

16 JANUARY 2019

COMMEMORATION OF THOSE LOST IN OPERATION OVERLORD

REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report is to outline proposals for a commemorative plaque paying tribute to officers of the US infantry, who were based in around Bridport and lost their lives on Omaha Beach in 1944.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Cllr Geoffrey Ackerman has highlighted the absence of any form of memorial in Bridport commemorating US soldiers who were billeted in Walditch and spent much of their time at training and support facilities in Bridport during WW2. He has suggested a plaque or other small memorial at an appropriate location in Bridport, to coincide with the 75th anniversary of Operation Overlord.

2.2 The request has received support from the Bridport Branch of the Royal British Legion, and a letter from Brigadier John Dean (President) is shown at Appendix A. The letter includes some outline ideas for a design for a plaque.

3.0 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 In determining how to proceed, town councillors will need to consider:

- In principle whether the request should be pursued
- The type and design of memorial to be erected
- Any arrangements for an unveiling ceremony (the RBL has suggested that the Defence Attaché from the US Embassy be invited)
- Whether a ceremony should be separate, or combined with an existing event
- Possible locations for the memorial (the Town Hall, Mountfield and the LSI have all been suggested to date)
- Those stakeholders to be included in planning for the memorial
- Funding for the memorial

3.2 This is not an exhaustive list and councillors may identify other matters of relevance.

3.3 Should councillors decide to proceed with a project, a temporary working group could be established to address these issues.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Without an agreed specification for a memorial, it is difficult to estimate the cost. However, a prudent estimate for a wooden memorial plaque, suitably sign-written, and an unveiling ceremony with refreshments is estimated at £800 to £1,000.

4.2 A more ambitious memorial, e.g. made from stone and erected outside, would require more detailed specification before a cost could be properly estimated.

4.3 The RBL has indicated a willingness to be involved in the project and it may be that this could include a contribution to the cost.

4.4 The cost of a plaque as estimated at 4.1 could be accommodated in current year budgeted expenditure.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The Committee is asked to determine whether to proceed with the proposal, the membership of a working group if required, and any other matters of principle for inclusion in the project (such as design principles and order of funding).

9 January 2019

Will Austin
Town Clerk



5th January 2019

Will Austin, Esq
Town Clerk
Bridport Town Council
Mountfield
Bridport
DT6 3JP

Dean Will,

I know you have been in discussion with Geoffrey Ackerman over the feasibility of erecting a memorial plaque to the US soldiers who lost their lives on Omaha Beach in 1944, it being the 75th anniversary of Operation Overlord this year. Geoffrey asked if I would draw up a possible design for the plaque. I enclose my first thoughts which include three possible wordings varying in length.

I would be very happy to be further involved in this Project were it to progress. Clearly it would be opportune to unveil such a plaque on the 6th June and excellent if the Defence Attache from the US Embassy could carry out the unveiling. We would be very happy to accommodate and entertain him and his wife.

Wishing you a happy New Year,

Yours Sincerely,



Brigadier John Dean
President, Bridport Branch, Royal British Legion



In memory of the Officers and Soldiers of 16th Infantry Regiment,
1st Infantry Division of the US Army
based in Bridport and the surrounding area between November
1943 and June 1944
who made the ultimate sacrifice on Omaha Beach in Normandy
during Operation Overlord

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In memory of the soldiers of 16th Infantry Regiment,
1st US Infantry Division
who died on Omaha Beach in Normandy during
Operation Overlord in June 1944