

THE REAGAN LEGACY FOUNDATION
IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE

REAGAN

AT NORMANDY





PURPOSE AND CONTENT

This proposed documentary film honors the legacy of Ronald Reagan's intimate connection to France as the first American president to commemorate the anniversary of the Normandy Invasion. The words spoken that day in June of 1984 underscored Reagan's respect for the allied forces that fought to liberate France forty years prior. Included in the film is the story of Reagan's personal World War II military history, his position as the most powerful leader of the free world who fought hard and passionately for freedom. Thousands of visitors who seek to learn more about the liberation of the people of France beginning at Sainte Mère Eglise and its blended history with the 82nd and 101st Airborne American Division Paratroopers who played a key role in the Invasion of Normandy will be enriched and entertained by the content of this film.

In 1984 on the 40th Anniversary of this historic event through a monumental speech staged beside the US Rangers Monument at Pointe du Hoc, President Reagan honored the bravery and sacrifice of the allied forces that fought so hard to liberate the oppressed and preserve liberty. Decades ago on that windswept cliff in the midst of the war that consumed the efforts of an entire world, a defining battle for a foothold on the rugged cliffs above turned the tables forever changing the course of that war leaving a legacy of determination and bravery that Reagan found worthy of remembering.

Above the English Channel, surrounded by a group of veterans and their families, President Reagan called attention to the site and the bravery of the soldiers who led the invasion and defied the oppressive Nazi regime. They fought, one man at a time, inch by treacherous inch, up the rugged cliffs of Normandy. He reminded the world of the importance of that event. It was a moment in history that defined the beginning chapters of the Liberation of France. Reagan felt moved to go there that day, joined by those remaining honored veterans of the battle to whom he referred as “the boys of Pointe du Hoc” to remind the world of the ultimate price of freedom. The importance of his visit that day cannot be overstated and is the basis for this film. Through Reagan’s own words, historic images, and video footage, we will explore the importance of his presence on that day and his commitment to remember those who fought to liberate France.





His leadership during the cold war era is included in the film along with his ongoing fight for the freedom of all. He served his country as president at a time when freedom was again in danger of being consumed by oppressive dictators as it had been in France of the 1940s. He was a member of the “Greatest Generation” who was ever ready to serve a greater cause. Those who come to view the film will leave with a better understanding not only of Reagan’s view of the allied troops and their permanent place in the history of France but of the very importance of liberty.



the Venue

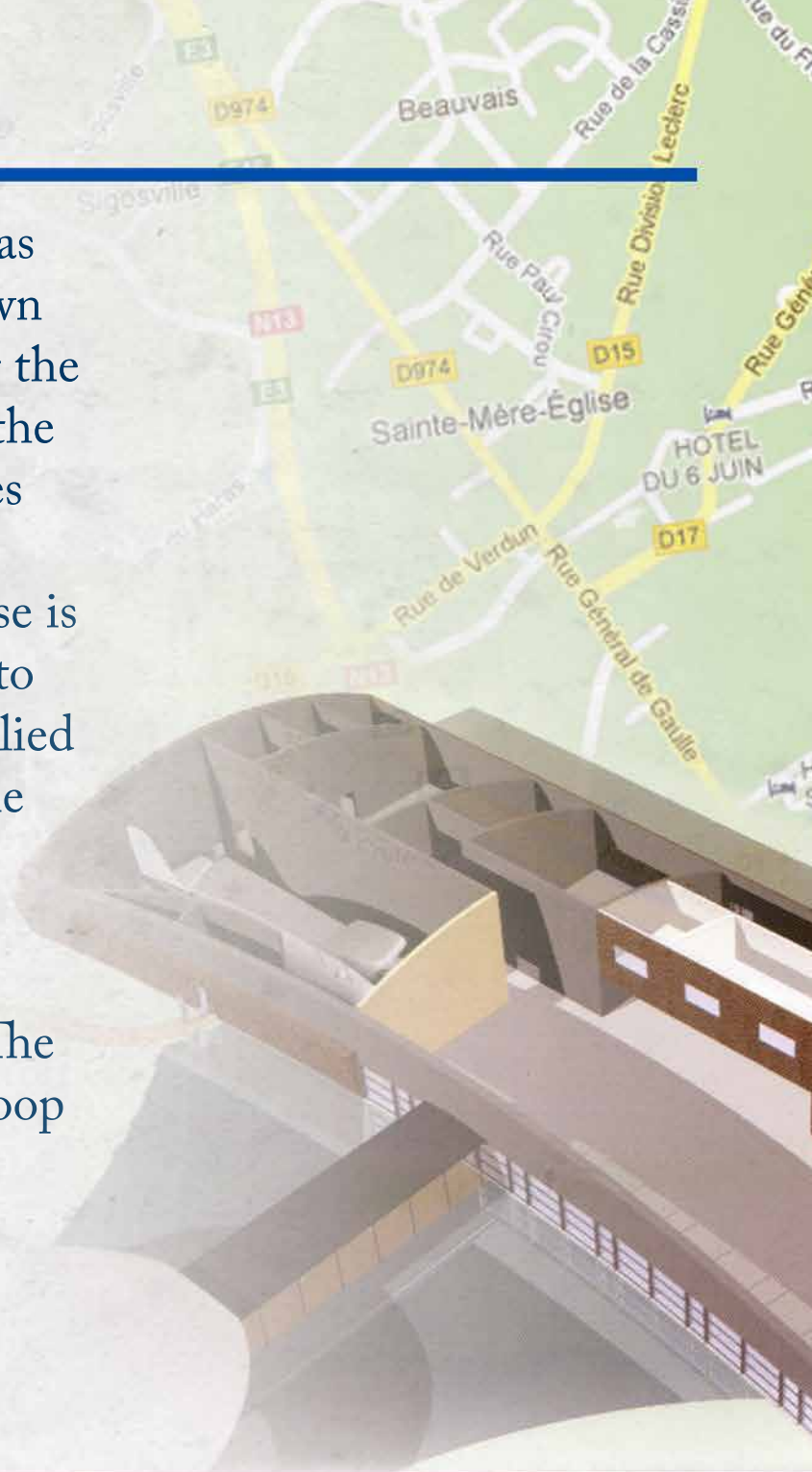




*The Reagan
Legacy
Foundation*



The venue of Sainte Mère Eglise Airborne Museum was chosen because historically speaking it was the first town in France liberated from German oppression following the beachhead Invasion at Normandy. The liberators were the American Paratroopers who as part of the Allied Forces swept in and began the liberation on the streets of this small but extremely important town. Sainte Mere Eglise is the focus of thousands of visitors who return annually to remember the great Liberation made possible by the allied forces on D-Day in 1944. Sainte Mere Eglise serves the key role as the epicenter of French liberation and an appreciation of the American troops who aided in the cause. The film will be shown in the new wing of the museum in the state-of-the-art cinema theater space. The 30 minute film will be shown to museum guests on a loop with built in intermissions.



315087



DOCUMENTARY VIDEO CONTENT

Reagan At Normandy is an in-depth portrait, not only into the great speech at Pointe Du Hoc, but also into the enduring relationship between two of the worlds greatest allies, America and France. Through archival video, photographs, motion graphics and video reenactments, we will show museum patrons a compelling tribute to the men and women who fought for freedom and the importance of the President's speech commemorating their sacrifice.

On the following pages you will see a proposed timeline of video content.



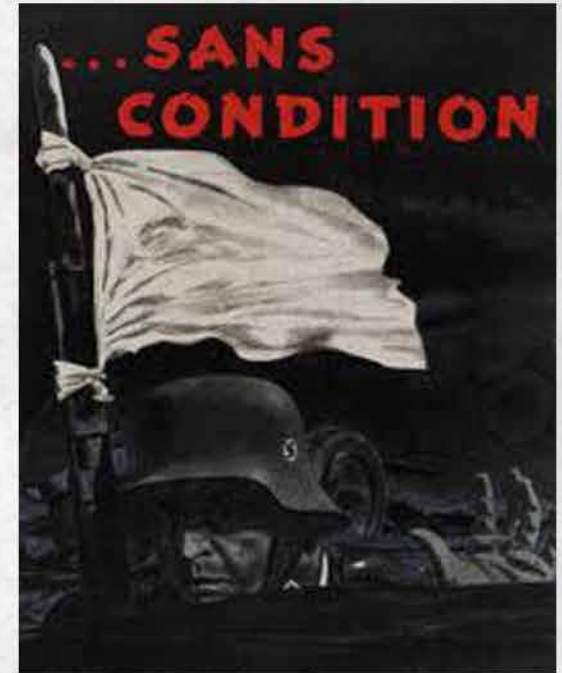
UNITED STATES AND FRANCE: WWI TO 1940

During the First World War, the United States joined France in 1917 providing much-needed reinforcements to the beleaguered country. Most of the American soldiers who joined the war came from recent immigrant descent to defend the land of their parents. In the peacemaking, however, the two nations clashed over details. The ambition of French Premier Georges Clemenceau was to ensure the future security of France through restitution, reparations, and guarantees. He had little confidence in what, to him, were the unrealistic and utopian principles of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. In reference to Wilson's "Fourteen Points" he remarked, "Even God was satisfied with Ten Commandments, but Wilson insists on fourteen."



The two nations clashed on debts, reparations, and restraints on Germany. Clemenceau was determined that German territory west of the Rhine should be established under domination of France. In the eyes of the U.S. and British representatives, such overreach would breed future wars and so a compromise was reached. Wilson and British Prime Minister David Lloyd George agreed that the United States and Great Britain, by treaty, would guarantee France against aggression. The importance of this pledge was vital.

Following WWI, the two nations remained friendly and beginning in the 1920s, U.S. intellectuals, writers, and tourists were drawn to France for its art, literature, philosophy, theatre, cinema, fashion, wines, and cuisine. In 1928 the two nations sponsored the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war, and in the thirties both governments favored capitalism over socialism. In the Second World War the U.S. again favored France in opposition to Germany. President Franklin D. Roosevelt aided the French with cash, munitions, and supplies but repeatedly refused to declare war on the Axis.



Certain factions of the defeated France established a fascist regime at Vichy in 1940. The United Kingdom under Winston Churchill rejected the fascist regime and instead supported the Free French—the French Resistance against the fascist regime.

President Roosevelt initially decided to support the fascist regime in Vichy which resulted in a significant clash between Roosevelt and French President Charles De Gaulle.

WORLD WAR II – THE INVASION OF NORMANDY

In 1944 as WWII was fought in the European Theater the Allied Forces were engaged in D-Day combat on the beaches and cliffs of Normandy, France. These Forces came from Canada, United Kingdom and United States of America. Free French Forces and Poland also participated in the battle after the assault phase, and there were also minor contingents from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, the Netherlands, and Norway.



General Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed commander of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force along with General Bernard Montgomery developed the invasion plan, insisting that the scale of the invasion be expanded with room to land a significant number of forces on the coast. The United States sent forces to take Omaha, Pointe du Hoc and Utah Beaches. The Canadians teamed up with British units to attack Sword Beach, Gold Beach and Juno Beach.

The Americans who landed on Omaha beach faced the veteran German 352nd Infantry Division. Omaha was the most heavily fortified beach, and the majority of landings missed their assigned sectors, but small units of infantry infiltrated the coastal defenses. At Pointe du Hoc, the task for the 2nd Ranger battalion was to scale the 30 meter cliffs under enemy fire. The Rangers were successful, and captured the fortifications. They then had to fight for 2 days to hold the location, however by the end of the day two isolated footholds had been established and the original D-Day objectives were accomplished.



Through the course of the invasion, members of the French resistance cut railroad tracks, sabotaged locomotives, and targeted supply trains, Allied aircraft bombed roads, bridges, and rail junctions to prevent the Germans from moving reinforcements toward the invasion beaches. All rail routes across the Seine River north of Paris were successfully closed and the transportation system in France was halted. The battle for Normandy continued for more than two months, with campaigns to expand the foothold on France, and concluded with the liberation of Paris on 25 August, and the German retreat across the Seine which was completed on 30 August 1944. The loss of France would deprive Germany not only of a major source of raw resources, and labor but also of seaports that had long sheltered its U-boats and of radar sites that had afforded early warning of Allied bomber attacks. More important, it would provide the Allies with the secure base they needed to launch their final offensive against the German heartland.



THE POST WAR ERA

The Normandy landings were the largest seaborne invasion in history, and they did hasten the end of the war in Europe, drawing large forces away from the Eastern Front that might otherwise have slowed the Soviet advance. The opening of a second front in Europe was also a tremendous psychological blow for Germany's military that had long feared a repetition of the two-front war of World War I. The Normandy landings heralded the start of the "race for Europe," between the Soviet forces and the Western powers, which some historians consider to be the start of the Cold War.





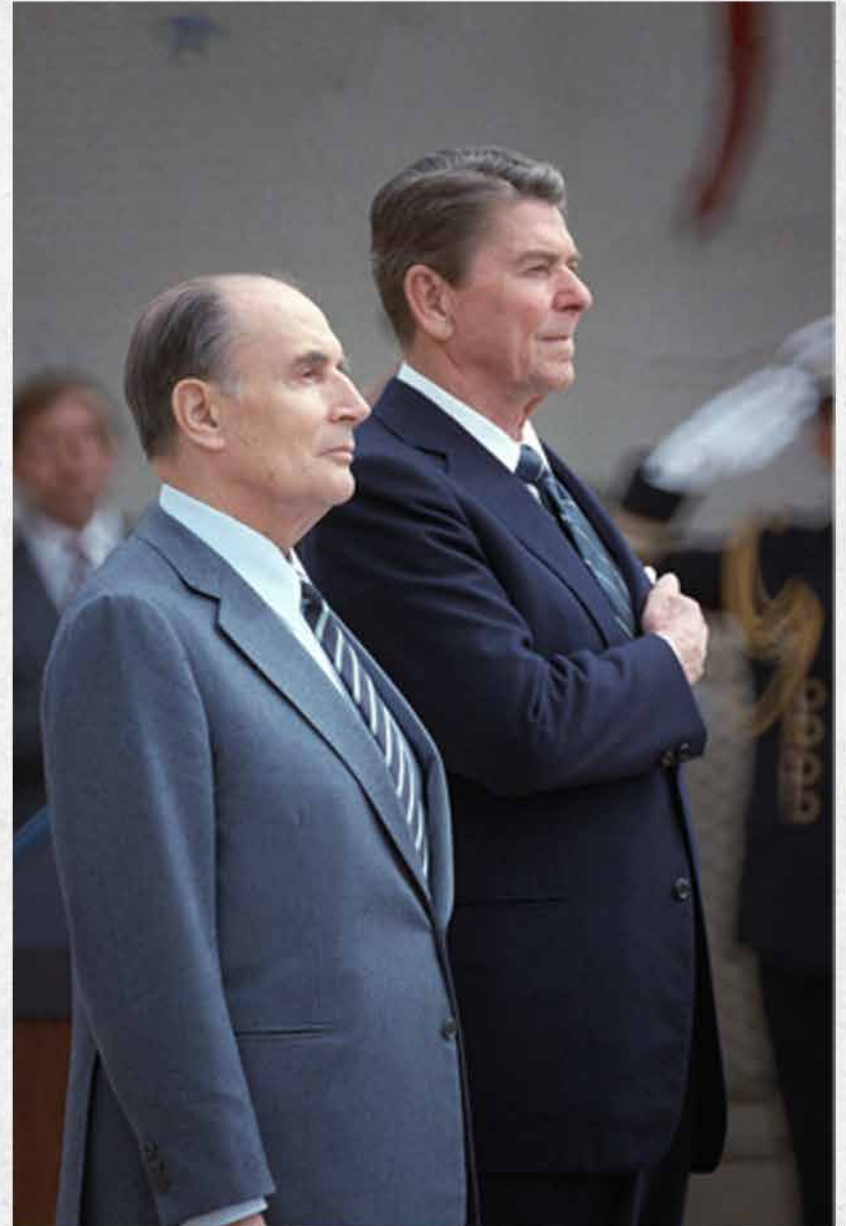
In the postwar years, the United States helped revive the French economy with the Marshall Plan and in 1949 again became a formal ally through the North Atlantic treaty. Though the United States openly disapproved of French efforts to regain control of colonies in Africa and Southeast Asia, it supported the French government in fighting the Communist uprising in French Indochina. In 1954 however U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower declined French requests for nuclear weapon air strikes to relieve besieged French forces at Dien Bien Phu. Both countries however opposed the Soviet Union in Cold War confrontations. When France, Britain, and Israel attacked Egypt, over the recently nationalized Suez Canal Eisenhower forced them to withdraw from the region. The Suez Crisis had a profound impact on France which began to consider that the U.S. could not be counted upon as a reliable ally. As time passed occasional tensions surfaced between the governments, however the French public itself, except for the Communists, generally had a good opinion of the United States throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s



THE 1980s - REAGAN'S DIPLOMACY WITH FRANCE

During the 1980s relations between the United States and France were generally cooperative. Mutual visits by high-level officials were conducted on a regular basis and there was bilateral contact at the cabinet level. France and the United States worked closely on some issues such as anti-terrorism, but differed on others, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a number of trade issues. Differences were always discussed frankly.

In August 1981 the French elections which occurred during May and June brought new government leaders to France. Most of the discussion in the United States concerning the potential impact of Socialist leader Francois Mitterrand on French foreign policy emphasized continuity and the moderation of Mitterrand and his policies dealing with Soviet relations and the problem of the Middle East issues. Contrasting President Reagan and Mitterrand there were significant differences in their ideas concerning the Third world, revolutionary movements, NATO, and defense programs



In the middle of the Cold War in the 1970s, Soviet intelligence carried out a substantial and successful clandestine effort to obtain technical and scientific knowledge from the West. This effort was suspected by a few US Government officials but not documented until 1981, when French intelligence obtained the services of Col. Vladimir Vetrov, who photographed and supplied KGB documents on the program. The Farewell dossier was the collection of documents that Colonel Vetrov, a KGB defector (code-named "Farewell"), gathered and gave to the French DST in 1981–82, during the Cold War. In the summer of 1981, President Mitterrand told President Reagan of the source, and, when the material was supplied, it led to a potent counterintelligence response by CIA and the NATO intelligence services.

Into the receptive climate of the Reagan administration in a private meeting associated with the July 1981 Ottawa Economic Summit he told Reagan of the source and offered the intelligence to the United States. It was passed through Vice President Bush and then to CIA. France played a key role in bringing light to these operations and exposing them to the United States. Though the two leaders disagreed over items such as nuclear weapons and points of US international power, President Reagan came to office with the intent of reversing what he saw as the "window of vulnerability" favoring the Soviets in strategic weapons throughout the world. He believed that the USSR's economy and the Soviet system were on the way to collapse. Reagan was the first leader who pursued this line of thought and his diplomacy with other leaders of the free world such as Francois Mitterrand was consistent in this area.



THE SPEECH – WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER

We will always remember.

We will always be proud.

We will always be prepared,
so we may always be free.

- Reagan on the 40th Anniversary
of D Day, June 6, 1984



The Allied invasion of Normandy is one of the most famous moments in the military history of the world. The successful, but deadly invasion began a two-month campaign that ended with the liberation of Paris in August 1944. President Reagan traveled to Normandy on the 40th Anniversary of the invasion to deliver one of his most famous addresses. At Pointe du Hoc, speaking to a handful of the remaining veterans from one Army battalion that had launched its attack on that site, Reagan saluted the heroes with the following: *"Behind me is a memorial that symbolizes the Ranger daggers that were thrust into the top of these cliffs. And before me are the men who put them there. These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war."*



THE SPEECH – WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER

Reagan remarked, *“We're here to mark that day in history when the Allied peoples joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty. For four long years, much of Europe had been under a terrible shadow. Free nations had fallen, Jews cried out in the camps—millions cried out for liberation. Europe was enslaved, and the world prayed for its rescue. Here in Normandy the rescue began. Here the Allies stood and fought against tyranny in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history. We stand on a lonely, windswept point on the northern shore of France. The air is soft, but forty years ago at this moment, the air was dense with smoke and the cries of men, and the air was filled with the crack of rifle fire and the roar of cannon... [that] mission was one of the most difficult and daring of the invasion: to climb these sheer and desolate cliffs and take out the enemy guns...”*



During his speech, Reagan took the opportunity to comment on the cold war with the line about tyranny and isolationism by saying: *“But we try always to be prepared for peace; prepared to deter aggression; prepared to negotiate the reduction of arms; and, yes, prepared to reach out again in the spirit of reconciliation. In truth, there is no reconciliation we would welcome more than reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so, together we can lessen the risks of war, now and forever.”* Furthermore, Reagan saluted the Soviets, who he said had paid *“a terrible price that testifies to the world the necessity of ending war.”* Later that day at Omaha Beach Reagan toured the Normandy American Cemetery, where white crosses and Stars of David mark the graves of U.S. servicemen who died in the Allied invasion of France. He remarked, *“Today as 40 years ago our armies are here for only one purpose—to protect and defend democracy. The only territories we hold are memorials, like this one and graveyards where our heroes rest. We in America have learned bitter lessons from two World Wars. It is better to be here, ready to protect the peace, than to take blind shelter across the sea...rushing to respond only after freedom is lost.”*

In the three years that followed the Normandy speech, Reagan used diplomacy, courted moderate elements among his adversaries and made bold moves overseas with the hope of achieving peace without bloodshed. After the Soviet reformer Mikhail Gorbachev came into power in 1985, Reagan entered into several rounds of negotiations that produced a historic arms agreement in 1987. In reality, the treaty began the process that ended the Cold War. Although during his European trip Reagan blamed the Soviet Union for world tensions in a speech in Galway, his speech at Pointe du Hoc took note of the immense Soviet contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany. He said that the "terrible price" paid by the Russian people in World War II testified to the necessity of avoiding war. *"In truth, there is no reconciliation we would welcome more than reconciliation with the Soviet Union, so together we can lessen the risks of war, now and forever,"* Reagan said. This passage foreshadowed the U.S.-Soviet summitry on which Reagan would embark the next year after Mikhail Gorbachev became the Soviet leader.



FILM SUMMARY

That June day in 1984, President Reagan spoke of the bravery of the troops who fought arm in arm to defeat the aggressive German forces. He understood the sentiment of the times because he lived through that era and saw the results of the sacrifices of friends back home. Friends who realized that their sons, brothers, and fathers would not be coming home, but rather would be eternally resting in the fields of Normandy. He was sincere in his gratitude to the French people for the way they tended the wounded and dead soldiers at Normandy. This film is an excellent opportunity to again remind the world of these contributions to the cause of freedom - a cause hard fought, hard won and never to be forgotten.

As Reagan stated and truly believed, *“We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we may always be free.”*





REAGAN

AT NORMANDY

© 2012 REAGAN LEGACY FOUNDATION

