

## Beachhead

**December 7, 1944** – D-Day, the Allied invasion of Europe. The mission: establish a beachhead along the Normandy coast. 2,501 Americans gave their lives on that bloody beach, and another 6,000 were wounded. But through their sacrifice a beachhead was established that would convey thousands more, including my father, into the heart of Europe.



**February 15 - April 21, 1944** – the battle of Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. 395 Americans were killed and another 1,940 were wounded. One of the wounded was Frank Koller, a veteran I accompanied on his Never Forgotten Honor Flight, October 4, 2010. Frank was wounded when the jeep in front of his hit a landmine and pieces of the jeep and its occupants hit him.



**February 19 - March 26, 1945** – the battle of Iwo Jima. Nearly 7,000 Marines were killed and another 20,000 were wounded. My late friend Jack Rempke of Mosinee was shot up by a Japanese machine gunner, and doctors told Jack he'd never walk again. Not only did he prove them wrong, he went on to have a successful career at American Can Corporation, teach boxing at the YMCA, and together with his wife Sally, adopt three medically dependent children.

What's the bottom line to all of these stories? **Establishing a beachhead is costly.** That reminder brings me back from the sanitized manger scenes of the Christmas season, the happy donkeys and the cooing doves. The reality was far different. A manger is a feeding trough for farm animals. Jesus' birth was attended by sheep and goats. There was no doctor, not even a midwife. His first visitors were shepherds, outcasts of society who couldn't even testify in court.

And yet what we celebrate this Christmas season is the establishment of a beachhead on the human situation. In Matthew 1:23, the Bible says, *"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us")*. The baby born that night in squalor would go on to give the world the greatest teachings it has ever received, and then to die a criminal's death on a device so cruel that the Romans would eventually outlaw its use.



Yes, establishing a beachhead is costly. And yet without it there is no hope. But with the establishing of a beachhead comes the hope of victory, costly though it be.

I hope this Christmas season comes with special significance to you as you celebrate the coming of the Savior, the one who would establish a beachhead on the human situation and give His life for you and for me.

Thank you for your support of the Never Forgotten Honor Flight. Through your efforts we have flown another 423 honored veterans this year on the Trip of a Lifetime. Here's a look at the scoreboard:

Veterans flown				Waiting to fly			
WWII	Korea	Vietnam	Total	WWII	Korea	Vietnam	Total
1,048	1,270	2,896	5,214	0	2	405	407

For the heroes,

Ken Moberg  
President