
Task Force Normandy

By Second Lieutenant John M. Chiappone

On 6 June 1944, the Allies fought their way ashore on the beaches of France, landing more than 130,000 soldiers there and dropping 30,000 airborne and glider troops farther inland. The soldiers' role in the "Greatest Generation" changed the tides of history. Sixty years later, a select group of soldiers from the 212th Military Police Company had the opportunity to honor their brothers-in-arms at a ceremony in France.

The company's responsibility was clear-cut—provide security for the events celebrating this significant anniversary. Each venue hosted thousands of people, including the presidents of the United States and France, the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, numerous senators, members of Congress, general officers, foreign officials, and other dignitaries. The first event took place in Ste Mere Eglise on 5 June 2004, honoring those paratroopers who jumped into the town that dark night. The military police soldiers performed brilliantly, receiving compliments from General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, among others.

The following day, 212th soldiers provided security at Omaha and Utah Beaches and at Isigny, Bayeux, and Pointe du Hoc. At each site, these military police soldiers flawlessly executed their duties with professionalism and military bearing. Visitors, including the president of the United States and the Army Chief of Staff, once again complimented the soldiers.

The greatest privilege the 212th soldiers had was the opportunity to speak with and learn from the veterans of the invasion. All the soldiers took time to speak to those great Americans, listening to and learning from their stories. No book or movie could portray the reality of D-Day as well as speaking to a veteran while standing on the very bridge that he had successfully seized from his Nazi enemies 60 years ago. The experience was incredible, with the veterans conversing with their modern counterparts and today's young soldiers gaining insight from those who went before them.



Photo by Specialist Kristopher Joseph

Soldiers in the 18th Military Police Brigade, headquartered in Mannheim, Germany, look over the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach, France, where they conducted security during the 60th anniversary of D-Day.