

Exercise Tiger Memorial Service Fort Taber~Fort Rodman Park

The annual Exercise Tiger memorial service will be held Sunday, April 23 at 1:00PM on the grounds of Fort Taber Fort Rodman Park located at 1000C South Rodney French Boulevard in New Bedford. The service is being organized by the City of New Bedford and the New Bedford Veterans' Advisory Board.

Brigadier General Francis B. McGurn II, Assistant Adjutant General Massachusetts National Guard will be the keynote speaker at this year's service. The color guard and firing detail will be handled by reenactors from the British Red Devils Paratroops and them 26th "Yankee Division." Guest of honor is Mr. Vincent Ricciardi, a survivor and veteran of Exercise Tiger.

The Exercise Tiger monument located at Fort Taber Fort Rodman Park was a result of the late Joseph Theodore, Jr.'s concept to create a "mirror "memorial in the United States to commemorate the lives of 749 American servicemen lost in action off of Slapton Sands in southern England during the April 28, 1944 exercises preparing for the invasion of Normandy. New Bedford resident John J. Bettencourt was one of the servicemen lost in this action.

At 0200 hours on April 28, 1944, a flotilla of eight landing ships (LST's) proceeded towards the beach a Slapton Sands, England. The LST's were transporting engineers and quartermaster troops along with equipment to provide support for troops of the US 4th Infantry Division assault group which had landed earlier. Out of the darkness came nine German E-boats, high powered torpedo firing boats that had previous picked up the existence of this unprotected convoy. Three LSTs

were struck in the attack. In all, 198 sailors and 551 soldiers, a total of 749 were lost. Because of the secrecy involving all of the D-Day preparations no one was allowed to divulge the incident at Slapton Sands. With the subsequent events of D-Day and the race across France into Germany, the incident was largely forgotten until 1971 when Kenneth Small and Englishmen discovered and uncovered evidence of the tragedy conceptualized a suitable memorial in England using a recovered M4 Sherman tank as the centerpiece of a memorial. Mr. Small wrote "The Forgotten Dead" detailing the events of Exercise Tiger.

The memorial here in New Bedford consists of 749 stars one for each serviceman lost, a life preserver with the numbers of the eight LSTs, the 4 th US Infantry Division patch and a memorial panel that provides historical information on Exercise Tiger.

For further information please contact Bob Bromley at 774-357-9591 or Chris Gomes at 508-991- 6186.