

D-Day excavation led by A&M team

COLLEGE STATION (AP) — The gnarled, rusted remains of barbed wire are still perched on some of the jagged rocks at Point-du-Hoc in Normandy, France, the site of the largest air, land and sea invasion ever undertaken.

It is a frightening reminder of the scope and ferocity of the bloodshed that occurred on the beaches of France during Operation Overlord on June 6, 1944, more commonly known as the D-Day invasion, which foreshadowed the end of WWII.

But it is the possibility of what lies underwater there that intrigues researchers like Brett Phaneuf, who last week began surveying the ocean floor off Normandy, hoping to locate wreckage and equipment from the invasion fleet that have remained lost.

Phaneuf is director of Project Neptune 2K, which is affiliated with Texas A&M University-based Institute for Nautical Archaeology. Their work to detail what happened to the ships and

"People shouldn't be removing things and desecrating a war site."

— Brett Phaneuf
director of Project Neptune 2K

planes that were lost in the invasion is already paying off.

Phaneuf and his team discovered the perfectly preserved vestige of a landing ship in the waters off of Utah Beach on Monday.

"The ship is almost completely intact," Phaneuf said in a telephone interview from a research vessel sailing the waters of Utah and Omaha beaches. "It's such a beautiful sight. You can even see the captain's deck. It reminds you that the price for freedom was paid here."

Before Monday's find, institute officials were discouraged by reports that people had been periodically dynamiting the battle's underwater remains to steal potentially valuable materials.

"That's disconcerting because this

area is just as hallowed as a veteran's cemetery," Phaneuf said. "People shouldn't be removing things and desecrating a war site."

Three years ago, Phaneuf was on another archaeological study in France and became interested in the naval history of the D-Day invasion after visiting memorial sites in Normandy.

When Phaneuf returned to America he began laying the groundwork for the project. After extensively researching naval reports and accounts of the battle, he eventually lined up the support of the institute and the Naval Historical Center's Underwater Archaeology Branch, a U.S. Navy office that works to preserve ship and aircraft wrecks.

Activist offers bounty

McALLEN (AP) — Angered by U.S. treatment of Mexican immigrants, an activist in Reynosa, Mexico says he will offer \$10,000 to anyone who kills a Border Patrol agent and law officers are taking his threat seriously.

Carlos Ibarra Perez, president of the Citizens Defense Committee, said he will offer the bounty at a news conference Monday in front of Reynosa's City Hall.

The plan by Ibarra Perez, whose group claims to have 5,000 members, follows the killing of an undocumented immigrant by a border patrol agent two weeks ago in Brownsville, discovery of a mentally disabled U.S. resident's body in the Rio Grande after his deportation, threats by vigilantes and other events.

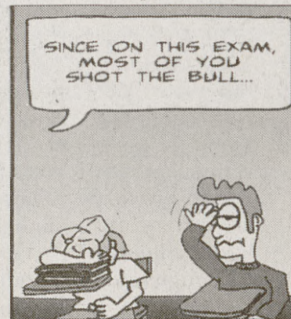
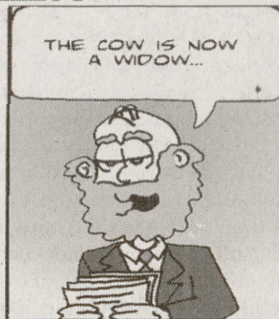
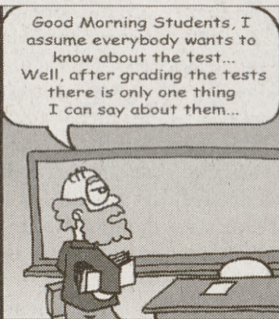
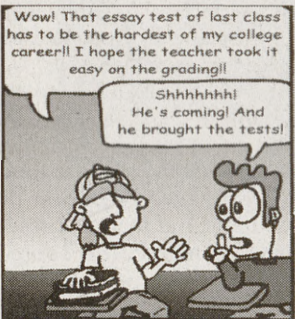
"If there are American citizens saying that they are going to kill migrants, then why can't we agents?" he told *The (McAllen) Monitor*, adding the United States is responsible for forcing his people to cross the border.

"The guilty one here is the U.S. government. If we rise up, we are availing this conflict."

American law officers say a response is possible yet because a transfer has been made to kill an agent, officials had not heard about Perez's intention to offer the bounty. Border patrol supervisor Ramiro De Anda said.

He said narcotics traffickers made similar threats in the past in the El Paso area.

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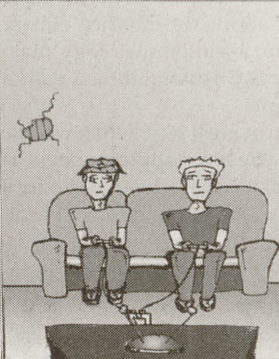
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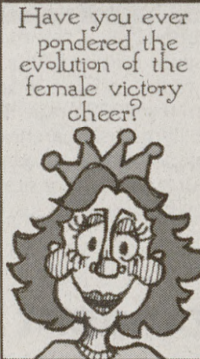
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