

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT OPENS TO THE PUBLIC AT 9 A.M. THURSDAY - SATURDAY

8 a.m.
German Formation - Sword Beach

9 a.m. to noon
Higgins Boat Rides (Separate Ticket Required) - Conneaut Port Authority Public Dock

9 a.m.
Allied Camp Flag Raising - England, Allied Parade
Artillery and Tank Firing - Vierville-sur-Mer (Beach)
Message Center Training - US Headquarters

9:30 a.m.
Assault Training Center for Allied Infantry - Omaha Beach

9:45 a.m.
Maquis Attack - Occupied France (La Fiere Bridge)

10 a.m.
USO Camp Show Occupied France, La Fiere Bridge

10:45 a.m.
Airborne Battle - Occupied France, La Fiere Bridge
Artillery and Tank Firing - Vierville-sur-Mer (Beach)

11 a.m.
Provisional Ranger Battalion Briefing - England, Allied Parade
The Naval Beach Battalion on D-Day - Navy Bunker

11:30 a.m.
Tank Crew Casualty Demonstration - Utah Beach / Armor Area
German Weapons Demonstration - Caen (Upper Pavilion)
Artillery and Tank Firing - Vierville-sur-Mer (Beach)
505th Regimental Combat Team D-Day Briefing - US Airborne Camp
The USO in WWII - Allied Home Front
Telephone and Switchboard Training Training - US Headquarters

12:15 p.m.
Invasion Assault Team Demonstration - England, Allied Parade

Noon
Tour of the Atlantic Wall - Starting at the Lower Pavilion
Basics of US Military Rifle Drill - Allied Headquarters
Uniforms of the Tankers - Utah Beach / Armor Area

12:30 p.m.
US Armor and Artillery on D-Day - Utah Beach / Armor Area

12:30 p.m.
Raising of Garrison Colors - England, Allied Parade
Mortar Firing Demonstration - Juno and Sword Beaches
German Field Equipment Briefing - Caen (Upper Pavilion)

12:30 p.m.
USO Camp Show - Point Du Hoc (Bluff)

12:30 p.m.
Victory Gardening on the American Home Front - Allied Home Front

1 p.m.
The 13th Kavallerie and Bereiterinne In Normandy - Caen (Upper Pavilion)
Bayonet Drill Demonstration - England, Allied Parade
German Surveying and Sand Table Demonstration - Omaha Beach

1:15 p.m.
Artillery and Tank Firing - Vierville-sur-Mer (Beach)
Church Service - Chaplains in WWII - Allied Camp
German Mines in WWII - Caen (Upper Pavilion)

1:30 p.m.
320th Barrage Balloon Company on D-Day (Friday and Saturday only) - England, Allied Parade
Morse Code Training Training - US Headquarters

1:30 p.m.
Evolution of the M4 Sherman - Utah Beach / Armor Area

2 p.m.
Army Air Corps Briefing - Allied Camp, Air Corps Section
Medics on D-Day - England, Allied Parade
South Bend Blue Sox Living History Team - Homefront SAS Training - Foucarville Area

2:30 p.m.
German Field Equipment and Uniform Briefing - Caen (Upper Pavilion)
Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (Friday and Saturday Only) - Allied Home Front
Radio Training - US Headquarters

2:30 p.m.
Normandy Embarkation Formation - England, Allied Parade

3 p.m.
Normandy Invasion - Beach

4:15 p.m.
US Mortar Demonstration Sword / Juno Beach

4:30 p.m.
Retreat Ceremony - England, Allied Parade
Evening Gun - Allied Parade or Utah Beach
USO Camp Show - Homefront

5:15 p.m.
The 13th Kavallerie and Bereiterinne In Normandy - Caen (Upper Pavilion)

5:15 p.m.
The Fallen of D-Day Memorial Service (Thursday and Friday) - 6th Beach Battalion Bunker

THURSDAY ONLY
5 to 7 p.m.: D-Day Museum Open House
8:30 to 9:15 p.m.: Dusk Artillery and Tank Firing, Omaha Beach

FRIDAY ONLY
6 to 7 p.m.: Don DiSantis Band, Conneaut Arts Center
7 to 8:30 p.m.: Baseball game, Malak Park

SATURDAY ONLY
8 p.m. to midnight: USO-Style Dance, New Leaf Event Center



Visitors to D-Day Conneaut 2019 check out tanks at Conneaut Township Park.

STAR BEACON FILE PHOTO

'Glad to be back'

D-Day invasion returns to Conneaut Township Park

BY BRIAN HAYTCHER
bhaytcher@starbeacon.com

CONNEAUT — After a year away due to COVID-19, re-enactors will storm the beaches of Conneaut Township Park again this year. The invasion will look a little different this year, though.

Betsy Bashore, chief executive officer of D-Day Ohio Inc., said usually the event is relatively easy to set up.

"There are enough curveballs this year, that is not entirely the case," Bashore said. D-Day Conneaut had very little income in the last year. Bashore was recently notified that they received a grant that will help the event financially.

"We spend as much as we bring in each year, but the residual amount we have in the bank is our startup money for the next year," Bashore said. "And we spent down some of that in 2020, so we were starting with a smaller pool of money, with fewer people coming on site, therefore fewer direct donations. So that caused us some trepidation even planning for this year,

Parking at D-Day slightly different from past years

CONNEAUT — Parking for this year's D-Day Conneaut will be less expansive than previous years.

Betsy Bashore, chief executive officer of D-Day Ohio Inc., said veterans and handicapped parking will be located at Conneaut High School, the same location it was at in 2019.

"That's far enough away that we're going to run a shuttle," she said.

Regular visitor parking will be the Canadian National green space, Bashore said.

"That's about four blocks from the event or so, and it's very walkable," she said. "We're just asking people to park there."

There are also people who live around the park who offer parking on their lawns for a small fee, Bashore said.

If someone needs to be dropped off, they can be dropped off at Pearl and Wright, Bashore said.

The other entrance to the event will be at Lake Bluff Drive, the entrance to the upper bluff of the park, D-Day Conneaut Chief Operating Officer Lori McLaughlin said.

Organizers are trying to cut down on the number of people crossing Lake Road, Bashore said.

but I think we're in a good spot."

Bashore asked visitors to be patient, because there are fewer volunteers than usual this year.

"This year's going to be different, but we hope to get back to normal next year, and if not next year, then

the following year," she said. "As soon as we can, we'll get back to our normal program."

Instead of a slow build-up to the recreated invasion on Saturday afternoon, D-Day Conneaut will have nearly identical schedules for

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, with the Normandy invasion being re-enacted at 3 p.m. every day. There will be some difference between days, with various events in the evenings.

Re-enactors stepped up to make sure that the battle can take place all three days, D-Day Conneaut Chief Operating Officer Lori McLaughlin said.

"That takes a lot of planning and a lot of effort on their part," she said.

Bashore said she advised more seasoned re-enactors to be careful how many battles they sign up for, since there will be significantly more than usual this year.

"I think people are going to get tired," she said.

The change to limited attendance is due to the event having limited capacity due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Free tickets have been available since June, with a limit of 5,000 per day. The limit for Saturday is 6,000, because that is the largest day, Bashore said. Veterans from

SEE D-DAY, B3

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Heim stepping down from D-Day Conneaut duties

BY MARK TODD
For the Star Beacon

This year's D-Day Conneaut will be the last for the long-time face and voice of the event.

Wayne Heim — media liaison, marketing expert, photography coordinator and website manager — will step down after the upcoming re-enactment is history. He has spent the past 11 years as a board member with D-Day Ohio Inc., the organization that stages the annual spectacle.

Heim, 53, of Chesterland, wants to devote more time to family, travel and other pursuits. While Heim's day-to-day involvement will cease, he hasn't yet decided whether to vacate his board seat.

A trip to Conneaut Township Park in 2008 was Heim's introduc-

tion to the re-enactment.

"I came with my son and his scout troop," he said. "We camped, with no idea what to expect. I was just blown away by the reality."



Heim

Heim introduced himself with D-Day Conneaut staff via photographs he took during the visit. He returned one year later and soon after joined the board.

For Heim, the annual event was a family affair, with wife and children lending a hand over the weekend. But now the kids are young adults heading off to school and other obligations.

"It was a family affair for years," he said. "It was really fun to do something as a family."

Also, Heim is an accomplished photographer, and his involvement with D-Day Conneaut over the years has denied him the chance to participate in summer art shows and exhibits.

While the re-enactment occupies just one weekend (this year it's Aug. 19-21), the planning and website supervision can involve countless hours of work, Heim said.

The labor doesn't end when the last tent comes down, either. As the event's chief photographer, he can shoot upwards of 10,000 images over the span of a few days. Examining all those images and posting the best ones on the D-Day Conneaut website can take a month to complete.

When Allied re-enactors hit the beach for the climatic invasion,

shutterbug Heim is right there with them, clad in a period uniform. The equipment he uses while on the shore or roaming the campsites is blend of modern digital gear (used discreetly when on the beach to maintain authenticity and a camera that has today's technology inside a unit that resembles a camera from the 1940s.

"I love the photos," Heim said. "I love being a fly-on-the-wall shooter. You can tell a story just in the face [of a re-enactor]. It falls under the realm of story-telling."

Heim said he will also miss talking to veterans who attend and share their stories.

"I have met some incredibly cool people," he said.

Heim also enjoys managing the D-Day Conneaut website,

which has seen two rebuilds during his tenure. "It's been a labor of love," he said.

Journalists know Heim as the go-to guy for news about the re-enactment. He gives interviews to print and broadcast media, and has been featured in television and radio spots. As the event has grown over the years, more media outlets have taken notice.

National news people have visited to report on the event, along with crews from Discovery and History channels, Heim said.

"The role [as media spokesman] has grown a lot over the years," he said.

D-Day Conneaut is the largest event devoted to the Normandy Invasion in the United States and attracts visitors from around the world.

"We see people from multiple countries," Heim said.

The popularity of D-Day Conneaut is a credit to the staff, re-enactors and volunteers who strive to create a weekend that is educational and entertaining, Heim said.

"It's so incredible the effort they put in year after year," he said. "They are an amazing group of people who are working to keep an important story alive."

Lori McLaughlin, D-Day Ohio chief operating officer, hopes Heim maintains some involvement with the event.

"He's a good voice on the board," she said.

Heim hasn't ruled out some role in the operation.

"I'm sure I'll be back," he said. "I doubt I can stay away."

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Two D-Day re-enactors share their stories

BY MARK TODD
For the Star Beacon



Haynes



Bartone

A love of history is the common thread that binds two long-time re-enactors to D-Day Conneaut, which returns to Conneaut Township Park starting Thursday.

Here's the story of two D-Day regulars:

CATHY HAYNES

During most of the year, Cathy Haynes, of Cattaraugus, New York, is a math teacher at a local high school. But at D-Day Conneaut, Haynes is a member of the Women's Army Corps, depicting one of many clerks who kept the communication pipeline flowing in the weeks and days before the Normandy Invasion.

Some people who attend the event question Haynes' presence at the event, pointing out that women did not storm the beaches on June 6, 1944. Haynes said she

explains she is portraying the women back in England who quietly played a big role in the historic invasion.

"I'm portraying what was happening in London, the women who were typing the orders and knew the secrets," she said.

D-Day Conneaut introduced Haynes to the world of re-enacting, she said. Her family has a deep interest in history (her husband has a degree in the subject), and when a friend suggested several years ago they attend a World War II-themed event in Conneaut, the Haynes' didn't hesitate.

"We came as spectators in 2014 or 2015," she said.

Haynes, an avid photographer, snapped thousands of images during that initial visit. She uploaded many of them to the D-Day Conneaut website, which in turn introduced her to re-enactors and eventually up the chain to Betsy Bashore, chief executive officer of D-Day Ohio Inc., which stages the event.

It was suggested Haynes portray a WAC, and she and her son attended the encampment the following year.

Haynes, who finds clothing and gear appropriate to the era at sales and antique shops, and has attended other re-enactments, but said the scope of D-Day Conneaut is beyond compare.

"There's nothing quite as intense," Haynes said.

A lot of study goes into her portrayal, and that research has given Haynes a lot of appreciation for what women

in the military had to endure.

"Women are still struggling today, but it's nothing compared to what came before us," she said.

CHRIS BARTONE

Conneaut resident Chris Bartone has been a presence at D-Day Conneaut since the event was in its infancy. "I was a spectator at the first one and became a re-enactor shortly after that," he said.

Bartone's interest in history was instilled in the 1980s by his grandmother, who was an avid student of the Civil War.

"History was always huge in my family," he said.

He started re-enacting while in college, portraying Confederate soldiers at Civil War events. At Township Park, he has re-created German officers, but also has depicted American soldiers and

said he is working on a British impression as well.

"I'm a GI when officially representing the event," he said.

This weekend, Bartone will again be clad in his German uniform, but will operate more behind the scenes as an advisor to the re-enactment and not as a combatant. Bartone, a former member of the D-Day Ohio board of directors, will be assisting new members of the management team, he said.

Bartone said he is "scaling back" his role as a German for "social reasons."

"I do think it's important to portray [Germans], but it's a touchy subject at the moment," he said.

Plenty of time must be spent to accurately depict an opponent, Bartone said. Information isn't as readily available and as commonly-known compared

to American and Allied troops, he said.

"It's a bit of experimental archaeology," he said. "The more you learn, the more you want to do it right. The more you research, the more you learn."

Bartone said he attends a handful of re-enactments a year, primarily in the tri-state area. While each has merit, they all are dwarfed in size by D-Day Conneaut, recognized as one of the largest World War II-themed events in the country, he said.

For health and safety reasons, this year the number of spectators and re-enactors have been capped to avoid overcrowding the park. Bartone said he will be curious to see what difference smaller crowds may have on the experience.

"I'm very curious to see how it plays out," he said.

Special activities for military veterans to take place

BY MARK TODD
For the Star Beacon

CONNEAUT — The persistent coronavirus has prompted organizers of D-Day Conneaut to limit — but not eliminate — special activities for military veterans, officials said.

One of the primary purposes of the popular re-enactment, to be held Thursday through Saturday at Conneaut Township Park, is to pay tribute to veterans, especially those who served in World War II. But concerns over COVID-19, especially

the virus' variants, has prompted a big overhaul of the schedule.

"[Veterans activities] will be dialed down," said Lori McLaughlin, chief operating officer for D-Day Ohio Inc., which stages the re-enactment.

While some aspects will remain, other events have been omitted for the health and safety of participants. A major loss is the Legion of Honor ceremony conducted by the government of France. For the past several years, French officials have bestowed medals

to veterans who helped liberate the country from the grip of Nazis.

Medals were awarded in a public ceremony attended by hundreds of re-enactors and visitors. But in an effort to promote social distancing, the ceremony has been canceled this year, hopefully to return in 2022, McLaughlin said.

Also, a luncheon held for veterans at the park has been shelved this year, she said.

The event will still feature a hospitality tent for veterans, where they will have an op-

portunity to share their stories to an audience kept an appropriate distance away, McLaughlin said.

"We will ask people to step away and let the [veterans] speak," she said.

Conversations will be done on an impromptu basis, rather than scheduled as in the past, to minimize crowd size, McLaughlin said.

Also, veterans will continue to enjoy priority seating for the big beach invasions to be held each of the three days, she said.

The vast majority

of veterans and their families understand the need for the special precautions, McLaughlin said.

"They have been extremely understanding," she said. "They realize we're doing this for their safety."

COVID completely wiped out D-Day Conneaut at the park last year. It was disappointing news for some veterans who — for health reasons — felt that 2020 was their last opportunity to attend, McLaughlin said.

D-Day Conneaut observances will also

be scaled back at Villa at the Lake, an assisted living center in Conneaut, said Deanna Fleischmann, executive director.

"We're not doing our regular big to-do," she said.

For the past several years, the facility has held on-site activities for residents unable to travel to the park.

A Lana Turner impersonator, Fleischmann said will perform on Wednesday afternoon, Fleischmann said. Nine Villa residents served in World War II, she said.

D-DAY: Invasion returns to Conneaut Township Park

FROM PAGE B1

World War II, Korea or Vietnam will not be turned away, Bashore said.

"We are holding back a pool of tickets for those individuals, because we think recognizing their service is important," she said. "And so, if they show up and they don't have a ticket, we will definitely accommodate them."

This year, D-Day Conneaut will seek to more accurately reflect the distribution of ranks in the allied force.

"Every year we ask our re-enactors to do something that raises the bar a little bit, either in what they're doing or what they're portraying or how authentic they look," Bashore said. "And this year we said, hey

'This year's going to be different, but we hope to get back to normal next year, and if not next year, then the following year. As soon as we can, we'll get back to our normal program.'

Betsy Bashore
Chief executive officer of D-Day Ohio Inc.

listen, there's only going to be 500 of you Americans. In reality, that's maybe a small battalion." That group would maybe have been under the command of a lieutenant colonel.

"There wouldn't have been 15 majors and 10 lieutenant colonels, there would have been a bunch of captains and a bunch of lieutenants, then a whole bunch of privates," Bashore said.

There is a constant struggle for re-enactors between what they want to portray and reality.

This year, there will be a few new groups,

including re-enactors portraying German engineers and another group portraying a group of volunteers who manned the Atlantic wall, Bashore said.

"It's a very diverse group, with a lot of dif-

ferent stories that led them to that position," Bashore said. "Many of them were offered the choice between joining the German army or going to a [prisoner of war] camp."

McLaughlin said

organizers are going above and beyond to exceed the expectations of community partners in regards to health measures.

Hand sanitizing and hand washing stations are planned

for the event, McLaughlin said. A significant amount of work is going in to making sure that the event is safe, she said.

"There's a lot going on that we are planning, to make it very safe," McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin said organizers are very excited for the event to be back this year.

"We're very excited," Bashore said. "We're glad to be back."

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