

May 2007

# The DZ

Headquarters  
95th Squadron  
96th Squadron  
97th Squadron  
98th Squadron

## Dedication of New Normandy American Cemetery Visitor Center Set for June 6, 2007

WASHINGTON, Nov. 10 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Sixty-three years after Allied troops stormed the beaches of Normandy to turn the tide of World War II in Europe, a new visitor center at the Normandy American Cemetery in France will open in June 2007 to tell the story of the 9,387 Americans buried there and put the D-Day landings and follow-on battle in Europe in perspective as one of the greatest military achievements of all time.

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) announced today that the \$30 million visitor center will be dedicated and opened to the public on June 6, 2007, during the annual D-Day commemorations. Normandy is ABMC's most visited cemetery, receiving approximately one million visitors each year.

Using personal stories of participants and a mix of narrative text, photos, films, interactive displays and artifacts, exhibits will portray the competence, courage and sacrifice of Allied forces. The visitor center will enhance the experience of visiting the cemetery by relating the global significance and meaning of Operation OVERLORD, the greatest amphibious invasion in history.

One-third of the building's 30,000 square feet will be dedicated exhibit space. The center is sited in a wooded area of the cemetery approximately 100 meters east of the Garden of the Missing.

In December 2002, ABMC selected the SmithGroup, an architectural and engineering firm based in Washington, D.C., to design and build the center. Gallagher & Associates, based in Bethesda, Md., is designing the exhibits. Construction began in September 2005.

ABMC worked closely with local government officials in Normandy to create a visitor center that will celebrate the spirit and teamwork of the men and women who won the battle for Normandy, while ensuring that the center integrates into the French government's plan for infrastructure improvements throughout the Normandy area.

ABMC will announce its plans for the center's public opening and dedication celebration in early 2007. Information will be posted on the commission's Web site at <http://www.abmc.gov>.

Source: [http://www.todaysseniorsnetwork.com/normandy\\_museum.htm](http://www.todaysseniorsnetwork.com/normandy_museum.htm)

## Liberty Jump Team

THE LIBERTY JUMP TEAM is a commemorative parachute team that honors the WWII heroes of the 'greatest generation' and other war veterans. The Liberty Jump Team is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a Base of Operation in Bristow, Oklahoma (20 miles west of Tulsa). The team performs static line parachute jumps, provides living history and static displays in both the United States and the European Theatre of Operations. The static line jumpers wear WWII style paratrooper uniforms, equipment & gear. Current military style round parachutes are used for static line operation.

Due to the success of the Normandy jump operation, Liberty Jump Team has been invited back to jump in Normandy in 2007. The team will be jumping June 3 Carentan, June 5 Liesville sur Douve, June 7 Quineville, and June 9 at La Fière.

All team members pay their own fees and expenses and are currently raising monies and planning for these jumps. Here in the US, the team has acquired the services of a vintage C-47 aircraft and performs static line parachute jumps at veteran reunions, re-enactments, air shows and other events across the USA.

There are currently membership opportunities on the Liberty Jump Team for parachutists, ground & drop-zone crew, historians, public relations and many other areas of support. If you are interested in being a part of the Liberty Jump Team, please e-mail, call or write for a membership application or for upcoming training sessions and events.



### Liberty Jump Team Foundation Inc

1515 Mount Gilead Road

Roanoke, TX 76262

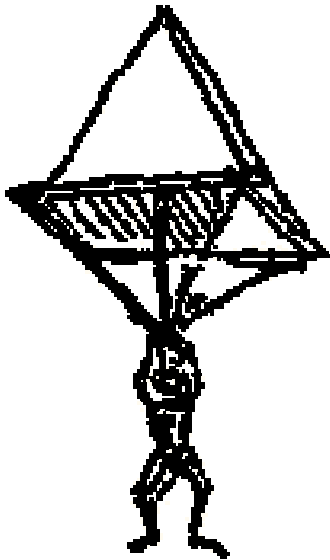
[www.libertyjumpteam.org](http://www.libertyjumpteam.org)

(817) 431-2286

Editors note: I will be participating in these jumps! I have also been invited to attend the memorial ceremony at Maganaville to honor the 440th air crew and I/506 paratroopers that were lost on 6 June 1944.

### ***Parachuting Envisioned***

***"If a man has a tent of linen without any aper-  
tures...  
he can throw himself down from any great height  
without injury."***

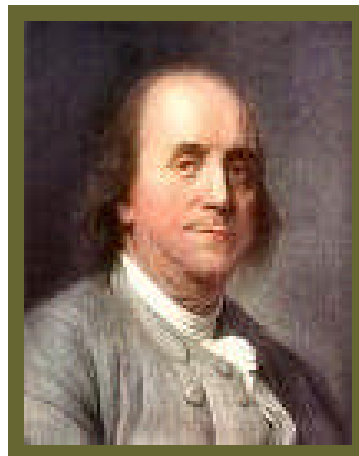


***Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)***

### ***Airborne Envisioned***

***"Where is the prince who could so afford to cover his country  
with troops for its defense as that 10,000 men descending from  
the clouds might not in many places do an infinite deal of mis-  
chief?"***

***Benjamin Franklin (1784)***



## SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE GLIDER PROGRAM AND THE CG4A

The CG-4A glider, (C-for cargo, G-for glider) was the mainstay of the U.S. Army Air Forces glider arsenal. It was designed by the Waco Aircraft Company of Troy, Ohio whose personnel followed specifications given to them by the U.S. Army Air Corps. Francis Arcier, a Waco vice-president and chief designer, is usually referred to as the "father" of the CG-4A. A total of 13,909 CG-4A gliders were constructed during the period 1942-1945. The Ford Motor Company, one of the 15 prime contractors building gliders, turned out 4,190 units, far beyond the second best producer with 1,509 units. Some of the other contractors included such names as Gibson, Northwestern Aeronautical, Pratt-Reed, Laister-Kaufman, Cessna Aircraft, and many others.

More than 70,000 individual parts made up the CG-4A. After its design was accepted and production started, some 7,000 modifications were made to the aircraft, although none of these modifications were a major change. The nose of the CG-4A could be elevated to facilitate loading and unloading of cargo and/or mobile vehicles. It could carry a jeep, or a jeep trailer fully loaded with combat equipment, or a 75 mm howitzer, or a 37 mm anti-tank gun, and specially designed airborne construction equipment including small graders and bulldozers.

Several powered models of the CG-4A were developed but few produced. Quick-mount engine pods were developed and attached successfully to the main wing struts. All the powered models flew with success but none survived the war years.

The CG-4A was not designed to be a thing of beauty - and certainly it was not considered to be an attractive aircraft. Most Air Force power pilots joked about its ungainly appearance but few of them poked any funny remarks at the guys who flew them. The glider pilots were an independent, tough, ready-to-fight group of pilots and they certainly were not backward in letting anyone know that the "G" on their silver wings stood for "Guts." The aircraft they flew with such abandon and ease was a strut-braced high-wing monoplane that could carry more than its own weight in payload, and frequently did. The wing, constructed around a front box spar and a rear "I" spar, had wooden ribs, and was plywood covered except for the trailing edge. The whole wing was covered with doped cotton fabric. The control surfaces were fabric covered except for the leading edges which were of plywood. The wing tips were elliptical and there was little dihedral. The fuselage was a welded steel tubing frame covered with fabric. The floor of the cargo compartment was of honeycombed plywood construction and had tremendous strength and rigidity. The cockpit was constructed also of a welded steel tubing frame covered with fabric and plywood.

The combat employment of the glider in the huge invasion of France on D-Day occurred less than three years after AF General Hap Arnold told a glider graduating class of six student pilots that the United States would have a glider force "second to none in the world." Before September, 1942 AF records listed no glider pilots.

In going to work to build such a glider force, CM files were checked but only 160 licensed civilian glider pilots were found in the United States. Of these, only 25 were sufficiently experienced to be instructors. They were put to work immediately to train Air Corps rated pilots for key positions. Enlisted men and thousands of recruited civilians were selected as pilot trainees. As they were trained, the best were retained to instruct others and thus the training organization developed. Soon after training was underway, all gliders were grounded for technical reasons. Abandonment of the program seemed probable. However, the glider survived this critical period and on the night of July 9, 1943, took part in the first Allied airborne operation in WWII. Allied gliders took off that night from an airfield in Tunisia. The destination was Axis-held Sicily; their cargo, British airborne troops. In spite of the many difficulties encountered on a first mission of this nature (and there were many), enough of the gliders got through to successfully complete the mission.

The glider in combat had proven itself and its use continued to build.

### GENERAL SPECIFICATION - CG-4A

Wing Span	83 feet, 8 inches
Length (Overall)	48 feet, 3-3/4 inches
Height	12 feet, 7-7/16 inches
Weight, design	3,750 pounds
Gross Weight, design	7,500 pounds
Wing Chord	10 feet, 6 inches

Article courtesy of the National WWII Glider Pilots Association, Inc

<http://www.ww2gp.org/CG4A.htm>



### Dues Notice

Please send \$20 for your annual dues to:

Richard E. Hobson  
3117 Stonehenge Lane  
Carrollton, TX 75006



Make your check payable to 440th Troop Carrier Group

## *The other Side of the Coin*

In a previous article in this newsletter I summarized the concerted opinions of many troop carrier D-Day veterans rebutting the interpretations by recent popular writers and film producers for the claimed wild dispersion of American paratroopers dropped over Normandy on D-Day 1944. During further research I uncovered the verbatim first official debriefings of troop commanders of the 82nd Airborne Division conducted on 13 August 1944, in Glebe House, Leicester, England after their return from more than two months of combat in Normandy. I emphasize that the many of the 82nd officers and men, unlike most of those of the 101st Airborne Division, were veterans of two previous combat jumps ~ Sicily and Italy ~ and on D-Day some even flew with the same troop carrier aircrew of the earlier drops.

I excerpt below some of the verbatim key points regarding the Normandy drop, made by some familiar and distinguished paratroopers. (recall that the two U.S. Airborne Divisions approached the Cotentin Peninsula from the west).

**Brigadier General James M. Gavin – Commanding General 82ND ABN DIV  
(CG Task Force “A”, flying with the 505th Parachute Inf. Regt.)**

“To begin with, the serial after leaving England was in good shape – tight formation – all ships apparently present. The flight, as well as it could be observed from the lead plane, was excellent. Some flak came up from the channel islands – tracers were seen falling short. Shortly after crossing the west coast, the first check point was soon which I had figured would be BRICQUABEC. We then encountered dense clouds. Ships which had been flying within a matter of feet of each other could not be seen anywhere. The red light went on, indicating four minutes to the drop. When it was almost time for the green light, we emerged from the clouds. There were no ships in sight. A river appeared in the distance turning to the West, which I estimated to be either the DOUVE or the upper reaches of the MERDERET. ...”

**Colonel William E. Ekman – Commanding Officer, 505th PARACHUTE INFANTRY:**

“ ... Our ride over was uneventful except for the ack-ack which came pretty close to our planes. Jumping out after going through the clouds, I baled out at about 0204 hours according to my watch. I had a very hard opening because we were going at least 150 mile per hour. I do not remember the landing because I was pretty dazed. I was in the midst of a field of cattle when I landed. ....”

Q. “In your area you had two lighted Ts, is that correct?”

A. [Ekman] “Yes, sir. The only comment I have on the operation is about the speed, the altitude of the planes, and the assembly lights. ... I noticed planes coming in from all directions and all altitudes. ...”

Q. “How long were you in the fog?”

A. [Ekman] “Right after coming across the coast and I would say maybe three miles from ST SAVUER we hit a heavy cloud bank and it was then that we lost control of the formation. Just a little ways this side of the MERDERET my plane came down under the clouds, but I could see few of the planes.”

**Lieutenant Colonel Timmes, 2ND BN, 507th PARACHUTE INFANTRY:**

“I was in the group flown by Colonel Mitchell. We got below a lot of haze, and we flew at about 550 feet above ground. We did not go too fast, and our landing was very good. We jumped at 0230, and we did not see any lights on the ground. I had a lot of difficulty assembling. We had the mission of taking Amfreville. ....”

**Lieutenant Colonel Vandervoort, 2d BN, 505th PARACHUTE INFANTRY:**

“..... The flight until we hit the French coast was quite uneventful for my Battalion. We reached France intact and in formation. As we came across the coast, we saw a little ack-ack from the ground; and I thought that there were some planes from the 101st Division shot down. As we approached our DZ, the pilot informed me that he could see our T. The pathfinder group had been dropped essentially where they should have been, a little further inland; and they only displayed two Ts. One was lighted when we dropped. The pilot I had was extremely reluctant to come down to the correct jumping altitude. We came in at 1400 feet, and our speed was excessive. I talked to the crew chief and asked him to slow down. We went through a bit of scud as we came in, and it caused the formation to break slightly. At the time I thought the Germans had smoked the area. I lost two platoons from Company “E”. The green light was turned on about 45 seconds before we reached the DOUVE River. I told them to turn it off. We dropped pretty well on our DZ. I myself, was a quarter of a mile from the DZ. .... I watched the battalion come in and they were all spread out, the ships being too high and too fast.”

**Lieutenant Colonel Krause, 3RD BN, 505th PARACHUTE INFANTRY:**

“... The trip was very uneventful on the way over. As we crossed the coast of France, I talked to my pilot by interphone, and said, ‘It looks like a good deal.’ I looked back and saw my ships behind me. Just about the time we hit the soup (fog or cloud), and we started to see fires on the ground, a little ack-ack and we had some fighters come in on us and fire on us. An element of three ships was directly under us and not more than thirty feet below. One came up from under and passed miraculously between my ship and the left wing ship. I would say that in the next three minutes I came as close to being crashed in the air as I ever hoped to. We tried to keep our formation, but ships constantly ran over each other. The pilot called for evasive action, and we split up. Some went high, some went lower, others right and left. This split our formation and we were well spread. Just about two or three minutes before drop time we saw this green T. It was a Godsend and I felt that I had found the Holy Grail. I would say that I dropped from over 2,000 feet. It was the longest ride I have had in over fifty jumps, and while descending, four ships passed under me and I really sweated this out.....”

**Lieutenant Colonel Ostberg, 1ST BN., 507th PARACHUTE INFANTRY:**

“We were scheduled to drop north of AMFREVILLE. We ran into fog. I saw my flight and it was all there for about the first three minutes. We ran into a lot of flak. Pebbles kept hitting, which I didn’t have enough sense to realize what was going on. We had no T to guide on, and only one radar set of the six we dropped was set up. . . . . Phone communications should be in the plane. Second hand information is no good, but you can’t tell the pilot what his job is. We dropped from a low altitude. I landed in a very flat field, but it was inundated.....”

**Lieutenant Colonel Mendez, 3RD BN 508th PARACHUTE INFANTRY:**

“I was in command of the 3rd Bn. At the outset. I didn’t see my Bn. For five days. We ran into a lot of trouble as soon as we hit land. The flak was terrific. We jumped from about 2100 feet, the entire serial, and were going rather fast. 2100 feet is too much of a ride; I checked my field bag and found three bullet holes in it. ....” In the debrief summary of the 505th jump I found the following words: “The first element, the 2d Battalion, dropped at 0151 hours and the entire regiment landed by 0220 hours. Most of the troops landed on or near the drop zone, but a few were widely dispersed over the countryside. Assembly was rapid, and the battalions moved off toward their objectives. The 3rd battalion entered STE. MERE EGLISE at 0400 hours, and the town was securely held and outposted in an hour. The American flag was hoisted over STE MERE EGLISE, the first French town to be liberated by the Allies.. .”

\* \* \*

Peter Huchthausen, Captain U.S. Navy (ret)

The author of eight books lives in the 1944, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division drop zone, and runs a B&B for veterans and their families.

**Nunquam Non Paratus - Never Unprepared**



440TH TROOP CARRIER  
GROUP ASSOCIATION

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The primary mission of the organization is to record, preserve and disseminate historical documents, photos and related materials of the 440th Troop Carrier Group, 9th Troop Carrier Command, 9th Air Force, European Theater of Operations during World War II.

Normandy\*Southern France\*Northern France\*Rome-Arno  
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**[www.440thtroopcarriergroup.org](http://www.440thtroopcarriergroup.org)**

**The President's Corner**

A Hearty potential welcome to all members to attend the 2007 Reunion of the Community of Troop Carrier Groups hosted by the 440th Troop Carrier Group. May you come and enjoy with your fellow Troop Carrier Groups and meet new friends as you visit with your "old friends". We will provide you the names of several churches and times of service for the 10th and 11th November, 2007 for the reunion in Fort Walton Beach Florida. A business meeting of the Community of Troop Carrier Groups is planned to elect officers to run the Community. We hope every group will supply a member to serve as a liaison between the Community and their individual Troop Carrier Group. Think about this and prepare to have a willing member to accept being the liaison between your Troop Carrier Group and the Community of Troop Carrier Groups.

Have a safe journey to the reunion!

May God protect you.

Bill Walsh, President

440th Troop Carrier Group