



# Berks Countians Who Died on D-Day

by Barry L. Kauffman

**T**he National D-Day Memorial is located on a 50-acre site overlooking the town of Bedford in the rural Virginia countryside. This location was chosen as the place to honor the men who stormed the beach-

es of Normandy on the French coast June 6, 1944 to begin the liberation of Europe from Nazi Germany.

Why would this remote place be chosen to honor the thousands of men who participated

in such a monumental event in American history?

Bedford, Virginia was a town of 3,200 residents in 1944 and like many other places, had sent the best of its youth to serve in the United States Army during



ing in Normandy, France. The hero was survived by his widowed mother, Helen, who died in 1995 at the age of 104 following half a century as a "Gold Star Mother."

### PFC Eake Demarco

**E**ake was born in Minersville, Schuylkill County, on January 1, 1922. Sometime before 1930, he was legally adopted by his Uncle, Ame Demarco, and his wife Jennie, who apparently came to America in 1925 for the express purpose of marrying Ame.

The identity of Eake's biological parents is unknown, but he moved to Reading with his adoptive parents who, by 1940, were living at 522 Weiser St. in Reading. This was Eake DeMarco's official residence on his enlistment records.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army in Allentown on November 7, 1942 and was sent overseas with the U.S. 1st Division, 16th Infantry Regiment in April, 1943. DeMarco participated in the in-

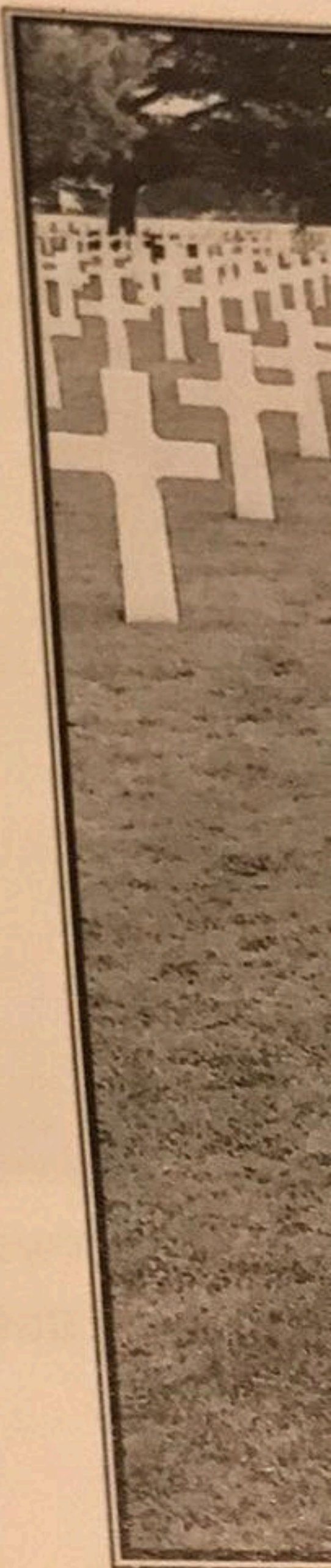


vasion of Sicily in July, 1943 in which battle he was awarded a Bronze Star. Following that action, Eake's unit returned to England in December to prepare for the D-Day invasion.

On June 6, 1944, the 16th Infantry landed on Omaha Beach in the first wave with German gunfire raking the landing craft. In order to avoid certain death from the hail of bullets as the ramp lowered, many of the soldiers went over the sides of the boat. Unfortunately, the water wasn't shallow enough for the men to stand and the heavy equipment in their backpacks dragged them under the surf, drowning many before they were able to free themselves from their equipment.

According to regimental records, Private First Class Eake DeMarco was among those unfortunate men who drowned and never reached the beach.

**PFC John N. Hughes**



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