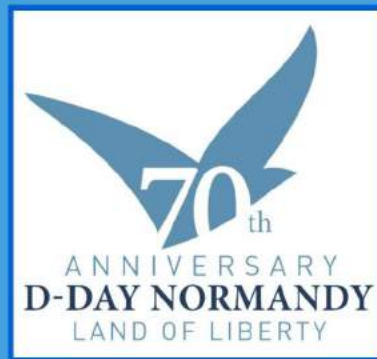


THE SECOND WORLD WAR



The Second World War had a dramatic impact on this part of Devon. As elsewhere, its men and womenfolk went off to serve in the armed forces, but their departure was outweighed by the huge number of service personnel based in and around Salcombe during the war. These included airmen and WAAFs at Bolt Head, West Prawle, Bolt Tail and Hope Cove, Royal Navy sailors in the harbour, soldiers serving in anti-aircraft artillery units and, from 1943, nearly two thousand Americans at the US Navy Amphibious Base.

All this military activity attracted the attention of the German Luftwaffe and, in over eleven bombing raids, 17 civilians lost their lives.

The population was further swelled early in the war by an influx of French and Belgian refugees and evacuees from London and other cities. By welcoming all these incomers, risking their lives as the bombs fell and actively embracing civilian campaigns to support the war effort, Salcombe folk more than did 'their bit'.

The Threat from the Air

After German reconnaissance planes spotted the construction of RAF Bolt Head in 1940, the Luftwaffe started sending aircraft on a regular basis to attack the airbase as well as vessels in the estuary.

Heavy bombers such as Dornier DO-17s and Junkers Ju88 were used in the early bombing raids, but when RAF Bolt Head became operational in December 1941, fast fighters – Me 109s and FW 190s – swooped in on 'Tip and Run Raids'. Approaching at low height to avoid the radar, they attacked the estuary and sped away before Spitfires from Bolt Head could intercept them.



Focke-Wulf Fw 190



Messerschmitt Bf 109



Dornier DO 17



Junkers Ju 88

The German fighters and bombers that attacked Salcombe between 1941 and 1943



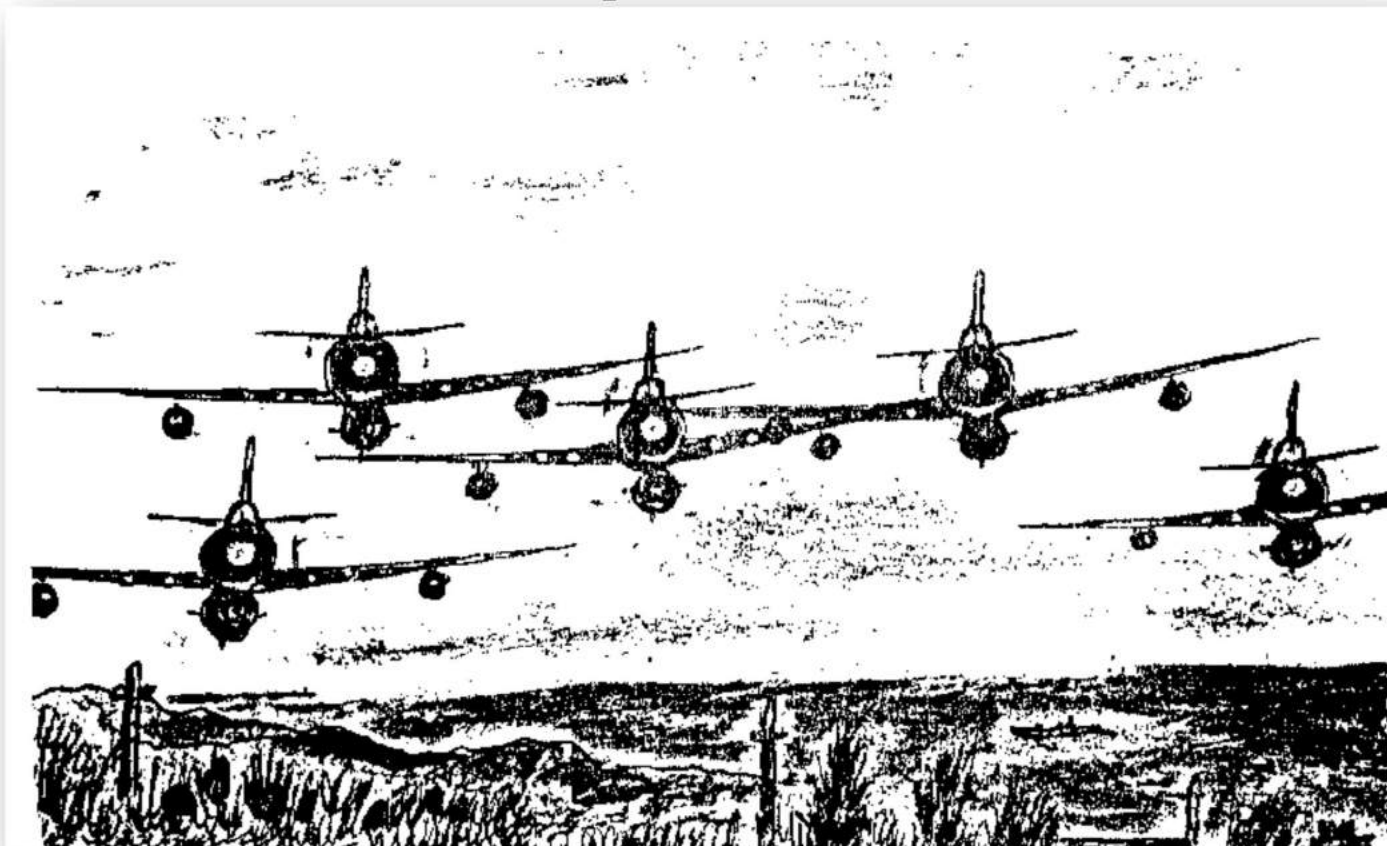
Site of the Church Street Raid, 8 September 1942

Nine people, including three children, were killed. Six of them were from one family.



Edgar Cove's Boatyard

Demolished in the 12 March 1943 raid, the yard was quickly re-built as it was carrying out essential war work for the Admiralty.



A low level attack

FW 190 fighter/ bombers attacking from South Pool (Drawing by P.A.F. Pearce)



Bombed in the Fore Street/Victoria Quay Raid, 12 March 1943

This raid claimed five lives.



Not to scale

Aircraft that flew from RAF Bolt Head 1941-45

RAF Bolt Head was operational from 1941 until 1945. The station was originally used by fighters of 10 and 11 group to escort bombers. The cliff-top site allowed the fighters maximum range for these sorties into France.

Later in the build-up for D-Day, Spitfires and Typhoons by day and Mosquitoes and Beaufighters by night, used the station for raids across the channel.

It was also a base for Air Sea Rescue using Lysanders, Spitfires and Walruses. At first the personnel were under canvas but as the war progressed facilities improved with huts and hangars being built.



610 Squadron, Bolt Head, October 1943
A Spitfire squadron which carried out convoy escort duties, bomber escort and offensive patrols.



Squadron Leader Sagjinski
One of the many Polish officers that flew from the airfield.

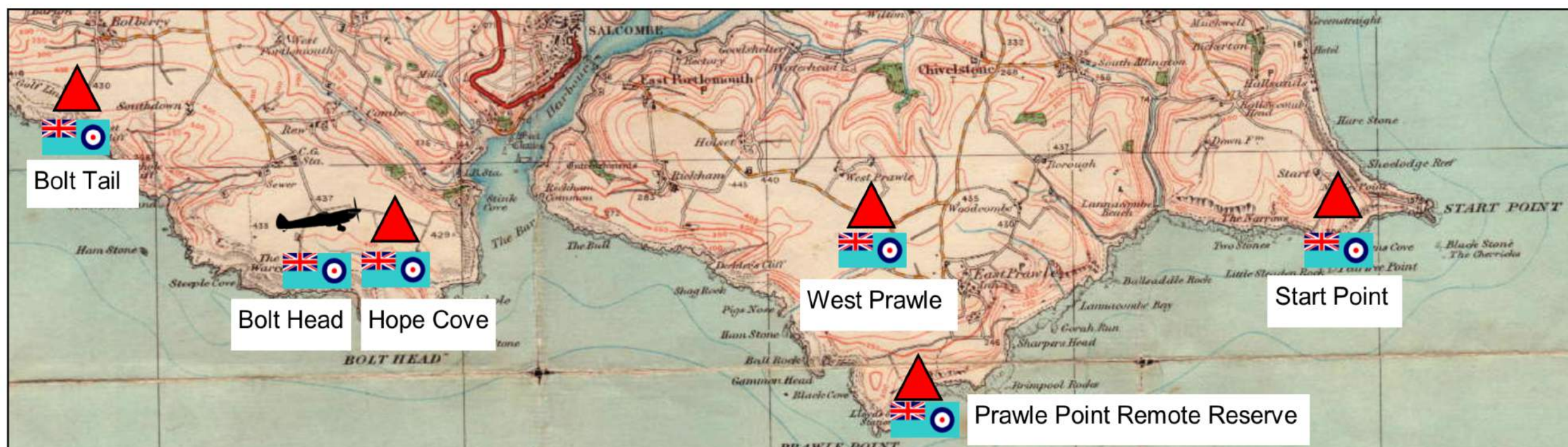


Courting in the cockpit



Air Sea Rescue

The RAF Air Sea Rescue launch 2504 was one of five stationed at Salcombe during the war. Attached to RAF Squadron 276 at Bolt Head, they had their headquarters at Rockside and the crews were billeted at Carbery.



Radar Stations

Between 1939 and 1942 five RAF radar stations were set up either side of the estuary to give early warning of German air raids:

RAF West Prawle - set up at the outset of the war, to provide radar cover for the approaches to Exeter and Plymouth.

RAF Bolt Tail - built in 1941 and situated right at the edge of the cliffs on Bolberry Down. It was designated an A.M.E.S. type 2, 52 unit.

RAF Hope Cove - a ground Control Interceptor Station (GCI). It was established in 1941 to direct fighter operations in this sector of the English Channel.

Start Point - In 1942 the RAF set up another Radar Station above Start Point as part of the Chain Home (Low) system. This was taken over by the Americans in 1943.



A.M.E.S. Type 2



Ops. Room, Hope Cove



Remains of the West Prawle Station



Prawle Point Remote Reserve Site

West Prawle was backed up by a Remote Reserve Site on the coast near Prawle Point.

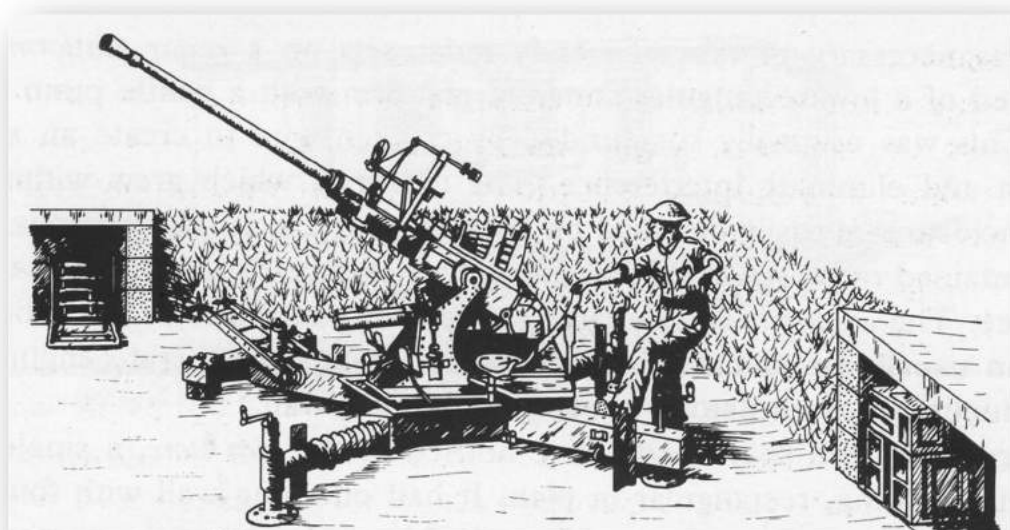


6-inch Naval Gun

Harbour Defence

The entrance to Salcombe harbour was guarded by a boom defence and, from July 1940, a gun battery. This mounted two 4-inch naval guns, later replaced by two 6-inch guns. The site, above Splat Cove, was manned by 391 Battery of 556 Coast Regiment until it was handed over to the Home Guard in 1943. Bofors anti-aircraft guns were mounted on the cliffs and the hilltops around the estuary and were in regular use between 1941-3.

Prawle Point Royal Naval Shore Signal Station - The Admiralty coastguards remained on constant watch throughout the war.



Anti-Aircraft Gun



RNSSS Prawle Point

The Home Front

The people of Salcombe played an active part in wartime fundraising and food production campaigns.

Many local people, too old to serve in the armed forces or employed in reserved occupations, were involved in home defence.



Pigs for Victory

In 1940 Salcombe U.D. Council was the first local authority in Devon to keep pigs under the wartime plan for increasing food production.



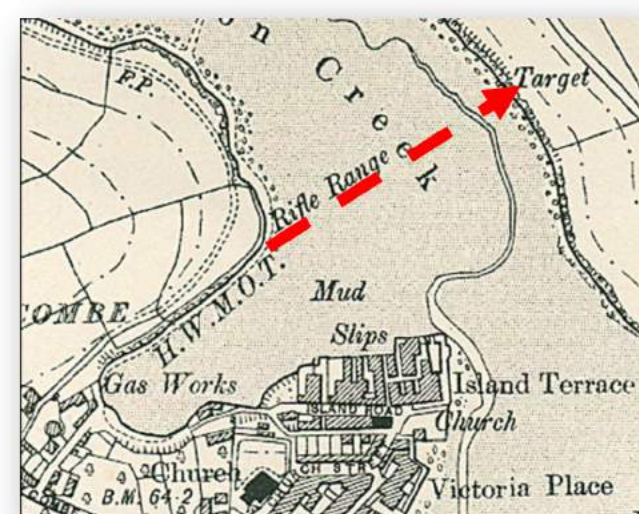
Warship Week

In February 1942 the minesweeper *HMS Leda* was adopted by Salcombe. Sadly seven months later she was torpedoed on Arctic convoy duty with the loss of 43 of her crew.



The Home Guard

Local units undertook mobile shore patrols and, after 1943, manned the 6inch gun battery above Splat Cove. Rifle practice was carried out across Batson Creek.



Wings For Victory

In 1940 a Me 109 German fighter plane was brought through Fore Street in sections, and re-assembled in Central Garage. Money was raised to buy a Spitfire



Air Raid Wardens In addition to domestic Anderson and Morrison shelters a large communal shelter was built in Courtenay Park.

Salute the Soldier

In April 1944 a march past by American and British forces, drill displays, dances and flag days helped to raise over £16,000 to fund a medical unit.



Land Girls

Help was needed to grow more food on farms and so the government started the Women's Land Army in June 1939. A number of the land girls who came to the South Hams from 'up country' married and settled here.

The Evacuee Children

Soon after the start of the war children began to arrive as evacuees from cities such as London to escape the bombing. Equipped with a gas mask and a small case of possessions, they travelled by train to Kingbridge where they were organised by the WVS. Many were allocated to farms, houses and hotels in and around Salcombe.

Despite moments of homesickness, most fitted in well and were made to feel welcome. Fights with the local youngsters were commonplace but *'with time integration came about and many local lads married evacuee girls and vice versa'*



Sharpitor

Seventeen local properties were taken over by Salcombe U.D. Council in 1940 under the Government Evacuation Scheme. Sharpitor Youth Hostel, now Overbecks, housed evacuees between July and October 1940, after which the children moved into town.

The Boat People

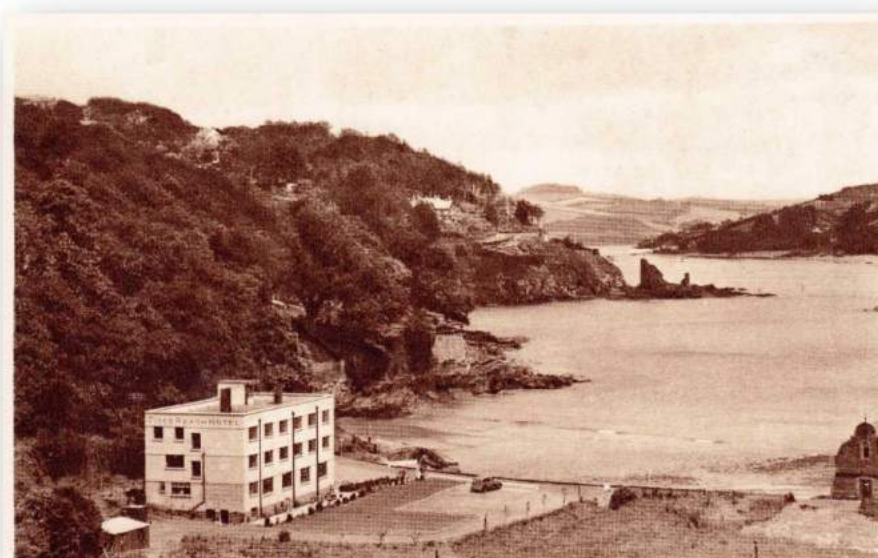
In 1940 French, Dutch and Belgian refugees came over in trawlers, barges and launches and sought safety in Salcombe Harbour. *'They were a beaten people, but if one saw, as we did, the national flags flying from this assortment of boats, some so enormous they appeared to be larger than the boats themselves, you would realise they were a proud people'* (P.A.F. Pearce)



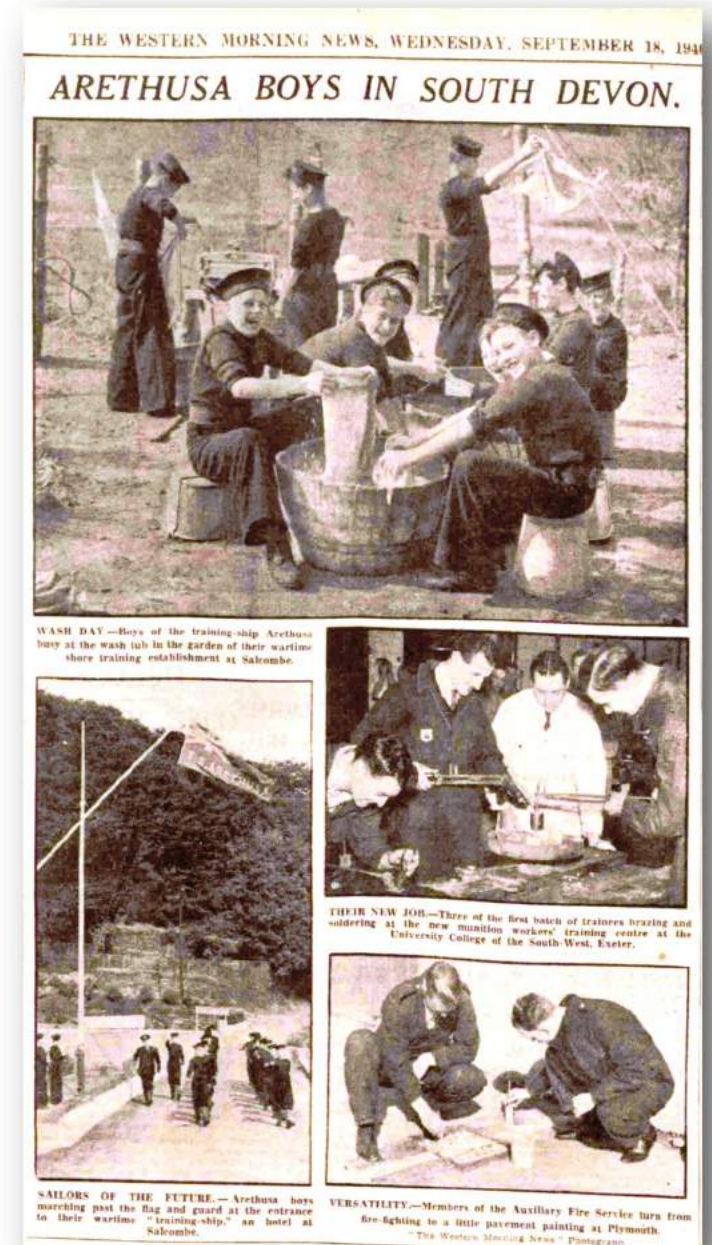
Evacuees arrive from London

The Training Ship Arethusa

Also evacuated to Salcombe in 1940 were boys from the Training Ship *Arethusa* based on the River Medway in Kent. Their new home was the Tides Reach Hotel, South Sands and by the time it closed in August 1945, 388 boys passed through the school - 90% of them joining the sea service.



Arethusa boys leading an active live at the Tides Reach





US Navy HQ at Salcombe Hotel



Operations Room: 24 March 1944



Two Hoots Vehicle Park



Erection of Quonset Huts on the Rugby Field



Ammunition Huts at Batson Cross



On 29th September 1943 the American Navy arrived in Salcombe to establish a U.S.N. Advanced Amphibious Base. The first tasks of the 'Seabee' Construction Group were to build three hutted camps on the top of the hill and a landing craft repair slipway on Mill Bay.

By 1944, nearly 2000 Americans were based in the town, outnumbering its depleted wartime population. They took over the Salcombe Hotel and about 60 other properties. St. Elmo Hotel became a hospital, Cliff House was used as a galley and mess hall and for recreation.

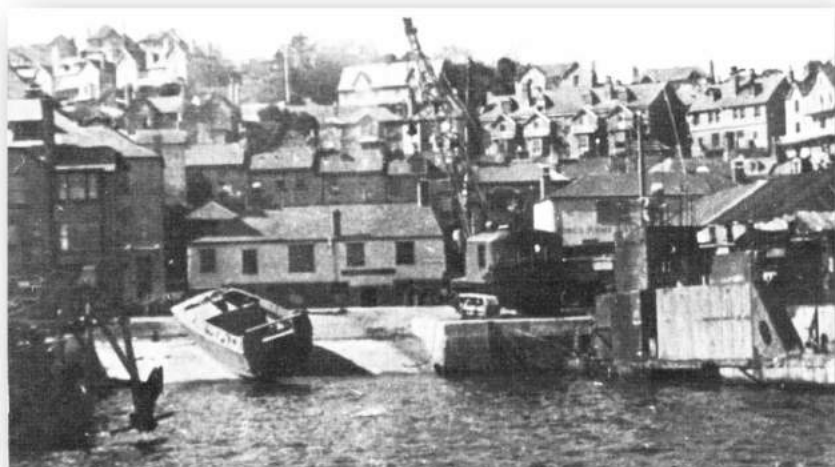
Whilst work was going on equipping and repairing landing craft, the 6th and 7th Beach Battalions practised landings on nearby beaches, including Slapton Sands.

After D-Day the Americans returned to carry out landing craft repairs. They finally left at the end of the war, taking with them fond memories of their time in Salcombe and a number of G.I. brides!

Landing Craft in Salcombe Harbour 1943-5



Two rows of derelict cottages at Whitestrand were bulldozed to make a slipway and loading ramp. It became the main centre of activity, with fixed and mobile cranes working around the clock, equipping and repairing the smaller landing craft.



Loading ramp and crane at Whitestrand



LCVPs under repair at Whitestrand



'Seabees' at work



An LCT on the Mill Bay repair slipway

The harbour soon filled up with various types of landing craft, including large LSTs (Landing Ship Tank) and LCTs (Landing Craft Tank). The slipway on Mill Bay was used to haul the LCTs out of the water for repair and maintenance.



A LST (Landing Ship Tank)



LCTs (Landing Craft Tank)



LCFs (Landing Craft Flak) and LSTs



LCTs under repair at Mill Bay, post D-Day



The Remains of the Mill Bay Repair Slipway

‘On the 4th of June we awoke to find the largest gathering of ships ever seen in Salcombe harbour at one time (sixty-six ships in all) and American G.I.'s, together with much equipment, were embarking at Whitestrand. Our hearts went out to the thousands of troops, out there in this miserable weather, rolling and pitching in those bull-nosed craft.

‘Because of the rough weather the departure was delayed 24 hours, but finally, after much discomfort and waiting, the ships and men left the harbour. The town fell silent. It was uncanny.’ (P.A.F. Pearce)



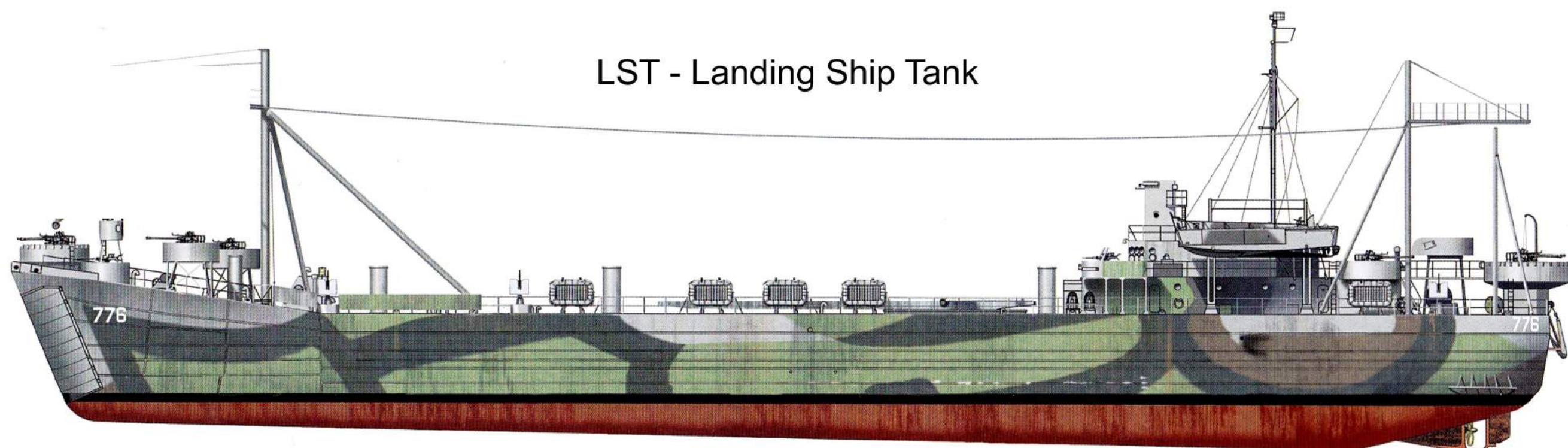
Embarking from Salcombe



American Troops board a LCT



The harbour full of Landing Craft.
On the beach at Millbay are 3 LCI.



LST - Landing Ship Tank



LCT - Landing Craft Tank



LCVP - Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel



LCI (L) - Landing Craft Infantry Large

Main types of Landing Craft

Force U and Utah Beach, D-Day June 6 1944



Operation Neptune

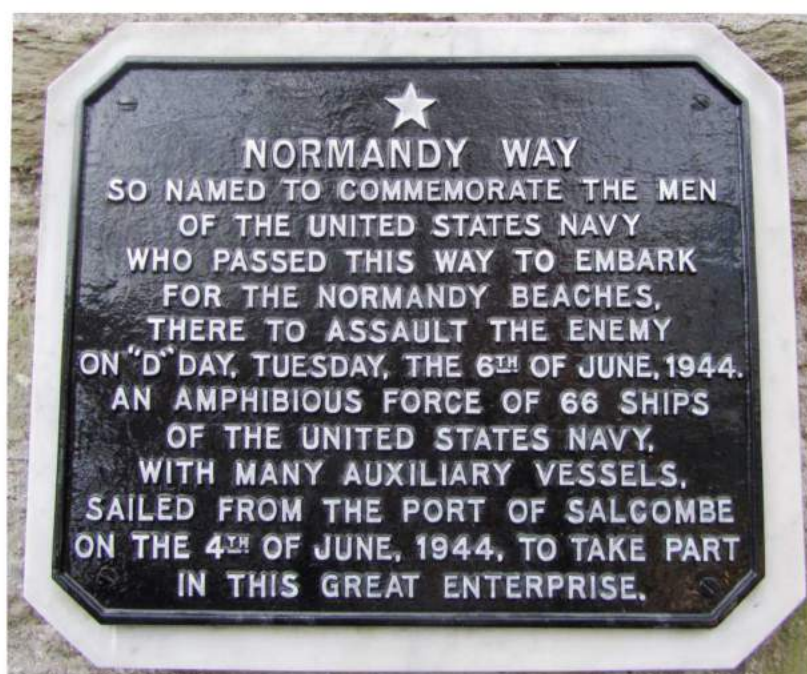
On June 4-5th 1944, convoys of landing craft and their escorts sailed from Salcombe to join Assault Force U of the Western Task Force. Their task was to land the 4th Division, VII Corps U.S. Army on Utah Beach, Normandy and to support the landing and subsequent operations. In stark contrast to Omaha Beach, where the fighting was fierce, the Utah landings met with relatively little resistance, and thankfully losses of men and material were small.



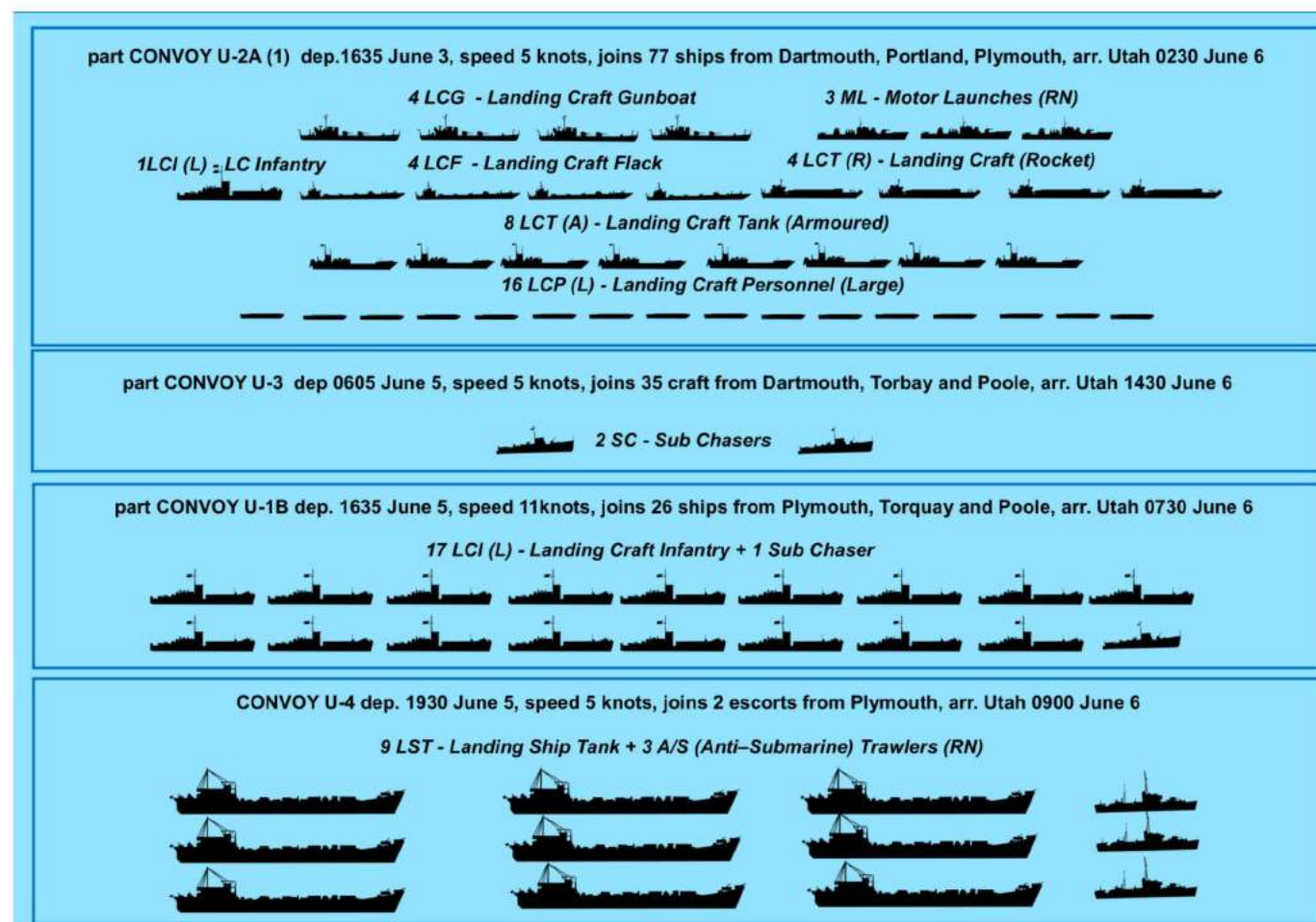
LST approaches Normandy Coast



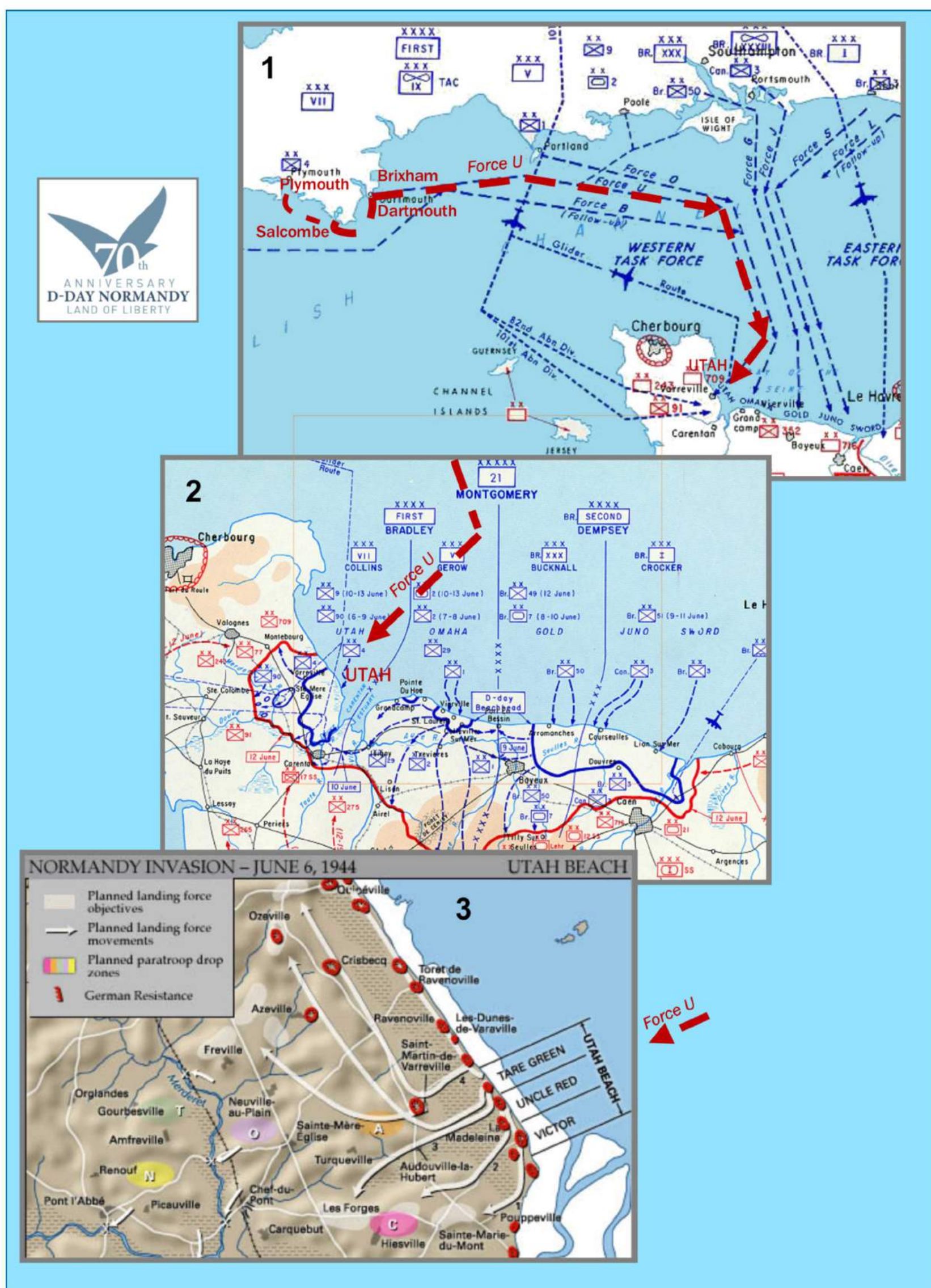
Landing on Utah Beach, 6 June



Normandy Way Plaque at Salcombe



Convoy formation of Salcombe's D-Day Flotilla



Route taken by Force U to Utah Beach



Salcombe's Roll of Honour 1939-45



ROYAL NAVY

- JAMES ADAMS.** Pilot officer (Pilot) Francis James Adams of the RAF Volunteer Reserve. Died 16 September 1942 aged 31.
- ALBERT G. BOTLEY.** CH/X101475 Marine Albert George Botley of the 48 Royal Marines Commando. Died 6 June 1944.
- MARCUS R. B. BROWSE** D/JX 137643 Petty Officer Marcus Robert Bradley Browse of HMS *Illustrious*. Died 9 February 1941 aged 24.
- ALBERT E. BUDD.** LJ/JX 216728 Seaman Albert Ernest Budd of the Royal Naval Patrol Service, HM Patrol Vessel P/2. Died of wounds 21 March 1941 aged 27.
- A. CHEESEMAM.** D/MX 64403 Shipwright 4th Class Charles Albert Thomas Cheeseman of HMS *Jaguar*. Died 26 March 1942 aged 23 in the sinking of his ship.
- W. CLARKE.** (Not yet confirmed)
- S. E. COOK.** D/M 37539 Chief Petty Officer Stanley Edward Cook of *HMS Gloucester*. Died 22 May 1941 aged 36.
- H. E. DORNOM .** D/SMX 214 Shipwright 4th Class Herbert Easton Dornom of *HMS Neptune*. Died in the sinking of ship 19 Dec. 1941 aged 27.
- S. J. FIELD.** LT/JX 198842 Petty Officer Sidney James Fields of the Royal Naval Patrol service, *HM Trawler Lord Stonehaven*. Died in the sinking of his ship 2 October 1942 aged 34.
- N. H. GALE DSO.** Captain (Commodore, 2nd Class) Newell Herbert Gale DSO of the Royal Naval Reserve, *HMS Eaglet*. Died on board the *Athelsultan* while acting as a convoy commodore sailing between Sidney AU and the UK. Killed 22 September 1942 aged 54 when his ship sank immediately after being torpedoed by U-617
- E. GALE** P/JX 176933 Able Seaman Edward Gale of *HM Submarine Unbeaten*. Died 11 November 1942.
- D. F. PARTRIDGE** D/JX 208775 Able Seaman Douglas Frank Partridge of *HMS Alaunia*. Died of illness on *HMS Alaunia* 17 Oct 1946 aged 25.
- A.E.PERRING** D/K 66436 Leading Stoker Alfred Eli Roy Perring of *HMS Itchen*. Died 23 September 1943 aged 36.
- N. SERGEANT** Temporary Sub-Lieutenant Anthony Noel Sergeant of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, *HMS Hornet*. Died 11 October 1940 aged 25. Accidentally shot by a sailor on guard duty.
- M. L. de C. STRETTON .**Lieutenant Michael Lynam de Courcy Stretton R.N.V.R. *HMS Indefatigable*. Died 14 August 1945 aged 25.
- S.TEAGUE** 57454 Chief Stoker Petty Officer Samuel Baden Powell Teague of *HMS Exeter*. Died 13 December 1939 in the Battle of the River Plate aged 39.
- G.A.WATSON.** P/JX 1301898 Leading seaman G.A.Watson of the Royal Navy, *HMS Pelican*. Died 22 April 1940 after his ship was bombed.

ARMY

- WILLIAM E. BENNETT.** T/175985 Driver William Edward Bennett of the Royal Army Service Corps. Died 14 July 1946 aged 45.
- A, L. GURNEY-RICHMOND.** 49852 Major Alfred Loraine Gurney-Richmond of the 7th Battalion, the King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Died 30 Oct 1940 aged 29.
- A. G. LEETE** 4341708 Sergeant Alexander George Leete of the 7th Battalion, the East Yorkshire Regiment. Died between 31 May 1940 and 1 June 1940 aged 25.
- R.V. P.MARCHAND.** 164337 Captain Robert Victor P. Marchand of 81 Field Regiment (Glamorgan Field Yeomanry), the Royal Artillery. Died 8 October 1944, in Holland, age 32
- C. A. STREET.** 2826 Lieut. Colonel Charles Arthur Street, the South Staffordshire Regiment, commanding the 7th Battalion, the Worcestershire Regiment. Died in Burma 8 February 1945, age 41. Memorial in Salcombe Church.
- F. G. TAYLOR** (Not yet confirmed)
- A.W.T.WOOD .** 5621286 Private Arthur William Thomas Wood of the 1st Battalion, the Middlesex Regiment. Died 8 August 1944 aged 25.
- E. G. REYNOLDS.** 122028 Lieutenant Edward George Reynolds of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Died in the UK 4 March 1940.
- F. A. V. ROBERTS** 77613 2nd Lieutenant Frank Arthur Victor Roberts of the 1st battalion, the Suffolk Regiment. Died 29 May 1940 aged 21

ROYAL AIR FORCE

- H. C. JEWELL .** 49589 Flying Officer (Pilot) Hedley Charles Jewell of the RAF Volunteer Reserve, 45 Squadron. Died 27 January 1944 aged 30.
- R. B. REDFERN** Believed to be 83453 Pilot Officer Robert Brook Redfern of the RAF Volunteer Reserve. Died on active service 8 March 1941.

MERCHANT NAVY etc.

- F.G.YOULDEN.** Fireman trimmer Frederick George Youlden of *SS Bibury* (London). Died 2 September 1940, aged 27.
- E. G. PARTRIDGE** Details of this man's military career not yet known. He died in England in the December Quarter of 1946 aged 27.
- H. E. RICHARDS** (Not yet confirmed)



Salcombe's Roll of Honour 1939-45



CIVILIAN CASUALTIES OF THE BOMBING OF SALCOMBE

Died in the Estuary bombing raid 13 August 1942

ELIZABETH MARY CHADDER - BLANK aged 38.

Died in the Church Street bombing raid 8 September 1942

EDITH PUTT aged 68, **WILLIAM HENRY PUTT** aged 60, **GRACE PUTT** aged 27, **DAVID MICHAEL PUTT**, aged 3 days, **BERNARD DARNBROUGH** aged 4, **DEREK DARNBROUGH** aged 7 at 4 Church street.

THOMAS SLADEN aged 75, **DOROTHY ROSE BALL** aged 40, at 5 Church Street.

KENNETH WILLIAM JOHN MINNEY, aged 11 months at 6 Church Street. (Kenneth is commemorated on the Kingsbridge War Memorial).

Died in the Fore Street bombing raid 12 March 1943

ELEANOR MARY CATFORD aged 63, **MARY EMILY RICHARDS** age 19, at 65A Fore Street.

POLLY LAPTHORN aged 37, **ELIZABETH GIBSON** aged 15 at 1 Clifton Place.

CATHERINE SUSAN PATEY aged 65 at 9 Fore Street.

Died in the Fort Charles bombing raid 30 March 1943

ANNA ALEXANDER, aged 3. **JOHN ALISTAIR PETER STEDMAN** aged 2.

NAVAL CASUALTIES BURIED IN BONFIRE HILL CEMETERY

Killed in the sinking of HM Trawler Pierre Descelliers

The *Pierre Descelliers* was used to defend the boom stretched across the mouth of the Kingsbridge Estuary at Salcombe. She was bombed during a German raid on Salcombe on 13 August 1942.

W. CONE. R/JX 243580 Able Seaman William Cone, Royal Navy, *HM Trawler Pierre Descelliers*. Born in Bramham, Yorkshire in 1907. Died 13 August 1942 aged 35.

J. T. DEAN. R/JX 268864 Ordinary Seaman John Thomas Den of the Royal Navy, *HM Trawler Pierre Descelliers*. Born in 1907. Died 13 August 1942 aged 34.

L. REED. R/JX 213322 Able Seaman Leonard Reed of the Royal Navy, *HM Trawler Pierre Descelliers*. Born in 1918. Died 13 August 1942 aged 24.

Killed in the sinking of HMS Penylan

During the night of December 2nd/3rd 1941, *HMS Penylan* was sailing close to the harbour entrance at Salcombe, on escort duty, bringing a coastal convoy up the Channel. As they neared Start Point, *Penylan* was attacked by a German submarine and sank.

D. COUGHLAN. D/M 38695 Chief Petty Officer Cook Dennis J. Coughlan, of the Royal Navy, *HMS Penylan*. Born in Ireland in 1907. Died 3 December 1942 aged 38.

W.HAMILTON. 20287 Leading Seaman William Hamilton of the Royal Navy, *HMS Penylan*. Born in Scotland in 1918. Died 3 December 1942 aged 24.

J.HANNA. C/NX 1477 Canteen Manager, John Hanna, the Royal Navy Canteen Service, *HMS Penylan*. Died 3 December 1942 aged 31.

R.LOVETT. D/JX 348061 Ordinary Seaman Roy Lovett, of the Royal Navy, *HMS Penylan*. Born in Burton-on-Trent in the March Quarter of 1923. Died 3 December 1942 aged 19.

W.M.SYMINGTON. D/KX 118229 Stoker 1st Class William McClean Symington of the Royal Navy, *HMS Penylan*. Born in Scotland in 1921. Died 3 December 1942 aged 21.

F.WATKINS. D/JX 129362 Petty officer Telegraphist Frederick Watkins, *HMS Penylan*. Born in 1911. Died 3 December 1942 aged 31. He swallowed so much oil that he died while being brought ashore.

T.WELLS-GARRETT. D/X 129243 Stoker 1st Class Thomas Wells-Garrett of the Royal Navy, *HMS Penylan*. Born in 1912. Died 3 December 1942 aged 30.

Killed in the sinking of HM Trawler Jasper

These two men were rescued and brought ashore when *HMS Jasper* was sunk by an E-boat in the Channel just south of Bolt Head. Sadly, they did not survive. *HMS Jasper* was formerly known as *Balthasar*, and was purchased for anti-submarine duties in 1935. These were the only two survivors from a crew of 11.

B. EWIN. Lieutenant Berwick Ewin of the Royal Navy, *HM Trawler Jasper*. Born in Hendon in the March Quarter of 1914. Died 1 December 1942 aged 28.

G. F. RUSLING. LT/X 308 Engineman George Frank Rusling of the Royal Naval Reserve (Patrol Service) *HM Trawler Jasper* Born in Caistor, Lincolnshire in 1892, Died 1 December 1942 aged 50.

Acknowledgements to Richard J. Brine and the Devon Heritage website for the above information