It was around 0400 hours on the morning of the invasion, and we were part of the first wave. This was kind of a joke around the company—you did such a good job in North Africa and Sicily that we are going to send you in the first wave again.

The wind and the waves were really kicking up as we descended the rope netting into the waiting landing craft. It was a real challenge to drop into the craft as it rose and fell with each wave. I settled down next to a fellow who I knew did not like the water because I was the company lifeguard and swim instructor. I wondered if anyone actually learned anything during April and May's swimming lessons in the English estuaries; I know I froze my buns off getting in and out of the water at that time of the year. I was sure most of these guys only saw water on Saturday night.

We circled around for about two hours. Some of the boats almost swamped, and many aboard were seasick. We finally started in, and you could see the Navy firing at the shore targets and rockets being fired. It was almost daylight, and you could just make out the obstacles near the shore. As we neared the shore, our landing craft hit a sandbar and lurched to port. They dropped the ramp. I jumped off the starboard side and went right to the bottom for what seemed like an eter-

nity. As I looked up I could see the small-arms bullets striking the water, going a few inches and then just dropping to the bottom. I was not getting anywhere trying to walk, so I squeezed the release on my life belt, and I shot to the surface like a cork. I was bobbing on the water like a big bird, a hell of a target. I removed the life belt and pushed it in front of me—you can see it in the picture. The landing craft must have taken a direct hit from the shore batteries, as all I could see was a bunch of junk and bodies everywhere.

Swimming to shore, I was trying to keep as low a silhouette as possible. Other landing craft were coming in, and many were being torn up by the obstacles, which had Teller land mines attached. The Germans must have been sweeping back and forth just above the water as I was hit several times in the pack and shoes, but no damage.

The tide was almost in when I reached the beach. Since I was very wet, it was a real struggle to try to get up and run. I ran in a half crouch, but I was hit in the shoulder close to the neck with a burst of automatic weapons fire. Two fellows grabbed me by the arms and pulled me to the base of a bluff. One was a buck sergeant from E Company and the other was a photographer with a camera around his neck and a press insignia on his shoulder. All I could think of was, "What in the hell is

this guy doing here?" Then he ran off into the water to a landing craft.

I guess my back hurt more than any other part of me. An aid man poured a bunch of sulfa on the wound, then bandaged it. Two slugs must have gone through; one stayed in my back until I got home, and one is still in my shoulder. I finally found what was left of F Company late in the afternoon, and we made it up the bluff. Our objective was the town of St. Lô. By this time my wounds were getting to me. The first sergeant saw blood and asked if I had been wounded. I was sent back to the beach and then on to England. After a couple of weeks in the hospital, I returned again to the company.

When *Life* ran Ed Regan's picture, identifying him as the man in Capa's famous photo, I didn't really see the resemblance. And he actually landed way down the beach. I wrote them a letter and sent along my picture. They ran it in the "Letters to the Editor" along with a photograph that another D-Day soldier had sent in. When I was in Atlanta some years ago, I looked up Ed Regan. We each still felt certain that we were the guy in the photo, but we talked for some time and had some good laughs.

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