



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 314

Resolution commemorating the 58th anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 1944, and honoring the heroism and valor of our veterans.

By Council Members Nelson, Avella, Boyland, DeBlasio, Felder, Fidler, Gennaro, Gerson, Jackson, Katz, Koppell, Lopez, Martinez, McMahon, Monserrate, Moskowitz, Recchia, Rivera, Seabrook, Sears, Serrano, Stewart, Gallagher, Lanza and Oddo; also Council Member Quinn

Whereas, The Allied invasion of Europe through the beaches at Normandy began in pre-dawn darkness around midnight on June 6, 1944; under the supreme command of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the plan of invasion, known as Operation Overlord, was launched; and Whereas, The Allied invasion of D-Day deftly combined a land invasion with coordinated air and sea support; Allied air forces carried three airborne divisions into battle, protecting the force as it crossed the English Channel, and attacking the targets throughout the invasion area in support of the assault forces; more than 5,000 ships, from battleships to landing craft, carried, escorted and landed the assault force along the Normandy coast; in the eastern zone, the British and Canadians landed on Gold, Juno and Sword beaches, while in the west, the Americans landed on the Utah and Omaha beaches; as the allies came ashore, they took their first steps on the final road to victory in Europe; and Whereas, Under cover of darkness, the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were air dropped behind Utah Beach to secure four causeways across a flooded area directly behind the beach and to protect the invasion's western flank; unexpectedly, due to some unforeseeable factors, most of the paratroopers missed their drop zones and became scattered across the Norman countryside; despite this seeming setback, throughout the night and into the early morning, the airborne troops gathered and organized themselves and went on to accomplish their missions; ironically, the paratroopers' wide dispersion benefited the invasion- with paratroopers dispersed in so many places, the Germans were never able to develop an adequate response to the airborne and amphibious assaults; and Whereas, The 4th Infantry was also assigned to take Utah Beach with the first wave landing 2,000 yards south of where they had intended, another twist of fate that actually proved fortuitous for the Allies as the intended beach was heavily defended in comparison to the light resistance and few fixed defenses encountered on the beach where they actually landed; and Whereas, After a personal reconnaissance, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt Jr., who accompanied the first wave, decided to take advantage of the opportunity and alter the original plan; he ordered that landing craft carrying the successive assault waves land reinforcements, equipment and supplies to capitalize on the first wave's success; within hours, the beachhead was secured and the 4th Division started inland to contact the airborne divisions scattered across its front; as in the Omaha zone, at day's end the Utah Beach forces had not gained all of their planned objectives; however, a lodgement was secured and, most important, once again the American soldier's courage, resourcefulness and initiative had rescued the operation from floundering along the Normandy coast; and Whereas, The landing on Omaha Beach by the regiments of the 1st and 29th Infantry divisions and Army Rangers was even more difficult than expected; when the first wave landed at 6:30 A.M., the men found that naval gunfire and pre-landing air bombardments had not softened German defenses or resistance; along the 7,000 yards of Normandy shoreline, German defenses were as close to that of an Atlantic Wall as on any of the D-Day beaches; enemy positions looked down from bluffs as high as 170 feet, and water and beach obstacles strewn across the narrow strip of beach stopped the assault at the water's edge for much of the morning; and Whereas, By mid-morning, initial reports painted such a bleak portrait of beachhead conditions that Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, United States First Army Commander, considered pulling off the beach and landing troops elsewhere, however, during these dark hours, bravery and initiative came to the fore; as soldiers struggled, one leader told his men that two types of people would stay on the beach- the dead and those who are going to die- so they'd better get the hell out of there, and they did; and Whereas, Slowly, individually and in groups, soldiers began to cross the fire-swept beach; supported by Allied naval gunfire from destroyers steaming dangerously close to the shore, the American infantry men gained the heights and beach exits and drove the enemy inland; by day's end, V Corps had a tenuous toehold on the Normandy coast, and the force consolidated to protect its gains and prepare for the next step on the road to Germany; and

Whereas, The people of the City of New York recognize and salute the heroism and bravery displayed by the soldiers who risked their lives for their country and for freedom-loving people around the world; and

Whereas, During these uncertain times in which we are living, we are more appreciative than ever of the fragility of our freedoms and of the supreme sacrifices that our nation's veterans have made in defense of those freedoms; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commemorates the 58th anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 1944, and honors the strength, heroism and valor of our veterans.

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