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## Capture Living History: Arthur Klobe helped plan D-Day

By Carl Kelly

Part 11 of a continuing series.

**When Gen. Omar Bradley selected his 1st Army staff for the invasion of Normandy 1st Lieutenant Arthur Klobe was chosen to join. He was sent to Bristol, England to the headquarters to be part of the planning team.**

"We did not decide whether to go to Normandy," said Klobe.

"That decision was made at the highest levels. We had the job of putting the troops on the ground in the proper sequence, infantry, artillery, medical, all of them, all of the details for everything."

The team was to plan how to use 5,000 vessels to get 150,000 troops on the ground in one 24-hour period. It was an enormous job.

"We worked on that plan an incredible number of hours from October 1943 until we picked ourselves up and went down to the Falmouth in June 1944. We had Top Security clearance. We knew every thing there was to know about the landing."

Klobe remembered one point in their planning when they couldn't determine whether the sand of Normandy would support the heavy craft that was to land there. The British were not concerned. They sent two men to France on a dark night to look at the beach. The men "did some soil testing and determined a 100 yard section of Omaha Beach where the heavy equipment could land." Problem solved.

"We had two missions," Klobe elaborated, "planning and bringing the troops to the highest state of readiness we could." They needed to do both simultaneously. He compared their second mission to preparing an NFL team for the big game. The planning team's job was to get them ready before, "the team comes running and screaming out at the beginning of the game."

Toward that end they conducted detailed training at the Assault Training Center in Gloucestershire. "Every unit that was to be involved in the landing went through a full-scale training. That paid off in Normandy. In a real landing, it is a big traffic jam. Some landing craft get stuck, or sunk," Klobe noted. "We did everything we could to make it work as planned. We worked hard to eliminate any surprises."

Although Klobe was not a part of General Bradley's personal staff, he did meet him from time to time as they discussed the progress of the plans, and he remembers the general as "a superb soldier."

"He was pretty much all business," Klobe explained. "He wasn't flamboyant. He wasn't George Patton. He would look at the statistics continually."

One of Klobe's most telling memories about Bradley is a short speech he gave to his staff, "You're out there as my eyes and ears. I want you to come back and tell me what you see and what you think we can do better."



*Arthur Klobe worked in Gen. Omar Bradley's staff on the team that planned the invasion of Normandy. They planned all of the details of landing 150,000 troops from 5,000 vessels in 24 hours.*

Despite all the careful planning, training and attention to detail, the invasion of Normandy did not go as planned.

"Omaha was trouble," said Klobe. "We ran into an extra German infantry division that was not shown in our order of battle. Our guys, the 29th Division that were the spearhead, they got pinned down. They lost a lot of wonderful young men. The organization on the beach didn't go the way we wanted it to go."

Klobe's thoughts turned to the men on the beach. "It is tragic to lose the life of anybody. But, above that it's costly. This was drummed into us by Gen. Bradley. He was known as a soldier's soldier. He paid a lot of attention to the GI."

"The infantry man when he goes ashore can carry only so much ammunition. It's heavy," he explained. Then, he became almost poetic. "The American soldier is tough, and his best friend is his rifle. That's his wife. That's his love. His everything. Respect it, clean it, treat it right. You need it. It's going to protect you."

"They got on the beach and they were pinned down and they soon were running out of small arms ammunition. I was standing on the rail of The Augusta on the morning of June 7th, D plus one, about a half a mile off shore watching all of this," he said.

Then, a superior officer gave him a list of the numbers of the landing craft on shore that had ammunition and took him in a craft to the beach. The officer went one way and sent Klobe the other to locate the landing craft and get ammunition to the troops.

"I was scared silly," he said. "So, I went down the beach. I know that I found three vessels. I'm not sure I didn't find four or five. I don't know. I don't remember. I was fortunate. I got back, and we went in the boat back to the ship."

They did the ammunition and they got it to the troops, and for this heroic act the French awarded Arthur Klobe the Crois de Guerre, their equivalent of the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor.

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