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D-Day conference draws veterans

August 01, 2009 | Eric Brown



Staff Sgt. Jim Bryant dropped into Normandy on June 6 via a glider. He served as a member of the 82nd Airborne Glider infantry Regiment.



Capt. Bill Overstreet flew with the 357th Fighter Group of the 363rd Fighter Squadron, providing close air support on D-Day and protecting the Allied ground forces from enemy aircraft

In honor of World War II veterans and to bring awareness to the D-Day invasion as a pivotal event in history, Liberty University has partnered with the National D-Day Memorial Foundation to host a two-day conference titled “[Overlord Echoes: The D-Day Journey Then and Now.](#)”

The conference, taking place June 4 and 5 at [Liberty University School of Law](#), features leading authorities on World War II, including Alex Kershaw, author of the best-selling book “The Bedford Boys” and Dr. Gerhard Weinberg, a German-born American historian and author who has written numerous books on the origins of the war. Veterans are also sharing personal experiences of the June 6, 1944 Normandy invasion.

Dr. David Snead, chairman of Liberty’s [history department](#), said those in attendance will not only be able to gain a better understanding of the events surrounding the war, but also have one of the final opportunities to hear the participating veterans speak publicly.

“As far as I know, there has never been a conference [on D-Day] that has tried to include both scholarly sessions and panels of veterans. This mix will allow the conference attendees to learn from actual participants in the war while gaining additional perspectives from some of the leading scholars in the world,” he said.

The conference is a prelude to the 65th anniversary ceremony taking place on Saturday, June 6 at the [National D-Day Memorial](#) in Bedford, Va., about 25 minutes from Liberty University.

“Since President George Bush dedicated the D-Day Memorial in 2001, it has brought literally thousands of people to the area to recognize the sacrifice of the men and women who served in World War II,” Snead said. “With its proximity to Bedford, outstanding facilities, and highly

trained faculty, Liberty is in a perfect situation to help the D-Day Memorial to expand its outreach and offer new opportunities for the community.”