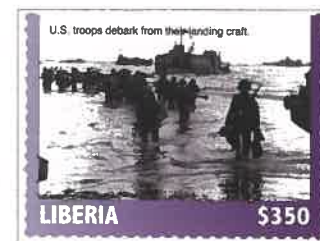


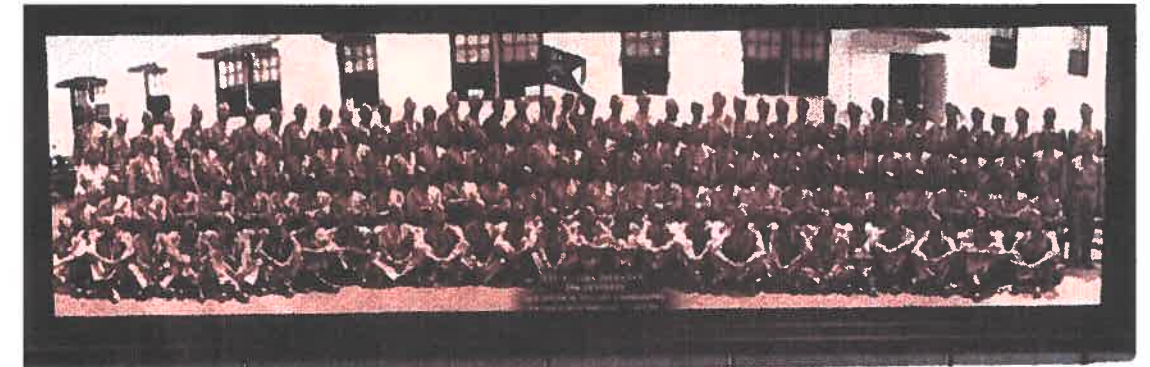
# The Story of the Bedford Boys

Carol Costa

On June 6, 1944, 156,000 American, British and Canadian forces landed on five beaches along a 50-mile fortified coast in northern France, the largest seaborne invasion in the history of modern warfare. By the end of the day, the Allies had suffered 10,000 casualties. Codenamed Operation Overload, this Allied invasion of France in World War II hastened the surrender of the Germans less than a year later.



On the morning of Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1944, a 21-year-old telegraph operator, Elizabeth Teuss, started receiving messages stating, "THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR . . . . . WAS KILLED IN ACTION SIX JUNE IN FRANCE LETTER FOLLOWS." In nine minutes on that morning in June, nineteen young men from the small farm town of Bedford, VA died on Omaha Beach. Part of Company A of the 116<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, the men were in the initial American assault force in the D-Day landing on Omaha Beach. Proportionally, this small town of 3200 residents suffered the nation's most severe D-Day loss. Four more Bedford men died later in the Normandy campaign.



*This picture is of the famed Company A, 116<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. At the end of the "Longest Day" 6 June 1944, 92% of these heroes would either be Killed or Wounded-In-Action on the beach and only 18 could hold a rifle.*

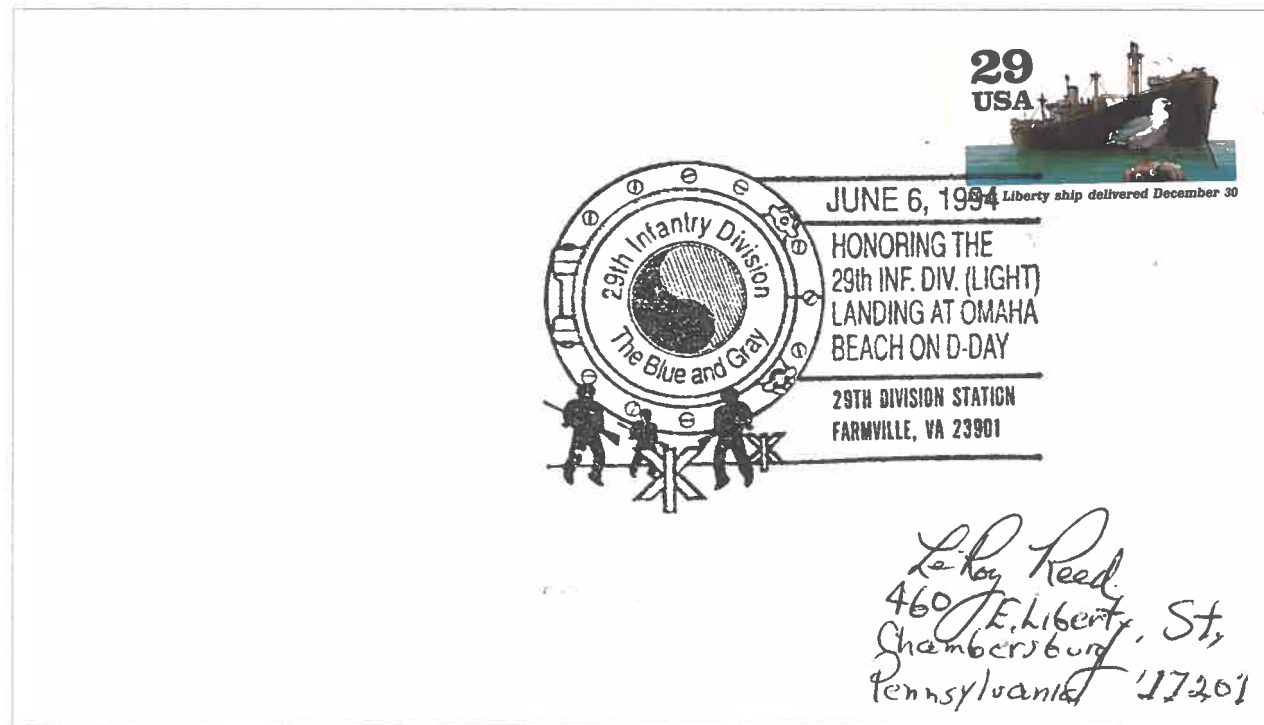
In 2019, retired couple Kenneth and Linda Parker were planning a trip to Normandy Beach to attend the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremonies of D-Day on June 6. While preparing for their trip, they learned about Bedford and traveled there. They were so emotionally moved by the story of the little town's sacrifice that they moved to Bedford and built a Tribute Center to the Bedford Boys. The Center was started in the old Green's Drugstore. The building was located in the heart of downtown Bedford near the high school where the young people of Bedford hung out at the soda fountain to socialize. The Western Union telegraph office which received the messages from the War Department was located in the drugstore in 1944.



*Elizabeth Teuss and West Union Telegraph Machine*



The Center is supported entirely by donations. More information about the Center and its programs is available on their website at [bbtcva.org](http://bbtcva.org).



The Tribute Center is filled with display cases containing the personal effects of the young men who were killed. Its focus is both remembrance of the Bedford Boys and education about D-Day and World War II. The Center hosts numerous educational programs and is launching a virtual classroom to be made available nationally to all children. 70% of school children today do not know why we fought World War II.

