

**Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.:** Brigadier General, U. S. Army.  
Normandy Invasion, 6 June 1944. Birth: Oyster Bay, N.Y.

**Citation:** After two verbal requests to accompany the leading assault elements in the Normandy Invasion had been denied, Brig. Gen. Roosevelt's written request for this mission was approved and he landed with the first wave of the forces assaulting the enemy-held beaches. He repeatedly led groups from the beach, over the seawall and established them inland. His valor, courage, and presence in the very front of the attack and his complete unconcern at being under heavy fire inspired the troops to heights of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice. Although the enemy had the beach under constant direct fire, Brig. Gen. Roosevelt moved from one locality to another, rallying men around him, directed and personally led them against the enemy. Under his seasoned, precise, calm, and unfaltering leadership, assault troops reduced beach strong points and rapidly moved inland with minimum casualties. He thus contributed substantially to the successful establishment of the beachhead in France.

## Casualties: D-Day, June 6, 1944

### The Challenge of Counting D-Day's Dead

In 2000, Carol Tuckwiller was handed the monumental task of identifying every Allied soldier who died on June 6, 1944, during the World War II invasion of German-held Normandy. The former librarian spent six years tracking down nearly 4,400 names.

She combed through military records, contacted government agencies worldwide and separated myth from fact — piling up boxes of evidence on shelves of a former liquor store in Bedford, Virginia. She finally gave up the chase not because every last dead soldier was accounted for, but because her leads ran dry.

Seventy years after D-Day, no one really knows how many of the more than 150,000 Normandy invaders died that day. And no one will ever know for sure. Too many of the invaders went missing, and too many other priorities on the chaotic French beaches that day crowded out the task of recording casualties.

We know more now than ever before, though, in large part because of Tuckwiller. She “conducted heroic research,” said William A. McIntosh, who as director of education for the National D-Day Memorial Foundation oversaw her work.

The result of Tuckwiller's effort is visible to visitors at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, where plaques bear the name of the soldiers who died on D-Day. Her work is also beginning to correct the historical record, as museums and historians acknowledge that at least 4,413 Allied soldiers died, far more than many previously believed.



Revisions to death totals during wars aren't unusual. The U.S. Civil War, World War I, and the Korean War all have had their death-toll estimates revised — even decades later.

It's harder still to get a count for a single day in a single battle or campaign. Soldiers who are gravely wounded one day but die of their wounds early the next morning don't normally count toward the day's total. Nor do soldiers whose bodies are never found. Tombstones at U.S. battlefield cemeteries mark a date of death when one is available, but not every Allied soldier who died on any given day during World War II did so while participating in that day's big battle. And many surviving American families during World War II requested bodies of dead soldiers be repatriated to the U.S., where they are scattered in cemeteries around the country.

Add to those challenges all the unique circumstances of the landings on Normandy's beaches on June 6, 1944, and you have a recipe for plenty of uncertainty.

"I started from zero," Tuckwiller, 67, said. She added names and knowledge along the way. For instance, she realized she'd have to study deaths recorded on June 7, 1945, because soldiers missing in action were declared dead after a year and a day.

As she worked, she learned why the records were so murky. Some clerks who would have kept the data died in the invasion. Some veterans told her that, in the chaos of the day, they started in one unit and ended up fighting with another.

"The scale of D-Day, combined with the destructive power of the weapons in the field, add to the usual fog of war to make accounting difficult," Michael Ray, a research editor at Encyclopaedia Britannica, wrote in an email. "A body struck by an artillery shell could be, essentially, erased, and that's just one of the possible fates that faced those who went ashore or jumped into Normandy. Seventy years after the landings, the unidentified remains of soldiers killed in the fighting are still being turned up by farmers and amateur archaeologists."

"What do you do about any potential casualties on June 5?" such as aircraft taking off from England that crashed, Timothy Nosal, spokesman for the American Battle Monuments Commission, asked. "What about casualties early on June 7? Like any other statistic, you have to consider what you're going to factor in. It's a difficult equation to jumble."

Recording casualties was "secondary to actual operations," Nosal said. On quieter days during the war, each unit would file a morning report. Last November, Nosal researched morning reports around D-Day and found that few of the units involved filed one on June 6 or June 7. "In most cases, they were not filed until the 8th, and most of those were handwritten and typed later in June," he said.

The high number of history buffs, veterans and their families who are touring Normandy or visiting World War II sites around this week's anniversary will find that museums and tour operators often struggle with how to present the uncertain information.

"We have found that tallying deaths/casualties on D-Day is a complicated topic, and there is still disagreement amongst scholars," Kacey M. Hill, a spokeswoman for the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, said in an email. Others try not to cite numbers.



“I personally try to spend as little time as possible talking stats as it gets so complicated,” Normandy tour guide Paul Woodadge said in an email. “I focus on personal stories.”

The U.S. military’s historical arm isn’t seeking to update its count. “Any attempt would probably be equally inaccurate and would be based on the same statistics used in earlier counts,” R. Scott Moore, chief of field programs and historical resources at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, said in an email.

Moore believes that many of the same limitations faced on D-Day would apply to combat today. “The differences today, given computer-based systems and central accounting processes, is exponentially better; no comparison,” he said. “But I expect that if you conducted an operation today on the scale of D-Day with the kind of casualties that would ensue, we would still have difficulty accounting for every casualty. When an individual disappears at the waterline, or alone in the forest at night after parachuting from an airplane, and no one sees it, how do you account for that soldier?”

Tuckwiller tried to do just that.

As the National D-Day Memorial Foundation officials were readying their memorial for its 2001 unveiling, Tuckwiller was looking for a new gig. She had worked 31 years in the Virginia room of the Roanoke Public Libraries before retiring in January 2000. She wrote to the foundation on a lark: “I said, you’re so new, you may not know what positions you need, but if there is anything I can do to help you, here’s my résumé,” she recalled in a telephone interview this week.

A few months later, she was hired to run a new program for the foundation: The Necrology Project. Its goal was to collect the names of every Normandy invader who died on June 6, 1944 — basically, to do what historians and military officials hadn’t been able to do before.

“I thought it was exciting because I was too dumb to know it was going to be so difficult,” Tuckwiller recalled. “But I like a challenge. I always love searching for information.”

Tuckwiller started looking for sources, using her library skills and what she’d learned from her father, David E. Tuckwiller, an Army Air Corps veteran. He’d hardly talked about the war until the 1980s, when she signed him up for a group of veterans of his old unit, which prompted him to show her the spiral notebook he kept of every mission. “It was the first time he had ever really opened up,” she said. He died last July.

As she began her search for D-Day’s dead, Tuckwiller said she realized she had underestimated the task. “It became quite clear why it hadn’t been done. It was just crazy.”

She sent letters to the embassies of U.S. allies. She contacted the, American Battle Monuments Commission, military historical societies and the Joint Mortuary Affairs Center in Fort Lee, Virginia. She made nine trips to the Military Personnel Records at the National Archive in St. Louis, and many more to the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland.

Tuckwiller fought through discouraging moments. Some told her what she wanted to do just couldn’t be done. But she also found that almost everyone wanted to help.



She derived the greatest pleasure from speaking to veterans and their families, though those conversations didn't always yield the sort of hard evidence she needed. One woman she spoke to was sure her relative had died on D-Day. She and Tuckwiller spoke for several months, until it became clear he'd been wounded on June 6<sup>th</sup> and taken back to England, where he died the next day.

Tuckwiller started recording all her data — including maybes, soldiers for whom she needed more information — in a spreadsheet, then a database. She also kept paper records for every soldier, which along with the World War II reference library she maintained started to overflow from the foundation's headquarters. The foundation rented a vacated liquor store a block from the office, with sturdy shelves strong enough for booze bottles, or photocopied army records.

Her progress was slow but steady. By the time President George W. Bush spoke at the unveiling of the memorial on the 57th anniversary of D-Day in 2001, Tuckwiller's efforts yielded enough names to fill about 20 plaques, each with about 20 names.

The foundation faced financial troubles during Tuckwiller's tenure, but she said she never felt financial pressure, nor was she rushed to finish the work. She tried to keep trip costs down, staying in budget hotels and getting food from relatives. She said she made about \$35,000 a year. Asked if it was a labor of love, she said, "Oh, absolutely, exclamation point."

Tuckwiller loved the chase, but she didn't lose sight of its meaning to survivors. When she saw family members rub papers against the plaques bearing their loved ones' names, to keep the rubbings, "that was very touching to me," she said.

Six years into her search, "It had gotten to the point where I just didn't know where else to look," she said. She no longer enjoyed the commute to work as much as she once did. "So I thought, well, I'll just leave it at this point, with the understanding it will never be closed."

When she left, the total count for Allied deaths on D-Day was 4,390.

While the result of Tuckwiller's work was a count of Allied dead higher than many historians had tallied before, it was also lower than what many people expect to hear, according to tour operators. The carnage of the invasion scenes in the movie "Saving Private Ryan," the scope of the mission and a confusion of casualty counts with death counts all played a role in those expectations.

D-Day planners, too, were surprised by the low death count —they feared as many as half the invaders, or 75,000 soldiers, would be killed or wounded on the day of the invasion.

"That's a testament to Allied planning," Nosal, the American Battle Monuments Commission spokesman, said.

Tuckwiller continued to contribute after leaving the foundation, including checking on names a staffer found in military cemeteries with D-Day as their death date. Tuckwiller found that all but two of the deaths were unrelated to the Normandy invasion. With this and other continued research, the count has slowly climbed to 4,413.



Today she is retired. She volunteers once a week at the Veteran Affairs medical center in Salem, Virginia, where she recently helped a Korean War veteran who'd discarded his discharge papers recover some of his records.

On Tuckwiller's last visit to the National Archive in St. Louis before she left the foundation, an archivist there showed her a room filled with boxes, each box filled with files that hadn't yet been cataloged. "I was drooling to get a hold of that information," she said. "Maybe if somebody comes back in 15 years, it will be cataloged." She'll be 82 in 15 years, but it was clear that she hoped that "somebody" would be her. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Bialik, "The Challenge of Counting D-Day's Dead," <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-challenge-of-counting-d-days-dead/>, June 8, 2014, accessed May 19, 2019.



## Salute to Our Nation's War Dead

### Sacred Duty: A Soldier's Tour at Arlington National Cemetery

Tom Cotton U.S. Senator from Arkansas

Author, *Sacred Duty: A Soldier's Tour at Arlington National Cemetery*

*The following is adapted from a speech delivered on April 9, 2019, at Hillsdale College's Allan P. Kirby, Jr. Center for Constitutional Studies and Citizenship in Washington, D.C.*

**Every Headstone** at Arlington tells a story. These are tales of heroes, I thought, as I placed the toe of my combat boot against the white marble. I pulled a miniature American flag out of my assault pack and pushed it three inches into the ground at my heel. I stepped aside to inspect it, making sure it met the standard that we had briefed to our troops: “vertical and perpendicular to the headstone.” Satisfied, I moved to the next headstone to keep up with my soldiers. Having started this row, I had to complete it. One soldier per row was the rule; otherwise, different boot sizes might disrupt the perfect symmetry of the headstones and flags. I planted flag after flag, as did the soldiers on the rows around me.

Bending over to plant the flags brought me eye-level with the lettering on those marble stones. The stories continued with each one. Distinguished Service Cross. Silver Star. Bronze Star. Purple Heart. America's wars marched by. Iraq. Afghanistan. Vietnam. Korea. World War II. World War I. Some soldiers died in very old age; others were teenagers. Crosses, Stars of David, Crescents and Stars. Every religion, every race, every age, every region of America is represented in these fields of stone.

I came upon the gravesite of a Medal of Honor recipient. I paused, came to attention, and saluted. The Medal of Honor is the nation's highest decoration for battlefield valor. By military custom, all soldiers salute Medal of Honor recipients irrespective of their rank, in life and in death. We had reminded our soldiers of this courtesy; hundreds of grave sites would receive salutes that afternoon. I planted this hero's flag and kept moving.

On some headstones sat a small memento: a rank or unit patch, a military coin, a seashell, sometimes just a penny or a rock. Each was a sign that someone—maybe family or friends, or perhaps a battle buddy who lived because of his friend's ultimate sacrifice—had visited, honored, and mourned. For those of us who had been downrange, the sight was equally comforting and jarring—a sign that we would be remembered in death, but also a reminder of just how close some of us had come to resting here ourselves. We left those mementos undisturbed.

After a while, my hand began to hurt from pushing on the pointed, gold tips of the flags. There had been no rain that week, so the ground was hard. I asked my soldiers how they were moving so fast and seemingly pain-free. They asked if I was using a bottle cap, and I said no. Several shook their heads in disbelief; forgetting a bottle cap was apparently a mistake on par with forgetting one's rifle or night vision goggles on patrol in Iraq. Those kinds of little tricks and techniques were not briefed in the day's written orders, but rather got passed down from seasoned soldiers. These details often make the difference between mission success or failure in the Army, whether in combat or stateside. After some good-natured ribbing at my expense, a young private squared me away with a spare cap.

We finished up our last section and got word over the radio to go place flags in the Columbarium, where open-air buildings contain thousands of urns. Walking down Arlington's leafy avenues, we passed Section 60, where soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan were laid to rest if their families chose Arlington as their eternal home. Unlike in the sections we had just completed, several visitors and mourners were present. Some had settled in for a while on blankets or lawn chairs. Others walked among the headstones. Even from a respectful distance, we could see the sense of loss and grief on their faces.



Once we finished in the Columbarium, “mission complete” came over the radio and we began the long walk up Arlington’s hills and back to Fort Myer. In just a few hours, we had placed a flag at every grave site in this sacred ground, more than two-hundred thousand of them. From President John F. Kennedy to the Unknown Soldiers to the youngest privates from our oldest wars, every hero of Arlington had a few moments that day with a soldier who, in this simple act of remembrance, delivered a powerful message to the dead and the living alike: you are not forgotten.

The Thursday before Memorial Day at Arlington National Cemetery is known as “Flags In.” The soldiers who place the flags belong to the 3rd United States Infantry Regiment, better known as The Old Guard. My turn at Flags In came in 2007, when I served with The Old Guard between my tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Old Guard is literally the *old* guard, the oldest active-duty infantry regiment in the Army, dating back to 1784, three years older even than our Constitution. The regiment got its nickname in 1847 from Winfield Scott, the longest-serving general in American history. Scott gave the regiment the honor of leading the victory march into Mexico City, where he directed his staff to “take your hats off to The Old Guard of the Army.” Perhaps Scott felt an old kinship with the 3rd Infantry, because he had fought the British alongside them outside Niagara Falls during the War of 1812.

Among the few regiments to participate in both of the major campaigns of the Mexican War—Monterrey in 1846 and Mexico City in 1847—The Old Guard made history alongside American military legends. A young lieutenant later wrote that “the loss of the 3rd Infantry in commissioned officers was especially severe” in the brutal street-to-street fighting in Monterrey. That lieutenant’s name was Ulysses S. Grant.

The 3rd Infantry was part of the main effort again the next year at the Battle of Cerro Gordo, the last stand on the road to Mexico City by Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna. The Mexicans had a numerically superior force on the high ground on both sides of the only passable road to the capital. But Santa Anna underestimated the Americans’ ingenuity and audacity. With a young captain of engineers blazing the path, the 3rd Infantry hacked through the jungle and crossed ravines to attack the Mexicans from their rear, finishing them off with a bayonet charge. That captain’s name was Robert E. Lee. And to this day, The Old Guard remains the only unit in the Army authorized to march with bayonets fixed to their rifles in honor of their forerunners’ bravery at Cerro Gordo.

The Old Guard returned to the battlefield in the Civil War, fighting with other “regulars”—the career professional soldiers of the federal government, as opposed to the volunteer soldiers of the state regiments. The Old Guard fought in every major battle in the eastern theater from the First Battle of Bull Run to Gettysburg, where they helped hold off Confederate charges against the weakened salient in Union lines at the Wheatfield. Watching from the nearby Round Top Hills, a state militiaman later wrote, “For two years, the regulars taught us how to fight like soldiers. At the Wheatfield at Gettysburg, they taught us how to die like soldiers.” Though out of the fight, the regiment later served in Grant’s headquarters at Appomattox Court House as he accepted the surrender of their old pathfinder from Cerro Gordo.

The Old Guard then went west following the American frontier, and ultimately to the Philippines at the turn of the century, fighting under General John “Black Jack” Pershing against Muslim radicals in Jolo [hó-lō] and Mindanao—the very places where al Qaeda and the Islamic State have franchises today. They guarded our southern border with Mexico against Pancho Villa [bél-yä] during World War I, and they trained the vast army of new recruits for World War II before deploying to Europe in the final months of the war.

It was after World War II that the Army assigned its oldest unit to its most sacred ground: Arlington National Cemetery, whose seal calls it “Our Nation’s Most Sacred Shrine,” and with good reason. To borrow from Tocqueville [tók-vēl] in a different context, those rolling hills seem “called by some secret design of Providence” to become our national cemetery.



George Washington's adopted son—his wife Martha's only surviving son—bought the land that became Arlington in 1778 to be closer to his mother and his stepfather at their beloved Mount Vernon. General Washington advised him on the purchase in correspondence from his winter camp at Valley Forge. But our national triumph three years later at Yorktown shattered the family's dreams. Their son died of a fever contracted there, leaving behind a six-month-old son of his own. George and Martha raised the boy, who was named George Washington Parke Custis but was known as Wash. When Wash came of age and inherited the land, he initially christened it Mount Washington, in honor of his revered adoptive father. Though he later renamed it Arlington, Wash used the land as a kind of public memorial in his lifelong mission to honor the great man. From hosting celebrations on Washington's Birthday to displaying artifacts and memorabilia to building the grand mansion still visible from the Lincoln Memorial today, Arlington got its start as a shrine to the father of our country.

A new resident arrived in 1831, when then-Lieutenant Robert E. Lee—himself the son of Washington's trusted cavalry commander during the Revolutionary War—married Wash's only surviving child, Mary. For 30 years, the Lees made Arlington their home and raised a family there between his military assignments. Because of his ties to Washington and his own military genius, Lee was offered command of a Union army as the Civil War started. But he declined on the spot. His long-time mentor—none other than the 3rd Infantry's old commander, Winfield Scott, now the General-in-Chief of the Army—scolded him: "Lee, you have made the greatest mistake of your life, but I feared it would be so." Resigning his commission, Lee left Arlington for Richmond, never to return. The United States Army occupied Arlington on May 24, 1861—and it has held the ground ever since.

Arlington at first became a military post, key terrain for the defense of the capital. The Old Guard even camped there for a few days in the summer of 1861. But as the horrific war ground on, casualties mounted, and Washington's cemeteries filled up. Montgomery Meigs, the Quartermaster General, and Edwin Stanton, the Secretary of War, detested Lee as a traitor and saw a double opportunity: by turning Arlington into a Union cemetery, they gained hundreds of acres in new land for graves, while also foreclosing Lee's return after the war. On May 13, 1864, Private William Christman was the first soldier interred at Arlington. Thousands more would soon join him, fixing Arlington as a new national cemetery.

Or so it was thought. Lee's son inherited the family's claim to their old farm. Himself a Confederate officer, his name nevertheless reflected the nation's deep roots at Arlington: George Washington Custis Lee. Known as Custis, he petitioned Congress to no avail, then sued in federal court to evict the Army as trespassers. *United States v. Lee* worked its way over the years to the Supreme Court, which upheld the Lee family's claim. Fortunately for the government, the nation, and the souls at rest in Arlington, Custis was magnanimous in victory, asking only for just compensation. In 1883, he deeded the land back to the government in return for \$150,000. The Secretary of War who accepted the deed was Robert Todd Lincoln, the son of Abraham Lincoln. After that final act of reconciliation between the firstborn sons of the great president and his famed rebel antagonist, Arlington's dead could rest in peace for eternity.

Since 1948, when The Old Guard became the Army's ceremonial unit and official escort to the president, it has marched in inaugural parades, performed ceremonies at the White House and the Pentagon, and provided color guards and a drill team for events around the capital, among other missions. But one mission takes priority above all else: military-honor funerals in Arlington National Cemetery. In manning, in training, in operating, funerals always come first, and they are a no-fail, zero-defect mission. While we often performed more than 20 funerals a day, we knew that—for the fallen and the family—each funeral was a once-in-a-lifetime moment, a lifetime in the making.

No matter how often we conducted funerals—and most of us performed hundreds of them—the pressure to achieve perfection for the fallen and their families never relented. Lieutenant Colonel Allen Kehoe, the battalion commander in charge of Old Guard funerals, has served in the 75th Ranger Regiment and is a five-time combat veteran. Yet he told me, "I've never experienced pressure like this anywhere else in the Army." He paused and added, "I know that sounds crazy." Perhaps to some, but not to me, and not to his soldiers. We felt the same pressure every day in Arlington, the pressure to perform our sacred duty to honor America's heroes.



Nothing interferes with The Old Guard's mission in Arlington—and when I say nothing, I mean nothing, not even 9/11. On that beautiful morning, the 9 o'clock funerals were underway when American Airlines Flight 77 slammed into the Pentagon, blasting debris across Washington Boulevard into the cemetery's southeastern corner. The Old Guard's Medical Platoon rushed to the scene, becoming the first soldiers to deploy to a battlefield in the War on Terror. Yet those funerals continued. So did the 10 o'clock funerals. And the 11 o'clock funerals. Over the next month, even as hundreds of Old Guard soldiers pulled guard duty at the Pentagon and carried remains from the crash site, funerals never stopped in Arlington.

Last year was no different during the state funeral for President George H.W. Bush. As the nation awoke to news of his passing, The Old Guard had already assembled in the pre-dawn darkness of a Saturday morning. Over the next six days, hundreds of Old Guard soldiers would honor the old aviator in Texas and at Andrews Air Force Base, the Capitol, and the Washington National Cathedral. Yet far from the limelight, funerals in Arlington continued as planned. As one Old Guard soldier told me, "Our standards remain the same, whether it's President Bush or a private first class."

Old Guard companies have industrial-quality press machines in their barracks to achieve razor-sharp pant creases. We measured uniform insignia out to one-sixty-fourth of an inch. Sitting down in uniform between funerals was prohibited to avoid wrinkles. We prepared for funerals in sweltering summer heat, winter blizzards, and driving rain. Even when inclement weather shuts down the cemetery, it does not stop The Old Guard from performing funerals on time and to standard.

Each morning, casket teams practiced folding the flag, even though they had folded thousands of them. Firing parties practiced their three-volley salute, seven rifles cracking as one in the parking lot. In the cemetery, we talked through the key sequences and cues before each funeral, sometimes conducting the very same talk-through six times in a day. Nothing was taken for granted.

For rare or complex funerals, The Old Guard goes to even greater lengths. I participated once in a group burial for twelve soldiers killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq. We rehearsed it for several days. Last year, The Old Guard dedicated the newest 27 acres of the cemetery by laying to rest two unknown Civil War soldiers whose remains were recently discovered at the battlefield of the Second Battle of Bull Run. The soldiers involved rehearsed the mission six times. Researchers believe, incidentally, that the two soldiers may have died from wounds suffered during the Union's failed assault on the third and final day of the battle—an assault in which The Old Guard participated.

Arlington is not the only site of The Old Guard's mission to honor our fallen. Since the earliest days of the Iraq War, The Old Guard has performed the dignified transfer of remains at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, where our nation's fallen soldiers return home for the last time. My tour with The Old Guard coincided with the Surge in Iraq, so sadly we had Dover missions almost every night—and they typically happened at night, given the flight times and time zone changes. Whatever the time and whatever the conditions, The Old Guard was there when the remains landed. My soldiers and I once drove to Dover two days early to get ahead of a potential blizzard. If a soldier was coming home, we would be there to honor him.

Most Americans have seen the iconic photographs of flag-draped cases at Dover; few have stood among them on that windy ramp. But Old Guard soldiers have. We've stood alone in the cargo hold, inspecting flags for the slightest deficiencies. We've strained with a heavy case of a fallen soldier still in full combat gear, packed in ice. We've felt the lightweight cases of the dissociated remains of a soldier killed by an improvised bomb, the enemy's most deadly weapon in Iraq and Afghanistan. We've saluted from the airplane as the remains were driven away to be prepared for the return to their family.

These poignant moments at Dover, like The Old Guard's unflinching dedication to our fallen at Arlington, tells not only a story about our war dead and the soldiers who honor them, but also a story about the nation on whose behalf they serve. We go to great lengths to recover fallen comrades, we honor them in the most precise and exacting ceremonies, we set aside national holidays to remember and celebrate them. We do these things for them, of course, but also for us, the living. Their stories of heroism, of



sacrifice, and of patriotism remind us of what is best in ourselves, and they teach our children what is best in America.

In doing so, we assure our fighting men and women around the world that they, too, will be remembered in death and their families will be cared for, a mutual pledge that shaped our identity as soldiers and our willingness to fight—and, if necessary, to die—for our country. “It is well that war is so terrible,” observed Robert E. Lee as he watched his army slaughter Union troops at Fredericksburg, “or we should grow too fond of it.” No one understands that lesson better than the soldiers who have fought our wars on the front lines and the soldiers who have honored the sacrifices of our fallen at places like Arlington and Dover. We know that sometimes our nation must wage war to defend all that we hold dear, but we also know the terrible costs inflicted by war.

No one summed up better what The Old Guard of Arlington means for our nation than Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey. He shared a story with me about taking a foreign military leader through Arlington to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Sergeant Major Dailey said, “I was explaining what The Old Guard does and he was looking out the window at all those headstones. After a long pause, still looking at the headstones, he said, ‘Now I know why your soldiers fight so hard. You take better care of your dead than we do our living.’”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Tom Cotton, “Sacred Duty: A Soldier’s Tour of Duty at Arlington National Cemetery,” Hillsdale, Mich., *Imprimis*, April/May 2019, vol. 48, No. 4/5, 1–7. Reprinted by permission from *Imprimis*, a publication of Hillsdale College. © 2019 by Hillsdale College.



## Silent Heroes

In 2005, my good friend, James L. Wattenbarger, wrote the following poem in remembrance of the fallen soldiers entombed at the American Cemetery and Memorial at Colleville-sur-Mer, France, entitled,

### **“Silent Heroes”**

Normandy, France, 6 June 2005

I walked, today,  
Though just in fantasy,  
Along a stretch of beach  
At Normandy.

The tide was busy with the sand,  
The sky was standing clear,  
And courage, long departed now,  
Had left no sign of fear.

Inland, across the grassy fields,  
Amid the well-kept lawn,  
“Old Glory” still draws duty;  
I found her there, at dawn.

A quiet thought, a morning breeze,  
As she began to stir ...  
I sensed the scope of sacrifice  
Entrusted here, to her.

I strolled at ease among the rows,  
Of crosses, placed with care,  
And felt the tug upon my heart,  
Of honor’s presence there.

Then, looking back I watched that flag  
With rippling colors wave ...  
A proud salute to each white cross  
That marked a silent hero’s grave.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> © 2005 by James L. Wattenbarger. All rights reserved.



## Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father: On this day, June 6th, seventy-five years ago, Allied forces executed Operation Overlord, a campaign that would challenge the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. At least 4,413 gave their lives while untold numbers of others were injured as over 150,000 soldiers, airmen, and marines advanced upon the Normandy coast of France.

Your weather angels cleared the skies of the English Channel just enough to allow the attack to go forward. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the tip of the spear and by your matchless grace victory was won on that most important date certified as D-Day

By your grace, by your design, in your divine decree, victory was made possible against the scourge of totalitarian forces that had designs on world domination.

Our last six hours have been presented to remind those who have recall of that day, others whose memories have faded, and most importantly, those who have not been constantly reminded of the fact that the freedom we have enjoyed for three-quarters of a century were provided by your divine intervention for that day's victorious conclusion.

Nazism is a mixture of all the worst ideas conjured by dictators – communism, totalitarianism, socialism, progressivism – each characterized by the use of rhetorical veils that conceal while advancing their hidden agendas.

Today, in Your client nation America, there are those who now engage in the nascent stages of Nazism whose tactics imitate the early stages Hitler's rise to power.

Just as in the days that preceded D-Day 1944, now seventy-five years later, we find that memories of that horror have faded, been forgotten, or, worse, never known.



Just as in the days that followed D-Day 1944, your control of history destroyed the satanic strategies of a demon-possessed tyrant.

It is our prayer that Your grace and by Your power that the evil machinations of the newly blinded and emerging Brownshirts will be exposed into the clear light of day, their evil strategies interrupted, and their cosmic purposes suppressed.

We thank you for the freedom you still provide for our Client Nation. We continue to trust in your grace as we continue to freely study your Word in this land of the free and the home of those brave men of arms who have served, been injured, and those who have given their lives for our freedom.

We lift our prayer of gratitude to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: King of kings, Lord of Lords, and *Yehowah Sevaoth*—the Lord of the Armies. Amen.

(End MD19-E-05. End *D-Day, June 6, 1944: Retrospective.*)

