Remembering D-Day



Young men preparing to risk everything → the price that was ultimately paid.

On June 6, 1944, more than 150,000 Allied troops crossed the English Channel and assaulted heavily defended beaches in Normandy. Many knew they might not survive the day. They were part of a larger effort involving millions of people—soldiers, sailors, airmen, factory workers, farmers, and families—all focused on a common purpose.

Whatever their political differences, Americans of that era generally shared a belief that they were part of something larger than themselves.

Today, our challenges are different. We are not storming beaches under machine-gun fire. We are not mobilizing an entire economy for a world war. By almost every material measure, we are wealthier, safer, and more comfortable than the generation that fought World War II.

Yet we often seem less confident in our ability to solve problems.

The generation that built Levittown, the Interstate Highway System, thousands of schools, airports, factories, and universities did not agree on

everything. They argued fiercely about politics, labor, taxes, and foreign policy. But they generally believed that progress was possible and that institutions could accomplish big things.

Today, we frequently appear trapped between two extremes:

- One side promises simple answers to complex problems.
- The other insists that many problems are too complicated to solve.

The D-Day generation accepted neither view. They understood that difficult problems required sustained effort, sacrifice, and practical solutions.

That doesn't mean we should romanticize the past. The America of 1944 had plenty of shortcomings. But there is something worth remembering about a generation that landed on the beaches of Normandy, defeated fascism, returned home, bought modest houses, raised families, built businesses, and expanded the American middle class.

Those veterans did not return expecting a perfect life. They expected an opportunity. A modest home in Levittown was not the destination; it was the first step.

Perhaps one lesson of D-Day is that great nations are built not only by dramatic acts of heroism but also by the quieter work that follows—building homes, communities, institutions, and opportunities for the next generation.

That's a message worth reflecting on tomorrow.