



# DRAGON'S BREATH

*Dhahran Memorial Division Newsletter*

June 2009

No. 24

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MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

## FLAG DAY



**HAPPY HOUR • 50 SR**  
**JUNE 18, 2009 • 1830 (6:30 PM)**  
**831 HOLMES • 878-1074**

## China Post 1 Officers and Board

<i>Commander</i>	<b>Daniel S. Boothby</b>
<i>1st Vice Commander</i>	<b>Cory Frances</b>
<i>Vice Commander - Membership</i>	<b>Anthony Rios</b>
<i>Vice Commander - Fundraising</i>	<b>Hans J. Stockenberger</b>
<i>Vice Commander - Social</i>	<i>Vacant</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<b>Tom Sedberry</b>
<i>Adjutant</i>	<b>C. DiAnne Boothby</b>
<i>Chaplain</i>	<b>Dwain Camp</b>
<i>Sergeant-at-Arms</i>	<b>Christopher Rudie</b>
<i>Newsletter/Historian</i>	<b>David W. Tschanz</b>

## Become a Member of China Post 1

*Becoming a Member of the China Post 1 Dhahran Memorial Division*



**There are three types of membership:**



### **Regular Member**

To become a regular member you must have served in the Armed Forces of the United States. Optionally you can be a US citizen who served with Allied Armed Forces during any period of conflict to which the United States was a party. Conscientious Objectors and others who refuse military discipline or do other nonqualified service are not eligible.

### **Sons of the American Legion**

Membership in this group is open to a sibling, child or grandchild of a veteran that was on active duty during any of our periods of conflict

### **Friends of China Post 1**

The "Friends of the Dhahran Memorial Division – China Post 1" is a social membership open to anyone who does not qualify in the above categories. Membership allows you admission to our gatherings as well a subscription to our newsletter and a place on our mailing list.

For additional information, as well as a membership form, please contact Tony Rios, Vice Commander – Membership

## Commander's Corner



Hi All,

First I would like to thank everyone for their support and attendance at the Memorial Day Observance!

I would also like to thank the CPI Exec members and members at large of both DMD and JMD that helped to plan, sell tickets and arrange the event. Thanks also to our speaker for the event Dr. David "Dr. Sanchez" Tschanz.

Most significantly, I want to thank SSG Aron Shipman, and the Marine Corps Detachment for their sponsorship and for their participation in the Memorial Day Ceremonies. They made it a memorable and solemn evening.

Thanks as well to the Marines and the Consulate staff for providing us the American soil upon which to observe Memorial Day.

I have not yet been informed of the final accounting, but anticipate that in combination with the Charity night proceeds that we will be sending \$5000 or more to the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Thank you again to all our supporters! It is just such support that is providing a real show of appreciation to our service members and their families, rather than just

lip service.

As we move towards the summer activities, DMD will be having a regular meeting followed by a happy hour on Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. Look for the follow-up e-mail announcement and request for RSVP, which should come out later this week. We also are thinking of some BBQ or such for a 4th of July celebration, probably on July 2nd, so watch for news on that as well.

The hot weather is here, so please be safe and say a prayer for our troops that are out in this heat with full battle gear.

I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming events!

Dan

**Uniform of the Night**

*Casual attire*



## The American Legion

GENERALS WARD & CHENNAULT & LT HELSETH  
CHINA POST 1

### Soldiers Of Fortune

Dear Potential China Post 1 Member:

Enclosed is the CP1 application form for you to complete. It is a 2-sided form. Please complete both sides. A copy of your DD-214 must be submitted with the application. If you do not have ready access to your DD-214, please submit it as soon as possible. A copy of your discharge certificate will be accepted as temporary documentation for application into China Post 1 but a copy of your DD-214 needs to be submitted when you have access to it. We normally give a grace period of 1 year to submit the DD-214.

#### Dues

There is an annual dues assessment of \$40 paid directly to the National China Post 1 Headquarters in Houston, Texas. The initial check is sent with the application from the Dhahran Memorial Division Office. There is also a SR150 dues payable annually to support the local Dhahran Memorial Division – China Post 1 chapter.

Sincerely,

Tony Rios  
Vice-Commander – Membership

## **What if D-Day Had Failed?** A Modest Speculation

*David W Tschanz*

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On the night of 5 June, after he'd given the final order for the Allied invasion to proceed, the Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D Eisenhower took a scrap of paper from his pocket and wrote out a press release he hoped he'd never have to issue:

*Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.*

The note was only found weeks later, crumpled in Ike's shirt pocket, by his naval aide, Captain Harry C. Butcher who saved for posterity.

But what if Ike had had to deliver it? What if D-Day had failed?

The question is a favorite one. Military historians and alternate historians (who now prefer to be called counter-factual historians) ponder the question and speculate into the wee hours of the morning, fueled by coffee, beer and snack food. The question won't ever go away, not only because the events of June 6<sup>th</sup> marked one of the turning points in history; but also because it could have so easily turned out differently. Hence this modest speculation about what might have happened if the greatest seaborne invasion in history had failed.

The first question that we have to address is how could D-Day have failed on June 6<sup>th</sup>. There were two possible ways the invasion to have failed that fateful Tuesday. The first almost happened.

### **What if the invasion hadn't happened because of the weather?**

The weather had been fine in late May during the final build-up of Allied troops. But then it rapidly deteriorated until on June 4<sup>th</sup> Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower decided to put things on hold.

Eisenhower was in a quandary and knew that were only two more days left that week with the right combination of moon and tide for the landings to proceed. If that happened, he'd have to postpone everything for another two weeks.

Fortunately, a temporary break in the weather allowed the invasion to go ahead on June 6<sup>th</sup>. The bad weather actually helped lull the Germans into thinking there would be no invasion and many of their senior commanders were out of position. As a result they were taken completely by surprise and the man in charge of repelling the invaders, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel did not return to his headquarters until almost sunset the night of June 6<sup>th</sup>. But what would have happened if the weather hadn't cleared or if Eisenhower had called off the June 6<sup>th</sup> landings?

Since the weather deteriorated into June 7<sup>th</sup>, almost certainly the invasion would have been postponed until two weeks later.

The postponements would have increased the odds that the Germans would have discerned that the invasion was imminent, though that was already widely suspected. If the Germans had been able to determine whether the June 18<sup>th</sup> invasion would land, they would have been able to bring the full force of their fire to bear at the very moment that Allied forces were at their most vulnerable, as they landed on the beaches.



So what would have happened if the invasion had been postponed till the next good weather on the 18<sup>th</sup>. It would have landed before the worst storm in 50 years. The troops get to land then lose all support and logistics.

German forces, while hampered by the weather as well, would have been able to pin, and defeat the Allies on their beachhead. Even if by some miracle Allied forces were able to escape, the result would have been catastrophic.

#### **What if the Germans had met the invasion as feared?**

It is easy, now to look back over sixty years in the past and forget what a close run thing it had been, even without coordinated German resistance or the release of the panzers.

Disaster almost struck at OMAHA, where American forces encountered murderous fire and were

mowed down in their hundreds as they left their landing craft - a scene powerfully evoked in the opening shots of Steven Spielberg's film, *Saving Private Ryan*. For a while, it seriously seemed that the Americans might have to withdraw, the situation saved only by the bravery of the GI's pinned down there under murderous fire. But the scene could just as easily have repeated ten fold on UTAH, GOLD, SWORD and JUNO

It was never a certainty that OVERLORD would succeed. While no commander undertakes a military operation of the magnitude of Overlord without confidence in its success, Eisenhower understood that failure was entirely possible and had prepared in advance to accept full responsibility.

For the D-Day landings to succeed, each of the following had to happen:

- Land over 150,000 troops by sea and by air on a strongly defended hostile shore.
- Deceive the Germans about where the Allies would land.
- Do this despite having to keep the actual site of the invasion the most heavily guarded secret on the planet by telling only the key invasion force commanders.
- Have the right weather conditions

Add to this that World War II amphibious operations were all perilous. Sicily, Salerno and the numerous landings in the Pacific showed that each operation was extremely complex and each could rely on Murphy's Law to come into play. At Sicily, the landings were hampered by unexpected problems including inexperienced transport pilots, lack of aerial discipline, "friendly fire" from Allied ships at sea, high winds and smoke from fires burning on the island. Salerno nearly came undone because of bad planning and General Mark Clark's foolish decisions to skip a pre-invasion bombardment and embark the landing craft from far too great a distance from the beaches.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, a sudden change in the weather could have swept away the invasion force. Rommel's presence might have made a difference. He probably would not have waited to order Hitler woken that morning to request permission to move the panzer reserves to the beaches.

And at the bottom of it all was Murphy's Law thwarting good plans and working on each of these and other factors singly, or collectively, to defeat the invasion.

### **Consequences**

So what would have happened if Ike had to deliver his speech, and the invasion forces lay in disarray, and the Germans rounded up tens of thousands of Allied prisoners.

The Allies would have continued fighting, of course.

The loss of troops while serious would not have been irreplaceable, at least with the landing force. The loss of the cutoff and captured or killed airborne forces would have been a more serious blow. Lost also were the precious landing craft that had been so carefully gathered. Replacing all would have taken at least a year.

Eisenhower would have been sacked or resigned. It is possible he may have gone further as some view his scrawled note as similar to a suicide note. Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery was his designated successor, but it is not likely he would have been given the job. General George Marshall had begged FDR to command the invasion, and might now be given command of a second attempt if it came.

Churchill's government would have fallen and he would have been replaced by Clement Atlee whose immediate political concern was reassuring a demoralized British population.

The problem would have been worse since by the late summer of 1944, even with the invasion successful, the V-1 and V-2 "buzz bomb" attacks shook Britain's morale.

The morale effect on Germany of this victory, which had suffered a string of defeats would have been tremendous. There would likely not have been the July 1944 bomb plot, which means Hitler might have avoided an acceleration of his paranoia and been able to trust his military advisors.

Tottering German allies, such as Romania, may have been more loathe to "defect" to the Allied or Russian side.

With the West temporarily neutralized, Hitler could focus on the Russians in the East, which were about to start the BAGRATION offensive. He might have managed to fight it to a bloody stalemate, using the forces that he would not have needed for the Battle of the Bulge, but that seems unlikely. By this time the Red Army had become unstoppable and eventually, though probably much later, Stalin's forces would have taken Berlin

Given another year, the concentration camps would have likely been able to complete the Final Solution.

Of course the Allies would not be sitting licking their wounds. Italy, where the Germans had brought an Allied advance to a halt, could have been reinforced and the battle pressed on. There could have been an invasion of the Balkans, or of southern France, or even of Norway. But it would have taken many months, or even a year, for any of these operations to be mounted with enough force to make a major impact on the war in Europe.

Allied strategic bombing would still continue to cripple German war production and logistical efforts; Germany would slowly starve to death as it was cut off from its sources of supply of vital materials, particularly oil

If the war raged on into the summer of 1945 the *Enola Gay* and *Bock's Car* would likely have been ordered to drop their deadly cargoes on German, not Japanese cities. In their wake the Red Army would have advanced through the ruins of nuked Europe, perhaps as far west as the English Channel.

The Yalta conference in February 1945, if it were even held, would have been far worse, given the ineffectual contribution of the Allies in defeating Germany. The result would have been to place Germany and most of western Europe behind the Iron Curtain, and communism would have been enforced on the end of bayonets.

In a repeat of 1940, Britain would have again stood alone, except for the United States and its overseas allies.

In these circumstances, the US might well have retreated across the Atlantic into isolation, and Britain forced into some disastrous compromise deal with Stalin. The whole post-war history of Britain, of Europe, and of the world, would have been radically different.

It didn't happen that way. But it might have.

# Menton 2009



## **Reflections on Memorial Day 2009**

*Delivered by David W. Tschanz  
On behalf of the Dhahran Memorial Division, China Post 1*

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Good evening.

I've been given the privilege of speaking to all of you this evening about Memorial Day and what it's all about, not just for members of the American Legion, or Americans, but for everyone.

Memorial Day is not about picnics and ballgames, hot dogs and beer, or dinner and dancing.

Since its first official observation on 5 May, 1868, when it was called Decoration Day, Memorial Day has been the day to remember those who sacrificed and died in our nation's service. And while it was originally dedicated to honor Civil War soldiers, today it calls to memory all who have fought for and defended our right to freedom.

America is not the only nation that recognizes those who have died for their country. Throughout much of Europe, Remembrance Day is observed on November 11<sup>th</sup> with red poppies to honor the fallen; in New Zealand and Australia, it's observed in April on ANZAC Day.

But no matter what it's called or when it's observed these days commemorate the universal all-encompassing understanding of the value of selfless sacrifice.

US Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes called this "our most sacred holiday." It is the day, he said, we should think about the men and women who gave their lives for their country.

But Holmes urged us not to spend Memorial Day pondering "with sad thoughts the passing of our heroes, but we should rather ponder their legacy – the life they made possible for us by their commitment and pain."

Memorial Day should be the day we reflect on what it means to have believed in something larger than yourself.

These brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines died protecting their country and what it stood for. They died defending a way of life that they felt was worth dying for. They died for their families, children, freedom, morality, values, and responsibility. They died for you and me, and we are deeply indebted to them.

How do we find such men and women?

The answer is patriotism. Without patriotism we would have no heroes to honor today.

Patriotism isn't simply an exaggerated sense of loyalty or posturing. Patriotism is deeper than its symbolic expressions, than sentiments about place and kinship that move us to hold our hands over our hearts during the national anthem.

Real patriots are quiet patriots. They don't brag about it or call attention to themselves; they let their actions speak louder than their words.

We are talking about people like Army Sgt. Michael Boatwright, a Texan who loved riding bulls, listening to country music and deer hunting.

He joined the Army after high school and found he loved being a soldier. He had just re-enlisted and had made the decision to make the Army his career when he was killed in Baghdad by an improvised explosive device.

Then there is Marine Cpl Travis Braddock-Nall of Portland, Oregon. Travis played the drums, loved punk rock music and drove his mother crazy with his series of tattoos.

In May of 2003, he was scheduled to leave Iraq. He was going to come home, go to college and learn to fly helicopters. He learned just before his departure that more help was needed in his platoon and so he volunteered to stay three more months.

Travis was killed two months later in an explosion during a mine-clearing operation near Karbala.

They are only two of the latest patriots and heroes who have fallen in a long line that stretches back more than two hundred years to Lexington and Concord.

How can we honor them adequately? Is it possible to do anything that will ever match their sacrifice?

Abraham Lincoln hinted at a possible answer to that question when, at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg in November 1862, he said:

*We cannot dedicate -- we cannot consecrate -- we cannot hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract.*

*It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work ... for which they gave the last full measure of devotion*

What we each need to do is look into our heart and souls and ask ourselves what we are doing with the bloodstained legacy they have left behind.

Their true memorial is the nation and culture we create from their sacrifice.

Thank you. May God bless you and may God bless the United States of America.



**Cemetery in York, Pennsylvania Decorated for Memorial Day, 2008**

## 2009 Calendar of Events

	Date	Event	Comments
	<del>January 15</del>	<del>Guadaleanal Liberation Dinner Meeting</del>	<del>Installation of Officers</del>
	<del>February 19</del>	<del>Chinese New Year</del>	<del>Wear Dragons</del>
	<del>March 26</del>	<del>Iwo Jima Day</del>	<del>The day the battle ended</del>
	<del>April 30</del>	<del>Annual Charity Event</del>	<del>Black-Tie Charity Fund Raiser</del>
	<del>May 21</del>	<del>Memorial Day Observance &amp; Dinner Dance</del>	<del>TBA</del>
	June 18	Flag Day Dinner meeting	Honor Old Glory
	July 2-3	4th of July BBQ & Picnic	233rd Birthday All Nighter!
	August 20	Summer Sizzler Happy Hour	Cool off with Ice
	September 17	3rd Annual Liberal Sacrifice Happy Hour	Volunteers?
	October 16	Columbus Day Dinner Meeting	Toy boat races in the pool?
	November	Veteran's Day Observance & Dinner Dance	TBA
	December 10	Holiday Dinner Meeting	Annual Elections

*All dates are tentative. Venues and times will be announced.*

**Mark Your Calendar!**

# 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY CELEBRATION



**JULY 2, 2009  
PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED**