

June 4, 2009

46

## D-DAY: LI VETS

See D-Day survivors' emotional recollections of the war in our video at [newsday.com](http://newsday.com)



# Failure not an option

- LI vets mark 65 years since Normandy landings
- Memories of trying to beat odds in deadly fight

BY CARL MACGOWAN  
[carl.macgowan@newsday.com](mailto:carl.macgowan@newsday.com)

As he finished reading his speech Friday at ceremonies marking the 65th anniversary of D-Day, former Navy sailor Joseph Corsentino of Valley Stream added an impromptu reflection on the birth 14 years ago of his twin grandsons, Joseph and Donald Grupski of Massapequa Park.

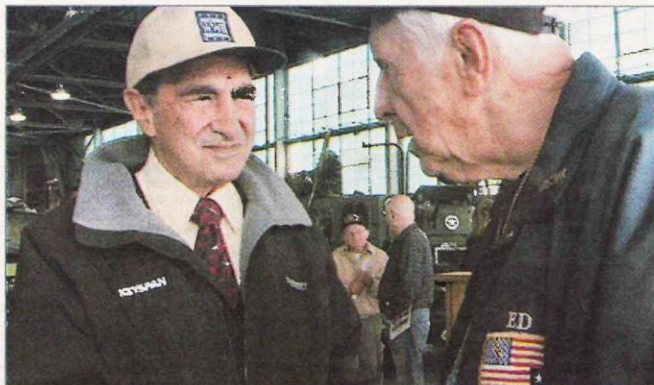
"D-Day — that's what it was all about," said Corsentino, 84, a retired chemist. "We did it for our children and our grandchildren so they might have a better life and a better free world for them to live in."

More than two dozen veterans of the June 6, 1944, invasion of Normandy, the turning point of World War II, attended ceremonies Friday at the American Airpower Museum at Republic Airport in East Farmingdale. They reminisced about roles in the battle, signed a placard for the museum and, prompted by Army veteran Walter Blum, 83, of Great Neck, held a moment of silence for the thousands who died.

A few hundred spectators, including D-Day veterans, their families and public officials, attended the ceremony inside an airplane hangar. Outside, rain fell from gray clouds reminiscent of the dark skies seen in archival footage of the invasion.

Jack McMullen, 87, of Seaford, who piloted a B-24 fighter plane, recalled trying to spot his targets through thick cloud cover as he flew 22,000 feet over St. Lo, France. "We couldn't see anything," the retired American Airlines pilot told the crowd. "The weather was lousy."

"I couldn't see where the bombs went," he told a reporter. Joe McKenna, 86, of Melville, who served in the Navy Armed Guard on a refueling ship, re-



World War II veterans Joseph Consenzo and Edward Collins reminisce Friday at the American Airpower Museum about D-Day. More than two dozen veterans of the 1944 invasion of Normandy attended the ceremonies in East Farmingdale.

**16 million**

U.S. troops who served in World War II

**2.3 million**

Surviving American World War II veterans

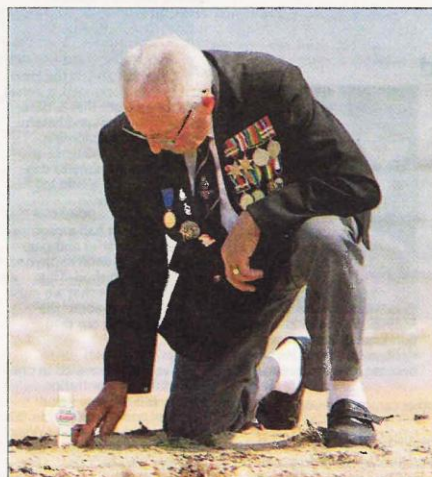
**850**

Estimated daily death rate of U.S. World War II veterans  
— U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### On Long Island

Ceremony marking the 65th anniversary of D-Day: Saturday, 10 a.m., Islip Town Veterans Memorial Park, Islip Town Hall, Montauk Highway, Islip.

## IN FRANCE



Ex-Royal Navy sailor and Normandy veteran Eric Buckley, 85, on the beach Friday near Caen, France



A World War II enthusiast dressed in combat uniform walks in the American cemetery in Normandy, France.

NEWSDAY, SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2009 [www.newsday.com](http://www.newsday.com)

REMEMBERING JUNE 6, 1944

B7

