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# Gov. Nixon Travels to American Cemetery in France

JUNE 17TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

Gov. Nixon Travels to American Cemetery in France

*Submitted by  
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**COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER, FRANCE** – Gov. Jay Nixon led a delegation from Missouri in visiting the Normandy American Cemetery, where more than 9,300 Americans killed during World War II – including 232 Missourians – are buried. Many of the soldiers interred at the cemetery died during the invasion of Normandy, which began on June 6, 1944.

The Governor gave brief remarks at the Cemetery Memorial before the playing of the American National Anthem. Gov. Nixon and two members of the Missouri delegation, state Sen. Ron Richard, of Joplin, and state Sen. Ryan McKenna, of Jefferson County, then laid wreaths at the memorial to honor American troops who died in the war.

“Sixty-nine years ago this month, American soldiers – some barely out of high school – disembarked from their landing craft onto beaches not far from here, jumping into a pounding surf and often a withering fire,” Gov. Nixon said. “The bravery of these young men was staggering. Under a deadly barrage, they worked their way up from ashore to join their fellow soldiers who, under the cover of darkness the night before, came into Normandy by parachute or glider.

“Thousands of American soldiers would die on D-Day and during the next several weeks in order to liberate France and western Europe,” the Governor said. “Nazi tyranny was defeated because so many of our countrymen were willing to fight and die to protect and preserve the American ideals of freedom and liberty. Their spirit lives on in the men and women of our armed forces today who bravely protect America and its people. On this hill, a short distance from where one of history’s turning points took place, we honor and thank The Greatest Generation for their courage, sacrifice and accomplishments.”

After the ceremony at the Memorial, the Governor and his group walked to the grave site of Woodrow W. Fitzwater, a soldier killed in action 69 years ago today. The Governor also laid a wreath at the grave of Private First Class Fitzwater, a member of the 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, who was from Montgomery County, and who had relatives in St. Louis.

“PFC Fitzwater represents the 232 soldiers from Missouri for whom this hallowed ground is their final resting place,” Gov. Nixon said. “They came from farms, small towns and big cities to join a great crusade that liberated millions and kept our country free. May we always remember and honor that selfless sacrifice.”

The Governor also traveled to the National Guard Monument in Vierville-sur-Mer, Normandy to pay his respects. The monument was dedicated on the 25th anniversary of D-Day in 1969 as a tribute to members of the National Guard who fought in France in World War I and World War II.

“This monument reminds us that Citizen-Soldiers from Missouri and other states continue to serve overseas as a vital part of our military forces, just as they bravely did in wars past,” the Governor said.

The visit to Normandy comes during the second day of the trade mission that Gov. Nixon is leading to three European countries. The delegation also includes First Lady Georganne Nixon; Mike Downing, Acting Director, Department of Economic Development; and representatives of Missouri businesses, industry leaders and higher education institutions, including Automated Motion Inc. (AMI); Boeing Company; DRS Technologies; Essex Industries; F-Stop Corporation, Kansas City Area Development Corp; Kansas City International Airport; LMI Aerospace; Mead & Hunt, Inc.; PAS Technologies; Sabreliner; St. Louis Lambert International Airport; St. Louis Regional Chamber; and the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

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In France, Gov. Nixon will attend the 50th International Paris Air Show, the world’s leading aviation and space industry event, and meet with major aerospace industry leaders and foreign investors who have, or are considering, significant investments in Missouri. The Governor will also meet with U.S. Ambassador Charles H. Rivkin, the Confederation of French Industries International, and the American Chamber of Commerce.

In the United Kingdom, Gov. Nixon is scheduled to meet with U.K. Trade and Invest, personnel from the U.S. Embassy; Minister Alistair Burt, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs; and the British-American Business Group.

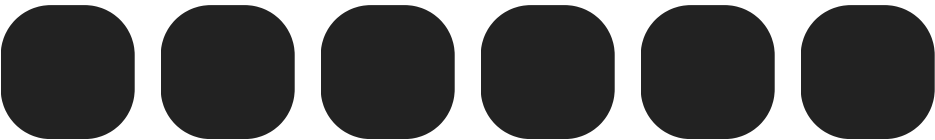
In Belgium, Gov. Nixon is scheduled to meet with U.S. Ambassador Howard Gutman; personnel from NATO Command; and with members of the American Chamber of Commerce and American European Commission Association.

The Governor, First Lady and members of the delegation arrived in Paris on Saturday (June 15). The delegation will travel to the United Kingdom on Wednesday, June 19 and then to Belgium on Thursday, June 20. The delegation will return to the United Kingdom on Friday, June 21 and depart for Missouri on Saturday, June 22. Travel costs for Gov. and Mrs. Nixon are being covered by the Hawthorn Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting economic growth in Missouri. State taxpayer funds are not being used.

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