

## ROUEN

As twilight came to the beaches of Normandy 06 June 1994, the Allied forces were present once again. There was, however, no offensive to be launched – there was only remembrance of those who gave their lives on these beaches so that Europe could be freed. Having successfully accomplished the commemorative events during the previous thirty-six hours, USCGC Dallas steamed toward La Harve and the mouth of the Seine river. As the shores of the Normandy beaches disappeared from view, the memories of the previous three weeks would stay with the crew for the rest of their lives. Later that evening, as Dallas neared La Harve, she slowed to embark the first of two pilots required to take the ship up the fifty-seven mile river transit into the port of Rouen, France. With the Special Sea Detail and Navigation Detail manned, Dallas began the six hour transit up the Seine to Rouen, the final resting place of King Richard the Lion-Hearted and Jeanne D'Arc (Joan of Arc). At approximately 0450 Dallas moored in downtown Rouen on 07 June 1994, thus bringing to an end the crew's own "longest day" which began over twenty-four hours earlier with Flight Quarters Condition One to launch the helicopter for the sunrise service.

After a brief rest the crew began to prepare for the first day's events in Rouen. Despite the fact that the city was not scheduled to commemorate D-Day for another month, the crew was kept busy receiving local military personnel, city officials, and citizens over the three port days who were of the last few days. Captain Hull, with a French liaison officer by his side, made official calls on the Chief Administrator of Maritime Affairs, the Assistant Regional Governor, the Deputy Mayor of Rouen, and the Military District Commander. The scheduled open houses, which ran from 1300 to 1900, brought both local residents and veterans in a steady stream. Even though few of the French visitors spoke English and even fewer crewmembers spoke French, everyone had a lot of fun. The first evening the flight deck was transformed into a reception hall for yet another successful event. As the guests arrived, it quickly became evident that the French felt uncomfortable in this predominately English speaking environment. The "ice" was broken by Captain Hull when he made a speech in somewhat fragmented French to welcome everyone aboard. His efforts were applauded and soon after the crew found themselves mingling with the various guests and conversing in a jumble of French and English, making it a memorable evening for all.

Over the next two days Dallas received nearly 1500 visitors including two full buses of French and Canadian veterans who had seen Dallas moored off Jù beach during their commemorations ashore. These veterans had come to Rouen to commemorate their actions which led to the eventual liberation of the city. While the various duty sections practiced diplomacy aboard ship, the rest of the crew ventured into Rouen, Paris and even back to the Normandy beaches. On the last full day inport, some of the crew took to a volleyball court to try to defeat a French army unit. According to LTJG Frank Rego, Dallas' interpreter and sports coordinator who was temporarily assigned from Activities Europe, "Team Dallas showed a lot of sportsmanship and promoted international goodwill." In other words, Team Dallas lost; but had a lot of fun doing it. Later that day other crewmembers found themselves in a less competitive environment sampling pastry and sipping champagne at Rouen's historic city hall at a reception hosted by the city's mayor.

The morning of 10 June, Dallas was underway once more. Embarked this time was the river pilot and two special guests, the French Military District Commander General Tycheny and Dallas' Port Liaison Officer, both of whom were to be with Dallas for the entire trip down the Seine. Unlike the night transit into Rouen, the return trip down the Seine during the day treated the crew to some views of the spectacular French countryside. Late in the afternoon Dallas exited the mouth of the river and, saying goodbye to our pilot and guests, turned west to sail past the Normandy beaches for the final time on her way to a logistics and refueling stop in Rota, Spain.

