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SUNDAY

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Weather

Partly cloudy today with a high of 81 and a low of 57. A chance of thunderstorms tomorrow with a high of 80 and a low of 62. /B10



INSIDE

Cease-fire call

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat condemns the suicide bombing that killed 17 Israelis and calls for an immediate cease-fire.

World /A4



State success

Alan Webb of South Lakes High School set a state record in the 800-meter run, and Petersburg's Jerome Mathis won the 100 and 200 in the State Group AAA track meet.

Sports /D1

Head of the class

Meet the nominees for the Richmond Times-Dispatch/Richmond Sports Backers Scholar-Athlete of the year award.

Sports /D8-9

Actress dies

Imogene Coca, who teamed with Sid Caesar on TV's classic "Your Show of Shows" in the 1950s, dies.

Nation /A13

Jacob Lawrence

From scatter rugs came colors of life.

Arts /H1



Reynolds rhymes

Volumes of verses preserve another side of family.

Flair /G1

All aboard

Plans for high-speed rail here gather steam.

Business /E1

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D - D A Y : J U N E 6 , 1 9 4 4

The men of Bedford's Company A believed they had earned the job by excelling over two years of hard training. Some of the British suspected the men were picked because they were too green to see

what awaited them. The British coxswains who drove the landing craft coined a nickname for themselves and the infantry going ashore in the first wave at Omaha Beach:

THE SUICIDE WAVE



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

U.S. Army soldiers from an unidentified unit wade toward Omaha Beach from a landing boat early in the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

Company A's journey from Bedford, Va., to Dog Green, Omaha Beach

BY BILL GEROUX
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

VIERVILLE-SUR-MER, France

Lieutenant Ray Nance awoke in the dark from a fitful sleep in his assault gear. His watch said 2 a.m., but he knew he would get no more rest on this day, June 6, 1944.

All around him, throughout the recesses of the troopship Empire Javelin, young men lay half-asleep on cots stacked three- to six-high. Within a few hours, most of them would be delivered to Omaha Beach on the coast of Normandy.

Nance had felt good about the invasion plan at first. The men would hit the beach after a bombardment so fierce, you could almost pity the Nazis. Everyone in Company A was impressed with the plan except the commanding officer, Capt. Taylor Fellers.

Fellers had known Nance for years, and before the final briefing he had taken him aside. Regardless of the plan, Fellers said, they and their men were going to have to cross a wide beach under the muzzles of guns trained down on them from hundred-foot bluffs. Fellers said that with an automatic rifle on those bluffs, he

could hold off an entire company by himself.

"Ray-ee," he had said in his rural Virginia drawl, "we'll all be killed."

Nance had been stunned, but soon persuaded himself Fellers was wrong. Fellers was a great inspirational leader — he'd gotten up out of a sickbed to lead his men on D-Day — but he had never been in combat.

Nor had Nance or anyone else in Company A, which was at its core a Virginia National Guard unit from the small town of Bedford, Va.

Company A, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division was a very small cog in an enormous wheel that had begun to turn, in accordance with the plan.

But two days before D-Day, Nance had felt his confidence dissolving. He could not pinpoint why, but he could not stop it. Now, waking up on his thin cot in the Empire Javelin, he felt only a vague, corrosive dread.

He climbed out of his bunk as soundlessly as possible and made his way to the galley. He ate a quick breakfast, returned to his locker to collect his rifle and gear, and headed topside.

The passageway to the main deck was strung with a heavy curtain to prevent any light in the stairwell from leaking outside and betraying the

SEE D-DAY, PAGE A7 ►

Inside:



BOB BROWN/TIMES-DISPATCH

Invasion survivors Roy Stevens and Ray Nance.

On June 6, 1944, 19 young men from Bedford died in the first waves of Allied troops to storm Omaha Beach. That sacrifice gave small Bedford one of the highest per capita losses on D-Day, and now it is the home of the National D-Day Memorial.

- More than 15,000 people are expected to join President Bush at the memorial's dedication Wednesday morning. **Page C1**
- With no national memorial dedicated to World War II, Bedford and its D-Day Memorial have attracted national attention. **Page C1**
- Staff writer Bill Geroux found haunting reminders of D-Day in Normandy. **Page C1**

Earley gets the nod

Hager makes motion for win by acclamation

BY TYLER WHITLEY
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

Attorney General Mark L. Earley won the Republican gubernatorial nomination by acclamation yesterday. Lt. Gov. John H. Hager made the motion after learning that he was going to be overwhelmingly defeated at the party's state convention.

The final vote count was not announced, but Republican sources said Earley won by a more than 2-to-1 margin. About 9,000 Republicans showed up at the Richmond Coliseum for the finish of the months-long nomination battle.

In a post-convention news conference, Earley

said he would resign as attorney general effective at noon today. Chief deputy attorney general Randolph Beales will become acting attorney general, serving at least until the General Assembly meets July 9 for a congressional redistricting session.

The climax of the nomination fight between Earley and Hager was delayed for more than an hour because, aides indicated, Hager was undecided whether to concede. He was mulling his options in a holding room in the bowels of the coliseum.

There also were some questionable vote counts in Chesterfield County and two other localities, although aides indicated they were not involved in the concession decision.

Finally, Hager rolled his wheelchair to the podium.

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Attorney General Mark L. Earley, Del. Jay Katzen of Fauquier and former Secretary of Public Safety Jerry W. Kilgore make up the 2001 Republican ticket for statewide office.