniversary year of the actual Normandy Invasion, but the 15th anniversary of the re-enactment itself. Because of the significance, planners are bracing for more than 1,200 re-enactors and upwards of 25,000 spectators at Conneaut Township Park.

"It's been very exciting," said Lori McLaughlin, chief operating officer for the event, which is staged by D-Day Ohio.

"We've gotten a lot of feedback on how large it's grown. People on the outside say how proud they are of Conneaut and will make a special effort to come."

Three battles are planned over the two days (Friday and Saturday), capped by a recreation of the actual amphibious assault on Saturday afternoon that will feature several landing craft. This year, however, the invasion will include a depiction of the landings made by Canadian and British soldiers at Juno and Sword beaches. As a result, more of the park's beach will be used in the mock attack.

Many favorites will return for



MARK TODD / Star Beacon

SOME OF the members of the D-Day Conneaut committee display themed merchandise that financially supports the annual World War II re-enactment at Conneaut Township Park. From left, Jennifer Palagyi, chief financial officer; Jill Warren, an intern assisting the project; Chris Bartone, Axis camp/beach defense commander; and Lori McLaughlin, chief operating officer.

2014, including an impressive array of hardware. A 1944 M4 A3 Sherman tank, owned by the Allen County Historical Society, will return, as well as "Georgie's Gal," a B-25 bomber. More German vehicles are expected this year, and one group will be bringing a real 88mm German anti-aircraft gun to town.

"It's the only live-firing 88 in the United States," said Betsy Bashore, chief executive officer

of D-Day Ohio. "It will mark the first time it's been brought out in the public."

And yes, it will let loose a few rounds over the weekend, organizers said.

The anniversary year has also spawned other activities. The Canadian consulate general and other international dignitaries are expected to be at the parade grounds, Bashore said. After a review of the troops, the offi-

cials will discuss "what the milestone means to their respective nations," she said.

The U.S. Postal Service will bring a trailer to the event for special stamp cancellations and a DVD from last year's event will be available for sale. McLaughlin said.

On Thursday night, the film "Saints and Soldiers: The Void" will be shown for free at the park. Bring a blanket or lawn

chair.

The possible participation of the Canadian government in the event shows D-Day Conneaut "has caught some attention," McLaughlin said. Also, AARP was interested in promoting the event to members, she said.

"They haven't been in the northeast Ohio region for so long," McLaughlin said.

Organizers say they wanted to make the milestone year something special.

"We've tried every year to add something new," said Chris Bartone, a member of the D-Day committee. "We're getting to the point (credibility-wise) where we can look at really improving."

In addition to watching battles, the public is encouraged to walk the Allied and Axis encampments and talk to re-enactors.

Every aspect of military life during World War II, from communications to food preparation, will be depicted. Campsites will be open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. both days.

For 2014, the committee plans to emphasize how the war affected those at home, McLaughlin said. "The home front piece will be enhanced," she said. "The average Joe, civilian aspect."

Battles will again feature an array of pyrotechnics to enhance the experience.

"Every year we include more

See 2014, Page 5

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Here’s the lineup

No shortage of activities on D-Day schedule

CONNEAUT — Organizers of D-Day Conneaut have packed hours of activities, demonstrations and events into the 2014 event at Township Park on Lake Road.

The program begins Thursday night with a showing of the film “Saints and Soldiers: The Void” on a giant outdoor screen and concludes Saturday night with a USO dance at the Conneaut Human Resources Center, 327 Mill St.

Many activities are held simultaneously, but are also repeated during the day to give visitors a chance to see their favorites. Location is listed in parenthesis.

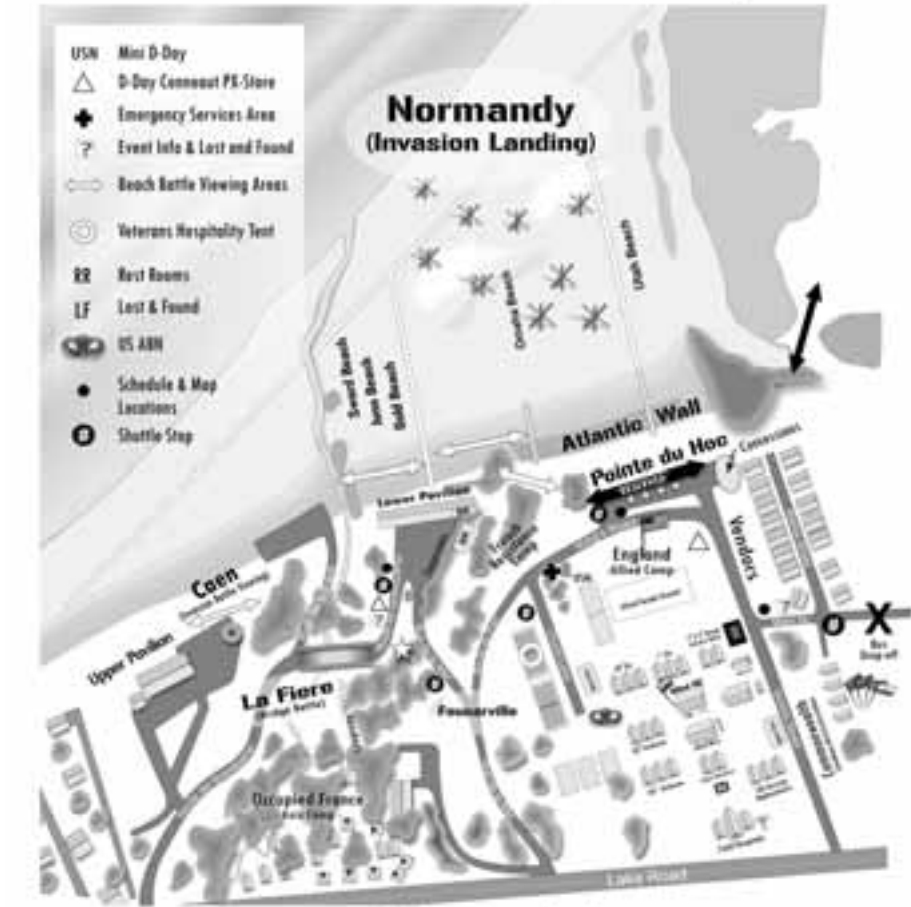
Here’s the lineup, which is subject to change:

THURSDAY

• **9 p.m.** — “Movie Night Under the Stars” at Township Park will present “Saints and Soldiers: The Void.” Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

FRIDAY

- **9-9:30 a.m.** — Allied camp flag raising to signal the start of D-Day Conneaut (parade field)
- **9-9:30 a.m.** — Axis Formation (Axis camp)
- **9 a.m.-9:15 a.m.** — Sherman tank cannon firing
- **9:30-9:45 a.m.** — Chain of command formation/practice (Allied parade grounds)
- **10-10:45 a.m.** — Allied weapons demonstration (Allied camp)
- **10-10:20 a.m.** — Maquis attack will recreated an attempt by French freedom fighters to sabotage German troops stationed in their area (Axis camp)
- **10:30-11 a.m.** — Invasion assault team training (29th DIV camp)
- **11-11:45 a.m.** — Axis weapons demonstration (Axis camp)
- **11:30 a.m.-noon** — American women’s military customs (lower pavilion)
- **Noon-12:30 p.m.** — Raising of garrison colors (Allied camp)
- **Noon-12:25 p.m.** — Sherman tank cannon firing
- **Noon-1 p.m.** — Luncheon for World War II veterans (upper pavilion, closed to public)
- **Noon- 1 p.m.** — Homefront experience in World War II includes performance by “Lana Turner” (veterans’ hospitality tent)
- **12:30-1 p.m.** — Veterans’ memorial salute will include a wreath-laying ceremony (Memorial Wall at tennis courts)
- **12:30-1 p.m.** — British women’s military customs (lower pavilion)
- **1-1:45 p.m.** — Platoon demonstration: mortar firing (Allied camp)
- **1-1:15 p.m.** — Maquis attack (Occupied France)
- **12:30-1 p.m.** — German women in the military (lower pavilion)
- **1-2 p.m.** — Invasion assault team training (Allied parade grounds)
- **1:30-2 p.m.** — Field equipment and uniform briefing will demonstrate uniforms and equipment issued to German infantrymen (Axis



- camp)
- **1:30-3 p.m.** — Veterans’ personal histories (veterans’ tent)
- **1:30-2:15 p.m.** — Axis weapons demonstration (Axis camp)
- **1:30-2:15 p.m.** — Life on the German homefront (lower pavilion)
- **1:30-2 p.m.** — Field equipment and uniform briefing (Axis camp)
- **2-3 p.m.** — Assault training center for Allied infantry include rehearsal involving landing craft (main invasion beach)
- **2-2:30 p.m.** — Airborne Pathfinders demonstration (Foucarville)
- **2:15-2:45 p.m.** — American homefront: Rationing in the Kitchen (lower pavilion)
- **2:45-3:15 p.m.** — 1940s women’s clothing (lower pavilion) teaches how to recreate the era’s glamour
- **3-4 p.m.** — Allied vs. Axis soccer match (parade field)
- **3-3:45 p.m.** — Women’s clothing: Care and identification (lower pavilion)
- **3-3:45 p.m.** — American homefront (lower pavilion)
- **4 p.m.** — Aerial demonstration featuring T-51 Mustangs from Titan Aircraft of Ashtabula County and a Mitchell B-25 J bomber (beach)
- **4:30 p.m.** — Axis changing of the

- guard/checkpoint Maquis attack recreates a skirmish involving French resistance at a German checkpoint (midpark)
- **4:45 -4:55 p.m.** — Retreat ceremony (Allied parade ground)
- **5 p.m.** — National anthem (midpark)
- **5:05 p.m.** — Battle for Foucarville, a clash between airborne troops and Germans that marks the first engagement of the Normandy Invasion
- **6-8 p.m.** — Historic vehicle rally features civilian and military vehicles (Lakeview Park)

SATURDAY

- **9-9:15 a.m.** — Opening ceremony features flag-raising and platoon formations (midpark)
- **9 a.m.** — Encampments and displays open to the public
- **9-9:30 a.m.** — Axis formation, review and drill (Axis camp)
- **9-9:15 a.m.** — Sherman tank cannon firing (bluff)
- **9:30-10 a.m.** — Axis weapons demonstration (Axis camp)
- **9:30-10 a.m.** — Allied intelligence support depicts information received just prior to the start of D-Day (Allied headquarters)
- **9:30-10 a.m.** — Invasion assault team training (Allied parade grounds)
- **10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.** — D-Day in Miniature

for children age 13 and under (sand volleyball court)

- **10 a.m.-10:45 a.m.** — Allied camp tour includes discussion of uniforms, barracks, weapons, supplies and daily training (Allied camp)
- **10-10:40 a.m.** — Veterans’ personal histories (children’s play area at the sand volleyball court)
- **10-10:45 a.m.** — Axis camp tour includes discussion of life in a German field unit (Axis camp)
- **10-10:30 a.m.** — Allied sand table briefing shows miniature models used to help troops maintain their bearings upon hitting the beach (band stand/stage)
- **10:30-10:45 a.m.** — Maquis attack depicts French freedom fighters attempting to sabotage German troops stationed in their area (Axis camp)
- **10:50-10:59 a.m.** — Narration begins for the Battle of La Fiere Bridge (lower park bridge)
- **11 a.m.** — Battle for La Fiere Bridge depicts fight for one of few bridges capable of supporting heavy equipment moving inland from the beaches (lower park bridge)
- **Noon-12:15 p.m.** — Allied parade and march-past salute honors WWII vets in attendance (Allied parade ground)
- **12:15 - 2:30 p.m.** — Veteran personal histories (veterans’ hospitality tent)
- **Noon-12:30 p.m.** — Commonwealth educational briefing discusses the role of Commonwealth troops on D-Day (briefing tent marked by Bradley’s flag)
- **12:30-1 p.m.** — Field equipment and uniform briefing (Axis camp)
- **12:30- 1 p.m.** — Boat assault team demonstration shows how landing craft were loaded, the teams of men who went aboard and their equipment (parade field)
- **1-1:30 p.m.** — Tour of the Atlantic Wall fortifications
- **1:30-2 p.m.** — Axis weapons demonstration (Axis camp)
- **1:30-2 p.m.** — Commonwealth infantry on D-Day discusses uniforms worn by British Commonwealth infantry (Allied camp parade grounds)
- **2:30 p.m.** — Normandy troop embarkation formation for beach landing includes a pass in review for veterans (parade grounds)
- **2:45 p.m.** — Narration begins for Normandy beach landing
- **3-4 p.m.** — Invasion begins
- **4:30 p.m.** — Press briefing with Allied commanders once the beachhead has been secured (briefing tent)
- **5 p.m.** — Encampments and displays close to the public
- **5:15 p.m.** — Performance of period tunes with “The Final Cut” (band stand)
- **8 p.m.-midnight** — USO-style dance featuring big-band music at the Conneaut Human Resources Center, 327 Mill St.; free to re-enactors (small admission fee for the public); 1940s dress strongly encouraged



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

A LANDING craft brings World War re-enactors to shore during D-Day Conneaut 2013.

What you need to know

WHAT: The 15th annual D-Day Conneaut encampment and battle re-enactment, which coincides with the 70th anniversary of the Normandy Invasion

WHEN: Friday and Saturday; Allied and Axis camp displays are open to the public both days between 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

WHERE: Conneaut Township Park, 480 Lake Road (Route 531). The event is staged by D-Day Ohio Inc.

WHY: The event is meant to educate the public about life on the battlefield and at home during World War II, with a special emphasis on the units, troops and planning involved in the D-Day Invasion. Also, organizers view the weekend as a tribute to WWII veterans, and many are expected to attend.

WHO: An estimated 1,200 re-enactors and more than 20,000 visitors are anticipated, making D-Day Conneaut one of the largest – if not the largest – World War II event in the country

COST: Admission is free, although donations are gratefully accepted. Sale of D-Day Conneaut merchandise, such as T-shirts and DVDs, also benefit the event.

PARKING: No parking is permitted within Township Park over the weekend or on Lake Road in the vicinity of the park. Shuttle buses will take visitors to and from

the following lots over the two days: Pittsburgh and Conneaut Dock Company, 950 Ford Ave. (for disabled persons and veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam wars); Broad and Jackson streets; Conneaut High School, 381 Mill St.; and Conneaut Middle School, 230 Gateway Ave. If necessary, overflow parking will be available at the Gateway Plaza shopping center at Route 7 and Gateway Avenue, near Interstate 90. Signs will point motorists to the lots.

Parking is also available along side streets adjacent to Township Park, but be mindful of private property and no-parking signs.

One-way traffic will be in effect on Lake Road in front of the park to facilitate flow and assist the shuttle buses.

FOOD: A food court featuring an array of vendors will be available atop the park bluff. Also, Pat's Lakeside Grill will be open for business in the beachfront pavilion. The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church opposite Township Park will hold a fish fry 4-7:30 p.m. Friday. Cost is \$10 and the public is welcome.

SHOPPING: Vendors will offer a variety of military-themed apparel and equipment to the public

PETS: Because of the anticipated crowds, noise and park policies, pets are not permitted on the grounds

2014

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special effects,” Bartone said. “It adds to the complexity.”

Organizers are planning other changes to deal with the crush of people. More portable toilets will be available and on-site security will be present. University Hospitals will set up a first aid station to back up the presence of Conneaut paramedics.

Cost of staging the event continues to climb, one reason D-Day Ohio has begun a special fundraising campaign in conjunction with the 70th anniversary. The group is looking for 70 donors willing to contribute \$1,000 each to the event, said Jennifer Palagyi, chief financial officer.

“That’s our goal,” she said.

No on-site parking will be available at Township Park. Instead, visitors may park along side streets or use one of several lots that will be regularly serviced by shuttle buses. Signs will direct drivers to the lots.

As usual, the committee will take great pains to mask as much of the park’s modern features as possible. Picnic tables, grills and traffic signs will be masked for the event. Replicas of bunkers and checkpoints will be removed from storage bins in town and assembled.

“We’re looking for more storage locations,” McLaughlin said.

Planning for the re-enactment probably began the day after last year’s event, McLaughlin said. The work is made easier by the great cooperation shown the group from the public and private sectors, she said.

“We really appreciate the full support we have from our government partners,” McLaughlin said, ranging from Conneaut City Hall to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Organizers say they sense a special anticipation for D-Day Conneaut 2014 within the community. “It’s a great event to have in town,” McLaughlin said.



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CONNEAUT TOWNSHIP Park has been the home of D-Day Conneaut since its inception 15 years ago. In the background is the field that contains the Allied encampment. Park commissioners say they welcome the event as a means to promote the lakefront facility.



MARK TODD / Star Beacon

CONNEAUT TOWNSHIP Park beach will become a mock battleground this weekend when the D-Day Conneaut re-enactment returns. The beach's resemblance to the Normandy coast brought it to the attention of event organizers.

A war-time, 1940s look

For one weekend a year, Township Park morphs into famous battlefield

By MARK TODD

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — For 51 weeks of the year, Conneaut Township Park accommodates swimmers, picnickers, reunions, beach glass buffs and outdoor enthusiasts.

But for a few days in August, the lakefront park goes back in time with the arrival of D-Day Conneaut, a World War II re-enactment. With the help of some clever craftsmen, many of the park's modern touches are hidden to create a war-time, 1940s look.

Township Park, perched on Lake Erie, offers exactly what the D-Day group was looking for: A wide beach that ends with bluffs nearly 100 feet tall, terrain that mimics what Allied forces encountered on June 6, 1944.

"There's one spot that looks like Normandy, and that's Conneaut Township Park," said Betsy Bashore, chief executive officer for D-Day Ohio, which stages the re-enactment.

It goes without saying the re-enactment

couldn't proceed without Township Park, and organizers are grateful for the park commissioners' cooperation. But what goes into staging such a massive event on a summer weekend during the park's busiest season?

Plenty of hard work, said Gary Coxon, who chairs the board of commissioners.

The task of prepping the park falls mostly to the small army of volunteers who camouflage picnic tables, grills and road signs with "crates," "boxes" and French mile markers. But for park staff there's coordinating the arrival of heavy vehicles and arranging enough trash cans and portable toilets to accommodate hundreds of re-enactors and thousands of visitors.

And each year, as the event grows, so does the park's responsibilities. Coxon recalls the first re-enactment, when only a few living historians participated and a couple hundred spectators were on hand.

Coxon remembers back to 2000, when the idea of turning the park into an encampment — complete with beachfront invasion — was first broached to the park board.

"We got a letter or email from these World War II re-enactors," he said. "At the time, we thought it was sort of bizarre. We thought about liability issues and whether we wanted to interrupt the sanctity of Township Park.

"We thought it was a lark," Coxon said. "We envisioned maybe 30 people messing around. It was totally new to us. We thought they would do it once and wouldn't come back."

The commissioners decided to give it a try. "You can't say no to every new thing that comes along," Coxon said.

The re-enactment was a big hit, and the event has consistently grown every year, attracting more participants and spectators.

"It just kept building and building," Coxon said. "It went to having no impact to dominating a week. It taxes our system. We're built to handle (on average) 1,000 people a day."

D-Day organizers begin the transformation days ahead of the encampment. "They show up on the Monday or Tuesday (ahead of the event)," Coxon said.

Props are installed and many of the park's fixtures in the prime areas — the bluffs and the Axis and Allied campsites — are hidden from view. Public address systems are installed and pyrotechnics are put into place on the beach. The goal is to create the feel of coastal France around the time of the amphibious assault.

Organizers are very respectful of the park, trying to minimize damage when possible, Coxon said.

"The committee is very impressive," he said. "They really help carry the load."

Park personnel get involved in the layout, double-checking to make sure the taxpayer-supported park isn't damaged by the event, Coxon said.

"We want to make sure whatever they do doesn't leave a scar on the park," he said. "We'll check on the heavy vehicles and where they're allowed to go. We don't want them driving over a sidewalk. Our biggest fear is bad weather. You put anything on the property (when wet) and you get ruts."

See MORPHS, Page 7



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

AN AMERICAN soldier (top) was a casualty while a German soldier (above) is hit and American soldiers storm the beach at Conneaut Township Park during D-Day Conneaut 2013 (right). The World War II invasion draws thousands to Conneaut.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

Morphs

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D-Day organizers make a cash donation to the park to help defray some of the cost.

“We’re reimbursed,” Coxon said. “They will offset some of our expenses. But some of it is our donation, too.”

Things were simpler when the re-enactment was held in September, Coxon said. After Labor Day, kids are back in school, family visits drop and there’s “a lot less pressure on the park,” he said. By comparison, August “is our prime time,” Coxon said.

The D-Day committee is a cooperative bunch, but that doesn’t stop them from making requests of the park board – for the sake of authenticity – that invariably launches a discussion.

“It’s a balancing thing,” Coxon said. “It can get a little trying at times. They have their demands which we balance against the people who want to picnic and enjoy the beach.”

The commissioners try to be flexible and understanding, however.

“We’re hoping it’s something good for the community and we run with that,” Coxon said. “We try not to be too hard on them. They’re good, big-hearted people. They’re good, honest citizens enjoying their hobby. We want (the event) to be a success.”

The park benefits from the arrangement, too. People who come to Township Park for the re-enactment are usually so impressed by the beach and other amenities that they schedule repeat visits.

“We do get that ‘wow!’ when they first arrive and see the park,” Coxon said. “People are coming from all over, and we get to introduce them to a nice area of the world.”

Township Park will continue to host the D-Day event as long as possible, Coxon said.

“We feel it’s a big deal for the city and Ashtabula County,” he said. “It brings people to town and creates interest in Conneaut.”

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Economic impact

Weekend has become huge tourist attraction for Ashtabula County

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — In just 15 years, D-Day Conneaut has become one of Ashtabula County's biggest events, drawing thousands of visitors — and their cash.

This weekend's re-enactment at Conneaut Township Park is expected to draw upwards of 25,000 people, representing a huge economic boon for the area. Data shows the average day visitor to the county spends \$102, while an overnight visitor will drop more than \$300, said Mark Winchell, Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau executive director.

“(D-Day Conneaut) is an economic catalyst,” he said.

Restaurants, gas stations and lodging in the region directly benefit from the influx of people, experts say.

“We have people who stop us (at the re-enactment) and ask us where the nearest CVS is or the best place to get a perch sandwich,” said Connie Naylor, Conneaut Board of Tourism chairwoman. “People who come regularly rent the same accommodations year after year.”

The ACCVB began fielding



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

THOUSANDS OF visitors watch D-Day Conneaut 2013 at Conneaut Township Park.

calls about the 2014 event many weeks ago, Winchell said.

“We get tons of requests about D-Day Conneaut,” he said. “We get calls from Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Cleveland. People are planning events around D-Day.”

Rooms are in short supply on D-Day weekend, said Betsy

Bashore, chief executive officer. “People are booking motels as far away as Erie, Pa.,” she said.

Conneaut's tourism board works hard with local businesses to help them make the most of the busy weekend, Naylor said.

“We encourage our businesses to be open that weekend,” she said. “We want them to think

outside the box and use their imagination. We tell them if they promote themselves they stand to have a very good weekend.”

Some stores will display “welcome re-enactor” posters in windows, Naylor said. “Everybody is gearing up.”

Many local merchants contact the D-Day group well in

advance for information, said Lori McLaughlin, chief operating officer.

“They want to know the dates for planning purposes,” she said. “And there's a huge interest among vendors (at the event). Four or five years ago we were begging people to come.”

D-Day Conneaut is unlike other festivals and events held in the county, Winchell said.

“It's a national day for us,” he said. “There are very few Normandy Invasion festivals. It's a component you don't have with other festivals.”

The event also speaks to many people at different levels, Winchell said.

“The authenticity of D-Day Conneaut makes it truly unique,” he said. “It's a great opportunity for remembrance and patriotic pride. “It's also multi-generational, something you don't have with other festivals.”

D-Day Conneaut can thrive for many years to come, thanks to the planning and hard work of the organizers, Winchell said.

“They do a great job of managing the festival and managing the crowds,” he said. “(The event's) impact is long-lived.”



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A special autograph

Madison veteran gets thanks from Obama

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

MADISON TOWNSHIP — Fred Pearson says people often thank him for his service during World War II, but few carry the status of one well-wisher he met in France at a ceremony commemorating the 70th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion.

Pearson, 94, of Madison, was greeted by no less than President Obama at a June 5 event in Normandy.

"He shook my hand and thanked me," he said.

But Pearson didn't stop there.

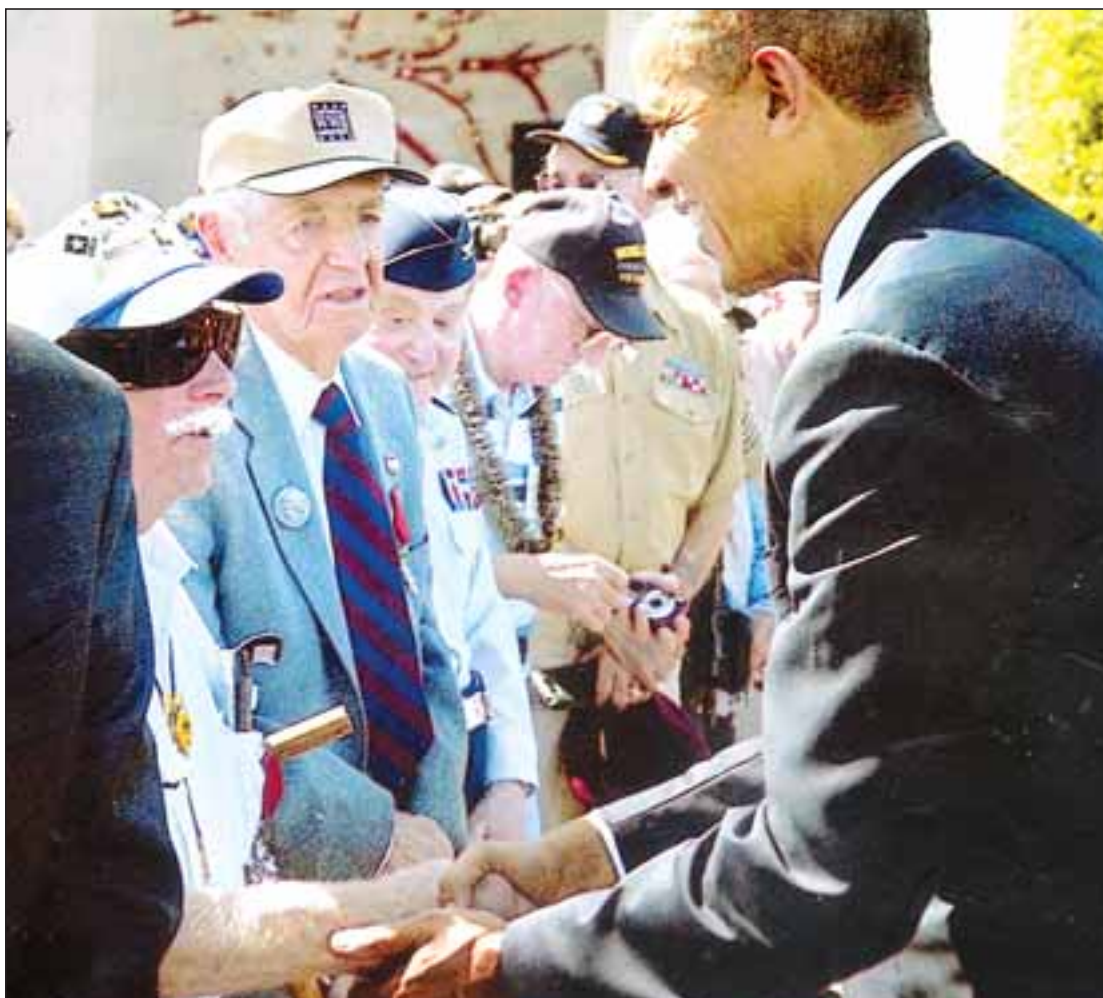
"I asked him for his autograph, and he took out a pen and signed for me," Pearson said. "I was the only one on the stage to get an autograph."

The trip to France in early June was much more pleasant than the first time Pearson saw the coast, six days after June 6, 1944, as a member of the 453rd Anti-Aircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion Battery B. Pearson came ashore at Utah Beach, and the carnage from a few days earlier was still evident.

Equipment was scattered everywhere, Pearson said. "It was a mess," he said.

Still, Utah was the better alternative, Pearson said.

"It was the easier beach," he said. "Omaha Beach was a



PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA (right) shakes hands with Fred Pearson of Madison Township during a D-Day Memorial in Normandy.

slaughterhouse."

Pearson's unit was charged with guarding ground troops from German aircraft. They rode

half-tracks fitted with quad-mounted, .50-caliber machine guns. Before the war would end, the 453rd would knock dozens

of enemy planes out of the air.

For the short term, however, some of the half-tracks — armed with 40mm cannon — helped the

Allies break through a hedgerow system that slowed their advance. Tanks proved vulnerable because their underbellies became briefly exposed to German gunners when they climbed up and over the hedgerows, Pearson said. Half-tracks, however, could rake enemy positions with machine gun fire while the 40mm cannon blasted pillboxes.

Pearson, a Madison-area resident at the time, joined the Army in September 1942 and was discharged in November 1945. During his time with the 453rd, which would be assigned to the 83rd Div., the unit earned citations for action in five campaigns: Normandy, Brittany, Central Europe, Ardennes and Rhineland. Pearson also served in the Battle of the Bulge.

"We got the credit for the liberation of Normandy and Brittany," Pearson said.

Some of the ceremonies Pearson attended in France were held by grateful French to honor their liberators, he said. During his nine days abroad, Pearson was interviewed by local media, attended numerous events, visited monuments and helped with the unveiling of a statue. He was presented the French Legion of Merit medal and received a proclamation from the mayor of Sainteny, a town heavily damaged during the war.

"It was a great trip," he said.

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FRED PEARSON of Madison Township shares his memories of D-Day.

WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

Thanks

From Page 10

Pearson traveled with a niece and his hosts the entire time was a French couple – who didn't speak a word of English. "Their children did, though," he said, smiling.

Pearson saw friends killed and wounded in combat, but his only injury was a gash to his thumb suffered from a C-ration can while scrambling for cover during an air attack.

"It was an enemy plane that would attack (toward the evening. We called him Bed-Check Charlie," he said. "I dove into a fox-hole and cut my thumb. I needed a couple of stitches. The medic wanted to put me in for a Purple Heart, but I said no. That's for guys with real (combat) wounds."

Coincidentally, Pearson's unit provided support for another area resident, Lt. Samuel Magill Sr. of Monroe Township, who would gain global fame for negotiating the surrender of 20,000 Germans soldiers. Pearson's unit was at the Loire River and wound up at the same spot where Magill was dealing with the Germans. At one point, the half-tracks were ordered to open fire, a show of force meant to impress the enemy on the other side of the river.

Magill died in October, and Pearson spoke at a memorial service in May.

Pearson said he often thinks of the war.

"Little things come back to me," he said. "When I look back on it, I wonder how we did it. We survived."

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Fiory Bartone

D-Day a vivid memory for Conneaut veteran

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — Fiory Bartone of Conneaut knows firsthand how quickly the Allied military could amass an invasion force of epic proportions.

Bartone, 90, was 70 years younger and a member of an amphibious combat brigade when he climbed into a landing craft bobbing on the English Channel on June 5, 1944. When Bartone boarded the craft, it seemed it was alone on the water, he recalled.

After an evening spent on the vessel, sunrise revealed Bartone and his buddies had company — an armada of ships with the same goal: Put troops and equipment on the Normandy coast.

“I didn't know you could get that many ships in the Channel,” he said. “It was just loaded with them.”

Bartone, who entered the service in March 1943, received special invasion training in Land's End, England. “When we first arrived in England, we lived in private homes,” he said.

Bartone landed at Utah Beach with the fourth wave around 10:30 a.m., he said. The ramps were dropped with the boats about 50 feet from shore so they wouldn't get stuck in sand. That meant a soggy slog to dry land for most, and a good dunking for the smaller guys.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

FIORY BARTONE, of Conneaut, is shown in his official basic training portrait in 1943.

“One fellow, who was short, went completely under water,” Bartone said. “He had to be pulled to the surface.”

Ahead of Bartone's unit were Army Rangers, who did a great job dealing with the German defenders, he said.

“The Rangers are one of the best units in the Army,” he said. “They had cleared that whole

area.”

Pockets of resistance remained, however. Bartone spent “three or four days,” and each night the German shelled the area.”

Utah Beach was barely a slip of land, Bartone recalled.

“It was only 20 or 30 feet wide,” he said. “We came in when the tide came in.”

Bartone quickly saw evidence of the fierce fighting that preceded his arrival. “There were a few bodies on the beach,” he said.

Further inland, Bartone saw parachutes draped on buildings. “The 82nd and 101st (airborne divisions) landed at Sainte-Mere-Eglise” he said.

Once the Cherbourg Peninsula had been cleared, Bartone's company — initially attached to the 4th Infantry — split up: Some went with Gen. Omar Bradley's 1st Army, while the balance joined Gen. George Patton's 3rd Army. Bartone's platoon was assigned to follow Bradley.

The force barreled through Europe, covering 10 or more miles a day. Bartone fought in the Battle of Bulge, but wasn't a member of the Allied force directly caught by the German counter-attack, he said.

“Thank God I was not in Bastogne,” Bartone said.

Bartone's unit also liberated Buchenwald, one of Hitler's death camps.

“The Germans had long gone by the time we got there,” Bartone said. “The stench was so bad you could smell it two or three miles away. These poor souls were hanging on the fence, looking for aid, looking for something to eat. Trenches were filled with bodies.”

There was also the gas chambers,” he said. “It was terrible.

Just terrible.”

Ultimately, Bartone fought in five campaigns: Northern France, Normandy, Rhineland, Ardennes and Central Europe. After the war, his unit was awarded the Croix de guerre from a grateful French government. Bartone also received several citations.

Discharged in December 1945, he survived the war without a scratch.

June 6, 1944, holds many special memories, Bartone said. He recalls sympathy for the landing craft crews who repeatedly put themselves in front of German guns while ferrying soldiers to shore.

“I felt sorry for the Navy guys who had to take those Higgins boats back and forth,” he said.

There was the can of celery soup that was his last hot meal for days after the invasion and the German prisoners his unit was first to transfer off the beach. And the eight-foot wall troops expected to encounter on the beach? It was about two feet tall — thanks to a build-up of sand.

Today, Bartone said he is selective in his wartime memories.

“I think about the good parts, not the bad parts,” he said. “I miss the fellows I served with. And I thank God I was young and didn't know what was going on.”

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WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

FIORY BARTONE of Conneaut shares his memories of D-Day.

Veterans are focus on D-Day weekend

By MARK TODD

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — Among the thousands expected for this weekend's D-Day re-enactment in Conneaut will be a few dozen VIPs — men and women who served in the military in World War II.

"For many of the veterans, (D-Day Conneaut) is a celebration of their legacy and of victory," said Eric Montgomery, veterans liaison.

Last year, more than 100 veterans were able to attend the event, and organizers are hoping to top that number. At the end of July, 85 veterans living as far away as Canada, Arizona and Florida had registered, Montgomery said.

Montgomery, who began the veterans program three years ago, contacts American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts within a 250 mile radius of Conneaut to extend an invitation to their World War II-era members. The committee provides special parking and shuttle service for veterans, a vets-only lunch and an opportunity to share their wartime stories with the public.

For many veterans, a trip to the re-enactment can become an emotional trigger, Montgomery said.

"A lot of the veterans who attend weren't at Normandy, but when they get into that environment — the sights, sounds and smells — it will



ERIC MONTGOMERY

draw out memories," he said.

D-Day Conneaut also provides veterans with a common background a chance to reminisce, Montgomery said.

"So many of the (military) reunions are being disbanded as veterans find it harder to travel," he said. "Conneaut is one of the last places where World War II veterans can get together on a regional level, not a national level.

"When I started the veterans program I wanted to create a reunion place," Montgomery said. "It's a means to propagate new friendships. Nobody the veterans talk to can relate to what they went through. They want to talk to a buddy. They want to know people with similar experiences."

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Sgt. Robert W. Bogar

Family of slain soldier enjoy warm welcome during trip to France

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

ASHTABULA – The family of an Ashtabula soldier killed a few days after the D-Day invasion learned first hand this summer that the people of France will never forget their liberators.

Sgt. Robert W. Bogar, an Army Ranger, was killed by machine gun fire on June 13, 1944, during the battle of the Moulin des Rondelles, an old mill near the Normandy village of Cerisy-la-Foret. Ten other soldiers died in the fighting.

Two months ago, local relatives of Bogar – two nephews, David Bogart and wife Carol of North Kingsville, and Paul Bogart and wife Diane of Saybrook Township – traveled to Normandy to attend a 70th commemorative ceremony at a monument erected at the battlefield. A third nephew, Jim Bogar, was unable to attend.

Much of the travel expense was borne by a man named Geert Van den Bogaert, an interpretative guide at the Normandy American Cemetery near Omaha Beach. A chance encounter with a relative of another man killed in the battle prompted Van den Bogaert to dig into the conflict and learn more about the men who died that day.

Through his effort, a monument was erected at the spot of the fighting and observances are conducted there annually.

Van den Bogaert's research eventually led him to the families of the 11 slain soldiers.

"This phone call came out of the blue in 2011," Diane Bogar said. "He asked if we were the family of Robert Bogar, and when I said yes there was this



MARK TODD / Star Beacon

RELATIVES OF Sgt. Robert W. Bogar of Ashtabula, killed in France in June 1944, traveled to France earlier this summer to attend a commemorative program in Normandy. Featured are David Bogar, nephew of the slain soldier; his wife, Carol (center); and Diane Bogar. Not pictured is Paul Bogar, Diane's husband and another nephew of Sgt. Bogar.

jubilation over the phone."

Van den Bogaert would visit the United States and meet with as many relations as possible. That contact would result in an invitation to attend the special ceremony in June 2014.

Much of the travel expense was borne by Van den Bogaert through a variety of fundraisers he conducted in France. "We spent eight days there, and for eight days he fed us," Carol Bogar said.

"He is an unbelievable person," David Bogar said.

The trip was laid out so the rel-

atives would follow in the footsteps of Company C. On the first day of the journey, families traveled to Omaha Beach to see where Company C waded ashore on that same date 70 years earlier. Families placed little flags in the sand bearing the name of a soldier.

"The beach was much bigger than I thought," Carol Bogar said. "And there is a big resemblance to Conneaut Township Park beach (home to the D-Day Conneaut encampment)."

Each day of the trip was filled with touring and ceremonies.

And everywhere the Bogars traveled, they met grateful French citizens. The outpouring of affection was "overwhelming," Carol Bogar said.

"I didn't think anybody there knew what had happened (in the battle)," she said.

David Bogar was stunned by the reception they received throughout the trip. Ceremonies were held in their honor at every stop, he said.

"The first town we went into was mind-boggling," David Bogar said. "The whole town was there. Kids were waving



SUBMITTED PHOTO

SGT. ROBERT W. BOGAR, killed in action in June 1944, was a graduate of Ashtabula High School. A monument in Normandy marks the spot of the battle that claimed his life.

flags. It was pretty emotional.

"They have named streets in the town named after the unit," he said. "They are so grateful."

"There were a lot of thank-yous," said Diane Bogar. "We saw so many American flags. To them it's the symbol of liberation."

Robert Bogar was nearly 25

See BOGAR, Page 15



SUBMITTED PHOTO

NEPHEWS OF Sgt. Robert W. Bogar, killed in action a few days after D-Day, are David Bogar (seated), Jim Bogar (left) and Paul Bogar. David and Paul, along with their wives, traveled to France in June to attend a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the battle that claimed Sgt. Bogar's life.

A note from a nephew

Paul Bogar of Saybrook Township, nephew of Sgt. Robert Bogar of Ashtabula who was killed in action in France on June 13, 1944, shares his thoughts about the family's recent participation in a commemorative service at the site of the battle:

"In historical terms, 70 years is a very short period of time.

"To those men and women who survived the horrors of war, you are also heroes whose stories should be told.

"Please feel no guilt or shame for your survival; it was meant to be.

"Pass your stories on so others may know what happened to their loved ones."



MARK TODD / Star Beacon

SGT. ROBERT W. BOGAR, killed in France in June 1944, is buried in Edgewood Cemetery in Ashtabula Township.

Bogar

From Page 14

years old when he entered the service in January 1942. He was a 1939 graduate of Ashtabula High School, where he played on the basketball team. Bogar also played baseball

with a Veterans of Foreign Wars team and worked at the Atlantic and Pacific store in Ashtabula, according to news reports.

"Parents and grandparents never really talked about him," Diane Bogar said. "We always wondered in the back of our minds what had happened to him."

Bogar was buried in



SUBMITTED PHOTO

SGT. ROBERT W. BOGAR of Ashtabula was killed in action in Normandy, just a few days after the D-Day Invasion.

France in a temporary cemetery that primarily held the remains of German soldiers. A few years later, his body was returned home and laid to rest in Edgewood Cemetery.

During the trip, the Bogars also bonded with relations of the other 10 soldiers. "It's a new family," Diane Bogar said.

At the conclusion of the journey, Diane said she told Van den Bogaert that — because of him — they had "made friends that we would be friends with the rest of lives."

"No," he said, pointing at Diane's ID badge, which contained a photo of Sgt. Bogar. "It's because of him."

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World War II

Star Beacon readers recall life at home

The Star Beacon asked readers to submit their memories of growing up during World War II. Two accounts are published below:

NANCY SCOTT OF GENEVA WRITES:

“Two of my uncles were drafted before the war. They were my Uncle Donald and my Uncle Arnold.

Arnold didn’t have to go because of his age but he went anyway.

“I was a little girl when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and I didn’t know much about what was happening but I learned fast. I joined a club where you wore a uniform. I figured I was helping my uncles and they would be proud of me.

“Everyone got real patriotic and didn’t mind the rationing. The women went to work in factories and that is where Rosie the Riveter came from. There were a few bootleggers and draft-dodgers and people shunned them. The bootleggers would kill horses and sell their meat for beef.

“My Uncle Bob had a very bad heart and he couldn’t join the service. He tried to get his friends to take the physical exam for him, but it didn’t work as he couldn’t be in the service with his brothers.

“Whenever my mother and I went anywhere, she always picked up hitchhikers who were servicemen.

“We lived in a house on a corner

where there was a lot of hitchhiking, and my Grandma would look out the window and say, ‘Nancy, go get that soldier boy or sailor boy and tell him to come over and have a bite to eat.’ They all came.

“The only thing I remember about the Normandy Invasion is my grandparents got a telegram that my Uncle Arnold was seriously wounded and the next day I came home from school and Grandma was crying. I went outside and grandpa was leaning against the barn door with his head in his hands. I said, ‘Grandpa, what is wrong with Grandma,’ and he said ‘We found out Arnold was killed,’ and I said ‘Oh,’ and ran to the outhouse and sat there and cried until my mom came home from work.

“The next day we got a telegram that my Uncle Donald was wounded in action. We were all afraid the next day we would get a telegram that he was killed. That didn’t happen, thank God.

“We got a letter from Donald saying he was on a hospital ship and the weather was like the Pacific Ocean turned upside down. He had been in Okinawa driving a DUCK (an amphibious vehicle), unloading ships, and he stood up and was shot in the knee. He said if he hadn’t stood up he probably would have been killed.

“A lot of entertainers, and even

movie stars, came to Geneva and sold defense bonds to people. I think they were all different prices. That was a lot of fun.

“People didn’t go shopping a lot because things were hard we didn’t have much money. The most shopping we did was for food. I don’t remember hearing people complaining about any hardships we had.

“I remember when my Uncle Donald came home he said that when the war ended the guys all celebrated by shooting their guns. He hid in a fox-hole for a couple of days because he was afraid of getting a stray bullet.”

CATHERINE GAMBLE OF CONNEAUT WRITES:

“At the start of World War II my father was rejected to serve in the Army because of high blood pressure, etc., but was hired as an accountant at the local training camp – Camp Reynolds – in Transfer, Pa.

“He also was a night air raid warden in our neighborhood. He was supplied with a helmet, flashlight, whistle, arm band and papers to record any findings of houses where lights were left on during black-out times when the sirens would go off.

“My younger sister and I thought it would be fun to call out to Dad during his night duties when he came to our street. We opened our bedroom window and when we heard him walking near our house yelled out

“Hi, Daddy!” He shouted out to us to “Close that window and go back to bed!” He was very upset and we never again repeated this action.

“Black-out were started, we were told, in case enemy planes were able to fly into our country and bomb our cities and towns.

“In grade school our classes would have air raid drills and we would go to the basement for awhile. One time, we were there for three hours. The nuns told us we would have an ‘amateur hour’ and students would go to the center of the basement and sing or dance or recite poetry or tell stories to pass the time.

“I remember my mother going through the rations booklet to see what she could buy with the coupons at our grocery store.

“We had a small Victory garden in our back yard next to our garage. We grew tomato plants, carrots and other vegetables. My sister and I had to weed the garden and water it, and when the veggies were ready pick them and wash the soil off. We enjoyed them at our meals.

“On the day the war ended we neighborhood children celebrated by banging on pots and pans with wooden spoons while walking up and the down the sidewalks, yelling “The war is over, the war is over!” Cars would toot their horns when they passed by.”

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THOMAS SMILE of the Conneaut Board of Tourism sells D-Day Conneaut 2013 programs during the World War II event at Conneaut Township Park.

Another well-trained force

D-Day Conneaut relies on its volunteer 'army'

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — While two armies battle on Conneaut Township Park's beach this weekend, another well-trained force will be hard at work to ensure visitors, vendors and re-enactors have an enjoyable visit.

D-Day Conneaut depends on dozens of community volunteers to make the event trouble-free, and to show the importance of the helpers a new position — local volunteer coordinator — was created to oversee the dozens of people who lend a hand for the two-day encampment.

Connie Jury of Conneaut holds the

inaugural post. She signs up volunteers and tries to fit them into positions that best suit their talents.

"I want them to do what they are comfortable doing," she said. "I give them a chance to succeed."

As of early August, Jury said she had upwards of 100 people to help handle traffic, work the parking lots, staff an information booth and even solicit donations from the crowd.

"There is so much to do," Jury said.

Even though D-Day Conneaut officially spans two days (Friday and Saturday), volunteers swung into action a few days ago when organizers began transforming Township Park beach into the Normandy coast. Some of the re-enactors showed up

at the start of the week, and volunteers were there to give assistance.

"Some people drive up and help starting on Monday," Jury said.

Many volunteers have been with the event since its start 15 years ago, organizers said. The dedication of the workers is admirable, Jury said.

"The first-year people are so enthralled," she said. "Two people are taking vacations around (the re-enactment). There's such an enjoyment in what they're doing."

Two training sessions were scheduled for the volunteers "to help them get a grasp of the whole thing," Jury said.

Organizers don't want to overwhelm workers with too many tasks. "We take

off little pieces, and everybody does their little piece," said Lori McLaughlin, D-Day Conneaut chief operating officer.

Local community support is "critical" to the success of D-Day Conneaut, said Betsy Bashore, chief executive officer of D-Day Ohio, which stages the event. Many members of the organizing committee don't live in the area, which makes dealing with the little details very difficult, she said. Having local people in key support positions is a blessing, Bashore said.

"They know the people in the community," she said. "They can establish relationships in the city and school district. Lori spends the year working with our public partners."

Big plans for future *D-Day museum moves a little closer to reality*

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — Plans are proceeding to transform a lakefront church in Conneaut into a museum devoted to World War II and the D-Day Invasion, but don't look for a grand opening anytime soon.

Progress is being made, but much remains to be done, said Chris Bartone, a member of the D-Day Conneaut committee.

"We have little funding and an all-volunteer staff," he said. "It's very difficult to get a museum up and running."

Last year, D-Day Ohio Inc., which stages the re-enactment, officially acquired the First Hungarian Reformed Church at Lake Road and Harbor Street. Discussion about the project began in 2012. The church, built in 1914, was basically donated to the organization, officials said.

Over the past year, D-Day Ohio has received a small grant to help make plumbing and electrical upgrades, Bartone said. "We've also obtained some display cases," he said.

Tours of the building will be available during the weekend, Bartone said.

A priority is to make the building accessible for disabled visitors via ramps. A small parking lot has also been discussed, officials have said.

Eventually, the building will house a wide array of World War II artifacts, with a special emphasis on the Normandy Invasion.

The church sits a very short distance from Conneaut Township Park, home to D-Day Conneaut. The proximity will help the D-Day group's goal to educate the public on the war, Betsy Bashore, D-Day Ohio/Conneaut chief executive officer, said last year.

"I think we can continue to tell the story of World War II and D-Day," she said.



MARK TODD / Star Beacon

THE FIRST HUNGARIAN Reformed Church at Harbor Street and Lake Road in Conneaut has been acquired by D-Day Ohio Inc., and will be converted into a museum devoted to the D-Day Invasion and World War II. The church was built 100 years ago.

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AMERICAN SOLDIERS storm the beach at Conneaut Township Park during D-Day Conneaut 2013. The World War II invasion drew thousands to Conneaut.

How it all began 15 years ago

Beach's resemblance to Normandy brought D-Day to Conneaut

By MARK TODD

Staff Writer

mtodd@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — D-Day Conneaut, celebrating 15 years of living history, all began with a beach.

The sprawling event we know today had its roots in the late 1990s, when Conneaut Township Park beach played a role in a World War II documentary filmed for German television and broadcast in 1999. For the D-Day portion of

the program, the park substituted for the coast of Normandy and featured a handful of re-enactors from the region.

At the time, producers said the wide beach and the park's towering bluff closely resembled the topography Allied invaders saw from their landing crafts.

Re-enactors involved in that TV show didn't forget the beach and the backdrop it provided. When plans for a re-enactment geared to D-Day were made, Conneaut's beach was recommended to organizers, according to news articles.

The first D-Day Conneaut, held in September 2000, featured an estimated 100 re-enactors and about 300 spectators. Numbers were so small, Allied and Axis soldiers could pitch their tents a short distance apart on the grassy field behind the east bluffs and still leave room for a parking lot.

That won't be the case this weekend. Some 1,400 re-enactors and 25,000 spectators are expected, and the encampments take up much of the park.

Organizers readily give credit to the

park's terrain for the event's success.

"The beach and natural landscape provides us (the opportunity)," said Mark Winchell, Ashtabula County Convention and Visitor Bureau executive director. "The natural environment makes it authentic."

Betsy Bashore, D-Day Ohio chief executive officer, agrees. "There's just one spot that looks like Normandy, and that's Conneaut Township Park," she said.

Scenes from the past

D-Day Conneaut



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

A GERMAN soldier gets shot during D-Day Conneaut 2013 at Conneaut Township Park..



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

PLANES WERE a big part of D-Day Conneaut 2013 as thousands of people attended the World War II re-enactment at Conneaut Township Park.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

AMERICAN SOLDIERS storm the beach at Conneaut Township Park during D-Day Conneaut 2013. The World War II invasion draws thousands to Conneaut.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

A **GERMAN** soldier takes aim during a mock invasion during D-Day Conneaut 2013 at Conneaut Township Park.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

WORLD WAR II prepare for battle during D-Day Conneaut 2013 at Conneaut Township Park.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

TRENTON NARTKER, of Bellbrook, watches D-Day Conneaut 2013 from Conneaut Township Park beach.

Scenes from the past

D-Day Conneaut



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

A VARIETY of military transports drop American soldier re-enactors on the beach at Conneaut Township Park during D-Day Conneaut 2013.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

PLANES BROUGHT a sense of realism to D-Day Conneaut 2013.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

A GERMAN soldier defends the beach during D-Day Conneaut 2013.



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WORLD WAR II re-enactors prepare for battle during D-Day Conneaut 2013 at Conneaut Township Park.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

A GERMAN soldier re-enactor moves into place during D-Day Conneaut 2013.



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

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World War II shortages

Rationing, gardening and cooking on the Home Front

By **SHELLEY TERRY**

Staff Writer

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Many folks say they will never forget Victory gardens, ration books, meatless meals or those World War II shortages.

Back then, cooking dinner meant growing a garden, canning and then preparing the meal from scratch — NOT taking it out of the freezer and popping it in the microwave.

It was said that the truest patriot was a healthy one. It may sound like a lot of drama today, but 70 years ago, people took that statement seriously. From the homemaker to the defense plant worker, everyone had a job to do.

Women in the United States had special challenges: having their men away at war, single parenting, working in factories and keeping the family healthy and strong.

Families planted Victory Gardens to help prevent a food shortage. The gardens also helped people stretch their rations coupons (the amount of certain foods they were allowed to buy at the store).

Because trains and trucks transported soldiers, vehicles and weapons, most Americans ate local produce.

People grew carrots, tomatoes, lettuce, beets and pea in their gardens. Swiss chard and kohlrabi were introduced to the American dinner table because they were easy to grow.

At their peak, more than 20 million Victory Gardens were planted across the U.S.

By 1944, Victory Gardens produced 40 percent of all vegetables grown in U.S.

Growing Victory Gardens gave Americans a feeling they were doing something to help win the war.

Homemakers scrimped and saved, stretching their groceries as far as possible with garden vegetables and the meat rations. If it turned out to be less meat than they were accustomed to, they didn't complain.

A great booklet, "Cooking on the Home Front," by Hugh and Judy Gowan, provides the following recipes from the patriotic homemakers of World War II:

POTATO SOUP

Prepare the desired amount of diced potatoes and boil in water until tender. Friday several onions in butter. Add flour to thicken, stirring constantly, and season with salt and pepper. Add a finely chopped glove of garlic. Add onion mixture to cooked potatoes and mix well. Place small pieces of Spam or ham in soup.

BEAN SOUP

1 pound of navy beans
1 1/2 pounds of ham
2 c. tomatoes sliced
2 tsp. parsley
1/2 c. diced potatoes
2 cups diced celery
Salt and pepper

Cover the beans with water and soak overnight. Drain into a large amount of water and cook until almost soft. Wash the ham and cover it with cold water. Boil until tender. Skim off fat. Add the beans and other vegetables and season with salt and pepper. Cook slowly until vegetables are soft.

DRIED BEEF AND MACARONI

4 oz. package of dried beef
1 can condensed cream of chicken

soup

6 oz. elbow macaroni

1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese

Tear beef into medium pieces and cover with boiling water. Let stand a minute and drain well. Cook macaroni in large pot of boiling water until done, but not too soft. Drain well. While macaroni is cooking, heat soup and stir in dried beef. Mix soup and macaroni and pour into casserole. Top with cheese and bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

VICTORY MEATLOAF

1 pound of ground beef
1 1/2 cups uncooked oatmeal
2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 egg, beaten well
1 1/4 cup milk
1/3 cup catsup
2 TB chopped onion
1 TB dried parsley flakes

Combine all ingredients and pack into loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour. Slice and serve warm. Leftovers make great sandwiches.

GRANNY'S CHICKEN POT PIE

1 stewing chicken, cut up
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 med. potatoes cut in small pieces
2 1/2 cups flour
1 1/2 tsp. salt
2 eggs
Small amount of milk or water
Place chicken, onion and one teaspoon of salt in a large pot and cover with water. Cook until chicken is tender. Remove chicken from broth, pick meat from bones and then return meat to broth. Add potatoes and cook for 15 minutes. Place flour, mixed with 1/2 teaspoon of salt into bowl. Form a well in the center and

add eggs. Mix thoroughly. If the dough is not soft enough, add a small amount of milk or water. Roll out as thin as possible on a floured surface and cut into 1 inch squares. Allow to dry for 1 1/2 hours. Drop these squares into boiling chicken broth. Cover tightly and boil for 20 minutes.

HOG MAW

1 pork maw (the lining of a pig's stomach)

1 medium onion diced
5 potatoes diced
4 carrots

1-2 pounds of loose sausage meat
Salt and pepper to taste

Thoroughly mix together vegetables, salt and pepper, and sausage meat. Stuff into pork maw. Place in large baking pan with 2 cups of water and bake at 350 degrees for two hours, until vegetables feel done when pricked with a fork. Remove maw from pan, split open and spoon out vegetables and sausage onto plates. Add salt and pepper to taste.

SALMON CROQUETTES

1 cup hot mashed potatoes
1 TB lemon juice
Bread crumbs
1 cup flaked salmon
Salt and pepper
1 egg

Combine potatoes and salmon. Season with salt and pepper and lemon juice. Shape and roll in crumbs, egg and crumbs again. Fry in hot fat 3-5 minutes. Drain. Makes 4.

MACARONI AND CHEESE

1 1/2 cups elbow macaroni
American cheese to taste
3 TB butter
3 TB flour
2 cups milk

1/4 tsp. salt
Dash of pepper

Cook macaroni in boiling salted water until tender. Drain well. Melt butter and blend in flour; add milk. Cook and stir until thick. Add salt and pepper, onion and cheese. Cook until cheese is melted. Mix with macaroni. Turn into a 1 1/2 quart casserole. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until bubbly.

FRIED GREEN TOMATOES

6 large green tomatoes
1 TB sugar
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 tsp. salt
1 egg, well beaten
1/2 cup bread crumbs
Wash the tomatoes and cut into 1/2 inch slices. Soak for one hour in cold

slated water. Add the sugar, pepper and salt to the beaten egg. dip each tomato slice in egg mixture, and then in bread crumbs. Fry on both sides in hot fat until brown.

HOT DANDELION GREENS

2 quarts of dandelion greens
1 cup water
1 tsp. salt
3 strips of bacon
1 hard-boiled egg, sliced
1/2 cup sugar
1 TB flour
1/2 cup vinegar
1 cup sour cream
Cook greens in salted water for 5 minutes. Drain. Fry bacon until crisp. Drain, reserving 2 TB of drippings. Combine sugar, four, vinegar, sour cream and bacon drippings. Add

bacon and greens and bring to full boil, stirring gently. Remove from heat. Garnish with egg.

OLD-FASHIONED GREEN STRING BEANS

1 1/2 pounds of green beans
1 medium slice of salt pork
1 cup water
Hot water
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
Wash beans and remove ends. Break into one-inch pieces. Place a medium slice of salt porch in a cup of water. Heat to boiling and cook 15-20 minutes. Add beans and enough hot water to almost cover. Continue to cook for an hour. Add salt and pepper the last 15 minutes of cooking.

EGGLESS, BUTTERLESS, MILKLESS CAKE

2 cups brown sugar
2 cups hot water
2 TB shortening
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. cloves
3 cups flour
1 tsp. soda
1 package seedless raisins
Boil together sugar, water, shortening, salt, raisins and spices for five minutes. When cold, add flour and soda dissolved in a teaspoon of hot water. This makes 2 loaves. Bake about 45 minutes in a 325 degree oven. This cake has good texture and will keep moist for some time.

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MARK TODD / Star Beacon

A 1944 SHERMAN tank, owned by the Allen County Historical Society, is scheduled to make a return visit to D-Day Conneaut this weekend. The tank will fire its cannon at intervals over the two-day event, organizers said.

Instilling an appreciation *Education big part of D-Day Conneaut*

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

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CONNEAUT — With two big milestones in play this year, organizers of D-Day Conneaut felt a need to make the 2014 version the best yet.

The 15th annual version of the event happens to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the actual Normandy Invasion. With increased attention on the real assault this year, event staff was motivated — but for emotional reasons people may not suspect.

“This year's re-enactment has special import, because it's one of the last big milestones with World War II veterans who can attend,” said Betsy Bashore, who has served as chief executive officer of D-Day Ohio, which has staged D-Day Conneaut for several years.

Speaking from her home near Maumee, Bashore said a big thrust of the event is educating the public about the war and also instilling an appreciation of its military veterans.

“Our mission is to educate, and having re-enactors just shooting at each other doesn't fulfill that mission,” she said.

Education is important to Bashore, who has more than 25 years experience with living history and has served as an event manager for more than 60 events. She often speaks at 19th century



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

WORLD WAR II re-enactors prepare for battle during D-Day Conneaut at Conneaut 2013 Township Park.

living history conferences.

While a recreation of the big invasion on the Conneaut Township Park beach is a big thrill for spectators, much of the important work is done at the campsites of Allied and Axis soldiers, where visitors can see recreations of camp life, gear and weapons. People are also welcome to talk to the re-enactors and hear stories about the groups, the units they portray and their role in the war.

The public is also invited to

watch weapons demonstrations and sit in on “strategy” sessions led by commanders.

Lori McLaughlin, D-Day Conneaut chief executive officer, said re-enactors spend plenty of time during the weekend to enlighten the public on the war. “The education piece (of the event) is impressive,” she said.

Chris Bartone of Conneaut, a member of the D-Day staff (Axis camp/beach defense coordinator) and a re-enactor, said his fellow

living historians are always willing to answer questions. It's something they enjoy, he said.

“The education part is the easiest stuff to do,” Bartone said. “Just give us a venue.”

The men and women who were there also play an extremely big part in the proceedings. At intervals during the weekend event, visitors will have opportunities to hear first-hand accounts of life on the front lines and homefront, too. The meet-and-greet sessions are

popular with re-enactors and public alike, organizers have said.

“(D-Day Conneaut) is always well-received by veterans,” Bashore said. “We've found it really gives an opportunity to veterans to talk about their experiences.”

Organizers have heard from relatives of WWII veterans who, while walking among the exhibits, would suddenly point out a piece of equipment or clothing and began sharing tales. Veterans who were reluctant to talk about war-time experiences before were motivated to speak after visiting the event, Bashore said.

D-Day Conneaut, along with other agencies, arrange to bring veterans living in nursing homes and similar facilities to Township Park for the day. They enjoy VIP seating for the battle and receive plenty of handshakes and “thank-you's” from grateful visitors.

The re-enactors also conduct a special march past the assembled veterans as a special tribute to their service.

Especially gratifying is seeing families stroll the campsites, Bashore said. Kids can be heard asking questions that the older folks can answer, she said.

“It's become an annual event (for families),” Bashore said. “It's great to see another generation being exposed to living history.”



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Villa at the Lake brings D-Day to residents

Weekend events extend beyond Conneaut Township Park

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

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CONNEAUT — Not all the 1940s nostalgia of D-Day Conneaut is confined to the city's lakefront this weekend.

For the second straight year, Villa at the Lake — an assisted living facility on Parish Road in Conneaut — is evoking the era for its residents and the public between noon-5 p.m. Thursday.

Entertainers, food and music are planned, along with re-enactors who will be participating in the military activities a short distance away at Conneaut Township Park, said Deanna Fleischmann, assistant executive director.

The activities are designed to give people who normally couldn't get to the encampments because of illness or mobility issues a chance to enjoy the experience, she said.

"We want to bring a part of the event to our building," Fleischmann said. "They can experience 1944 for a day. They can feel a part of the event."

There will be plenty of sensory experiences to get people in the mood, including a performance by a swing band between 2:30-4 p.m. The musicians will play outdoors, so bring a blanket or lawn chair, Fleischmann said.

Vehicles of the era will be parked in the lot, and actress Jennelle Gilreath of Missouri will make an appearance as film

See EXTEND, Page 29



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

SHARON INGRAM (right) takes a picture of (from left) Melissa Caesar, account executive at the Village on the Lake, Violette Hosey and Janey Hosey, volunteers and Diana Wright, activities department of the Villa on the Lake, during a 2013 D-Day event at the Conneaut facility.



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WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon
NICK COLBY, a World War II veteran, attends a 2013 D-Day event at the Villa on the Lake in Conneaut.



MARK TODD / Star Beacon

GOLD STARS bearing information on military veterans hang in a tree next to the Conneaut Art Center, 1025 Buffalo St. The stars are displayed in August, timed to the D-Day Conneaut event.

Extend

From Page 28

legend Lana Turner (noon-2 p.m.) Other entertainers will stroll through the facility and mingle with the crowd.

Displays from the period, assembled with the help of the Conneaut Public Library and the Conneaut Area Historical Society will be ready for inspection.

At 2 p.m., residents who served in the military will be awarded pins in a special ceremony conducted by an Ashtabula veterans organization, Fleischmann said.

Stations serving food from the 1940s can be sampled, and a

“canteen-style” picnic will be served to everyone. Popcorn and cotton candy machines will also churn out goodies.

An organization called Operation Veterans Benefit will have a booth at the Villa, Fleischmann said. Parking attendants will be on duty, she said.

Last year’s “dry run” served as a springboard for an even bigger version on Thursday, Fleischmann said. “I think people like being part of a community event,” she said.

Villa residents and their guests raved about the activity, Fleischmann said.

“They loved it,” she said. “It’s a fun day for seniors and the community.”

Meanwhile, the Conneaut Arts

Center, 1025 Buffalo St., — a short distance from Township Park and the re-enactment — is again decorating a tree next to its Kilpi Hall headquarters with gold stars commemorating the service of a veteran. The stars will hang from branches through August, said Penny Armeni, CAC executive director.

“We’ve had this program for many years now,” she said. “We get them from all over (the country).”

The tribute is open to any veteran from any time period and branch of the military, Armeni said.

Cost is \$10 for a new star tribute or \$5 to renew a star tribute. Contact the CAC (593-5888) for information.

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Anticipating record crowds

Event has exploded dramatically since debut 15 years ago

By **MARK TODD**

Staff Writer

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In just the span of 15 years, D-Day Conneaut has grown from an event featuring a few re-enactors to one of the premiere World War II events in the country.

In fact, if predictions hold true, Conneaut may lay

claim to the biggest WWII event held in the U.S. Such success is both gratifying — and a little unnerving, said Betsy Bashore, chief executive officer for D-Day Ohio, which stages the event.

“We anticipate record crowds,” Bashore said in a phone conversation from her Maumee home. “We

double our attendance year to year.”

Within the WWII re-enactor community, Conneaut has become a must-do. Last year 830 re-enactors made the trip to Conneaut Township Park, Bashore said. Several weeks ago, registration topped 1,200, she said. Some 1,400 are expected this weekend, officials said.

“We’re really at the top of the chart,” Bashore said. “It’s really unexpected, and I’m humbled by the response this year. Reaching those levels is tough to do.”

Meanwhile, organizers are expecting upwards of 25,000 people to visit over the weekend.

Some of the added interest for 2014 may be due to

the 70th anniversary of D-Day, but the steady growth also gets a push from D-Day Ohio’s reputation. Over the years, re-enactors have praised the organization of the entire event. Social media has helped spread the good reviews.

Staging such an extravaganza is a monumental task made easier with a good committee and dozens of local volunteers, Bashore said. “Sometimes it’s a little scary with so many moving pieces,” she said. “But it’s also exciting.”

With growing numbers also comes a dwindling amount of elbow room. When it started, D-Day Conneaut encampments filled less than half the field on the east end of the park and on-site parking was plentiful. Today, campsites cover nearly every grassy spot above the beach.

It begs the question: Will D-Day Conneaut outgrow Township Park? No, Bashore said. There would be no re-enactment without the park’s beach, she said. However, this event will provide an excellent test of crowd management, she

said.

“This will be our test year,” said Bashore. “We will see how many re-enactors we can handle.”

One problem few people consider is the cost of staging the re-enactment. D-Day Ohio subsidizes some of the transport expense for big equipment, plus must see to the usual amenities thousands of people expect, including first aid, security — and portable toilets.

“(Funding) is one of our biggest challenges,” Bashore said. “We’re funded by donations, and the vast majority is from people who come (to the event). People who buy a DVD or T-shirt or drop \$1 in a bucket, they pay for it.”

In fact, money matters rank high on the list of biggest misconceptions about D-Day Conneaut, Bashore said.

“People think we’re funded by the government, the public thinks re-enactors pay (to participate), while the re-enactors believe the public pays an admission fee,” she said.

In reality, no one pays to attend or to pitch a tent. In

lieu of a fee, re-enactors are expected to mingle with visitors and answer questions, Bashore said.

“We ask them to spend 16 hours talking to people,” she said.

Another reason re-enactors get a free pass are the hefty sums they’ve spent before they arrive at Township Park.

“The typical re-enactor may spend thousands of dollars (on uniforms and gear) to get involved,” Bashore said.

Travel costs are another consideration.

“We have families come from Texas, California, Nova Scotia and Florida,” Bashore said. “To get to an event like ours can be a financial commitment.”

In the end, organizers hope everyone who attends D-Day Conneaut has fun and has learned something new about D-Day and World War II.

“We want everyone to leave with the impression that they had a great day and that they want to come back — and bring a friend,” Bashore said.

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BETSY BASHORE, chief executive officer for D-Day Ohio, monitors the 2013 event from the Conneaut Township Park beach.

WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon

June of 1944

D-Day gave Allies toehold in Europe



PUBLIC DOMAIN

GEN. EISENHOWER speaking with 1st Lt. Wallace C. Strobel and men of Company E 502nd PIR on June 5. The placard around Strobel's neck indicates he is the jumpmaster for chalk 23 of the 438th TCG. Strobel's battalion was the first to drop into Normandy.

By DAVE DELUCA

Staff Writer

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In June of 1944, the armies of World War II were at a stale-mate. Things were not going well for either the Allies or the Axis powers.

Germany's troops were spread thinly across Western Europe, with the majority of its forces sent to fight on the Russian front.

On the other hand, the Allies had invaded Italy and found maintaining a southern front against the Germans difficult. The Allies were looking for a softer spot to invade, to allow materials and men into western Europe, and to attack Germany from the west.

To this end, the Allies decided to attack occupied France via the English Channel. Operation Overlord was the name given to the military action which resulted in the Normandy Invasion of June 6, 1944, and the battle across France that followed.

The naval assault phase of Operation Overlord, landing troops on beaches and other military supporting operations, was called Operation Neptune. D-Day is actually the name given any secret battle plan up until the date and hour it actually occurs.

The Allied forces — Americans, British, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, Free French, Czechs, Belgians, Poles and Norwegians — were under the command of American General Dwight D. Eisenhower and British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery. The Germans were under the command of Field Marshal Gerd Von Rundstedt and Field Marshall Erwin Rommel.

See D-DAY, Page 34



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PUBLIC DOMAIN

THESE AMERICAN troops were wounded during the assault on Omaha beach, on D-day. They are being treated, and are waiting to be evacuated.

D-Day

From Page 32

The Normandy Invasion was a costly battle in terms of men and materials lost, but not nearly as costly as some in which hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives. When Allied troops finally took control of Normandy Beach on D-Day, nearly 2,499 Americans had died, while 1,914 British, Canadian, and other Allied troops lost their lives.

More than 425,000 Allied and German troops were killed, wounded or went missing in the ensuing conflict. Among the 209,000 Allied casualties of the entire Normandy Invasion were 37,000 dead ground forces and another 16,714 among air forces. Upwards of 20,000 French civilians died during bombing raids and battle-related incidents. Allied naval losses in June 1944 included 24 war ships and 35 merchantmen or auxiliaries.

The Normandy Invasion took place four years after the Germans invaded and occupied France. Most of western Europe was in the hands of the Nazis or its Axis allies. It had been three years since the Germans invaded Russia in an attempt to gain dominance over the entire continent.

German forces had been weakened by these conflicts, but not enough to insure an easy Allied victory. In fact, the Allies found the invasion difficult.

See D-DAY, Page 36

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BY NIGHTFALL on June 6, more than 9,000 Allied soldiers were dead or wounded, but more than 100,000 had made it ashore, securing French coastal villages.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

IN AN operation commonly known as D-Day, nearly 160,000 Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy in France on June 6, 1944, launching the invasion of German-occupied western Europe that helped turn the tide of World War II.

D-Day

From Page 34

The Germans were aware that an Allied invasion of France was about to take place, but were unsure where or when. Still, they were well prepared. High

on cliffs above the Normandy beaches were fortified bunkers, ‘pill boxes.’ and other armed semi-underground emplacements. Many Allied soldiers were killed in their Dukw amphibious vehicles (ducks), as they landed, before their feet even hit the beach. American Army Rangers

were faced with one of the most impossible tasks — scaling cliffs over one hundred feet high under intense automatic weapons fire. Whole companies were wiped out before they even engaged the enemy. The Americans captured Omaha and Utah beaches, the British were victorious on Juno

and Gold beaches and the Canadians took Sword beach. In some areas, casualties were light and in others they were severe. By the end of June 11 (D-day plus 5), 326,547 troops, 54,186 vehicles and 102,428 tons of supplies had landed on the Normandy beaches. Along with the troops directly involved with the

invasion, millions of civilians were involved in the preparations for D-Day. Today, 27 war cemeteries contain the remains of more than 110,000 soldiers from both sides. Entombed there are 77,866 Germans, 9,386 Americans, 17,769 British, 5,002 Canadian and 65 Polish soldiers.

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D-DAY PARATROOPER with bazooka.

PUBLIC DOMAIN



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SEVERAL SHIPS carrying troops came under enemy fire and capsized. Here, soldiers rescue shipwrecked comrades.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

USS NEVADA is shown on D-Day firing on positons at Utah Beach.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

AMERICAN TROOPS of the 16th Infantry Regiment shelter from German machine gun fire and artillery amongst beach obstacles on Omaha Beach during the Normandy D-Day landings on the 6 June 1944.

Chris Bartone

Love of history inspired local man to re-enact

By **STACY MILLBERG**

Staff Writer

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CONNEAUT — Chris Bartone can't remember a time he wasn't interested in history.

Growing up, he spent a lot of time with his grandparents. His father's dad would tell him stories of World War II and he became enthralled in it. His grandparents on his mother's side subscribed to a Civil War magazine that he would read, he said.

"My family would eat, sleep and breath history," Bartone said.

Bartone grew up in Conneaut and began re-enacting during his undergraduate time in college around 1995. He started out as a Civil War re-enactor and when he returned home after college, began World War II re-enacting at the very first D-Day Conneaut event, he said.

"I've always been interested in history," he said.

Bartone has an undergraduate in history as well as a graduate degree in history.

"I can't remember a time when I wasn't involved with history," he said. "It's a passion. It's a disease."

Bartone said there is a lot of behind-the-scenes details that go into re-enacting that many spectators don't realize.

"It's not like putting on a play and acting a part," he said. "You really have to research it to do it right."

Bartone said re-enactors will spend time learning what the average person went through to really become who they are re-enacting.

There is a lot of reading and studying



SUBMITTED PHOTO

CHRIS BARTONE, of Conneaut, will participate in this year's D-Day Conneaut re-enactment event along with more than 1,000 other re-enactors.

that takes place before a re-enactor puts on a uniform and participates in a re-enactment, he said.

"What people see at events is just the icing on the cake," he said. "What they don't see is all the hard work that goes into it."

He said the actual re-enacting takes very little time. Bartone said re-enacting also gets quite expensive; however, there are always other re-enactors that will lend

their equipment to newcomers if need be.

Most re-enactors are organized by units that belong to a larger parent organization for insurance purposes, he said.

Each unit pays a yearly dues to its parent organization and are then covered under its insurance.

Bartone said his unit, which is based in Cleveland, has members spanning from Girard, Pa., Cleveland and Akron areas. His unit usually participates in about six

to 10 events each year.

Bartone said family life has slowed down his participation in re-enactments. He tends to participate in two to three events each year, as his schedule permits.

Bartone will be participating in this year's D-Day Conneaut with his unit on Aug. 23. More than 1,000 re-enactors are expected to participate in this year's event which is held at Conneaut Township Park.



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CHRIS BARTONE, a local re-enactor, has been participating in the D-Day Conneaut event from the time it began.



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