



18th Military Police Brigade Leads the Way for D-Day Ceremonies

By Specialist Adrienne Killingsworth

When it came time to honor the Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen who fought and gave their lives during the D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, sixty-five years ago, thousands flocked to the shores of Utah Beach and Omaha Beach to pay homage to the bravery and sacrifices of these heroes. To honor them in the manner they deserve, the 18th Military Police Brigade was tasked to plan, coordinate, and conduct all U.S. support to the Normandy ceremonies commemorating the 65th anniversary of D-Day. Weeks of careful planning and coordination ensured that the veterans of D-Day knew their acts of heroism had not been forgotten.

As the “Task Force Normandy” commander, Colonel Thomas P. Evans (commander of the 18th Military Police Brigade) oversaw the command and control of the ceremonies, which began on 3 June. And more than 600 Soldiers from the 18th Military Police Brigade and historical D-Day units participated in the ceremonies. Maintaining such a large number of Soldiers and coordinating with other military branches and foreign officials required a high level of dedication and attention to detail.

An essential aspect of the mission was coordination with French officials (including town mayors, cemetery managers, and the gendarmerie) from the brigade headquarters in Germany. In addition, the President’s attendance at D-Day ceremonies made coordination with

the White House Press Corps and the U.S. Secret Service necessary.

Soldiers of the 18th provided force protection and were directly involved in the ceremonies. They conducted salute battery and color guard support and stood in formation at the ceremonies.

Despite the logistical difficulties of planning and conducting such a large operation, the opportunity to bring U.S. Army Europe units together with historic units like the 82d Airborne Division, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment and to be involved in such a historical event was a prestigious honor for the brigade. The Soldiers of the 18th Military Police Brigade were proud to pay tribute to the veterans who came before them.

The teamwork and partnerships of Task Force Normandy mirror the cooperation and alliances that have made so many hundreds of military missions a success—including one very important one sixty-five years ago on the beaches of Normandy.

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