



Task Force Normandy 65 Joint Information Bureau
Release #N2009-06-3-03

<http://www.eucom.mil/english/Dday/Dday.asp>
June 3, 2009

Trio of Stryker sergeants relives history by recreating image of Soldiers taken on D-Day

By Tech. Sgt. Michael Voss
435th Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office

NORMANDY, France -- Three Soldiers and career-long friends got the rare opportunity to relive the past in a unique way June 2 while the trio is here supporting the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of D-Day.

Sgts. 1st Class Patrick Martin, William Suarez and Steve Selvage from the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, based in Vilseck, Germany, recreated a picture taken of Soldiers on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

The three Soldiers are part of Task Force Normandy 65, a team of hundreds of Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen, federal employees and contractors from across Europe and the United States taking part in honoring those who assaulted Normandy 65 years ago.

Many of the task force servicemembers here for this week's nearly two dozen commemorative ceremonies in the region are tasked with ceremonial support and security missions. More than 10,000 guests and visitors are expected to witness the week's events. But the servicemembers also have another inherent responsibility -- to be ambassadors for their respective services. During their off-duty time servicemembers are encouraged to take in sights of the many historic sites in the area.



COURTESY PHOTOS

In the photo at left taken June 2, (left to right) Sgts. 1st Class Patrick Martin, William Suarez and Steve Selvage of the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, based in Vilseck, Germany, recreate the pose on a postcard taken June 6, 1944 (at right). The building behind the posing Soldiers, now a pizza shop, was a German communications bunker captured by American troops on D-Day.

Filled with museums, monuments and shops brimming with World War II postcards, pictures and memorabilia, the region still holds a vast amount of history for those who visit D-Day sites each year.

“While we were looking around shops ... we came across a postcard with a picture of three GIs in front of a little shop during the invasion,” said Martin. “It just so happened we remembered seeing that exact shop, and we decided to try to recreate that photo.”

The Soldiers traveled the more than four blocks back to the location near Utah Beach that they remembered and asked the owner of what is now a pizza shop if it would be all right to take the photo.

The shop owner looked over the original D-Day postcard scene and not only said yes to the request but, as many Normandy residents do, invited them in and told the story of the historic site.

“We had no idea (of) the history behind the place,” said Selvage, a native of Centerburg, Ohio.

The shop owner showed them that the little shop pictured on the postcard had actually been a German communications bunker on D-Day. When allied forces took control of the area American GIs used the bunker as a staging point. Many of the original servicemembers who landed on the beaches on June 6 even signed the bricks that make up the foundation of the building.

“It was amazing to see all the signatures on the walls,” said Suarez.

After hearing the story and knowing the history behind the site the three sergeants decided to pay tribute to the Soldiers who landed here on D-Day by posing for an exact replica of the scene captured on the 1944 postcard.

“It was really Martin’s idea,” said Selvage. “But I am glad he had it.”

Martin, a Scotia, N.Y. native, admitted he was inspired to pose for the photo by his wife, Cheryl, who he described as “a bit of a history and photo buff.”

“I listen from time to time when she talks about photos,” said Martin. “I never thought that info would come in handy during this trip.”



Follow us on Twitter: @USArmyEurope or @US_EUCOM