



Turning Point

**An eyewitness, up-close and personal account
of the beginning of the end
of World War II.**



D-Day, June 6, 1944

By

Delmar S. Powell



EVEREADY PRESS

1817 Broadway . Nashville, Tennessee 37203
615-327-9106





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Printed in the USA

Book design by Eveready Press

Navy Presidential Unit Citation (back cover)

Criteria: Awarded to units of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps and allies for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy on or after December 7, 1941 (marking the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entrance into World War II.) The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions so as to set it apart from and above other units participating in the same campaign. The award is the unit equivalent of a Navy Cross Medal and was established on February 6, 1942.

The Presidential Unit Citation and the Navy Cross Medal are second only to the honor given for the Medal of Honor, the highest military medal awarded for honor.

ISBN: 978-0-9814694-7-8



~ Foreword ~

In the course of human history there have been reports of wars and more wars. With each account there have always been those who do not believe some of the incidents that were cited.

This phenomenon has already been experienced in this report of Turning Point. When talking with men who have gone through West Point, they were quick to express their disbelief in certain statements. Others could not trust the report of the numbers of wounded men transported. Still there are those that can not bring themselves to think that plans for the Normandy Invasion were started a year before the United States was drawn into the war with Germany.

One strategical point in that planning was the establishment of a combat medical team of





three thousand medical personnel. The main purpose was to evacuate the wounded from Normandy to the hospitals in England. An evacuation team of the size needed would alert the enemy that something big was being planned. The USA's strategy was to give this team a TOP SECRET designation. This was done with the name "FOXY 29".



Another part of the plan was to involve only a few ranking officers in the planning procedure. A noncommissioned officer was given a very important position in this regard. He was a Chief Pharmacist Mate. He was to spend the better part of four years visiting Naval hospitals, universities and other places where Naval medical personnel were working. His job was to observe medical men at work. Those whom he found to be worthy of the cause of FOXY 29 were placed on his list. His name was Joseph Earhart Sardo III, Master





Chief Pharmacist Mate, U.S.N. In his book titled, “FOXY 29”: *From The Sea-Came Heroes*, he stated:

“I had orders signed by the Commanding Admiral himself stating that I was to have my pick of any corpsman serving in these hospitals and that they had no choice but to accept my orders and their transfer into ‘FOXY 29’ for further training.”

Considering that the plans for Normandy invasion would call for a total of three million men, over one hundred thousand going on the beaches, there was a demand for a large force of medical personnel to remove the wounded.

The plan was to mount the largest invasion in human history. To do this, it would take years to develop. New types of ships would need to be developed. Those ships were the Landing Ship





Tank (LST) along with many other amphibious vessels.

As the years passed, only certain key persons were even aware of it until just five or six months prior to D-Day. At that time all the separate units were brought into play and trained specifically for their part of the invasion. All those on the Master Chief's list were called to Lido Beach, Long Island, New York FOXY 29 was trained and assembled there in January of 1944. No one knew they were on such a list until a long time after World War II ended, so truly secret were all the plans for the invasion of Normandy. The magnitude of this plan was so broad it demanded absolute secrecy.

Finally, may I add that all that secrecy, at all levels, *worked*. I am especially proud to have been a part of it.

Delmar S. Powell





Most of the sailors on our ship were breathing a little easier. The great storm was calming down, and the sea was not so rough as we had seen during the earlier hours of the day. Our United States Ship the LST (Landing Ship Tank) was resting in her berth in Southern England. Sleep that night did not come easy as we had headed out into the English Channel earlier but had to turn back due to the storm. It was the evening of June 5, 1944.

Roughly about one o'clock in the morning I awakened from a silent sleep and realized that we were underway. Directions could not be determined for it was a black night, and no stars could be seen. One had to consult the compass. On the other hand every man on the ship knew





where we were headed and all were looking forward to this very day.

As we plied through the English Channel, we were informed that we were going to invade France where the Germans had “impregnable strongholds” all along the beaches where we were headed. We were also informed that this invasion of France must be won at all costs. Should it be lost, none of us would be going back to America. England would be under the rule of Hitler and that meant there would be no way back across the Atlantic to the USA. Most of the invasion fleet would also have been lost. To the man there was a determination to win this confrontation.

The LST ship has a cruising speed of nine knots per hour. A mile and one eighth equals a knot. Where we were headed was roughly 30 miles across the English channel to the shore of





France. That meant that we would be in position off the coast of France in about three and a half hours. It was so dark no other ships could be detected any place in the Channel. It was a silent run. There were no lights, noise, or radio, nothing that could alarm the enemy who was not sure when we would be coming. All that could be heard was the humming of the ship's Diesel engines and the splash of the waves against the snub-nosed bow of the ship as we plowed through the waters.

