

Vet gives rare talk about D-Day

BY REGGIE PONDER
The Daily Advance

Vernon Lingle has never liked to talk much about his military service during the Normandy invasion on D-Day.

Lingle, 94, was a Navy gunner's mate on an infantry landing vessel that ferried troops and supplies to Omaha Beach the day of the Allied invasion of France on June 6, 1944. The invasion landed more than 160,000 troops at Normandy, giving the Allies a foothold in Europe that eventually led to the end of the German occupation of France and the end of World War II on the Western Front.

Lingle, who served in both the U.S. Navy and Air Force, has been asked numerous times to speak about his D-Day service to groups ranging from public school students to church gatherings. And he has always politely declined.

"I have never done any public speaking and I don't intend to," Lingle said. "I get nervous."

Lingle likens his experience during the D-Day invasion to going into hell and coming back, saying he never dwelt on the horrors of that day, choosing to focus instead on his thankfulness for living through it.

Recently he was asked to speak at the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Senior Center about his wartime experiences.

"I told them I thank God every day that I'm able to say 'hello everybody,'" Lingle recalled. "And then I sat down."

So he was initially reluctant to take part in a U.S.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Vernon Lingle recently spoke of his experiences in D-Day during World War II.

Department of Defense project chronicling D-Day from the viewpoint of those who were there.

Katie Lange, who writes articles for defense.gov and various DoD social media platforms, said she is interviewing three D-Day veterans for an article on the invasion in connection with the upcoming 75th anniversary of D-Day on June 6. The other two veterans are Col. Richard Hayman of Oregon, who served in the Army Air Forces, and Robert Fagan of Texas, who served in the Army.

On Thursday, Lange visited Elizabeth City to interview Lingle. The interview was scheduled to take place at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6060, where Lingle is a member.

Lingle, however, expressed some reluctance about the DoD interview when he learned it would

involve video.

"What have I gotten myself into?" he wondered aloud.

Lingle ultimately agreed to the interview with Lange, saying he did so because he realizes there are not many World War II veterans still alive. "And I think I'm the only D-Day veteran in this (VFW post)," he said.

Lingle said that when June 6, 1944, arrived and the assault on Normandy began, he and the other sailors were confident they had done all they could do to prepare for the invasion.

"We trained so long and so hard that I don't think we worried about the invasion at all," he said. "We were glad it was going to be over with."

On the evening of D-Day, the vessel he was aboard was towing a barge loaded with ammunition and other supplies when planes overhead began attacking it and other supply boats.

"Shells were falling all over the place during that invasion," Lingle recalled.

Lingle said his most vivid memories of D-Day are gruesome.

"In my mind all I can see is that beach littered with dead bodies," he said.

But Lingle said those memories have never interfered with him being able to move on with his life. He served a total of 13 years in the Navy and then served in the Air Force until his retirement in 1964.

Lingle, who is from the rural community of Faith near Salisbury in North Carolina's Piedmont region, said he and his wife bought a lot at Snug Harbor after he retired from the military and

civil service. When his wife's health declined about a decade ago they moved here from Florida to be closer to their son in Williamsburg, Virginia, and he became involved in the VFW in Elizabeth City. He said he has enjoyed the fellowship in the VFW.

All ages get along very well in veterans organizations, he said.

"I bowled with them until three months ago," Lingle said. "I was bowling with people in their 20s."

Ken Sandridge, commander of VFW Post 6060, said he appreciates Lingle's humility and is glad he overcame his reticence and agreed to be part of Lange's article.

"It is absolutely fantastic," Sandridge said. "There are not a lot of World War II veterans that are remaining with us."

And those who are still around rarely talk about their experiences, Sandridge said.

Lange said the recollections of Lingle and the other veterans are "a living piece of history" that will help tell the story of D-Day for the 75th anniversary.

For Lingle, he keeps coming back to a feeling of gratitude for surviving an experience that was so deadly for others. Allied casualties on June 6, 1944 have been estimated at 10,000 killed, wounded or missing in action. Of that number, 6,603 were Americans.

"I told my preacher — and this was years ago — I told him I'm not worried about going to hell," Lingle said. "And he said, 'why not?' and I said, 'because I've been there.'"

TIP LEADS TO ARREST



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Based on a tip to Hertford Police Officer Max Robeson, Michael Lee Douglas, 50, of Plymouth was arrested for possession of stolen property, misdemeanor larceny and driving while license revoked. Police provided a photo of the van in the Hertford Food Lion parking lot to The Perquimans Weekly and then the Weekly posted the picture on its Facebook page asking for help.

TRUCK FIRE



PHOTO BY ED LEICHESTER

A truck burns on West Railroad Avenue on May 7. Firefighters from Hertford and Winfall were able to extinguish the blaze and keep it from spreading to nearby structures.

MEETING

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Judge Tillett's order revoked a previous \$15,000 cash bond set by Judge J.C. Cole after Jackson failed to appear in court. In its place he set a \$15,000 secured bond. That meant Jackson got back the \$15,000 in cash was not jailed, but did have to pay for the secured bond.

Tillett's order said Jackson could continue to perform his job as a Hertford Town Board member, but only on conditions.

Jackson can't be in close proximity with Eley but Judge Tillett set out exemp-

tions. That includes a physical barrier. Also allowed are communications by electronic or audio technology, or a separation by more than 20 feet.

For the purposes of Monday's meeting, a physical barrier was erected to the right of Mayor Horace Reid and Eley. It's the type of typical office furniture used to create the walls of a cubicle but this was just one side. Jackson's seat is the left of the mayor's seat.

Jackson showed up for the regular 7:30 p.m. meeting.

Judge Tillett's order is temporary until the assault matter is heard or until the

order is modified.

Jackson said it was up to Judge Tillett to determine if the partition wall was enough to comply with the order.

The town council asked Eley to step out of the meeting because it wanted to talk about the money it says Eley owes the town. Eley, as with other firefighters, have been paid a bonus by the town based on the number of calls they go on. Jackson said that violates a town policy because council members aren't supposed to get any money from the town outside of their town board salary.

Jackson's is appealing

January's guilty verdict to Superior Court. The case has yet to be heard.

Jackson is scheduled to appear in court on July 9 on a separate charge of perjury, a felony. A Perquimans County grand jury found Jackson perjured himself when asked if he was on bond when he was arrested in February 2018 on a traffic stop and Jackson said he wasn't.

If found guilty Jackson could face at least five months in jail and lose his ability to vote or hold elected office.

As for the special meeting Monday, the policies involve contracts with the town a social media policy.

MEMORIAL

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October of 1985 he was assigned to Marine Corps Security Force Training Center, Virginia Beach, VA, and served as an instructor and senior noncommissioned officer in charge of the physical security/antiterrorism section and a subject matter expert and academics officer. He was later deployed with a mobile training team to Southeast Asia.

In February 1992, then

Gunnery Sergeant Grasty was selected and promoted to Warrant Officer. Upon graduation from school, he was assigned to a weapons training battalion at Paris Island. He was transferred to the Marine Corps Security Force Training Company in Chesapeake and retired in June 2000.

Grasty was called into the ministry in 2007, serving as interim pastor in several local churches. He has served as the bi-vocational pastor at Freedom Baptist Ministries of Elizabeth City

for seven years.

He is married to his wife, Cynthia, of 42 years, and they live in Elizabeth City. They have two daughters, Amy Grasty and Sara Bukowski, both of Raleigh.

The observance will include the posting of the service colors by the Post 126 Honor Guard; POW/MIA Memorial; a salute to our military services; and our roll call of deceased county veterans since the last Memorial Day observance. Hertford American Legion Auxiliary Unit 126,

Boy Scout Troop 150; and Cub Scout Pack 150 will participate.

The Perquimans County High School band under the direction of Malik Barrows is providing music and taps for the observance.

Wreath presenters include Perquimans County, the Town of Hertford, the Town of Winfall, the Inter-County Ruritan Club; the Sons of the American Revolution; Colonial Dames; DAR; and American Legion Posts 126 and 362.

GARDEN

Continued from 1

ton. "When it came to vendors we were at capacity," Shook said.

More than 100 people have gone through the local Master Gardener training program and Shook said about 65 are still active in it. After they complete the program they are expected to volunteer back 40 hours the following year to help

others.

Master Gardeners staff a hotline at 482-6585 on Tuesdays and Thursday from 10 a.m. until noon. People can call in with gardening questions.

For those interested in going through the program, registration starts on July 1. Weekly classes start in September and run through early December. The cost of the program is \$85 for the instruction book. For more information, call 482-6585.

PRAYER

Continued from 1

School Principal John Laster asked for God to give elected leaders courage.

Rachel Sanders prayed for school students and staff "who have never heard your name." She is a teacher at Perquimans County High School and was praying for teachers and school staff.

"Lord you have already won the battle," Sanders said.

Tony Cook, a senior at PCHS, thanked God for all his gifts.

"We are coming together today because it is your day, not just today but every day. Please give students your guidance."

Praying for churches, Pastor Greg Owenby of Bethel Baptist Church asked "I pray God you give us a deep seeded love. Help our churches stand up."

Pastor Todd Kemp mentioned John 3:16 and asked

OBITUARY POLICY

For information on submitting obituaries or death notices Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., call 329-9505 or email obits@ap-genc.com and specify that you are interested in obituary information for The Perquimans Weekly. On weekends and holidays, email obits@ap-genc.com.

Obituaries must be received, processed and approved by 8 a.m. on Tuesday to appear in print in the Wednesday edition.

Death notices can include the name and age of the decedent; funeral and visitation or viewing information; and the name of the funeral home.

BANKRUPTCY

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Pet show held at Missing Mill

By BRIANNA CAVANAUGH and CHEYANNE STORY

The first annual Perquimans Pet Show at Missing Mill Park as part of the Riverbash Festival.

The show was open to all species and breeds of animals. Pet owners were asked to donate pet supplies in lieu of an entry fee to benefit the Tri-County Animal Shelter.

Lucy and Faith, two dogs who are currently available for adoption at Tri-County, joined in the fun with some help from two younger audience volunteers.

The canines and a rabbit competed in Best Dressed, Most Obedient, Biggest, Smallest, Best Beggar and Best Rescue Pet. Ripken took home the most obedient and

biggest. Suzy and Mr. Gibbles tied for Best Dressed so the audience had to be polled to decide the winner. It could be Suzy's prancing in her angel costume that was the deciding factor.

Calvin who was the youngest at 4 months old, was the smallest. Roll, Deputy Farrar's dog participated in the best beggar and most likely won when he stole the sweet treat.

Plans are being made to transition the Pet Show to a Pet Carnival for 2020. Watch for Riverbash 2020 for more details.

(Brianna Cavanaugh and Cheyanne Story are interns seeking future careers in the field of animal science. They designed the pet show.)

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