

BIA Bulletin

The Newsletter of the Bedford International Alliance

Issue No. 10, Fall 2024

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 BIA Vice President—Debby Allen
 BIA Treasurer—Imogene Morris
 BIA Secretary—Courtney Garner

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In this issue

Photos
by
Sue Moore



Articles on: History of BIA, Bedford Boy Allen Huddleston, WWII Servicemen

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BIA Mission

On D-Day, 6 June 1944, Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy as part of Operation Overlord, an operation aimed at the heart of Nazi Germany and the destruction of German armed forces. The landings began the liberation of France, followed by the liberation of other countries of Western Europe.

The Bedford Boys in Company A were part of the first wave in the Omaha Beach landings. With the loss of 19 Bedford men in Company A and one man in a sister unit, a total of 20 men, the Bedford, Virginia, community suffered the highest loss per capita on D-Day of any American community. Remembering and honoring these men of the Bedford community—those who died and those who survived—is a key part of today's mission of the Bedford International Alliance, Inc.

Since 1999, the BIA exists to promote the rich, historical, international relationship and kinship between the Town of Bedford, Bedford County, and the communities of the Omaha Beach area of the Calvados Department in the Normandy region of France and the communities of Bedfordshire and Ivybridge, England. Our mission is to further and deepen our ongoing and productive relationship with our sister communities through the exchange of continued friendship, educational pursuits, cultural understanding, economic interests, and periodic visitations. The Bedford Boys will not be forgotten.

In Memory of

Corwin Hazen ("Sam") Broesamle

Margaret Ruth Long Hager

Lorraine Mildred Judd

Antoinette Louise Pighetti ("Toni") Seidelmann

President's Message

BIA has been very busy and active in the community since the spring newsletter.

Our first scholarship was awarded to a young lady from Liberty High School.

We had a successful fund raiser at the Bedford Moose Lodge. This consisted of a cash draw down in which several people won cash prizes. Additionally, we were able to showcase our organization to members of the community who attended. We raised \$ 6,304 for our scholarship fund. Hopefully, we can make this an annual tradition. To keep this fund alive will require members stepping up. We do it for our youth and to carry on with the mission that the Bedford Boys will not be forgotten.

From October 7 to 10, we hosted three couples from the Normandy Omaha Beach-Bedford Association (OB-BA). Trips included a visit to the Bedford Boys Tribute Center; lunch at the Town Kitchen; time at the Greenwood and Longwood Cemeteries, where our visitors visited each Bedford Boy grave and placed a rose on them; visits to the Courthouse and Town Hall; a drive to the Peaks of Otter and on the Parkway; a trip to the National D-Day memorial where April Cheek-Messier met the visitors and Imogene Morris gave a tour, followed by a box lunch; a visit to the Bedford Area Welcome Center to see the sister cities and Normandy and Ivy Bridge displays and to see all that Bedford has to offer. On the last evening, there was a dinner for the French guests, their hosts, and other BIA members at Liberty Station. Upon leaving the following day, the French visitors stopped at Popular Forest.

The guests indicated that they truly enjoyed their visit to Bedford. Sue Moore took many photos during the visit, some of which are included in this newsletter. Sue has put together scrapbooks on the visit and has mailed them as gifts to the French visitors and OB-BA.

I want to thank all who helped with welcoming our French visitors. They are looking forward to our BIA trip to France in June 2025.

Our upcoming events include the Christmas get together and the Christmas Parade.

Steve Rush, President

Upcoming BIA Meetings & Events

December 5	Holiday Soiree @ The Barn on Woods Road
December 7	Bedford Christmas Parade
December 12	4 th Quarter BIA Board Meeting
January	BIA Annual Meeting

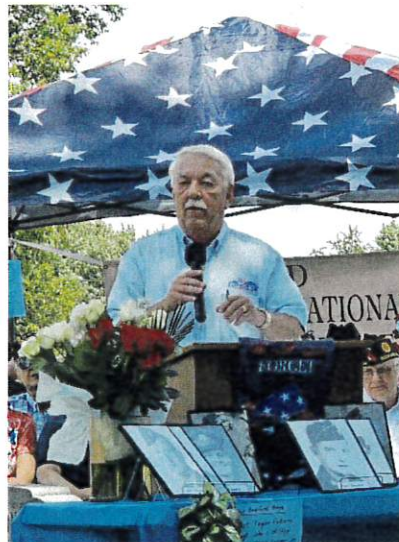
Recent BIA Events and Activities

Memorial Day Ceremony at Greenwood Cemetery

On Monday, May 27, at 2:00 p.m., at Greenwood Cemetery, BIA held its annual Memorial Day Tribute to honor the Bedford Boys of Company A who are buried at Greenwood and Oakwood Cemetery as well as another cemetery in Bedford County, and those interred in France and memorialized on the Tablets of the Missing at the Normandy American Cemetery.

This was the 10th year for the ceremony. Approximately 150 people attended.

The guest speaker was Mike Shelton, one of the founders of BIA. Rick Dellinger sang. Speakers highlighted the lives of each of the nine Bedford Boys who were killed on D-Day and are buried in Bedford. Boy Scouts, JROTC, National Guard, and the American Legion assisted and participated, and there were two helicopter flyovers.



D-Day Tribute to the Bedford Boys

On June 6 at the National D-Day Memorial, as part of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day Commemoration, BIA President Steve Rush and member Judy Reynolds laid a wreath at the Homage Statue, honoring the Bedford Boys of Company A.



Steve Rush and Judy Reynolds



WWII Veteran Clarence E. "Bill" Wenzel and his wife Ave, who live in the Huddleston area of Bedford County, escorted by BIA members Jim Morrison and Sue Moore

WWII veteran and escort, with BIA member Imogene Morris



Bastille Day Celebration

On July 12, BIA held its annual Bastille Day celebration at Avenel.





Centerfest Participation

On September 21, BIA members staffed a tent to greet visitors and promote BIA.



Denny and Courtney Garner

Judy and Mike College
and Steve Rush



Visit of French Omaha Beach-Bedford Association Members

Six members of BIA’s sister organization in Normandy, the Omaha Beach-Bedford Association, visited Bedford on October 7-10. The visitors were Bruno and Suzel Clemencon, Oliver and Catherine Coustaury, and Francois and Odile Gosselin. They were hosted in Bedford in homes of BIA members John and Judy Chesson, Alex and Linda Daniels, and Jim Messier and Cindy Gunnoe. During their visit, the French visitors were escorted on visits to the National D-Day Memorial, the Bedford Boys Tribute Center, the Bedford Area Welcome Center, the Courthouse and Town Hall, Peaks of Otter, and the graves of the Bedford Boys in Greenwood and Longwood Cemeteries. BIA hosted the visitors at a dinner at Liberty Station on the last night of their visit. The visitors subsequently traveled to Poplar Forest and on their own to other sites in Virginia and elsewhere in the U.S.



Pictured above, from left, are French couples:

- Bruno & Suzel Clemencon,
- Odile & Francois Gosselin
- Oliver & Catherine Coustaury



French visitors with April Cheek-Messier, President of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation



By the Higgins boat



In front of the Homage statue honoring the Bedford Boys



At the Bedford Boys Tribute Center with Linda & Ken Parker



At the Grave of Captain Taylor Fellers with relatives C.W. Higgenbotham & Liz Beverly



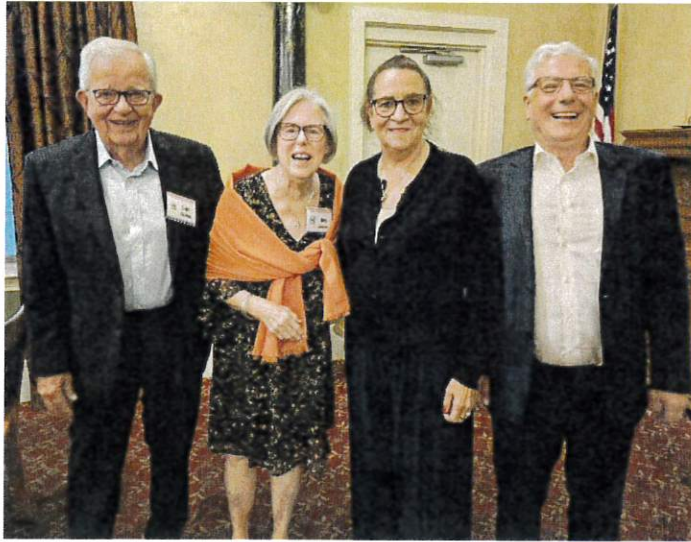
Paying tribute at the Stone at the courthouse and at the grave of John D. Clifton



At the Bedford Area Welcome Center



French Visitors with BIA Host Couples



John & Judy Chesson with
Suzel & Bruno Clemencon

Catherine & Oliver Coustaury
with Linda & Alex Daniel



Cindy Gunnoe & Jim Messier
with Francois & Odile Gosselin

Recent BIA Board Meetings – Summaries

2nd Quarter BIA Board Meeting, June 13

The meeting was held at the Bedford Moose Lodge.

Treasurer Imogene Morris reported that BIA now had 125 paid members.

Steve Rush read the information and requirements for BIA student scholarships and introduced scholarship winner Megan Cash, a student at Liberty High School, who plans to study veterinary science at Ferrum College.

Steve Rush and Judy Reynolds laid the annual BIA wreath at the Homage Statue during the June 6 80th Anniversary Commemoration of D-Day at the National D-Day Memorial. Imogene Morris reported that all three zones of public schools in Bedford County participated in the project to write letters of veterans. Each veteran received about 50 letters or notes.

Steve Rush reported that French visitors from BIA's sister organization in Normandy, the OBBA, planned to visit Bedford October 7-10. The Bedford Area Welcome Center offered a donation to help with hosting the French visitors.

Steve Moore reported that the BIA 2025 trip to Paris, Normandy, and England was full with 41 participants.

Andy Dooley gave an update on the Cash Draw Down event to be held August 10 at the Bedford Moose Lodge to raise funds for the BIA scholarship fund.

Carol and Tandy Amburgey reported on the May 27 Memorial Day Ceremony at Greenwood/Oakwood Cemeteries, which was attended by about 150 people, featured Mike Shelton as guest speaker, and was assisted by Boy Scouts, JROTC, American Legion, Sgt. Zachary Osborne of the National Guard, and Rick Dellinger, and two helicopter fly-overs.

Sue Moore reported that PowerPoint presentations were made and shown at all Bedford area schools after SOL testing was completed. She also reported that 30 posters were printed and placed in downtown Bedford storefronts.

3rd Quarter BIA Board Meeting, September 17

The meeting was held at the Original Italian Pizza restaurant. The Board approved raising the dues from \$20 to \$25 in 2025.

Steve Rush reported on plans for the French Omaha Beach-Bedford Association visit to the U.S. and Bedford from October 7-10. The three couples who plan to visit will be hosted in the homes of three BIA families in Bedford, and the visitors will be escorted on visits to the Bedford Boys Tribute Center, Courthouse, Bedford Museum, Greenwood/Oakwood Cemeteries, the National D-Day Memorial, and possibly the Blue Ridge Parkway or Poplar Forest. BIA will host a dinner at Liberty Station on October 9.

Steve Rush thanked Andy Dooley and all who participated in the Cash Draw Down Event at the Bedford Moose Lodge, which raised money for the BIA Scholarship Fund. Charlotte Vincent reported that one scholarship of \$500 had been awarded to a student this year, and that in 2025 the scholarship amount will increase to \$750.

Steve Moore provided an update on plans for a BIA trip to France and London in 2025, which will now include a visit to Bletchley Park, home of the British WWII codebreakers. The Moores hosted a mixer at their home recently so people going on the trip could get to know each other better.

It was announced that the catered Holiday Soiree will be held on December 5 at The Barn on Wood Road.

Looking forward to BIA elections, Steve Rush reported that the current president, vice president, and recording secretary wished to continue in their positions. If anyone wishes to be considered for the position of treasurer or other positions, they should contact Debby Allen, chair of the nominating committee.

2025 Trip to Paris, Normandy, and England

People have signed up for all the seats for the June 2025 trip to Paris, Normandy, and England. The mission of the trip is to honor the Bedford Boys at the American Cemetery in Normandy.

Schedule and planned activities:

June 1, 2025 Depart Bedford – Motor coach to either Dulles or Charlotte Int. Airport

June 2, Arrive Paris -- 2 nights Hotel Grans Voyageurs. Free day for re-coup and explore

June 3, Day in Paris at leisure or individual excursions, tours in Paris

June 4, Check out of Paris hotel, motor coach to Bayeux hotel. * transit to American Cemetery for placing of wreath at front of cemetery and individual flag placements on Bedford Boys' graves. Bayeux Hotel allows us to explore this quaint city during free evenings.

*June 5, Visit Mulberrys at Arromanches, Maisey Battery, museum near Les Braves on Omaha Beach, visit Captain Winters statue (Band of Brothers), re-enactments, Omaha beach, Utah beach, Ponte Du Hoc.

*June 6, Attend the official D-Day ceremony at the American Cemetery, observe re-enactments. Dinner reception with sister organization Omaha Beach-Bedford Association

*June 7, Check out and bus to ferry over English Channel to Portsmouth (departure point for Bedford Boys 80 years ago). Visit D-Day Story, Check-in Hotel in South Hampton. Dinner

June 8, Visit Southwick house (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) D-Day planning. Southwick Revival Spirit Day. South Hampton Hotel

June 9, Check out of hotel, visit the Tank Museum, and tour of the Tank Story Hall, transit to London Hotel

June 10, Tour of West London (Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, House of Parliament and Big Ben). Visit Imperial War Museum, transit to Battle of Britain Bunker, guided tour of WWII Bunker and Operations Room, continue city tour (tour of London, St. Paul's Cathedral)

June 11, Day in London at leisure (guide available). Dinner Cruise on Thames River

June 12, Transit to London Heathrow Airport for flight home. Motor Coach back to Bedford

* Jenny Post, Bedford native (former site director of the D-Day memorial) will be guiding us in the Normandy venues.

Steve Moore

A Short History of the Bedford International Alliance

by Mike Shelton

Part One (to be continued in the next issue of the BIA Bulletin)

The Bedford International Alliance began to develop in 1994 after the 50th commemoration of D-Day in Bedford. Prior to that time, much smaller remembrances occurred in Bedford.

In 1954, the first memorial was dedicated at the Bedford County Courthouse with the unveiling of a plaque attached to a stone delivered to Bedford from the cliffs of Vierville-sur-Mer, France. That event was developed by Mr. Ray Nance, the former second in command of Company A, when our soldiers landed on Omaha Beach. While he was wounded in the D-Day landings, little did he know that Captain Fellers was killed, thereby putting Lieutenant Nance in the role of commanding officer. However, he essentially had no company to lead as Company A experienced tremendous losses early on June 6.

Ray Nance was instrumental in leading the efforts upon his return from war to make sure the Bedford Boys would always be remembered. By the time the 50th commemoration of D-Day came upon us, the stories and details of D-Day had become more prominent around the world. Bedford's story of loss came to the forefront as the history started to become clearer. This community became a focal point of telling the D-Day story.

In 1994, the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, which had been working since 1984 to create an appropriate national recognition of D-Day, made the City of Bedford the site of that recognition. I was serving as the Mayor of Bedford during that time, and I quickly found out how much I did not know other than general facts. I was unaware of the details of Operation Overlord and its world-wide impacts. Being involved in the site selection of Bedford, I found that my life would be forever changed.

In 1995, a visit by Major General Bruce Jacobs, commanding officer of the 29th Infantry Division, strongly encouraged that an international relationship between Bedford and Vierville-sur-Mer, France, should be pursued, as these two parts of the world had so much in common as a result of D-Day. It is that part of Omaha Beach where Company A landed and Bedford suffered significant losses.

City Manager Jack Gross and I took this encouragement very seriously and we began to find ways we might make this happen. To do so, I worked closely with Roy Stevens, Ray Nance, Pride Wingfield, Lucille Boggess, and others to begin the processes to reach out to Vierville-sur-Mer Mayor Jean-Marie Oxeant and determine what that village's level of interest might be.

After a year and a half of back-and-forth communications, we were able to overcome the French community's trepidation to "twin" with Bedford. They thought we would be too large and overwhelming for their small community. After his village understood that Bedford, Virginia, was very much like his French agrarian area, Mayor Oxeant was able to secure commitments from other adjoining and surrounding French communities to band together for a possible relationship. In early 1997, Vierville, along with 7 other villages, agreed to develop a relationship for working out the details.

(to be continued in the next edition of the BIA Bulletin)

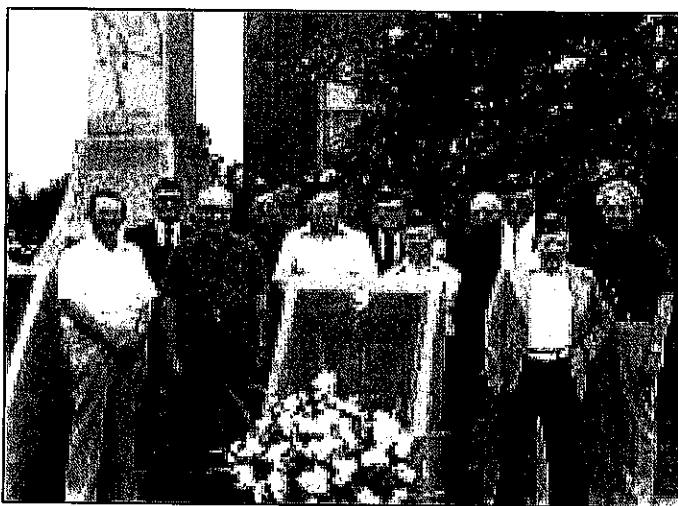
Bedford Boys Biography

Allen Huddleston

Allen M. Huddleston joined Bedford's Company A of the National Guard and fought with the company in Europe. He missed the D-Day Invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, because of a training injury, which he says is probably why he lived to have a full life. After he rejoined the company, he was wounded in combat and spent months in the hospital and in rehabilitation.

Huddleston was born and raised on a farm about three miles south of the town of Bedford along Route 122. He went to school in a one-room schoolhouse through the seventh grade and went on to graduate from Bedford High School, Class of 1936. Following graduation, he worked on the farm and as a soda jerk at both Ballard-Maupin and Lyles Drug Stores.

In January 1941, because he believed he would likely be inducted under the new draft law, Huddleston joined the local National Guard unit. Two weeks later, on February 3, Company A and Huddleston left Bedford for a year of active-duty training. Huddleston remembers families and friends seeing the unit off at the train station when it left Bedford, but he does not remember the parade, party, and dance that the community held for the unit more than a week before its departure.



Allen Huddleston (far right) & Bedford Veterans 1950s

In April 1942, while stationed at Fort Meade, Maryland, Huddleston returned to Bedford on a three-day pass and married his sweetheart, Geraldine Gillaspie. Geraldine worked for a dentist in Bedford. The couple corresponded while separated during the war, but did not write every day.

In Company A, Huddleston became a machine gunner, trained on a thirty-caliber, air-cooled, machine gun. As a private, he earned \$21 a month. He subsequently received promotions to private first class, sergeant, and staff sergeant. He became a section sergeant in the weapons platoon in charge of two machine gun squads.

Approximately ten days before D-Day, while Company A was engaged in man-to-man, unarmed, combat training in England, fellow soldier Robert Goode threw Huddleston to the ground, breaking Huddleston's right ankle. He was taken to a hospital, where his ankle was put into a cast. He was then sent to a rehabilitation facility, and he was at this facility on June 6 when Company A left England for the D-Day Invasion.

Huddleston rejoined Company A in mid-August 1944, at Brest, France. The unit was deployed by train to Paris and then was sent to the Dutch-German border. On September 30, 1944, during the unit's first day of combat near Aachen, Germany, Huddleston was hit in the right shoulder joint by shrapnel from a German 88-millimeter gun.

He was taken to an aid station, then to Belgium, and then to Paris, where, with his arm bandaged in a sling, he had to sit and sleep on a cot in an airport for three or four days waiting for the weather to clear so he could be flown to a hospital in England. The shrapnel had been

removed, and Huddleston could pull back the dressing to see his wound, which to him looked like a piece of raw meat.

At the hospital in England, the doctors closed up the wound and placed his arm in a "Y" brace, which held his arm bent at a forty-five-degree angle up alongside his head. The brace was supported by wires which went under his stomach and up his back. The brace was uncomfortable, particularly when trying to lie down and sleep on the wires. It was very painful when the brace was finally removed. (In later years, Huddleston's injury would continue to hurt. For a while the injury didn't bother him too much. Over the last twenty-five years, however, he received cortisone shots infrequently and then took Vioxx, but he was taking neither by early 2002.)

From the hospital, Huddleston was sent to a rehabilitation facility in England, the same one where he had been sent after his ankle was broken. He left there in April 1945 and returned by ship to New York. He was sent to the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center in Staunton, Virginia, for a few days and then was issued a pass to go home. He took the bus to Roanoke, and his wife, whom he had called once back in the United States, met him at the Hotel Roanoke. He was not home for long until he was sent to Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Virginia, for relaxation for two or three weeks. He was discharged from the Army in late April 1945.

Huddleston returned to Bedford and took a job at the Alcoholic Beverage Commission store on Main Street. He and his wife then moved to Lexington, Virginia, where, with the help of funding from the GI Bill, he trained as a photographer in a portrait studio. He primarily shot yearbook photos for colleges in southwest Virginia. The Huddlestons returned to Bedford in 1949, and he owned and operated Bedford Photo on Main Street for over forty-five years until he retired in 1996. The Huddlestons raised three sons. Geraldine died in 1988. Allen moved to the Elks National Home in Bedford in 2000. Allen Huddleston died in 2016.

-- Extracted and revised from *Bedford Goes to War, The Heroic Story of a Small Virginia Community in World War II*, by James W. Morrison

Return of Remains of WWII Marine Morris E. Canady

by Jim Morrison

Bedford County lost about 140 servicemen in WWII, 15 in the Pacific Theater. One of these was Marine PFC Morris E. Canady of Bedford County's Goode community, the first service member from Bedford County killed in WWII after Pearl Harbor.

PFC Canady volunteered for the Marine Corps in January 1942, shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and other areas of the Pacific. After basic training at Paris Island, SC, he was assigned to the 1st Marine Division.

The Japanese captured the island Guadalcanal, located some 1,200 miles north east of Australia and began to build an airfield there, threatening Allied lines of communication to Australia. Over six months, naval, air, and land battles were fought to control Guadalcanal and nearby areas. The 1st Marine Division, PFC Canady's parent division, was deployed ashore to capture Guadalcanal, including the airfield.



On September 24, 1942, PFC Canady was killed in action, along with nine other Marines. He was buried the next day in the battle area, with the intention of later recovering the remains. Efforts to locate and recover the remains in the 1940s were unsuccessful.

Beginning in 2012, a new effort was made to locate and recover the remain, looking in new areas. Family members were asked to provide DNA samples. In 2018 and 2019, possible human remains were recovered. In spring 2024, the Marine Corps notified nephew Jimmy E. Canady, of Goode, that the remains of his Uncle Morris had been located, recovered, and identified. In July 2024, two Marine Corps representatives came to Goode to report on the efforts and results and prepare for the return to family of PFC Canady's remains.

In September, a Marine accompanied a casket with PFC Canady's remains from Hawaii to Dallas and then to Richmond, where a Marine unit transferred the remains to a Tharp Funeral Home hearse. The hearse and a car with family members were escorted from Richmond to Bedford by four Virginia State Police motorcyclists and at least seven civilian Patriot Guard Rider motorcyclists, driving four hours in pouring rain, assisted by law local law enforcement officers along the way.

A memorial service at Tharp Funeral Home and burial service at Virginia Memorial Park were held on September 28, with honors rendered by the Marine Corps and Bedford's American Legion Post 54 (the Board Canady Post, named after the first Bedford County servicemen killed in WWI and WWII).

Photos of the September 28 services, taken by Sue Moore, can be viewed at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/KiurYCVHZsWQ5gzw9>



Charles Shay, WWII and Korean War Veteran

by Sue Moore

On the 2022 BIA trip to Europe, BIA members were honored to meet Charles Norman Shay, an American WWII and Korean War veteran who lives in Normandy.

Charles Shay is a Penobscot tribal elder, writer, and decorated veteran, who recently turned 100 years old.

As a medic, he landed on Omaha Beach on D Day in the first wave, fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and served to the end of the war, without getting any injuries. Shay was awarded the Legion d'Honneur, making him the first Native American from Maine with the distinction of French chevalier.



Larry Horne & Charles Shay



Charles Shay is one of America's many heroes.

On D-Day, his 1st Infantry Division, the Big Red One, sustained about 2,000 casualties, most during the first hour of the landings under German fire. Shay recalled looking toward the sea to see injured soldiers struggling to get ashore, loaded down with heavy equipment. The tide was rapidly rising and some were drowning. He decided that he needed to rush into danger with his medical supplies. He pulled some onto the beach. Shay remembered the smell of burning flesh and seeing the seas filled with blood. He was numb, but had to rely on his training to save lives. With his eyes stinging from the thick smoke that engulfed the battle, Shay looked seaward at injured men struggling to get ashore, loaded down with equipment. Some were drowning in the rising tide. Without hesitation he ran into danger. By noon, half of the soldiers and most of the officers in his unit were dead or wounded.

Internet Resources

BIA Website: my-bia.org

BIA Facebook Page: www.facebook.com > Bedford

International Alliance, Inc.

National D-Day Memorial: www.dday.org

Bedford Boys Tribute Center: bedfordboystributecenter.com

Normandy Website: www.welovenormandy.com

and [welovenormandy/Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/welovenormandy/)

Interactivewebsite: <http://interactive.guim.co.uk/embed/2014/apr/image-opacity-slider-master/index.html?ww2-dday>

Video of Silhouettes of the D-Day dead on Omaha Beach:

<file:///C:/Users/morri/Downloads/Normandy%20Beach%20-%20The%20Fallen%209,000!.pdf>

History Traveler video on Dog Green Sector of Omaha Beach, where Company A landed

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzGqQcnjTVmhcFpsjBhWqpGMQxGV?projector=1>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dddPqPuVs8>

Photos of D-Day era. Put cursor on each photo, click on and hold down and drag from left to right to see the WWII photo change to a photo of the same site in modern times

<https://interactive.guim.co.uk/embed/2014/apr/image-opacity-slider-master/index.html?ww2-dday>

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