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*D-Day: The French Jubilee of Liberty Medal*

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**Abstract.** This report details the Jubilee of Liberty Medal awarded to U.S. veterans by the French government to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy by the Allied forces on June 6, 1994 (D-Day). These medals are no longer distributed by the French government. Included is information on how to obtain this medal from a commercial source and how U.S. veterans may obtain an official "Thank-You- America 1944-1945" certificate of participation from the French government.

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# CRS Report for Congress

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## D-Day: The French Jubilee of Liberty Medal

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### Summary

This report details the Jubilee of Liberty Medal awarded to U.S. veterans by the French government to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion of Normandy by the Allied forces on June 6, 1944 (D-Day). These medals are no longer distributed by the French government. Included is information on how to obtain this medal from a commercial source and how U.S. veterans may obtain an official “Thank-You-America 1944-1945” certificate of participation from the French government. This report will be updated as needed.

### Normandy Invasion, June 6, 1944

The invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, was the largest air, land, and sea invasion ever undertaken, including over 5,000 ships, 10,000 airplanes, and over 150,000 American, British, Canadian, Free French, and Polish troops.<sup>1</sup> There are no exact figures for the total number of D-Day participants nor exact casualty figures. Some historians estimate that more than 70,000 Americans and more than 80,000 combined British, Canadian, Free French, and Polish troops participated, including 23,000 men arriving by parachute and glider.<sup>2</sup> According to estimates from the National D-Day Memorial Museum, the Allied forces suffered 9,758 casualties, of which 6,603 were Americans.

### Jubilee of Liberty Medals and D-Day

The Jubilee of Liberty Medal was first awarded in June 1994 to American servicemen for their participation in the Battle of Normandy. The medals were minted at the request of the Regional Council of Normandy to be presented to veterans attending

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Williams, “Operation Overlord,” *MilitaryHistoryOnline*, at [<http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/wwii/dday/overlord.aspx>].

<sup>2</sup> Historical information can be found in numerous sources including *D-Day June 6, 1944 (1994)* and *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944 to May 7, 1945 (1998)* both by Stephen Ambrose; and *The Longest Day (1959)* by Cornelius Ryan. Additional information is available from the National D-Day Museum located in New Orleans, Louisiana, via the Internet at [<http://www.ddaymuseum.org>].

the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day landing on June 6, 1994. Eligible veterans included all who served in Normandy from June 6 to August 31, 1944, comprising land forces, off-shore supporting personnel, and airmen flying cover overhead. The only stipulation was that the medal be presented during an official ceremony, and the veteran be present to accept. On the front of the medal is inscribed, “Overlord 6 Juin 1944” on the upper part of the medal, with the flags of the allied nations and the names of the landing beaches completing the face of the medal. On the reverse side is the Torch of Freedom surrounded by the device of William the Conqueror ‘Diex Aie’ (“God is with us” in Norman French).

Unfortunately, these medals are no longer being awarded by the French government. All medals to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony on June 6, 1994, have been distributed by the French government. Additional medals for those veterans who were unable to attend the anniversary ceremony were later distributed through the *Association Debarquement et Bataille de Normandie 1944* in France, which is now defunct.

Some Members of Congress have awarded the Jubilee of Liberty Medals to U.S. veterans who were unable to attend the ceremony in France on June 6, 1994. These medals were obtained either from the *Association Debarquement et Bataille de Normandie 1944* or from a commercial source.

Commercially-minted Jubilee of Liberty Medals are being manufactured by Sims Enterprises, a private company in Kansas, that is selling these medals at a cost of \$17 for each individual medal (includes shipping and handling ) or \$13 each for orders of 10 or more medals (plus an additional charge for shipping). Please note: This company is not affiliated with either the French or U.S. governments. Veterans are asked to send copies *not* the originals of their service record for verification; copies will not be returned unless specifically requested along with the medals. For additional information, please contact Sims Enterprises, 617 Main Street, Newton, KS 67114; Tel: (316) 283-5817.

### **“Thank-You-America 1944-1945” Certificates**

The French government is no longer distributing the Jubilee of Liberty medals. Instead, the government of France is distributing a “Thank-You-America Certificate 1944-1945” for U.S. veterans. According to a letter sent in December 2000 by former Ambassador of France to the United States, His Excellency François Bujon de l’Estang, to then Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel W. Gober, the government of France is issuing a certificate to recognize the participation of American and allied soldiers who participated in the Normandy landing and subsequent battles leading to the liberation of France. Veterans who served on French territory and in French territorial waters and airspace, from June 6, 1944, to May 8, 1945, are still eligible. The certificate will not be issued posthumously. In agreement with the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the French Consulates General and state veterans affairs offices, veterans service organizations, and veterans associations will identify eligible veterans, review and certify the applications, prepare the certificates, and organize the ceremonies to present the certificates.

D-Day participants living in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia may obtain applications for certificates from the French embassy in Washington, DC, or directly from the Internet at [<http://www.ambafrance-us.org/news/statmnts/2000/ww2/index.asp>].

French Consulate/"Thank-You-America"  
 4101 Reservoir Road  
 Washington, DC 20007  
 Tel: (202) 944-6000  
 Fax: (202) 944-6072

D-Day veterans living in other states may wish to contact the nearest French consulate listed below.

**Table 1. French Consulates in the United States**

State	Address
<b>Atlanta</b> (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 3475 Piedmont Road, NE Suite 1840 Atlanta, GA 30305
<b>Boston</b> (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" Park Square Building Suite 750 31 Saint James Avenue Boston, MA 02116
<b>Chicago</b> (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 737 North Michigan Avenue Suite 2020 Chicago, IL 60611
<b>Houston</b> (Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 777 Post Oak Boulevard Suite 600 Houston, TX 77056
<b>Los Angeles</b> (Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico) for California, send to LA if your zip code is under 93400, to SF if above (see below)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 10990 Wilshire Boulevard Suite 300 Los Angeles, CA 90024
<b>Miami</b> (Florida)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" One Biscayne Tower 17th Floor 2 South Biscayne Boulevard Miami, FL 33131
<b>New Orleans</b> (Louisiana)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" The Amoco Building 1340 Poydras Street, Suite 1710 New Orleans, LA 70112

State	Address
<b>New York</b> (Connecticut, New Jersey, New York)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 934 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10021
<b>San Francisco</b> (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington State, Wyoming) for California, send to SF if your zip code is above 93400, to LA if under (see above)	French Consulate/"Thank-You-America" 540 Bush Street San Francisco, CA 94108

## Websites on D-Day

**American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC).** The American Battle Monuments Commission's Web page on the Normandy Cemetery at [<http://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/no.php>] has information on the cemetery and links on how to locate those interred at American World War II cemeteries overseas.

**D-Day Museum.** The National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, at [<http://www.ddaymuseum.org>] provides historical information on events from D-Day as well as information on annual commemorative events.

**National D-Day Memorial.** The website of the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia, at [<http://www.dday.org>] includes information on the memorial, local events, and tours.

**Normandy Region D-Day Tours.** The official website in English of the *Comité Régional de Tourisme de Normandie* lists various D-Day tours in the region as well as general tourist information at [<http://www.normandy-tourism.org/gb/16tours/index.html>].

**Western France Tourism Board.** The official site of the Western France Tourism Board offers information on tours and travel in the region by clicking on "Normandy" at [<http://www.westernfrancetouristboard.com>].