

LANDING IN NORMANDY

His name is William Turner. He is British and he is 96 years old but he was 17 years old during the landing in France.

You were a private during the second World War. You took part into a crucial event, the landing in Normandy. At that moment you were 17 years old, how did you do ?

Why did you take part in the landing ?

First, I wanted to follow my big brother in the army because he was my model. Then I was determined to help France, because it was occupied by German troops. Moreover I didn't agree with Nazi ideology.

When did you learn about your landing in Normandy ?

One officer told us we were going to take part in the landing in Normandy on 5th June. After that, the officer told us " if you want to leave this boat, you can! ". « NO » we all screamed .The officer was impressed.

How did you feel before the landing in Normandy ?

I was stressed because I risked my life in this operation in Normandy. The Germans knew our position and we were to be exposed when we would land the beach. I was also proud because I helped French allies and I was accompagnied by my big brother, Charles. After that, as anybody had ever been on a boat, our officer decided to give us a drug to the seasickness. This pill made all privates stoned .



Omaha beach, 6th. June 1944 (revue Figaro Hors Série)

What did you have to do ?

My mission was to land on French beach in Normand.It codename was Sword. My squad had to push the German Privates. They were hidden away in the Altlantic wall bumkers. We tried to move but the beach was full of mines, barbed wire, pyramid. It was Field Marshal Rommel who put in the beach. We lost many soldiers. We bombers blasting German tanks and trucks with rockets, miles bihind enemy lines.

What happened when the operation started ?

First, I went down the boat. My equipment was too heavy so I took it off. After, I swam to go on the beach. When I arrived, I was hidden behind a tank to avoid dying. A grenade landed near me, my big brother wasn't far away. away. He threw himself on the grenade and he died to save me. I was horrified, I didn't know what to do. I continued the fight with a lot of effort.

How did the French people greet you ?

When I finished the Overlord mission , I needed to be billeted with the French people. The army didn't anticipate this victory, so there weren't enough lodgings. I went to various villages and I finally found a family agreeing to billet me for a night. For breakfast I was given bread and milk . I didn't forget those people, particularly the mom , Françoise. Before my departure the family wished me good luck.

What has changed in your life after this war experience ?

I'm sad because I lost my big brother. My life has changed since he wasn't there. I got many injuries so I have a lot of scars which remind me of the war.



photo débarquement barge (Nara)

William survived the D-DAY despite the 4,414 allied soldiers who died. This event marked his life and though he took confidence. He had helped France to keep her territories