What the Critics Say

"Great reporting... tremendous"

"Mr. Hemingway shows beautifully what the trained creative talent can do even when it is rigorously disciplined by the need for sticking to facts.

"This is the finest kind of reporting; here, every time is the right word, the vivid incident, the picture of the thing as it was, sharply and precisely drawn. And here, too, is the feel of anxiety and eagerness and of heightened perception, all severely reined in — the taut undercurrent of emotions suppressed, suggested as only Hemingway can do it.

"And in this narrative he has exhibited another facet of his genius. His story of the men and the beach is great reporting. But his panorama of the heaving, tossing, roaring, echoing battle of the men-of-war and their darting, flashing, weaving lesser companions, the landing boats — that is tremendous.

"Perhaps an amphibious attack will be better reported somewhere some day, but I doubt it."

Joseph Henry Jackson, Literary Editor
San Francisco Chronicle

"First to combine literary art with trained observer's eye"

"This article is convincing. You know it's real as though you were right there. Whole pictures, in panorama and detail, emerge from the simple, powerful prose.

"Hemingway's name and influence will be remembered a hundred years from now when most of our literary 'great' are forgotten, and this article is on a par with his purely literary work."

A. C. Spectorsky, Literary Editor
Chicago Sun Book Week

"Adds the artist's touch to reporting"

"Hemingway's 'Voyage To Victory' adds to reporting that touch which only the artist in fiction can give to the recording of fact. Only such an artist in narrative technique knows how to mold the scene, the characters and the rhythm of action into an effective unit."

Clyde Beck, Literary Editor
The Detroit News

VOYAGE TO VICTORY

AN EYE-WITNESS REPORT OF THE BATTLE FOR A NORMANDY BEACHHEAD

BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Collier's correspondent on the Invasion Front

in the July 22nd issue

Collier's - The National Weekly on newsstands Friday, July 14th
THE MEN OF D-DAY


"Frank"...Frank Currier, Coxswain, USN, of Saugus, Mass.—thin-faced, freckled, patient.

"Ed"...Edward Banker, Signalman, USN, of Brooklyn, N.Y.

"The Lieutenant"...U.S. Army commanding officer of assault troops on "Andy's" LCV (P).

The Battleships Texas and Arkansas...The big guns that blasted the way to victory.

The Dorothea Dix...The attack transport, Commander W. I. Leahy commanding, which carried the troops.

Thomas E. Nash...Engineer, USN, of Seattle, Wash.

Lacey T. Shiflet...Gunner, USN.

Also taking part in the action:

A wounded G.I. ...An LCI crew...Crews of several patrol boats...Survivors of a wrecked LCI...An American destroyer...Burnt-out tanks...Bazookas...Pill boxes...Machine-gun nests...Mortars...and Ernest Hemingway.

Place: Fox Green and Easy Red beaches, off Colleville, Normandy.

Time: Early morning, June 6th, 1944—D-Day.
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.

—E. Hemingway

Voyage to Victory
BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY
RAFTED FROM LONDON

Collier’s famed war correspondent watches, as our fighting men battle across the beaches into Normandy

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 sheets of water that fell on the helmeted heads of the troops packed shoulder to shoulder in the stuff, 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 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 boats 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 broadside 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 (jg) 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, streaked by 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) 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 scalded, her troops huddling out of the spray.

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

That doesn't mean you have to run into everything on the coast, Andy said. He was a handsome, hollow-cheeked boy with a bald head, and his hair was just stubble. "I got one of these things out of the back seat of my car. I think it's a Zeiss.

I got my old Zeiss glasses out of my pocket, where I stored them, and now I can see what I'm seeing. That flag is over there, with your glasses!"

I got my Zeiss glasses out of my pocket, where they were wrapped in a cloth pad with some tissue inside. I made the flag out just before we went into the dark glasses.

"It's green."

"Then we are in the main-swept channel," Andy said. "That's all right. Go ahead. What's the matter with you? Can you steer twenty-two?"

I was trying to dry my glasses, but it was hopeless. The spray was coming in, and I was already wet on the right side.

The battleship Texas was seen coming up the shore. She was just off our right now, and firing over us as we moved in toward the French coast, which was showing clearer all the time. I was cocooned in a cocoon, course of 220 degrees, looking for water on which I could find Andy or Currier the coxswain.

The low cliffs were broken by valleys of them. There was a small church spire in one of them. There was a house down the road to the sea. There was a house on the right of one of the beaches. On all the headlands the smoke was thick and the northwest wind held the smoke close to the ground.

Those of our troops who were not war-gray with sickness, fighting to keep on and hold on to the beaches, fought on and fought on. The sea was a tide of the Middle Ages, strange and unbelievable monster.

There would be a flail of a mast, a broad flashes from the 14-inch guns of the Texas, that would lick far out of the ship. Then the yellow smoke would cloud the enemy's line of sight, the smoke would rise. The signal flag would be left, the men would stagger and fall, the smoke would rise. The ship would be gone. The smoke would rise.

"Look what they're doing to those German's," I leaned forward to hear a G.I. say above the roar of the motor. "I guess there won't be a man alive there," he said happily.

That was the only thing I remember hearing. I heard some G.I.s say all the time, and they spoke to one another sometimes, but you could not hear them with the roar of the ship's motor.

"Have you got a small chart, Andy?" I shouted.

"Tell me about one of those charts with another Fox Green and Red Eyes?"

"Never had one," said Andy. "This time we were approaching the coast of France, which looked incomprehensible.

"That's 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.""

"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 sea instead of topping them, and the boat pulled away from us. The LCVP 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 sea she barked into them and the water filled 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're nearly the lines of a ship, while the LCVPs look like iron bathtubs, and the LCTs like floating freight gondolas. Everywhere you could see, the ocean was covered with these craft. But if a few of them were hit and 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 said. "There's a control boat here somewhere.

"There's a control boat here somewhere." Andy said. "We'll find out what beach we're opposite.""
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," an officer shouted.

"Thanks," Andy looked 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

Tanks blew up with a flash in the streaming gray smoke.

"There's a boat we can catch with," Andy said.

"Coxswain, steer for that LCI over there. We'll come on. Get over there.

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

"Can you tell us what beach is this?" 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 skirted into speed and disappeared from view.

I was discouraged now, because ahead of us, inshore, was the 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 where it should have been was the steeple of the Colleville church showing 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 along the coast, and I remember having asked one captain, Commander W. H. Kehlly of the attack transport Dorotha M. Dix, if our attack was to be a diversionary force.

"No," he had said, "Absolutely not.

What makes you ask that question?"

"Because these beaches are so highly defended.

"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 the landings for us.

I wish I could write the full story of what means to transport across a mine-swept channel; the mathematical projection of maneuver; the intricate details and chronological accuracy and split-second timing of everything from the time the anchor comes up until the boats are lowered and away into the roaring, unceasing assembly circle from which they break off into the attack wave.

The story of all the teamwork behind that which 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 LCP(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 it was Dog White beach which should be 3,495 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 could not hear what they said.

"Hand shotted 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 the LCP(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 bunging out to sea through the swarming traffic of landing craft and lighter craft.

"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.
Target for Machine Guns

An LCV(P) was slanted drunkenly in the take like a long gray steel bathtub. They were firing at the water line, and the fire was kicking up sharp spurs of water. "That's where he says he wants to go," Andy said. "So that's where we'll go."

"No," I said. "I've seen both those guns open up."

"That's where he wants to go," Andy said. "Put her ahead straight in."

"All right," I said. I turned the stern and signaled to the other boat to work her arm, with its upraised finger, up and down. "Come on, you guys," I said. "In the roar of the motor that sounded like the 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 trailing edge of the water going overhead. Then I dropped into the well in the stern sheers where the gunner would have been. The machine-gun fire was throwing water all over the boat, and an antitank shellpossed up a jet of water over us.

"We're going to your left," I said to Andy. "Keep your head down close to his." "Get her the hell around and out of here, coxswain!" Andy called. "Get her out of here!"

As we swung round on our stern in a pivot and pulled out, the machine-gun fire stopped. We didn't stop and then we're down to our pickets. Over the water around us I'd got my head up and think the wind was blowing the shore.

"It wasn't cleared, either," Andy said. "You could see the mines on all the water in the minefield."

"Let's coast along and find a good place to put them ashore," I said. "If we stay outside of the machine-gun fire, we don't think we'll shoot at us with anything big except for HCPV 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 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 got back to the stern. "He wants us to go in," I said. "The LCI was passing that has commanding officer on it."

"We can get him ashore farther up toward Easy Red," Andy said. "He wants to see his commanding officer."

"Those people in that black boat were from his outfit."

Advice from a Wounded Ship

Out on the way, rolling in the sea, was a Landing Craft Infantry, and as we came alongside, I saw a ragged shellhole through the steel plate forward of her pilot house where an 88-mm. German shell had punched in. Blood was dripping from the round edges of the hole in the seachannel with each roll of the LCI. Her rails and hull had been battered by the shellfire from the other boat. The lieutenant had some conversation with another officer who was dressed in a 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 shipping fields behind the beaches.

"He's afraid they don't want him to go in yet, to wait," Andy said. "Let's get out of the way of this destroyer."

"When long is he going to wait?"

"The lieutenant's 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 if it's up at that end," I said. "I'm pretty sure we can get in there when he wants to go in. You're sure they told him they shouldn't go in."

"That's what he says," Andy said. "Talk him to again and get it straight."

"They're saying they shouldn't go in. 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 he was all fouled up and to stay out a while."

The destroyer was firing point blank at the concrete pillbox that had fired at us on the first trip. They were back, and as the guns fired you heard the bursts and the sound of the bullets. "Let's go in," I said. "The brake was changed back onto the steel deck."

The six-inch guns of the destroyer were smashing at the grounded 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 have punched out what was holding up, 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.

"When the infantry has pushed up to the top of the ridge at the end of that valley," I shouted to the lieutenant.

"I don't want us yet," he said. "They told me clear they didn't want us yet."

"Let me take the glasses—Humbug," 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 round 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-sunk LCP(V) foun- dered in the minefield.

"Yes. Sir," Ed Banker said.

An LCI was headed straight toward us, pulling away from the beach after having been passed. "Yes," a man shouted with a megaphone, "There are wounded on that boat and she is sinking."

"Can you get in to her?"

"Let me call the megaphone as the wind snatched the voice away, "there's a machine-gun nest."

"Did they say there was or wasn't a machine-gun nest?"

"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 to 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 among us, but the one 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 seas.

I do not know if the Germans did not fire on us unless the destroyer had knocked the machine-gun pillbox out. Or maybe they were warning us to blow up with the amount of trouble to lay and the Germans might well have wanted to see them work. We were in the range of the antiaircraft guns 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 tanks coming along the beach, barely moving, they were advancing so slowly. The valley opened out onto the beach, and it was the valley opened onto the beach, and it was a little fountain of water jet up, 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 the wheels of the tank, and they were close enough so that I could see their faces, but no men came out of the tank.

By then, we had the wounded man and the survivors on board, the ramp started up, and we were feeling our way out through the stakes and Collier opened up the engine wide as necessary to burn.

We took the wounded boy out to the destroyer. They hoisted him aboard in one of those metal baskets and took on the shoulders to the beach and were blowing every gun. I saw a piece of German about three feet long with an arm, it sailed up high into the air in the fountaining of one shellburst.

It reminded me of a scene in Petrovna.

Landing on the Beach

The infantry had now worked up the valley on our left and had gone over the 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 TTT 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 heavy 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 LCVPs that went in from the Civic, but many of the crews could have been picked up and might be on other vessels. It had been a frontal assault in Broad Beach, against a mine beach defended by all the obstacles in the way.

The beach had been defended so stubbornly and intelligently as to be lost by enemy action.

The boat was lost in the battleship, and the others were lost by enemy action. 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 LCVP 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.

THE END

While Mr. Hemingway was covering this article, General Montgomery revealed in an interview that a German division was sent up to the beach front at the spot where Collier's correspondent sailed. "We hit it right on the nose," Mr. Hemingway said.