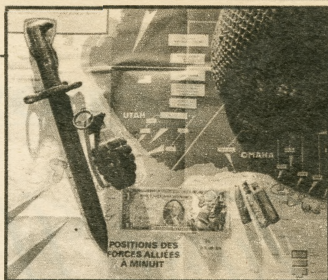


INQUIRER

JUNE 3, 1984

Perils of the past

FOR ME, D-DAY EVOKES AN ODD kind of memory. I was 3 years old at the time, and so can have had only the dimmest awareness of what was going on. Yet because I have seen the events portrayed in movies, pictures and books so often, I feel as if I have my own recollections. They are memories in black-and-white, or sepia, as if from an old newsreel, full of both glory and squalor. Undoubtedly, as Steve Twomey writes this week, the vividness of these pseudo-memories, and much of their appeal, comes from the lack of moral ambiguity surrounding the event. The cause was just, and it prevailed. We can't help but wish things were like that more often now.



And that's what makes attempts to define the lessons of history a tricky business. There are dangers involved in having won a just war. It can imbue a nation with an unwarranted feeling of moral infallibility. One also ought to consider that the Vietnam War occurred, in part, because we thought we were applying the lessons of World War II. Hitler, everyone said later, could have been crushed without a world war if his first acts of aggression had been vigorously opposed. So somehow we ended up treating Asian communism as if it were German fascism — and misleading ourselves. A cynic might be moved to paraphrase Santayana, and say that those who forget the lessons of the past are doomed only to forget the lessons of the past. And nothing more.

But that's not right, either. We can admire, and draw strength from, the courage and determination of the soldiers who went ashore at Normandy. They met the challenge of their time as, ultimately, we should be able to meet the challenges of ours.

F E A T U R E S

'AND WHEN THE MIST LIFTED, I SAW THE SHIPS'

Written by Steve Twomey; photographed by Clem Murray Forty years ago, a Frenchman in Normandy watched the greatest armada in history bob in the choppy gray sea before him. D-Day was beginning.

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HOW TELEVISION COVERS THE CAMPAIGN

By Jack Smith It's all become part of a presidential candidate's lexicon: stand-ups, one-on-ones, Sony sandwiches, eight-second bites — all part of "making the old geezer talk."

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IS HAMMERING HANK TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

By Dan White The last boxer of note from Princeton University was fictional. Henry Milligan, heavyweight, intends to prove at the Olympics that he's for real.

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