

“These are the Boys of Pointe du Hoc... Champions who helped to free a Continent. The Heroes who helped end a war” Pres. Reagan, 40th Anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 1984



President Reagan and the Rangers who survived Pointe du Hoc on
D-Day, Normandy, June 6, 1984

As a child of six on June 6, 1944, I listened as the family gathered around the Philco radio in our parlor to hear the first reports and the message of General later President Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, announcing the momentous invasion of Hitler's Fortress Europa on the coast of Normandy. We had relatives who, we later learned, fought and survived on the beaches at Normandy only to lose their lives in the fury of the Battles in the Ardennes Forest and the Bulge. A future brother-in law was an officer in the Mighty Eighth Air Force with a Bomb Group stationed at an RAF airfield, Bury Saint Edmund in England. Later as a leader of his Bomb Group alumni association he visited the Normandy Battlefield and, like many in his party, veterans of the air war during WWII, received a commemorative medal from the Mayor of Caen, France.

They were the heroes who rolled back the Nazi hordes from occupied Europe to victory on May 8, 1945. Those that are alive now in their 90's we hold precious as living testament

to their bravery and commitment to the mission, freeing the continent from Nazi tyranny and mass murder. On this 71st anniversary, we should pause and salute their selfless deeds and sacrifices.

The Daily Mail noted in a 2014 commemoration how President Ronald Reagan [gave](#) an evocative and emotional remembrance on the 40th anniversary in 1984. Joining him were surviving members of an Army Rangers team that had scaled cliffs at Pointe du Hoc to silence German guns protecting the Normandy beaches.



President Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan at the Normandy American Cemetery, June 6, 1984

Source: AP/Ron Edmonds

Today's *Washington Examiner* [shares](#) the video and text of Reagan's Pointe du Hoc speech on June 6, 1984, the 40th anniversary of D-Day:

Reagan's voice at times cracked with emotion as he delivered the speech at the U.S. Ranger Monument at Pointe du Hoc, France. American veterans, then in their 60s, reacted to the powerful speech in their honor by dabbing their eyes. These were the men who climbed the cliffs of Normandy and freed Western Europe from Nazi Germany.

Here's an excerpt from Reagan's speech:

We're here to mark that day in history when the Allied armies joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty. For 4 long years, much of Europe had been under a terrible shadow. Free nations had fallen, Jews cried out in the camps, millions cried out for liberation. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here in Normandy the rescue began. Here the Allies stood and

fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history.

We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft, but 40 years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, and the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon. At dawn, on the morning of the 6th of June, 1944, 225 Rangers jumped off the British landing craft and ran to the bottom of these cliffs. Their mission was one of the most difficult and daring of the invasion: to climb these sheer and desolate cliffs and take out the enemy guns. The Allies had been told that some of the mightiest of these guns were here and they would be trained on the beaches to stop the Allied advance.

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers – the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machineguns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and began to pull themselves up. When one Ranger fell, another would take his place. When one rope was cut, a Ranger would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back, and held their footing. Soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top, and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs, they began to seize back the continent of Europe. Two hundred and twenty-five came here. After 2 days of fighting, only 90 could still bear arms.

Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there.

These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war.

[Here is the full text.](#)

[Watch](#) this YouTube video of Reagan's speech at the Pointe du Hoc Memorial Commemoration on the 40th anniversary of D-Day June 6, 1984: