

# WHERE

SHOPPING, DINING

NEW ORLEANS

OBJECTS OF OUR

# *Affection*

ART GLASS

SOUTHERN ART

LEATHER GOODS

FINE WINES

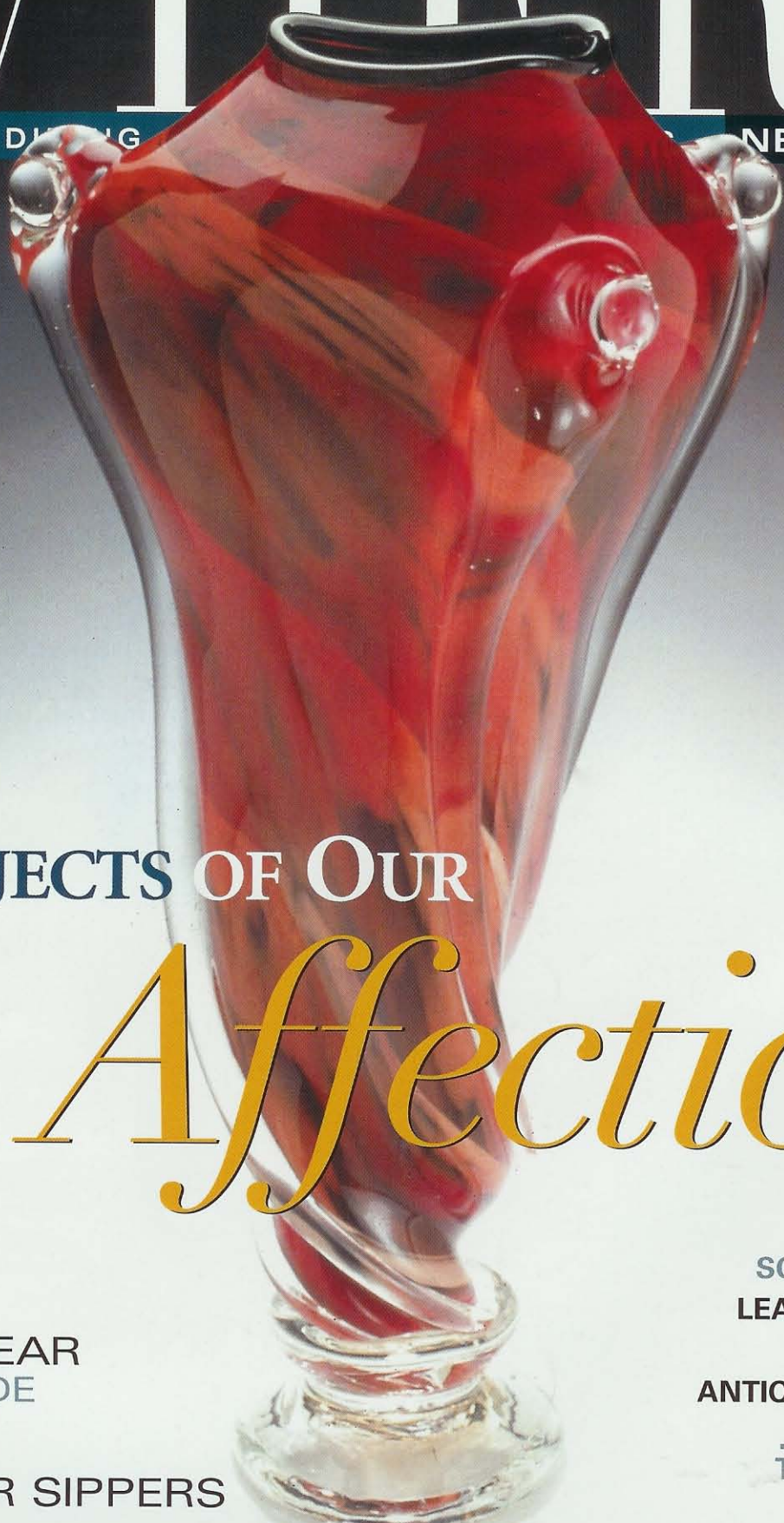
ANTIQUE WATCHES

...AND WHERE  
TO FIND THEM



MENSWEAR  
À LA MODE

9 COOL  
SUMMER SIPPERS



# War & Remembrance

This month, the National D-Day Museum marks the 60th anniversary of that pivotal battle with a weekend of tributes *By Jil McIntosh*

Jun. 6, 1944. Better known as D-Day, it has been called the pivotal moment of the 20th century, and rightly so. Throughout the hours of this “longest day,” more than 132,000 Allied soldiers landed on the beaches of Normandy to force back the Germans. Had they failed, the war might have dragged on longer, cost many more lives—or ended much differently.

The triumph of D-Day belongs to the nation, but it depended on one man: New Orleans boatbuilder Andrew Higgins. Familiar with shallow-draft Mississippi riverboats, he developed a unique, flat-bottomed personnel carrier called the LCVP (Land Craft, Vehicle, Personnel). Unlike conventional deep-water carriers, the so-called “Higgins boat” was able to land right at the shore, discharge men via a ramp, and return quickly to the mother ship for more troops. Higgins built some 20,000 assorted craft in his New Orleans factory, using the city’s first racially integrated workforce.

A vintage LCVP stands at the entrance to the National D-Day Museum, which will commemorate the 60th anniversary of D-Day with a huge outdoor presentation in and around the museum on Jun. 5 and 6.

## WINNING THE WAR

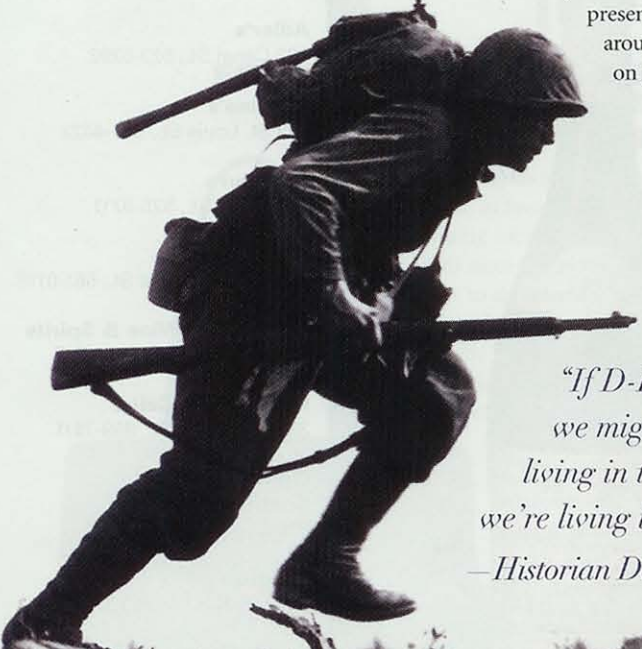
“Eisenhower said, ‘Andy Higgins was the man who won the war for us,’” says museum president Dr. Nick Mueller. “Without those boats, we’d have to attack heavily defended ports, as we did in Dieppe, and that was a disaster. Once you opened all the beaches of Europe, Hitler had to spread his defenses across the whole coastline. These boats changed the whole strategy and tactics of the war.”

Higgins boats were used in every major American amphibious operation in Europe, Africa, and the Pacific. The D-Day Museum’s mission is to tell the story of each campaign, and because of this, it was designated by Congress as America’s National World War II Museum. It was founded by the late historian Dr. Stephen Ambrose, a Crescent City resident and professor at the University of New Orleans, to honor Higgins and America’s contribution to the war.

Its focus on D-Day attests to the importance of the battle. It was a joint Allied venture of American, Canadian, and British battalions. But the U.S. troops suffered the highest casualties: an estimated 2,200 on the beaches, and 2,500 in the air.

Code-named Overlord, it was the largest invasion in history: Within the month, two million Allies were in France. Two years in the planning, it was—amazingly—carried out in secrecy. Not even the Allied forces knew when the call would come. Originally planned for Jun. 1, 1944, the invasion was held off because of bad weather; told there would be a break in the storm, Eisenhower gave the order, and final planning came together in the space of a few days.

“This was the time of landing on France,” says historian Douglas Brinkley, director of the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans. “Until this point, we were doing military exercises off the coast of England. The secrecy of D-Day is remarkable when you consider the amount of ships and support services that we were launching. It was clearly a masterfully planned and executed military invasion which sent Adolf Hitler and the Nazis running. If D-Day failed, we might



*“If D-Day failed,  
we might not be  
living in the world  
we’re living in today.”*

*—Historian Douglas Brinkley*



**A HIGGINS BOAT IS THE CENTERPIECE OF THE ENTRY TO THE NATIONAL D-DAY MUSEUM. THESE PERSONNEL CARRIERS WERE CREDITED AS AN INTEGRAL TOOL FOR THE ALLIED VICTORY IN WORLD WAR II.**

not be living in the world we're living in today. This day will be reconsidered thousands of years from now."

### **SALUTING THE SACRIFICE**

The museum's tribute begins Jun. 5, with a "living history" encampment of war reenactors, firepower demonstrations, life on the home front, slide presentations, and rock climbing for children.

At 6:20 am on Jun. 6 (about the same time the first troops were landing), a sunrise ceremony will be held in front of the museum. A parade of military vehicles starts at 8:30 am, followed by a 10 am simulcast satellite hook-up to the American cemetery memorial at Omaha Beach.

Even if you can't attend the services, the museum is a must-see at any time, with interactive galleries, artifacts, and an introductory documentary by director Steven Spielberg (*Saving Private Ryan*).

"Every American was touched by World War II," says Mueller. "Fifteen million soldiers under arms and everybody in the home front sacrificed. Our freedoms were paid for by those who gave up their lives. The museum is our way to pay respect to them." **VZ**

## **SALUTING THE HEROES**

*The following is a partial list of activities scheduled for the National D-Day Museum's commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Normandy invasion. For more information, call 527-6012.*

### **Sat., Jun. 5**

9 am-5 pm

Museum open to the public

10 am

Hourly tactical briefings begin. Throughout the weekend, in a simulated World War II briefing room, D-Day Museum staff will report on a regular basis the buildup, execution, and progress of the Normandy invasion as it was happening. The half-hour presentations will include a large map to assist visitors in visualizing the unfolding of the operation

7:00 pm

"An Evening of Wine and War" (tickets: \$100)

A 1940s-themed cabaret dinner featuring French wines and cuisine, live jazz, and swing dancing, culminating in a midnight toast

### **Sun., Jun. 6**

6:20 am

Hourly tactical briefings resume

7:20-8:30 am

Red Cross re-enactors serve coffee and donuts (free)

7:20 am-5 pm

Museum open to the public

8:30-9 am

Vintage military vehicle "run-up" (free)

10-10:45 am

Live telecast and ceremony from Andrew Higgins Drive with American Battlefield Monuments Commission officials at the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach, France (free)

