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## **Paratroopers revisit roots in D-Day Commemoration**

*By Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod*



110602-A-3108M-001 A poster advertising the 67<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World War II Allied invasion of France appears in a storefront in Sainte Mere Eglise, a Norman village liberated by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. This year, as in years past, paratroopers with the storied All American division participated in memorial ceremonies and parachute into a nearby field, re-enacting the jump the division made in the

predawn hours of D-Day, June 6, 1944. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110602-A-3108M-002 Staff Sgt. James Brawley and Sgt. Joshua Evans, paratroopers with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, compare their modern uniforms with a French re-enactor dressed as a World War II era paratrooper June 2, 2011, Sainte Mere Eglise, France. Much as Civil War enthusiasts do in the U.S., re-enactors come from across Europe to commemorate the Allied invasion of France that led to Hitler's defeat. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110602-A-3108M-003 A mock-up of a U.S. Army paratrooper hangs from a church steeple in Sainte Mere Eglise, France, for the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied invasion of France in early June 2011. The actual World War II paratrooper, John Steele of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, pretended to be dead for two hours until taken prisoner by German troops. He later escaped and rejoined his regiment. (U.S.

Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110603-A-3108M-001 Marcel Jean, mayor of Chef du Pont, France, remembers the heroic fighting of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division's 508<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment along the Merderet River in a ceremony held June 3, 2011, to remember the fallen. After parachuting into , the 508<sup>th</sup> freed the village and captured a nearby bridge from the Germans during the Allied invasion of France, June 6, 1944. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110603-A-3108M-002 Paratroopers of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division march with other U.S. servicemembers through the streets of Montebourg, France, June 3, 2011, to honor those lost in the division's heavy combat in the area as the Allies drove the German army from northern France's Cotentin peninsula. Troops of every nation involved in the conflict were honored in a short memorial ceremony led by the citizens of Montebourg. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110603-A-3108M-003 Sgt. Mark Gunn, a paratrooper with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, marches as part of a color guard through the streets of Montebourg, France, June 3, 2011. Originally from Westland, Mich., Gunn is an armor with the division's 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110603-A-3108M-004 A French officer watches a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules fly overhead during a June 3, 2011, memorial ceremony to commemorate U.S., French, British and German soldiers who fought and died in the area during the World War II Allied invasion of France. At left in the maroon beret is the current commanding general of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110603-A-3108M-005 Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins, commanding general of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, and a French city official, present a floral arrangement at a World War II memorial to honor fallen troops during a commemoration ceremony June 3, 2011, in Montebourg, France. The 82<sup>nd</sup> helped to push the German army from the strategic town in the weeks following the Allied invasion June 6, 1944. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110603-A-3108M-006 A city official of Montebourg, France, clasps the hand of a young French girl adorned with uniform insignia and badges given to her by U.S. Army paratroopers visiting Normandy, France, to commemorate the events following D-Day during the first week of June 2011. The children helped the official and Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins, commanding general of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, lay flowers at a World War II memorial to honor fallen troops. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110603-A-3108M-007 Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Thomas Wakefield, a scout platoon sergeant with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, marches U.S. paratroopers and other servicemembers through the streets of Montebourg, France, June 3, 2011. The soldiers and local citizens are honoring the contributions of U.S. and other Allied soldiers to the liberation of northern France following D-Day and remembering all the lives lost – Allied and German – during the epic struggles to end World War II in Europe. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110603-A-3108M-008 Maugei Louis of Montebourg, France, shares a laugh with Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Chastity Wassman, a U.S. Army airborne instructor, during a banquet held by the citizens of Montebourg, France, for visiting U.S. servicemembers. Wassman is in France as part of a U.S. contingent that are scheduled to parachute into nearby La Fiere to commemorate Allied parachutists who jumped into Normandy in the predawn hours of June 6, 1944. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110604-A-3108M-001 Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins, commanding general of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, thanks the citizens of Angoville au Plain, France, for remembering the sacrifices of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division paratroopers who fought in the area following the Allied invasion of northern France during a memorial ceremony June 4, 2011. Seated with a group of fellow veterans (front right) is former Army paratrooper medic, Robert Wright, who, along with fellow medic, Ken Moore, cared for over 70 injured Allied and German troops in the Angoville church at left before the town was finally liberated. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110604-A-3108M-002 Citizens of Angoville au Plain, France, lay flowers at a memorial to honor the memories of paratroopers of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division who died in and around their town during World War II in a ceremony June 4, 2011. Many of the townspeople dress in period U.S. Army uniforms for the ceremony. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110604-A-3108M-003 A World War II veteran and former paratrooper with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division salutes the U.S. flag during a memorial ceremony held June 4, 2011, to honor his fallen comrades who died liberating Angoville au Plain, France, and surrounding areas following the Allied invasion of Normandy. Citizens of Angoville hold the memorial ceremony every year. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110604-A-3108M-004 A stained-glass window in the church of Angoville au Plain, France, casts a light to the memory of U.S. Army paratroopers who wrested the village from the German army following the Allied invasion of France June 6, 1944. The church was once used by two Army medics to care for over 70 U.S. and German soldiers as fighting raged outside. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110604-A-3108M-005 Fireworks explode over the church steeple at Sainte Mere Eglise, France, June 4, 2011, during a week of festivities and memorial ceremonies that commemorate the Allied invasion of France 67 years ago. People come from all over the world to remember the beginning of the end of World War II in Europe. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-001 Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins, commanding general of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, recounts to an audience of several thousand the heroic efforts of 82<sup>nd</sup> paratroopers to capture a nearby bridge capable of supporting armor from the Germans during a memorial ceremony June 5, 2011, at La Fiere, France. His paratroopers were scheduled to parachute into a nearby drop zone, but foul weather forced the jump to be called off. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-002 Several dignitaries, including Maj. Gen. James Huggins, commanding general of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division (in the maroon beret at left), lay flowers at a memorial to the soldiers who fought and died in the La Fiere, France, area just after D-Day, during a ceremony June 5, 2011. A replica of the statue at left, known as “Iron Mike,” also exists at the division’s home base of Fort Bragg, N.C., home of the airborne. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-003 World War II veteran Fred Morgan, who jumped into Normandy as a paratrooper medic with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division during the Allied invasion of France, embraces the current commanding general of the division, Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins June 5, 2011, at La Fiere, France. Morgan and another veteran medic were present for the dedication of a memorial plaque to Allied medics at a memorial to paratroopers. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-004 A dozen French re-enactors gather in the back of a vintage World War II truck at the La Fiere bridge over the Merderet River June 5, 2011, to watch paratroopers with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and other Army parachutists jump into a nearby drop zone to commemorate airborne operations during D-Day. They belong to an association of 100 members who restore World War II – era U.S. Army vehicles, equipment and uniforms to display at commemorations. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-005 Maj. Gen. Jim Huggins, commanding general of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, stands with a color guard before the town hall of Sainte Mere Eglise, France, June 5, 2011, to commemorate the division's role in liberating the area from the Germans on D-Day. At right are World War II veteran U.S. Army paratroopers who jumped into northern France on D-Day. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-006 French children walk past World War II veteran paratroopers to deliver floral arrangements to dignitaries who will lay them at a war memorial during a ceremony in Sainte Mere Eglise, France, June 5, 2011. The ceremony is part of the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied invasion of France. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-007 French children and other citizens of Sainte Mere Eglise, France, watch paratroopers with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division taking part in the commemoration of the 67<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Allied invasion of France in a ceremony June 5, 2011. Liberated by American paratroopers who jumped into the area in the pre-dawn hours of D-Day in 1944, the town of Sainte Mere Eglise has since been particularly fond of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-008 A German army band salutes American paratroopers during festivities to mark the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day, June 5, 2011, in Sainte Mere Eglise, France. U.S. Army paratroopers with the 82<sup>nd</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Divisions liberated the town after parachuting in before dawn on June 6, 1944. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-009 Zane Schlemmer, a veteran U.S. Army paratrooper who jumped into northern France as a sergeant with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, walks in his jump boots down the main street of Sainte Mere Eglise with other World War II veterans during the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied invasion of France, June 5, 2011. French citizens applaud as he and current paratroopers with the 82<sup>nd</sup> and other Army units parade past. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)



110605-A-3108M-010 An organist in a church in Sainte Mere Eglise, France, plays hymns below a stained-glass window dedicated to the memory of U.S. Army paratroopers June 5, 2011, during the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town's liberation. At center is Michael the Archangel, patron saint of paratroopers. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod)