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D-Day: The French Jubilee of Liberty Medal and the 60th Anniversary Commemoration on June 6, 2004, and Events for June 6, 2005

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Summary

This report details the Jubilee of Liberty Medal awarded to U.S. veterans by the French government to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy by the Allied forces on June 6, 1944 (D-Day). These medals are no longer distributed by the French government. Included is information on how to obtain this medal from a commercial source and how U.S. veterans may obtain an official “Thank-You-America 1944-1945” certificate of participation from the French government. Also included is information on official events and activities in Normandy during the 60th anniversary on June 6, 2004, and scheduled events for June 6, 2005. This report will be updated as needed.

Normandy Invasion, June 6, 1944

The invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, was the largest air, land, and sea invasion ever undertaken, including over 5,000 ships, 10,000 airplanes, and over 150,000 American, British, Canadian, Free French, and Polish troops.¹ There are no exact figures for the total number of D-Day participants nor exact casualty figures.² Historical information can be found in numerous sources including *D-Day June 6, 1944* (1994) and *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944 to May 7, 1945* (1998) both by Stephen Ambrose; and *The Longest Day* (1959) by Cornelius Ryan. Additional information is available from

¹ Brian Williams, “Operation Overlord,” *MilitaryHistoryOnline*, at [<http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/wwii/dday/overlord.aspx>].

² Some historians estimate that over 70,000 Americans and over 80,000 combined British, Canadian, Free French, and Polish troops participated, including 23,000 men arriving by parachute and glider. These estimates are from the histories listed above. According to estimates from the National D-Day Memorial Museum, the Allied forces suffered 9,758 casualties, of which 6,603 were Americans.

the National D-Day Museum located in New Orleans, Louisiana, via the Internet at [<http://www.ddaymuseum.org>].

Jubilee of Liberty Medals and the 50th Anniversary of D-Day

The Jubilee of Liberty Medal was first awarded in June 1994 to American servicemen for their participation in the Battle of Normandy. The medals were minted at the request of the Regional Council of Normandy to be presented to veterans attending the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landing on June 6, 1994. Eligible veterans included all who served in Normandy from June 6 to August 31, 1944, comprising land forces, off-shore supporting personnel, and airmen flying cover overhead. The only stipulation was that the medal be presented during an official ceremony, and the veteran be present to accept. On the front of the medal is inscribed, "Overlord 6 Juin 1944" on the upper part of the medal, with the flags of the allied nations and the names of the landing beaches completing the face of the medal. On the reverse side is the Torch of Freedom surrounded by the device of William the Conqueror 'Diex Aie' ("God is with us" in Norman French).

Unfortunately, these medals are no longer being awarded by the French government. All medals to commemorate the 50th anniversary ceremony on June 6, 1994, have been distributed by the French government. Additional medals for those veterans who were unable to attend the anniversary ceremony were later distributed through the *Association Debarquement et Bataille de Normandie 1944* in France, which is now defunct.

Some Members of Congress have awarded the Jubilee of Liberty Medals to U.S. veterans who were unable to attend the ceremony in France on June 6, 1994. These medals were obtained either from the *Association Debarquement et Bataille de Normandie 1944* or from a commercial source.

Commercially-minted Jubilee of Liberty Medals are being manufactured by Sims Enterprises, a private company in Kansas, that is selling these medals at a cost of \$17 for each individual medal (includes shipping and handling) or \$13 each for orders of 10 or more medals (plus an additional charge for shipping). Please note: This company is not affiliated with either the French or U.S. governments. Veterans are asked to send copies of their service record for verification; copies will not be returned unless specifically requested along with the medals. For additional information, please contact Sims Enterprises, 616 Main Street, Newton, KS 67114; Tel: (316) 283-5817.

"Thank-You-America 1944-1945" Certificates

The French government is no longer distributing the Jubilee of Liberty medals. Instead, the government of France is distributing a "Thank-You-America Certificate 1944-1945" for U.S. veterans. According to a letter sent in December 2000 by former Ambassador of France to the United States, His Excellency François Bujon de l'Estang, to then Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel W. Gober, the government of France is issuing a certificate to recognize the participation of American and allied soldiers who participated in the Normandy landing and subsequent battles leading to the liberation of France. Veterans who served on French territory and in French territorial waters and airspace, from June 6, 1944, to May 8, 1945, are still eligible. The certificate will not be issued posthumously. In agreement with the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the

French Consulates General and state veterans affairs offices, veterans service organizations, and veterans associations will identify eligible veterans, review and certify the applications, prepare the certificates, and organize the ceremonies to present the certificates.

D-Day participants living in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia may obtain applications for certificates from the French embassy in Washington, DC, or directly from the Internet at [<http://www.ambafrance-us.org/news/statmnts/2000/ww2/index.asp>].

French Consulate/"Thank-You-America"
4101 Reservoir Road
Washington, DC 20007
Tel: (202) 944-6000
Fax: (202) 944-6072

D-Day veterans living in other states may wish to contact the nearest French consulate listed below.

Table 1. French Consulates in the United States

State	Address
Atlanta (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 3475 Piedmont Road, NE Suite 1840 Atlanta, GA 30305
Boston (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" Park Square Building Suite 750 31 Saint James Avenue Boston, MA 02116
Chicago (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 737 North Michigan Avenue Suite 2020 Chicago, IL 60611
Houston (Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 777 Post Oak Boulevard Suite 600 Houston, TX 77056
Los Angeles (Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico) for California, send to LA if your zip code is under 93400, to SF if above (see below)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 10990 Wilshire Boulevard Suite 300 Los Angeles, CA 90024

State	Address
Miami (Florida)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" One Biscayne Tower 17th Floor 2 South Biscayne Boulevard Miami, FL 33131
New Orleans (Louisiana)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" The Amoco Building 1340 Poydras Street, Suite 1710 New Orleans, LA 70112
New York (Connecticut, New Jersey, New York)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 934 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10021
San Francisco (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington State, Wyoming) for California, send to SF if your zip code is above 93400, to LA if under (see above)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 540 Bush Street San Francisco, CA 94108

60th Anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 2004, and Events for 2005

The official ceremony on June 6, 2004, was attended by the following heads of state: U.S. President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Queen Elizabeth II, and the Prince of Wales. President Chirac also invited, for the first time, representatives of the German and Russian governments, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Both leaders accepted his invitation. Other guests included Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands, the Prime Ministers of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, as well as representatives of the Dutch and Polish governments.

On May 17, 2004, the official U.S. World War II 60th Anniversary Commemorative Committee released its schedule of commemorative events worldwide at its website at [<http://www.60wwii.mil>]. Additional information on official events, local activities, and commemorative tours during the 60th anniversary in June 2004 and current information on events for June 2005 are available from the following websites.

American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). The American Battle Monuments Commission at [<http://www.abmc.gov/abmc5e.htm>] lists events in Normandy that will include substantial American participation. It also links to the official site of the Normandy Memoire at [<http://www.normandiememoire.com>], which provides information in English and French for all the anniversary events authorized by the French D-Day planning committee. A copy of the report on the 2004 commemorations is available at this site as well as a listing of events for June 2005.

Calendar of the Official Commemorations of June 6, 2004. This is a lengthy calendar by month (June, July, August) and by date (June 4 to August 29, 2004) of all official commemorations of June 6, 2004, in Normandy, France, at [<http://www.dday-overlord.com/NMacceng.htm>].

D-Day Museum 60th Anniversary of D-Day Commemorative Tour. The National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, sponsored a 60th anniversary tour from May 30 to June 8, 2004. Information on the tour itinerary and related activities in Normandy at [<http://www.stephenambrosetours.com/tours/dday-comm.html>].

National D-Day Memorial. The website of the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia, includes information on events and tours for the 61st anniversary in Normandy on June 6, 2005, by clicking on “Visit Normandy” at [<http://www.dday.org/start.html>].

Normandy Region D-Day Tours. The official website in English of the *Comité Régional de Tourisme de Normandie* lists various D-Day tours in the region as well as general tourist information at [<http://www.normandy-tourism.org/gb/16tours/index.html>].

Western France Tourism Board. The official site of the Western France Tourism Board offers information on tours and travel in the region by clicking on “Normandy” at [<http://www.westernfrancetouristboard.com>].