

# News Tribune

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## **Historian to present program on D-Day**

**Missouri River Region Library to host lecture on invasion's 65th anniversary**



John Brueck portrays an American soldier during an event in Sainte Mere Eglise, France.

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On June 6, 1944, 160,000 Allied troops landed along a 50-mile stretch of the heavily guarded French coast to fight Nazi Germany on the beaches of Normandy, France. More than 5,000 ships and 13,000 aircraft supported the **D-Day** invasion, and by the end of the day on June 6, the Allies gained a foothold in Normandy. More than 9,000 Allied soldiers were killed or wounded on **D-Day**, but more than 100,000 soldiers began the march across Europe to defeat Hitler.

At 7 p.m. Saturday, the 65th anniversary of **D-Day**, John Brueck a World War II, European Theater Operations **historian** and avid researcher will present an hour-long program, "Day of Days: Normandy Revisited," at the Missouri River Regional Library. His presentation will be followed by an hour-long episode of the "Band of Brothers".

Brueck recalls being about 7 years old when he first entered an Army surplus store with his father.

"The first thing I thought was there was a story behind the items, a story about the person and about their journey," he said. "I have been enamored by the European Theater of Operations in World War II since then." As he got older, Brueck began to become particularly interested in the happenings in Normandy and Belgium during the war. That fascination has grown into a thirst for the first-hand knowledge that can only be gained through walking the battlefields with a metal detector in hand and speaking with French villagers who remain and recall the war.

His travels have taken Brueck and his French friends deep into battlefields not discussed in history books. He has taken veterans on return trips to Omaha Beach, and has taken fallen veterans' family members to the battlefields where their loved ones lost their lives. "I really have seen and have been able to take others on a first-hand real tour of the battlefields," Brueck said.

Brueck, who says veterans are heroes, gets emotional when discussing the roles those heroes have played in our lives.

"I view each of these men and women as heroes and feel it is an honor to help tell the stories of the battle they fought," Brueck said. "It is an honor to tell their stories - to tell the story of **D-Day** and beyond."

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