



# The Bedford Boys: One Small Town's Ultimate D-Day Sacrifice

*Alex Kershaw*

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The memorable opening scene of "Saving Private Ryan", which portrayed the appalling scenario on Omaha Beach, where allied bombs had failed to knock out German gun emplacements or do any damage whatsoever to beach defences was loosely based on Bedford's story. The first wave of seasick young GIs were being tipped out into the tide to be picked off by waiting machine gun fire and shelling, acting more as target practice than a tangible threat. Incredible bravery and luck did in some instances prevail, and with the help of a more successful bombing campaign later in the day, Omaha was finally taken. Company A was in that first wave of landings - known, jokingly as "the suicide wave" by soldiers before the attack. Many of Bedford's young recruits to the US Army found themselves training and fighting together in Company A of the 116th Regiment of the 29th Division - a company which was all but obliterated by the end of the Longest Day. From small town lives - wives, fiancées and childhoods - to training in the UK and those fateful D-Day landings on on to the aftermath, this book creates a vivid portrait of one town's loss.

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