

On June 5, 1944, Easy Company boarded an aircraft. William “Wild Bill” Guarnere had just learned his brother had been killed in Italy. On the flight to France there wasn’t much talking. Many people slept while others just waited. At about three in the morning on June 6, the plane flew over the Normandy border. Outside, guns fired in the air and explosions shook the plane. Lieutenant Winters told his men to stand up, hook up, and hang tough. Then the countdown started. “Ten okay. Nine okay. Eight okay. Seven okay. Six okay. Five okay. Four okay. Three okay. Two okay. One okay. Let’s go!” The paratroopers were separated on the jump.

When Lieutenant Winters landed, he had lost his leg bag carrying all of his weapons and had just his boot knife. While taking out the knife he heard rustling near him. “Flash” he whispered.

“It’s me, sir,” replied a private named Lorrain. “I’m from the 82nd Airborne. Do you know where we are?”

“Of course, private” replied Winters. “We’re in Normandy.”

While walking they heard some people wading in the creek. Lieutenant Winters said, “Flash” which is a code to see if the people he heard were Americans.

Malarkey, an American paratrooper, replied, “Thunder. Lieutenant is that you?”

Thunder was a signal for Winters to know that Malarkey was one of his men. The signal allowed Winters and his fellow paratroopers to regroup.

Winters and his men walked along train tracks and came across a squad of Germans in horse-drawn carriages. “Wait for my signal,” said Lieutenant Winters. Suddenly, Wild Bill

whipped out his Thompson and opened fire. The rest of the men joined along. "Cease fire! What part of 'wait for my signal' don't you understand?" shouted Lieutenant Winters.

"Yes sir," Wild Bill replied.

"Sir" Lipton called "M-1 Grande" as he pointed to the rifle under the carriage seat. He knew that Lieutenant Winters didn't have a gun.

"Thanks," said Lieutenant Winters.

As they continued walking, Malarkey found a supply drop. "Well boys, lock and load" Malarkey exclaimed. They all stocked up on ammunition.

Finally, they came across a temporary headquarters where POWs were being held captive. Speirs, a Non Commissioned Officer, said, "Winters, there are German Batteries (meaning German Artillery) a quarter mile away. We need you and your men to take them out."

"Spread out. Wait for my command, Bill." Winters told his men.

"Where are we going to hide?" asked Lorrain. He and Malarkey both looked at the trees above and decided to hide there.

"Fire!" shouted Winters. Gun shots were fired from everywhere.

"Buck" Compton discovered trenches and ran to them with his men. The Germans became so confused that they fired at themselves. While that was going on, Winters and Lorrain blew up the batteries with dynamite. They were running low on ammo so they sent Buck to get more.

Someone shouted, "Get in the grass! We need to take out that last battery!"

Bullets whizzed past Winters and his men. Buck returned with the supplies needed to destroy the enemy. Once the enemy was taken out, they ran across the field and put dynamite into the enemies' guns in order to blow them up. While there, Winters found maps on a table that showed the German positions. He took them, looked down, and noticed that Lorrain was dead. Lipton said, "We've got to get out of here!"

Winters said, "Get back to headquarters. Move! Go!"

When Winters and his men got back to headquarters they ate dinner using the little food they had. They learned that the men on Omaha Beach had invaded France. Winters learned that the company commander had died, which now made him company commander. June 6, 1944, forever known as D-Day, was a success! At the end of the day, Dick Winters promised himself, "If I ever survive this war, I am going to settle down somewhere in peace and quiet."

Epilogue

The men who fought on D-Day freed Normandy, France. After D-Day, Dick Winters and his men went on to fight in the Battle of the Bulge, liberated prisoners from a concentration camp and discovered Hitler's Eagles Nest. When Easy Company had casualties, new men were assigned to their unit. By the end of the war, Easy Company lost 150% of the number of men with which they started.

Dick Winters was born and raised in Lancaster County and lived in Lebanon County after the war. He built his own farmhouse by hand in Fredericksburg and lived in peace and quiet just like he had promised himself.

During the Korean War he worked in military offices. There, he was promoted to a Major. After retirement, Major Winters moved to Hershey. He died January 2, 2011.

Steven Ambrose wrote a bestseller, *Band of Brothers*, that was about Easy Company's war experiences. Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg bought the rights of Steven Ambrose's book and created a ten-part miniseries called *Band of Brothers*. The miniseries became a hit and won eight Emmy Awards. Major Winters kept a journal through the war. He and Cole Kingseed wrote the book, *Beyond Band of Brothers*. Several other members of Easy Company also wrote books about their experiences.

I care about Major Winters because he fought through the entire war and showed great leadership. Yet, he did not consider himself a hero. His actions have inspired many people, including me. Currently, I am fundraising to ensure a monument is built in Normandy to remember Major Winters and all the men that served with him on D-Day. I am getting the donations by distributing wristbands that say "Hang Tough" because that is what Major Winters said to his men during the war. Without Easy Company and the many other courageous men that fought during WWII, our world would have been a very different place. Their stories should not be forgotten.

Bibliography

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<<http://www.hangtough6644.org/>>

<<http://www.majordickwinters.com/>>

Winters, Dick and Cole C. Kingseed. *Beyond Band of Brothers*. New York: Berkley Caliber, 2006.