Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight D. Eisenhower
Notice of Separation from the U.S. Naval Service – Coast Guard
Honorable Discharge

May 9, 1946
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D-DAY RECOLLECTIONS - by John Olha, Seaman 1/C

It was June 5, 1944 when the USS SAMUEL CHASE weighed anchor in Weymouth harbor and headed for Normandy. There were hundreds of ships and crafts of all descriptions in that convoy, but to each of us it was only ourselves. We arrived in the Bay of Seine at 3:00 a.m. on June 6 in full battle readiness—all of us at general quarters. D-Day was an event I barely understood then, but fully do now. That day was a monumental time in the history of civilization. It was the day the allies invaded Nazi-occupied Europe!

Over the P.A. came the message from our Supreme Allied Commander, Dwight Eisenhower, "Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force, you are about to embark upon the Great Crusade......." Those were heady times for a young sailor, just barely turned 19 years of age.

Our ship lay off the French Coast as the USS ARKANSAS, USS NEVADA and USS TEXAS began to pour their fire toward shore. Hundred of planes—U.S. Air Force and RAF provided an overhead canopy. The U.S. Army, 1st Division, began to board our landing craft at the ship's rail. The order came quickly "lower all boats" and the first wave headed for the beach. Reports filtered back to the CHASE that German 88's and 155's prevented the beach from being secured. Gradually, the invasion rolled on—beyond the dreadful toll on Omaha Beach.

The CHASE then began to take on the wounded and dead while preparing for the return voyage to Weymouth. The wounded were clustered amidship and in Sick Bay while those over whose faces blankets had been drawn were laid out on the aft deck. Several of us drew the duty of placing the dead in body bags. After 66 years, that scene is still vivid in my memory now and it probably always will be. How many times have I wondered who those young soldiers were and how their families' lives were affected.

On June 7, we transferred the wounded and dead at the dock in Weymouth. That day, the CHASE disembarked 322 casualties. After a few days, we were underway again to eventually participate in the invasion of Southern France.