

Voyage to victory

by Ernest Hemingway, from
Collier's magazine, July 22, 1944.

NO ONE remembers the date of the Battle of Shiloh. But the day we took Fox Green beach was the sixth of June, and the wind was blowing hard out of the northwest. As we moved in toward land in the gray early light, the 36-foot coffin-shaped steel boats took solid green sheet of water that fell on the helmeted heads of the troops packed shoulder to shoulder in the stiff, awkward, uncomfortable, lonely companionship of men going to a battle. There were cases of TNT, with rubber tube life preservers wrapped around them to float them in the surf, stacked forward in the steel well of the LCV(P), and there were piles of bazookas and boxes of bazooka rockets encased in waterproof coverings that reminded you of the transparent raincoats college girls wear.

All this equipment, too, had the rubber tube life preservers strapped and tied on, and the men wore these same gray rubber tubes strapped under their armpits.

As the boat rose to a sea, the green water turned white and came slamming in over the men, the guns and the cases of explosives. Ahead you could see the coast of France. The gray booms and derrick-forested bulks of the attack transports were behind now, and, over all the sea, boats were crawling forward toward France.

As the LCV(P) rose to the crest of a wave, you saw the line of low, silhouetted cruisers and the two big battlewagons lying broad-side to the shore. You saw the heat-bright flashes of their guns and the brown smoke that pushed out against the wind and then blew away.

'What's your course, coxswain?' Lieutenant Robert Anderson of Roanoke, Virginia, shouted from the stern.

'Two-twenty, sir,' the coxswain, Frank Currier of Saugus, Massachusetts, answered. He was a thin-faced, freckled boy with his eyes fixed on the compass.

'Then steer two-twenty, damn it!' Anderson said. 'Don't steer all over the whole damn ocean!'

'I'm steering two-twenty, sir,' the coxswain said patiently.

'Well, steer it, then,' Andy said. He was nervous, but the boat crew, who were making their first landing under fire, knew this officer had taken LCV(P)s in to the African landing, Sicily and Salerno, and they had confidence in him.

'Don't steer into that LCT,' Andy shouted, as we roared by the ugly steel hull of a tank landing craft, her vehicles sea-lashed, her troops huddling out of the spray.

'I'm steering two-twenty,' the coxswain said.

‘That doesn’t mean you have to run into everything on the ocean,’ Andy said. He was a handsome, hollow-cheeked boy with a lot of style and a sort of easy petulance. ‘Mr Hemingway, will you please see if you can see what that flag is over there, with your glasses?’

I got my old miniature Zeiss glasses out of an inside pocket, where they were wrapped in a woolen sock with some tissue to clean them, and focused them on the flag. I made the flag out just before a wave drenched the glasses.

‘It’s green.’

‘Then we are in the mine-swept channel,’ Andy said. ‘That’s all right. Coxswain, what’s the matter with you? Can’t you steer two-twenty?’

I was trying to dry my glasses, but it was hopeless the way the spray was coming in, so I wrapped them up for a try later on and watched the battleship Texas shelling the shore. She was just off on our right now and firing over us as we moved in toward the French coast, which was showing clearer all the time on what was, or was not, a course of 220 degrees, depending on whether you believed Andy or Currier the coxswain.

The low cliffs were broken by valleys. There was a town with a church spire in one of them. There was a wood that came down to the sea. There was a house on the right of one of the beaches. On all the headlands, the gorse was burning, but the northwest wind held the smoke close to the ground.

Those of our troops who were not wax-gray with seasickness, fighting it off, trying to hold onto themselves before they had to grab for the steel side of the boat, were watching the Texas with looks of surprise and happiness. Under the steel helmets they looked like pikemen of the Middle Ages to whose aid in battle had suddenly come some strange and unbelievable monster.

There would be a flash like a blast furnace from the 14-inch guns of the Texas, that would lick far out from the ship. Then the yellow-brown smoke would cloud out and, with the smoke still rolling, the concussion and the report would hit us, jarring the men’s helmets. It struck your near ear like a punch with a heavy, dry glove.

Then up on the green rise of a hill that now showed clearly as we moved in would spout two tall black fountains of earth and smoke.

That is the only thing I remember hearing a G.I. say all that morning. They spoke to one another sometimes, but you could not hear them with the roar the 225-horsepower high-speed gray Diesel made. Mostly, though, they stood silent without speaking.

I never saw anyone smile after we left the line of firing ships. They had seen the mysterious monster that was helping them, but now he was gone and they were alone again. I found if I kept my mouth open from the time I saw the guns flash until after the concussion, it took the shock away.

I was glad when we were inside and out of the line of fire of the Texas and the Arkansas. Other ships were firing over us all day and you were never away from the sudden, slapping thud of naval gunfire. But the big guns of the Texas and Arkansas that

sounded as though they were throwing whole railway trains across the sky were far away as we moved on in. They were no part of our world as we moved steadily over the gray, whitecapped sea toward where, ahead of us, death was being issued in small, intimate, accurately administered packages. They were like the thunder of a storm that is passing in another county whose rain will never reach you. But they were knocking out the shore batteries, so that later the destroyers could move in almost to the shore when they had to come in to save the landing.

Invasion Coast Dead Ahead

Now ahead of us we could see the coast in complete detail. Andy opened the silhouette map with all the beaches and their distinguishing features reproduced on it, and I got my glasses out and commenced drying and wiping them under the shelter of the skirts of my burberry. As far as you could see, there were landing craft moving in over the gray sea. The sun was under at this time, and smoke was blowing all along the coast.

The map that Andy spread on his knees was in ten folded sheets, held together with staples, and marked Appendix One to Annex A. Five different sheets were stapled together and, as I watched Andy open his map, which spread, open, twice as long as a man could reach with outstretched arms, the wind caught it, and the section of the map showing Dog White, Fox Red, Fox Green, Dog Green, Easy Red and part of Sector Charlie snapped twice gaily in the wind and blew overboard.

I had studied this map and memorized most of it, but it is one thing to have it in your memory and another thing to see it actually on paper and be able to check and be sure.

‘Have you got a small chart, Andy?’ I shouted. ‘One of those one-sheet ones with just Fox Green and Easy Red?’

‘Never had one,’ said Andy. All this time we were approaching the coast of France, which looked increasingly hostile.

‘That the only chart?’ I said, close to his ear.

‘Only one,’ said Andy, ‘and it disintegrated on me. A wave hit it, and it disintegrated. What beach do you think we are opposite?’

‘There’s the church tower that looks like Colleville,’ I said. ‘That ought to be on Fox Green. Then there is a house like the one marked on Fox Green and the timber that runs down to the water in a straight line, like on Easy Red.’

‘That’s right,’ said Andy. ‘But I think we’re too far to the left.’

‘Those are the features, all right,’ I said. ‘I’ve got them in my head but there shouldn’t be any cliffs. The cliffs start to the left of Fox Green where Fox Red beach starts. If that’s true, then Fox Green has to be on our right.’

‘There’s a control boat here somewhere,’ Andy said. ‘We’ll find out what beach we’re opposite.’

‘She can’t be Fox Green if there are cliffs,’ I said.

‘That’s right,’ Andy said. ‘We’ll find out from a control boat. Steer for that PC, coxswain. No, not there! Don’t you see him? Get ahead of him. You’ll never catch him that way.’

We never did catch him, either. We slammed into the seas instead of topping them, and the boat pulled away from us. The LCV(P) was bow-heavy with the load of TNT and the weight of the three-eighth-inch steel armor, and where she should have lifted easily over the seas she banged into them and the water came in solidly.

‘The hell with him!’ Andy said. ‘We’ll ask this LCI.’

Landing Craft Infantry are the only amphibious operations craft that look as though they were made to go to sea. They very nearly have the lines of a ship, while the LCV(P)s look like iron bathtubs, and the LCTs like floating freight gondolas. Everywhere you could see, the ocean was covered with these craft but very few of them were headed toward shore. They would start toward the beach, then sheer off and circle back. On the beach itself, in from where we were, there were lines of what looked like tanks, but my glasses were still too wet to function.

‘Where’s Fox Green beach?’ Andy cupped his hands and shouted up at the LCI that was surging past us, loaded with troops.

‘Can’t hear,’ someone shouted. We had no megaphone.

‘What beach are we opposite?’ Andy yelled.

The officer on the LCI shook his head. The other officers did not even look toward us. They were looking over their shoulders at the beach.

‘Get her close alongside, coxswain,’ Andy said. ‘Come on, get in there close.’

We roared up alongside the LCI, then cut down the motor as she slipped past us.

‘Where’s Fox Green beach?’ Andy yelled, as the wind blew the words away.

‘Straight in to your right,’ an officer shouted.

‘Thanks.’ Andy looked astern at the other two boats and told Ed Banker, the signalman, ‘Get them to close up. Get them up.’

Ed Banker turned around and jerked his forearm, with index finger raised, up and down. ‘They’re closing up, sir,’ he said.

Looking back you could see the other heavily loaded boats climbing the waves that were green now the sun was out, and pounding down into the troughs.

‘You wet all through, sir?’ Ed asked me.

‘All the way.’

‘Me, too,’ Ed said. ‘Only thing wasn’t wet was my belly button. Now it’s wet, too.’

‘This has got to be Fox Green,’ I said to Andy. ‘I recognize where the cliff stops. That’s all Fox Green to the right. There is the Colleville church. There’s the house on the beach. There’s the Ruquet Valley on Easy Red to the right. This is Fox Green absolutely.’

‘We’ll check when we get in closer,’ Andy said. ‘You really think it’s Fox Green?’

‘It has to be.’

Ahead of us, the various landing craft were all acting in the same confusing manner—heading in, coming out and circling.

The Tanks Were Stymied

‘There’s something wrong as hell,’ I said to Andy. ‘See the tanks? They’re all along the edge of the beach. They haven’t gone in at all.’

Just then one of the tanks flared up and started to burn with thick black smoke and yellow flame. Farther down the beach, another tank started burning. Along the line of the beach, they were crouched like big yellow toads along the high water line. As I stood up, watching, two more started to burn. The first ones were pouring out gray smoke now, and the wind was blowing it flat along the beach. As I stood up, trying to see if there was anyone in beyond the high water line of tanks, one of the burning tanks blew up with a flash in the streaming gray smoke.

‘There’s a boat we can check with,’ Andy said. ‘Coxswain, steer for that LC over there. Yes, that one. Put her hard over. Come on. Get over there!’

This was a black boat, fast-looking, mounting two machine guns and wallowing slowly out away from the beach, her engine almost idling.

‘Can you tell us what beach this is?’ Andy shouted.

‘Dog White,’ came the answer.

‘Are you sure?’

‘Dog White beach,’ they called from the black boat.

‘You checked it?’ Andy called.

‘It’s Dog White beach,’ they called back from the boat, and their screw churned the water white as they slipped into speed and pulled away from us.

I was discouraged now, because ahead of us, inshore, was every landmark I had memorized on Fox Green and Easy Red beaches. The line of the cliffs that marked the left end of Fox Green beach showed clearly. Every house was where it should be. The steeple of the Colleville church showed exactly as it had in the silhouette. I had studied the charts, the silhouettes, the data on the obstacles in the water and the defenses all one morning, and I remember having asked our captain, Commander W. I. Leahy of the attack transport Dorothea M. Dix, if our attack was to be a diversion in force.

‘No,’ he had said. ‘Absolutely not. What makes you ask that question?’

‘Because these beaches are so highly defensible.’

‘The Army is going to clear the obstacles and the mines out in the first thirty minutes,’ Captain Leahy had told me. ‘They’re going to cut lanes in through them for the landing craft.’

I wish I could write the full story of what it means to take a transport across through a mine-swept channel; the mathematical precision of maneuver; the infinite detail and chronometrical accuracy and split-second timing of everything from the time the anchor comes up until the boats are lowered and away into the roaring, sea-churning assembly circle from which they break off into the attack wave.

The story of all the teamwork behind that has to be written, but to get all that in would take a book, and this is simply the account of how it was in a LCV(P) on the day we stormed Fox Green beach.

Right at this moment, no one seemed to know where Fox Green beach was. I was sure we were opposite it, but the patrol boat had said this was Dog White beach which should be 4,295 yards to our right, if we were where I knew we were.

‘It can’t be Dog White, Andy,’ I said. ‘Those are the cliffs where Fox Red starts on our left.’

‘The man says it’s Dog White,’ Andy said.

In the solid-packed troops in the boat, a man with a vertical white bar painted on his helmet was looking at us and shaking his head. He had high cheekbones and a rather flat, puzzled face.

‘The lieutenant says he knows it, and we’re on Fox Green,’ Ed Banker shouted back at us. He spoke again to the lieutenant but we could not hear what they said.

Andy shouted at the lieutenant, and he nodded his helmeted head up and down.

‘He says it’s Fox Green,’ Andy said.

‘Ask him where he wants to go in,’ I said.

Leading in the Seventh Wave

Just then another small black patrol boat with several officers in it came toward us from the beach, and an officer stood up in it and megaphoned, ‘Are there any boats here for the seventh wave on Fox Green beach?’

There was one boat for that wave with us, and the officer shouted to them to follow their boat.

‘Is this Fox Green?’ Andy called to them.

‘Yes. Do you see that ruined house? Fox Green beach runs for eleven hundred and thirty-five yards to the right of that ruined house.’

‘Can you get into the beach?’

‘I can’t tell you that. You will have to ask a beach control boat.’

‘Can’t we just run in?’

‘I have no authority on that. You must ask the beach control boat.’

‘Where is it?’

‘Way out there somewhere.’

‘We can go in where an LCV(P) has been in or an LCI,’ I said. ‘It’s bound to be clear where they run in, and we can go in under the lee of one.’

‘We’ll look for the control boat,’ Andy said, and we went banging out to sea through the swarming traffic of landing craft and lighters.

‘I can’t find her,’ Andy said. ‘She isn’t here. She ought to be in closer. We have to get the hell in. We’re late now. Let’s go in.’

‘Ask him where he is supposed to land,’ I said.

Andy went down and talked to the lieutenant. I could see the lieutenant’s lips moving as he spoke, but could hear nothing above the engine noise.

‘He wants to run straight in for that ruined house,’ Andy said, when he came back.

We headed in for the beach. As we came in, running fast, the black patrol boat swung over toward us again.

‘Did you find the control boat?’ they megaphoned.

‘No!’

‘What are you going to do?’

‘We’re going in,’ Andy yelled.

‘Well, good luck to you fellows,’ the megaphone said. It came over, slow and solemn like an elegy. ‘Good luck to all of you fellows.’

That included Thomas E. Nash, engineer, from Seattle with a good grin and two teeth out of it. It included Edward F. Banker, signalman, of Brooklyn, and Lacey T. Shiflet of Orange, Virginia, who would have been the gunner if we had had room for guns. It included Frank Currier, the coxswain, of Saugus, Massachusetts, and it included Andy and me. When we heard the lugubrious tone of that parting benediction we all knew how bad the beach really was.

As we came roaring in on the beach, I sat high on the stern to see what we were up against. I had the glasses dry now and I took a good look at the shore. The shore was coming toward us awfully fast, and in the glasses it was coming even faster.

On the beach on the left where there was no sheltering overhang of shingled bank, the first, second, third, fourth and fifth waves lay where they had fallen, looking like so many heavily laden bundles on the flat pebbly stretch between the sea and the first cover. To the right, there was an open stretch where the beach exit led up a wooded valley from the sea. It was here that the Germans hoped to get something very good, and later we saw them get it.

To the right of this, two tanks were burning on the crest of the beach, the smoke now gray after the first violent black and yellow billows. Coming in I had spotted two machine gun nests. One was firing intermittently from the ruins of the smashed house

on the right of the small valley. The other was two hundred yards to the right and possibly four hundred yards in front of the beach.

The officer commanding the troops we were carrying had asked us to head directly for the beach opposite the ruined house.

‘Right in there,’ he said. ‘That’s where.’

‘Andy,’ I said, ‘that whole sector is enfiladed by machine gun fire. I just saw them open twice on that stranded boat.’

Target for Machine Guns

An LCV(P) was slanted drunkenly in the stakes like a lost gray steel bathtub. They were firing at the water line, and the fire was kicking up sharp spurts of water.

‘That’s where he says he wants to go,’ Andy said. ‘So that’s where we’ll take him.’

‘It isn’t any good,’ I said. ‘I’ve seen both those guns open up.’

‘That’s where he wants to go,’ Andy said. ‘Put her ahead straight in.’ He turned astern and signaled to the other boats, jerking his arm, with its upraised finger, up and down.

‘Come on, you guys,’ he said, inaudible in the roar of the motor that sounded like a plane taking off. ‘Close up! Close up! What’s the matter with you? Close up, can’t you? Take her straight in, coxswain!’

At this point, we entered the beaten zone from the two machine gun points, and I ducked my head under the sharp cracking that was going overhead. Then I dropped into the well in the stern sheets where the gunner would have been if we had any guns. The machine gun fire was throwing water all around the boat, and an antitank shell tossed up a jet of water over us.

The lieutenant was talking, but I couldn’t hear what he said. Andy could hear him. He had his head down close to his lips.

‘Get her the hell around and out of here, coxswain!’ Andy called. ‘Get her out of here!’

As we swung round on our stem in a pivot and pulled out, the machine gun fire stopped. But individual sniping shots kept cracking over or spitting into the water around us. I’d got my head up again with some difficulty and was watching the shore.

‘It wasn’t cleared, either,’ Andy said. ‘You could see the mines on all those stakes.’

‘Let’s coast along and find a good place to put them ashore,’ I said. ‘If we stay outside of the machine gun fire, I don’t think they’ll shoot at us with anything big because we’re just as LCV(P), and they’ve got better targets than us.’

‘We’ll look for a place,’ Andy said.

‘What’s he want now?’ I said to Andy.

The lieutenant’s lips were moving again. They moved very slowly and as though they had no connection with him or with his face.

Andy got down to listen to him. He came back into the stern. ‘He wants to go out to an LCI we passed that has his commanding officer on it.’

‘We can get him ashore farther up toward Easy Red,’ I said.

‘He wants to see his commanding officer,’ Andy said. ‘Those people in that black boat were from his outfit.’

Advice from a Wounded Ship

Out a way, rolling in the sea, was a Landing Craft Infantry, and as we came alongside of her I saw a ragged shellhole through the steel plates forward of her pilothouse where an 88-mm. German shell had punched through. Blood was dripping from the shiny edges of the hole into the sea with each roll of the LCI. Her rails and hull had been befouled by seasick men, and her dead were laid forward of her pilothouse. Our lieutenant had some conversation with another officer while we rose and fell in the surge alongside the black iron hull, and then we pulled away.

Andy went forward and talked to him, then came aft again, and we sat up on the stern and watched two destroyers coming along toward us from the eastern beaches, their guns pounding away at targets on the headlands and sloping fields behind the beaches.

‘He says they don’t want him to go in yet; to wait,’ Andy said. ‘Let’s get out of the way of this destroyer.’

‘How long is he going to wait?’

‘He says they have no business in there now. People that should have been ahead of them haven’t gone in yet. They told him to wait.’

‘Let’s get in where we can keep track of it,’ I said. ‘Take the glasses and look at that beach, but don’t tell them forward what you see.’

Andy looked. He handed the glasses back to me and shook his head.

‘Let’s cruise along it to the right and see how it is up at that end,’ I said. ‘I’m pretty sure we can get in there when he wants to get in. You’re sure they told him he shouldn’t go in?’

‘That’s what he says.’

‘Talk to him again and get it straight.’

Andy came back. ‘He says they shouldn’t go in now. They’re supposed to clear the mines away, so the tanks can go, and he says nothing is in there to go yet. He says they told him it is all fouled up and to stay out yet a while.’

The destroyer was firing point blank at the concrete pillbox that had fired at us on the first trip into the beach, and as the guns fired you heard the bursts and saw the earth jump almost at the same time as the empty brass cases clanged back onto the steel deck.

The five-inch guns of the destroyer were smashing at the ruined house at the edge of the little valley where the other machine gun had fired from.

‘Let’s move in now that the can has gone by and see if we can’t find a good place,’ Andy said.

‘That can punched out what was holding them up there, and you can see some infantry working up that draw now,’ I said to Andy. ‘Here, take the glasses.’

Slowly, laboriously, as though they were Atlas carrying the world on their shoulders, men were working up the valley on our right. They were not firing. They were just moving slowly up the valley like a tired pack train at the end of the day, going the other way from home.

‘The infantry has pushed up to the top of the ridge at the end of that valley,’ I shouted to the lieutenant.

‘They don’t want us yet,’ he said. ‘They told me clear they didn’t want us in yet.’

‘Let me take the glasses for Hemingway,’ Andy said. Then he handed them back. ‘In there, there’s somebody signaling with a yellow flag, and there’s a boat in there in trouble, it looks like. Coxswain, take her straight in.’

We moved in toward the beach at full speed, and Ed Banker looked around and said, ‘Mr Anderson, the other boats are coming, too.’

‘Get them back!’ Andy said. ‘Get them back!’

Banker turned around and waved the boats away. He had difficulty making them understand, but finally the wide waves they were throwing subsided and they dropped astern.

‘Did you get them back?’ Andy asked, without looking away from the beach where we could see a half-sunken LCV(P) foundered in the mined stakes.

‘Yes, sir,’ Ed Banker said.

An LCI was headed straight toward us, pulling away from the beach after having circled to go in. As it passed, a man shouted with a megaphone, ‘There are wounded on that boat and she is sinking.’

‘Can you get in to her?’

The only words we heard clearly from the megaphone as the wind snatched the voice away were ‘machine gun nest.’

‘Did they say there was or there wasn’t a machine gun nest?’ Andy said.

‘I couldn’t hear.’

‘Run alongside of her again, coxswain,’ he said. ‘Run close alongside.’

‘Did you say there was a machine gun nest?’ he shouted.

An officer leaned over with the megaphone, ‘A machine gun nest has been firing on them. They are sinking.’

‘Take her straight in, coxswain,’ Andy said.

It was difficult to make our way through the stakes that had been sunk as obstructions, because there were contact mines fastened them, that looked like large double pie plates fastened face to face. They looked as though they had been spiked to the pilings and then assembled. They were the ugly, neutral gray-yellow color that almost everything is in war.

We did not know what other stakes with mines were under us, but the ones that we could see we fended off by hand and worked our way to the sinking boat.

It was not easy to bring on board the man who had been shot through the lower abdomen, because there was no room to let the ramp down the way we were jammed in the stakes with the cross sea.

I do not know why the Germans did not fire on us unless the destroyer had knocked the machine gun pillbox out. Or maybe they were waiting for us to blow up with the mines. Certainly the mines had been a great amount of trouble to lay and the Germans might well have wanted to see them work. We were in the range of the antitank gun that had fired on us before, and all the time we were maneuvering and working in the stakes I was waiting for it to fire.

As we lowered the ramp the first time, while we were crowded in against the other LCV(P), but before she sank, I saw three tanks coming along the beach, barely moving, they were advancing so slowly. The Germans let them cross the open space where the valley opened onto the beach, and it was absolutely flat with a perfect field of fire. Then I saw a little fountain of water jut up, just over and beyond the lead tank. Then smoke broke out of the leading tank on the side away from us, and I saw two men dive out of the turret and land on their hands and knees on the stones of the beach. They were close enough so that I could see their faces, but no more men came out as the tank started to blaze up and burn fiercely.

By then, we had the wounded man and the survivors on board, the ramp back up, and were feeling our way out through the stakes. As we cleared the last of the stakes, and Currier opened up the engine wide as we pulled out to sea, another tank was beginning to burn.

We took the wounded boy out to the destroyer. They hoisted him aboard it in one of those metal baskets and took on the survivors. Meantime, the destroyers had run in almost to the beach and were blowing every pillbox out of the ground with their five-inch guns. I saw a piece of German about three feet long with an arm on it sail high up into the air in the fountaining of one shellburst. It reminded me of a scene in *Petroushka*.

Landing on the Beach

The infantry had now worked up the valley on our left and had gone on over that ridge. There was no reason for anyone to stay out now. We ran in to a good spot we had

picked on the beach and put our troops and their TNT and their bazookas and their lieutenant ashore, and that was that.

The Germans were still shooting with their antitank guns, shifting them around in the valley, holding their fire until they had a target they wanted. Their mortars were still laying a plunging fire along the beaches. They had left people behind to snipe at the beaches, and when we left, finally, all these people who were firing were evidently going to stay until dark at least.

The heavily loaded ducks that had formerly sunk in the waves on their way in were now making the beach steadily. The famous thirty-minute clearing of the channels through the mined obstacles was still a myth, and now, with the high tide, it was a tough trip in with the stakes submerged.

We had six craft missing, finally, out of the twenty-four LVC(P)s that went in from the Dix, but many of the crews could have been picked up and might be on other vessels. It had been a frontal assault in broad daylight, against a mined beach defended by all the obstacles military ingenuity could devise. The beach had been defended as stubbornly and as intelligently as any troops could defend it. But every boat from the Dix had landed her troops and cargo. No boat was lost through bad seamanship. All that were lost were lost by enemy action. And we had taken the beach.

There is much that I have not written. You could write for a week and not give everyone credit for what he did on a front of 1,135 yards. Real war is never like paper war, nor do accounts of it read much the way it looks. But if you want to know how it was in an LCV(P) on D-Day when we took Fox Green beach and Easy Red beach on the sixth of June, 1944, then this is as near as I can come to it.