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The following document is an extract from a microfilm I bought at Maxwell Air Force Base. The cost for each microfilm is \$ 30. Help me to buy more microfilms about the Troop Carrier and put more documents and information on the website.

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Le document suivant est extrait d'un microfilm que j'ai acheté à la base aérienne de Maxwell aux Etats-Unis. Le coût par microfilm est de \$ 30. En m'aidant à acheter d'autres microfilms vous permettrez au site de diffuser encore plus d'informations sur le rôle des différents 'Troop Carrier Groups' lors de l'opération «Neptune».

**FAITES UN DON – UTILISEZ LE BOUTON PAYPAL - MERCI**

### D-Day Experiences of Pathfinder first sergeant Charles R. Malley

With coaxing from mutual friend Walter S. "Smokey" Gordon, I was able to worm the experiences of the top pathfinder NCO for the D-Day With The Screaming Eagles story. Here is Malley's account as it was prepared in 1966:

"Hi Buddy: Received a note from my good friend Walter Gordon and I will do my humble best to aid you in your dedicated endeavor. I will of necessity route this missile through Walter as your address was not indicated in your brochure. Incidentally I got quite a bang out of the questionnaire data form. Will start from there.

"**Marching Area:** The pathfinders were organized in December '43. Most of the volunteers were busted down NCO's. Training started under Frank Lillyman and to say the least was sort of hilarious. All men had been through the Airborne training mill and were hot to trot. Capt. Lillyman was indeed the right man for the 101st Pathfinders. Twice monthly he would scrounge an Air Force plane on the liquor run into Scotland. Any man who wanted booze put his order in and the Great White Airforce delivered same. Hell they even gave us real air force mattresses--no straw. Our pathfinder unit was stationed just outside of Nottingham, England, home of Robin Hood and the famous Bastille where good old Robin was incarcerated. Many and many of times I would receive a call from the good Sheriff of Nottingham to come down and get these present-day HOODS out of his jail. One thing about English justice--no fines, no nothing--just get 'em to Hell out of here. Lillyman was quite a guy. When I would return these bodies back to the unit he would enquire as to the seriousness of any pending charges from the suffering English civilians. If it looked bad he would give the guy company punishment on the spot thereby forestalling any possible courts-martial. Saved me once!

"I think everyone in the Pathfinders realized that we were getting very close to invasion in later May '44. They threw the barbed wire on us in the last week of May. We set up tents for the various chaplains and all activities were restricted to the enclosure. People were praying all over the place. One 2nd Lt. stayed on his knees for three days. My good friend Jerry Farley, coal miner from Penn had volunteered with me for the pathfinders. Farley could barely read and write and I had been conducting as well as writing all of his love missives for two years so he had to volunteer in order to keep his affairs straight. Farley went to confession 11 times in two days. He slept next to me and after every sojourn with the Catholic chaplain I would say to him, 'Jerry, did you tell the priest about that so and so in London?' Woman of course. Farley would mutter some obscenity and back to the priest. I could not obtain the Catholic Rights of being saved being divorced at the time. [Some slight exaggeration here I believe--GK]

**D-Day is postponed.** A plane came wheeling in on the Air Base. A warrant officer was admitted into the compound. Attached to his right wrist was a small valise. Capt. Lillyman took a key from his pocket and took the valise from the warrant officer. His face was quite white. A message from General Taylor was inside valise. Lillyman read same, turned to me and said, 'Sergeant--tell the troops to relax. We have one more day.' The letter was burned on the spot, valise was returned to the warrant officer who didn't realize the contents. Officer left. The following day June 5th approximate time 6 p.m., new plane, new officer, same procedure. Lillyman same procedure. This time he turned to me and said, 'Get the troops ready.'

"As you know the pathfinder mission was to set up radar etc. for the main flight coming in. Actually we would be in France about two hours ahead of the main body. [Not so--first troops would be landing less than an hour later. GEK] The entire company was moved to flight line and lo and behold, they even had photographers. Generals and all to cheer us up. Even provided Red Cross gals with coffee.

"After appropriate pictures and speeches by the "Stars" we boarded. The Generals came through the C-47 shaking hands with all troops. One said to Farley, 'Son, I wish I was going with you!' Without blinking an eye Farley says, 'General, you are a damned liar!' [It sounds great but I am dubious--GEK] They issued our puke pills and puke sacks as you remember and fired up the motors. My remembrance says the time was around 11 p.m. English hours.

"I was No. 1 at the door due to the fact that I was jumping a Rebecca Radar set attached to my right leg. Naturally we were loaded to the gills with equipment and could barely move. We flew all over the damned English Channel so low that the spray from the water was coming in the door. Later they said this was to confuse German radar. I know damned well it confused all of us on the C-47.

"All of a sudden we shot up a couple hundred feet. Flak was all over the damned sky. Tracer bullets were a dime a thousand. Bullets were whizzing through the fuselage like bees after a honey-robbing bear.

All of a sudden the warning bell to clear the airplane came. Normally being airborne you go without even thinking. I looked out the door to swing. We were all hooked up and I could have grabbed a hand full of trees. I hollered to Lt. Rothwell, stick commander, to hold. One motor was on fire burning like hell. The crew chief kept hollering, 'Clear the ship, Clear the ship!' 'Clear hell! We were at ground level. The co-pilot came rushing back into the troop section and shouted, 'Everything overboard. We are going down.' We cut and slashed our way out of parachutes, guns, ammo, every damned thing we could. I pulled a detonator on the radar set and threw it out. Hell we had nothing left on but jump boots and long underwear. The co-pilot comes back in and makes the overstatement of the century. He hollers, 'Prepare to jump, we are going in.' Jump hell!

"I can sincerely state that there was no great excitement on the plane. I cut Wheeler clean into his rib section trying to get him loose from his chute. He got the Purple Heart.

"We prepared for ditching as our instructions had told us. Ass end to the front of the plane, legs around man in front. Mae Wests were on and the pilot fired a red flare for lighting. The waves were about 200 feet high that night but the pilot did one helluva job. He brought her in on top of one of the waves, dragged tail and flopped her in. We sat there as per orders. Rothwell was trying to get the dinghies inflated. The water came up around our knees and the co-pilot stuck his head back in from the blister on top of the plane. 'Get the troops out--this thing is going down!' Needless to say, we cleared faster than when hooked up. We got the guys who could not swim into the dinghies. Pustola, from Brooklyn had his pockets full of all the pistols we had been passing up the line to throw overboard. Seems like he had always wanted some pistols.

"We swam around for about thirty minutes and somebody hollered, 'Ship ahoy!' I couldn't see any ship but it was a British destroyer on submarine patrol. We could hear the Limeys hollering, 'Shoot the bastards, they're Krauts!' We kept shouting 'American paratroopers!' I have a great warm feeling in my heart for the English. They fished us from the briny depths, gave us grog. We were all froze, and extended such hospitality as was available on D-night Normandy, English Channel, 2 a.m. June 6, 1944.

"One Air Force 2nd lieutenant went along for the ride. After being picked up I asked him what he thought. His reply, 'Look Sarge, I am going to get clear out of the Air Force. These people are playing for keeps!'

Hoping this might help you.

Sincerely,

C. R. Malley  
P.O. Box 111, Leesville, LA"