

Museum's D-Day Recognition Features 1947 Jeep and Military Memorabilia

The 80th Anniversary of D-Day is fast approaching. On June 6, 2024, the Milam County Historical Museum will proudly feature its display of American Military memorabilia. Also, featured will be a restored 1947 Jeep in celebration of D-Day. The museum has many artifacts, uniforms, medals, letters, etc. in its permanent military collection. These valued treasures are from both World War I & II, Vietnam, the Korean Conflict, the Spanish-American War, and even the American Civil War. This downtown Cameron recognition of D-Day will be held June 6-8, and the MCHM will be partnering with the Milam County Railroad Museum to inform and educate citizens about the significance of D-Day and other military conflicts in American History.

D-Day is known as the largest seaborne invasion in history. On Tuesday, June 6, 1944, Allied Forces invaded Normandy, a coastal region of Northern France. This famed invasion began the liberation of Nazi occupied France during World War II and eventually led to the ultimate Allied victory in Europe. But the cost was heavy, as thousands of American, British, and Canadian casualties occurred at places like Omaha Beach, Utah Beach, Gold Beach, and Juno Beach. Thus, because of the US military's involvement and the country's great sacrifices, D-Day should be memorialized and commemorated by all freedom-loving Americans. What better way to do that than visiting one of our local museums that emphasizes the contributions of the US Armed Forces to our County, State, and National History.

In a small way, our community will have the opportunity to recognize the 80th Anniversary of D-Day by visiting our county's museum complex. A major highlight from the World War II Era that will be displayed on June 6th is a 1947 Jeep CJ-2A. This feature of the Milam Museum's collection is on loan from Cameron Resident Hal D. Stanislaw. This dependable Army vehicle is considered a general-purpose vehicle and an outstanding example of American automotive history. The Willys Company was awarded the first Army contract to manufacture Jeeps for combat use in World War II. A Jeep was labeled a CJ model if it was a 4-wheel drive vehicle. A 2-wheel drive Jeep would be called a DJ model. The Jeep on display at the museum has a four-cylinder L-134 "Go Devil" engine, a military style engine that is designed to operate in 24 inches of water without the motor stopping. Mr. Stanislaw had the Jeep completely restored and has generously allowed it to be displayed in the Barbara Hajovsky Memorial Transportation Exhibit at the Milam County Jail Museum located at 201 E. Main Street in Cameron.

Extremely influential in having the 1947 Jeep loaned to the museum, Bud Hajovsky, a member of the museum's board of trustees, says the Jeep is similar to those used during the storming of Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944. An Army Veteran and member of the Cameron VFW, Mr. Hajovsky points out to visitors the many uses the US Army had for Jeeps. He says the "Go Devil" style motor was found in the Jeeps that drove off the landing crafts into the surf and on to Omaha Beach in Normandy, June 6, 1944, or D-Day. This earned the Army First Division the nickname the "Go Devil" Division. Hajovsky also points out to visitors that the 1940's version of the Willys Jeep is slightly different than the 1960's version used during his military service.

Currently, plans are to have the 1947 Jeep CJ-model on display outside the Milam County Historical Museum and the Milam County Railroad Museum on June 6th, from 10am to 4pm, in honor of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. You can visit both Museums on that day at 110 & 112 West First Street in historic downtown Cameron or visit us starting at 10am every Wednesday through Saturday. In honor of all veterans and active military personnel, special D-Day/Military displays and events will be held June 6-8 at your Milam County Museums, and you are invited. We hope to see you there.