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D-Day through Song: Teaching History through music and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences

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**D-Day through Song:
Teaching History through Music and the
Theory of Multiple Intelligences**



**Lucas Rewa
Honors Thesis
Lee Honors College
Western Michigan University
May 21st, 2009**

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EXPLANATION



Explanation

Social studies teachers know that making their lessons engaging for students is of utmost importance. History has a reputation of being one of those subjects that students think is boring. They think that history has no connection to their lives; it has no meaning for them. In order to get the students engaged in the material and to really learn, a teacher has to relate history to the students' lives. They need to foster an emotional attachment between the students and the material. "Emotion is the glue that makes history stick."¹

Emotion comes from the students being invested in the material somehow. This could be by relating it to their lives somehow or by fostering empathy within the students. Firsthand accounts of history can be one way of getting students to be emotionally invested because they can put themselves in the shoes of the person who lived the events. While oral histories and primary source documents may be interesting for some students, others will find them boring. So teachers need to find ways to get that emotion into their lessons since "emotions drive attention, and in turn drive learning and memory."²

So how does a history go about adding emotion into lessons and the subject matter? One way is to incorporate music somehow. Music has a unique way of bringing out emotions in people. Music can cause measurable bodily reactions such as chills. This is often due to the structural arrangement of the music.³ The lyrical content of music also has the power to bring out emotions in people. If a song has a relatively sad story, the listener is likely to feel sad if they are listening to the lyrics at all. Music has a power to change moods; it has an unseen power over us.

As was mentioned earlier, music is useful for committing information to memory. The reason for this is that both hemispheres of the brain are involved in processing music. Music can be structured in a logical way, which goes with the left side of the brain, but music also is very creative and therefore is connected to the right side of the brain.⁴ The words that are used also link emotions and the memory into the long term memory. This is why when you hear a song it brings up memories of times you had heard it before or the emotions you were feeling when you first heard it.⁵ If music is this powerful of a memory tool, teachers should use it to help students remember concepts and events in history. History teachers want to have the information that they are trying to teach be what the students are recalling when they hear these songs.

Music often comments on social issues that the students can relate to in some way, especially the current music that they listen to. The deterioration of family, drug abuse, and violence are common themes in much of the music that students are listening to these days.

¹ James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook got Wrong* (New York: Touchstone, 2007), 342.

² Fara E. Green, "Brain and Learning Research: Implications for Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners," *Education* 119 no 4 (Summer 1999): 682-7.

³ Oliver Grewe, et al, "Listening to Music as a Re-Creative Process: Physiological, Psychological, and Psychoacoustical Correlates of Chills and Strong Emotions," *Music Perception* 24 no 3 (2007): 297-8.

⁴ Green, 685.

⁵ Maggie Taylor-Murray, "5 Ways to Use Music to Accelerate Learning in Training," *Training Journal* (May 2004): 6.

These same themes are also a big part of many of these students' lives.⁶ Popular music has had a tradition of speaking about social issues that dates back to folk music that discussed the hardships of the great depression and the blues that told the tale of oppression and subjugation of an entire race.⁷ People that deal with the social issues discussed in music are likely to have an emotional reaction of some sort when they listen to the music. Even if a person is not directly affected by the subject matter, they can still relate it to their lives somehow or just get emotional over the story that is being told.

So there is a connection between emotion and history, between emotion and music, and also between music and history. As history is the study of our past, the social issues over the years are a part of history. As music often comments on the social issues of the day, it only makes sense that history and music are connected and that a teacher can use music as a teaching tool. Before explaining ways to utilize music in the teaching of history, there are a couple other things to consider.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences, as proposed by Howard Gardner, states that there are at least eight different intelligences that people possess in different degrees. If a person is deficient in one intelligence area they could very well excel in others.⁸ These intelligences are defined by the ways that a person "takes in information, retains and manipulates that information, and demonstrates their understanding to themselves and others."⁹ The eight intelligences are as follows: Linguistic (word smart), Logical/Mathematical (number/reasoning smart), Spatial (picture smart), Bodily/Kinesthetic (body smart), Musical (music smart), Interpersonal (people smart), Intrapersonal (self smart), and Naturalist (nature smart).¹⁰ People can have a "scattered profile of intelligences" which means they could possess these different intelligences in varying degrees.¹¹ Everybody is different. Everybody is diverse. That is why it is hard to reach every student with the same type of teaching.

The traditional way of teaching, which is made up of lecturing and book work, is really only meant for two of the eight intelligences. The linguistic and logical intelligences get most of the focus.¹² Not all students learn well in these ways though. In order to give everybody the

⁶ Cameron White and Susan McCormack, "The Message in the Music: Popular Culture and Teaching in Social Studies," *The Social Studies* 97 no 3 (May/June 2006): 124.

⁷ Ibid, 123.

⁸ Shirley Veenema and Howard Gardner, "Multimedia and Multiple Intelligences," *The American Prospect* 29 (Nov/Dec 1996): 70.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Thomas Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligence*, 1998-2000.
http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm

¹¹ Howard Gardner, "Audiences for the Theory of Multiple Intelligences," *Teachers College Record* 106 no 1 (Jan 2004): 216.

¹² Howard Gardner, "Probing More Deeply into the Issue of Multiple Intelligences," *National Association of Secondary School Principals. NASSP Bulletin* 80 (Nov 1996): 2.

best experience possible and convey the information equally to all students, a teacher needs to consider these multiple intelligences when designing lessons, projects, and assessments.

So teachers need to incorporate as many different intelligences as possible into their teaching. As music was discussed earlier, let's take a look at the musical intelligence. "Musical intelligence is the capacity to think in music, to hear musical patterns, and to create musical products."¹³ By incorporating music into the teaching of history, we are not only connecting emotion with the subject matter, but we are also teaching in a way that will be best for those students with a high level of musical intelligence. Now that we know why using music to teach history is effective, how can we do it?

There are many ways that a teacher can use music to teach students. The simplest way would be to listen to music from the time period that the class is studying. Music comments on the social issues and general culture of the time in which it was created. An example would be to listen to protest music from the 1960's in a lesson or unit about the Vietnam War or Civil Rights. There is information about the social issues in the lyrical content but we can also learn about culture and technology by listening to the style of music, what type of instruments were used, the recording techniques, and vocabulary that is used.¹⁴

A more elaborate way of using music would be for students to write the songs themselves. They could either rewrite the lyrics to popular songs or they could come up with something altogether new. By allowing students to rewrite their favorite songs, a teacher is allowing the students a chance to involve their interests in their schoolwork. The work that the students produce when they are really into the assignment is amazing.¹⁵ They perform better when they have a personal stake in what they are doing. Those students who have high levels of musical intelligence may write their own song about a historic event. This is much more difficult as it requires creating rhythms and melodies along with writing lyrics. The teacher could even offer ways for students to record their songs or maybe there could be a performance day where students get the chance to show off their work.

An assignment like this could be used in a few different ways. It could be a stand-alone assignment that all the students have to complete. This may not be the best idea as not all students have a high capacity of musical intelligence. This project could be used as an option for an assessment over a chapter or a unit. In my internship classroom I gave the students a choice between a test, a poster, a diary, or a new national anthem as their assessment for one of the chapters in the book. Students could choose whichever assessment they were most interested in or whichever they were the best at. Students with high musical intelligence often decided to write a new national anthem.

A song writing assignment could also be part of a larger project like a multi-genre inquiry project. An inquiry project is one in which a student chooses a topic and then delves into it. They do a lot of research but they do not write a traditional research paper. Instead they put together a project that is a collection of different types of assignments on different aspects of the topic. The items that make up multi-genre inquiry projects can be poems,

¹³ Green, 683.

¹⁴ White, 122.

¹⁵ Ibid, 123.

newspaper articles, diary entries, diagrams, illustrations, and even songs.¹⁶ A student could write a song that explains part of the topic they are inquiring about. However a teacher chooses to implement this idea, the fact is that it is going to be a different type of assignment that the students will learn from and remember.

Teachers need to get their students engaged in the subject material any way that they can. Tying emotion into the lessons by using music about things which the students are about is one way to do that. Students care about music, so by bringing that interest into the classroom, teachers can get students engaged in topics they might think boring. At the same time, including music also helps learners with high musical intelligence learn the material better. After all, teachers are there to serve the students; they need to give them what they need to succeed.

What follows in the coming pages is a more elaborate example of this type of song writing assignment. I chose to create a five song “album” about D-Day or the Allied invasion of Western Europe on June 6th, 1944. The songs cover different aspects of the invasion and are written from the perspectives of German, British, and American soldiers who fought in the battles. Accompanying the lyrics are explanations of the music that goes along with them. After the songs are notes pages which explain the songs in further depth.

¹⁶ Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman, *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher’s Guide to Content Area Reading*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004), 217.

THE SONGS



The Premonition (Song 1)

We're out here alone, or so it seems
I miss my family and my childhood dreams

It's been but seventeen years since I left the
womb
No I sit, waiting, in my concrete tomb

Waiting for an attack, an attack that's sure
to come
I fear there will be death for most, but glory
for some

The defenders are spread like too little
butter on too much bread
With crashing waves of dread, I know it
won't be long 'til I'm dead

With heavy heart I lie down to bed
Behind my shut eyes a filmstrip plays
Visions of bursting shells, flying lead
They plague this poor boy as he now prays

An explosion sounds and I snap awake
All around the bunker shivers and quakes
The blast my bunk mate's life did take
The invasion is on everything's at stake

Dazed and confused I look out to sea
An ocean of ships bearing down on me

Man the guns! Man the guns! Man the
guns!

Mines exploding! Mortars falling!

Won't stop coming! Just keep firing!

Fire the guns! Fire the guns! Fire the guns!

Tracers flashing! Shrapnel slashing!

Don't stop shooting! Just keep killing!

Slow arpeggiated chords – very foreboding
sounding, minor chords

Vocals are clean and quiet – almost like a
whisper

Sound starts to build up, more instruments
come in

Loud guitar to represent the explosion
The tempo picks up and the guitar riffs are
really fast and technical
Vocals are death metal style

This is the “break down part” made up of a
series of very fast guitar and bass drum
triplets that line up with the vocal line.
The guitar and bass drum sound like
machine guns.

Guitar solo following the breakdown

A great flood of men upon these French shores
A hail of lead ensures they breathe no more

As each wave of men breaks against the shore
Another is behind, behind them only more
The flood waters rise and smash the Atlantic Wall
Bullets enter my thigh and chest and I fall

Now I have reached the end of me, my end complete,
the end of what I used to be
And from the sea, what'll surely be the end
of Hitler's tyranny, the end of Nazi Germany

Music switches to a heavier version of the first theme. Same chord progression just with distorted guitars

Song comes to a climax here and the guitar makes a machine gun sound

The clean guitar part returns for the end of the song.

The Drop (Song 2)

Darkness around me, black Channel below
me

A Paratroop in the Airborne Infantry

I volunteered for this; they say we're the
best

Through harder training we were put to the
test

We must be crazy to jump out of planes
Dealing with danger gets us monetary gains

But that was then and this is now
We will take back Europe no matter how

We're sitting in this plane, trying to stay
sane

We're nearing the coast where the danger
is the most

I look around at my brothers in arms
I wonder how many will meet harm

I feel sluggish and drowsy, I melt into my
seat
The drone of the engines lulls me near sleep
It must be those pills that they made us eat
It better wear off by the time I'm on my
feet

If it doesn't and the Germans I meet
I will surely be nothing but a chunk of dead
meat

A flash in my periphery
A blast off to the left of me
Everything's too dark to see

Music starts out fast with chuggy guitars
Vocals are shouted fast, typical thrash style

Guitar effect or keyboards in the
background that sound like the droning of a
plane engine

Music starts to get a lot heavier.
Explosion sounds from the guitar
Maybe use whammy bar against the strings

But the flak and tracers of the enemy

Shells pounding, a hammer to my head
Still the pilot flies on ahead
The plane next to us is going down
I'll never forget the terrible sound

Rounds rip up through the floor
Splitting friends; they live no more
Is this what we all have in store?
I curse the Germans, "Your mother's a
whore!"

Boom! We're hit with a deafening roar
Burning, we fall like a meteor
I pick myself up, up off the floor
The green light's on, get to the door!

Out of the aircraft and into the fray
Will I survive tonight to see the new day?

My chute snaps open with a rustling sound
My leg bag rips off, hurling towards the
ground
Hanging in the air, slowly drifting down
Nowhere near my target, a small French
town

I can see the ground now, crystal clear
Bullets zip past me, way too near
I think of my home, my mother dear
The last I saw her was twice past a year
I can't let myself now be gripped by fear
The time to fight is now, it is here

I touch down in a mire, a flooded field
The German guns fire on without yield

Guitar has a steady pounding that sounds
like anti-aircraft fire

New guitar riff comes up, has the same anti-
aircraft theme but is more complicated

Huge guitar "explosion"
Use a slide, pick scrape, or whammy dive to
make the sound of a plane going down

Mellower riff starts that reflects the floating
down but still has a tinge of malice to it as
there are bullets flying around

Music is fast again, back to the theme that
the song started with until the end of the
song

I ditch my chute and look around
My rifle and ammo are nowhere to be
found

I pull out my knife and creep through the
water
All around me are the sounds of slaughter
I hear "Flash!" and I cry "Thunder"
A para from my stick presents his plunder

It was an M-1 Garand and a bandolier
Taken from a dead man off to our rear

We head into the dark, early June 6, 1944
To clear the way for the troops headed
towards shore
We'll hook up with more soldiers to settle
the score
To take the objective and to win the war

The Wait (Song 3)

A jerking lunge and I hit the floor
 The Horsa skids and breaks in two
 I'm alive but my head is sore
 Our glider's landed, the bridge in view

Cheers to the pilot he has spared us
 From the poles, Rommel's Asparagus
 Just bumps and bruises, few casualties
 And intact force with a bridge to seize

After I drag myself from the plywood wreck
 I head towards the bridge, risking my neck

Six gliders soared like Pegasus from the
 skies
 Catching the dozing Nazis by complete
 surprise

With lightning fast speed we took the
 pillboxes and flak
 With but minor resistance to our daring
 attack

We took the two bridges and we worked as
 a team
 Our well made plan had worked like a
 dream

We kept at the Nazis and never did slow
 Ham and Jam for breakfast, jolly good show

But this wasn't a dream, no this was real
 My good friend Den Brotheridge, lie dead
 on the steel

First dead in Operation Overlord
 Let's hallow his name, give him an award

What we have taken the Germans want
 back
 We must prepare for the counter attack

A drum fill begins the song, it is very
 stumbling sounding like the crashing glider

Standard melodic death metal riffs here and
 the vocals are the standard as well, low and
 guttural

Machine gun riffs and blast beats on the
 drums again to symbolize the attack on the
 bridges

Music gets more melodic here as we are
 focusing on somebody's death

Back to the heavy stuff here

With the bridges over the canal and the
Orne
Our boys can march from the beach to the
core

We brace ourselves in the middle of the
night
British 6th Airborne versus their German
might
Brothers to my left and brothers to my right
Locked and loaded, prepared for one hell of
a fight

As we are waiting we hear a faint sound
The sound gets louder as it echoes through
town

Sounds like tanks head from Benouville to
Caen
Oh please God let there be only one

Sounds like the tanks are driving not
slowing
Sounds like they're passing and just keep
going
Did we take the bridges without them
knowing?
Either way I'm ready, no fear that I'm
showing

When we heard the tanks we then sent a
runner
We need a piat gun, its bombs, and a
gunner

We had a problem, the piat was the answer
Our only weapon that could take out a
Panzer

The tanks turned, now headed towards the
span
Sgt. Thornton with his peat would carry out
our plan

Previous riff continues but a new riff starts
to fade in. It is slow and plodding, sort of
clanky sounding, like a tank

Tank riff continues but changes up a little
bit to represent what the 6th is doing to
fight back

To hold fire in battle to some may seem
strange
But with the piat, the tank better be in
range
The gun launches bombs only about fifty
yards
To turn a tank into hot metal shards

Waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting for a shot
Waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting, perfect
spot
Waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting, only
chance
Waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting, take back
France

Fire! The bomb strikes the Mark IV
The blast loud like thunder from Thor
The shot sets off a chain reaction inside
The crew trapped within 'til burning they
died

Where there is one tank there's bound to
be more
The destroyed panzer let them know what's
in store

The ambush on the tank was a huge success
The tank behind flees, avoiding the mess

It may be back, our fighting is not through
The invasion's just begun, there's lots to do

New riff starts over top of tank riff.
It keeps building up for a while.
Keeps building.

A really heavy pick scrape and drum fill
accompany the piat hitting the tank and a
new fast and technical riff finishes out the
song.

The Climb (Song 4)

We set out early on this day of days
They say that the Rangers lead the way

We start our mission before every other
wave
If we do our duty, many lives we'll save

Mission is to take the guns on Pointe-du-
Hoc
To climb the ropes and scale the rock

Climbing to the top, we must be fast
Timing spot on if we will last

The big guns will wreck havoc on the boys
on the beach
So with Thermite grenades we must destroy
each

But before we begin we must get to land
Packed like sardines in this huge tin can

The coxswain's confused, he heads to the
wrong zone
Machine guns begin to fire, ripping flesh,
breaking bone

The Landing Craft Assaults are heavy and in
the water ride low
Waves rise and over the sides the waters
did flow

We take cover behind the gunwales
Bailing water with our helmets as pails

When we get to the shore the beach is
shrinking fast
As we prepare the assault, the machine
guns still blast

Not expecting an attack from the sea
Germans didn't build defenses on the beach

The song begins with a calm guitar line with lots of chorus effect on it. This will make it sound like whooshing waves as the boats are coming in.

A heavier riff kicks in, sort of math metal style, it is hard to predict, kind of chaotic Machine gun riffs and blast beats accompany it as well.

Whoosh! The grappling hook hurls toward
the Cliffside
The rope unravels from the craft, sitting
near high tide

The ropes are up, it's time to go
I jump over the side and sink below

I crawl from the ocean onto dry land
Gasping for air, my BAR at hand
I make my way across the sand
Dodging death at the hands of my fellow
man

I reach the cliff and grab for the rope
It feels wet and slippery as I grope

Just then they begin firing from the top
Bullets rain down, they just won't stop

I step back, take aim, and fire my gun
The fearful BAR sends them on the run

I sit back and provide suppressing fire
As my fellow Rangers climb higher and
higher

It's a difficult climb; many don't make it at
all
Some are shot, one hundred feet they fall
Hitting the soldiers climbing below
Who are already climbing up slow

My time is here, I start to scale
If we don't make it, the invasion will fail

Up, up, up I go
By BAR and ammo in tow

A grueling task, my muscles burn
To be at the top, oh how I yearn

As if climbing a cliff were not enough
Things were going to get much more tough

Whooshing sound and a guitar chord for the
grappling hook hitting home.
New riff starts. It's medium speed but
really heavy.

More machine gun riffs, different from the
last song, different rhythm.

Fast but steady riff that sounds like a BAR
firing

A new riff accompanies the climb up the
cliff.

A German potato masher came from over
the edge
The concussion hit me it felt like a sledge

I shook off the blast and continued my
ascent
To get to the top I was hell bent

I continued the climb, never looking down
On my face a mad grimace, not a frown

I will scale this cliff and avenge my friends'
loss
When I get up there I'll show them who is
boss

By the time I reach the peak
My body aches, I feel weak
When fire from a MG-42 and 20 mil opened
I fired up, I got a second wind

I joined the men, my fellow rangers
It was time to go kill some strangers

Battling through trenches and craters we
made our way to the guns
Despite the wall of lead, onward we run

When we finally reach the first concrete
casement
We are met with shock and amazement
Instead of a cannon this was a telephone
pole emplacement
We were puzzled, where have the Czech
guns went?

Foiled by the logs made to look like big
guns
We will head inland to find the real ones

When we find them we'll put them out of
action
A small step in conquering the Nazi faction

Some kind of sound effect for the grenade
tumbling down and exploding.

Now there is another machine gun riff and a
slower riff over top of it to represent these
two guns firing at the Rangers.

A confused sounding riff that goes all over
the place starts. It straightens itself out by
the end of the song and ends with a huge
ringing chord.

The Beach (Song 5)

The ramp drops on the vomit filled Higgins
Boat
Lifeless bodies all around in the surf they
float

An overcast morn with dark and dreary
skies
Fitting weather for many a man's demise

Some men in the water, their gear drags
them down
Struggling to free themselves in vain they
drown

A boat on my flank bursts into flames
The men aboard, the fire touches and
maims

Another boat is crippled by an underwater
mine
Other LCVP scatter out of their straight lines

I look around left, right, above, and below
The spectacle reminds me of a fireworks
show

A noise jerks me from my reverie
My captain is yelling at me
"Get of this boat, get your ass out!"
Over the sounds of explosions I could hear
him shout

I hit the beach and notice it's red
I find the culprit, a man with a hole in his
head

I can't hear myself think over the unending
racket
I think to myself, "I don't think I can hack it"

Tracers hiss by all around me
For every one, several bullets I can't see

This song is pretty much all really brutal fast
riffs until it gets to the end. The riffs are
pretty technical and hard to play too.

The song is in a minor key to go along with
the menacing feeling of the subject matter.

Some kind of sound effect that sounds like
burning

An explosion sound here made with the
guitar

A quick arpeggiated dreamy riff sandwiched
between the brutality

Snapping and popping bullets hit on the shore
The pillboxes keep firing and firing some more

There was supposed to be support from amphibious Shermans
They were taken out by the waves, not even the Germans

Instead we take on the defenders with small arms
We're boys from American cities, towns, and farms

I get off the ground and sprint to some cover
As I hide I think of my lover

Shrinking myself behind the hedgehog
I see a friend of mine behind a log

He is shot in the chest which sounds a dull thud
Out from under him flows a river of blood

I pull out my gun from its protective plastic bag
It's a Thompson .45 with a 30 round mag

There is utter chaos all around
As mortars fall and shatter the ground

I make a run with others to the shingle
There's no time to chat, rest, or mingle

I look back at the beach, so many had to fall
They never made it this far, to the sea wall

Medics scramble to offer relief
To the dying men, their lives so brief
How many of them thought of ma
As they lie dying on Omaha?

Snapping and popping sounds made with the guitar or maybe the bass

Music gets all chaotic again and unpredictable

The shingle gave us cover from fire
But beyond was tangled Concertina wire

A soldier ran to the wire with a Bangalore
The long explosive, a hole in the wire it tore

Through the gap to the other side
We jumped in craters to fire and hide

There's a machine gun to the right with
which we'll cope
Bring up a sniper with his Springfield and
scope

Clear to advance we scramble to the
concrete
Inside its hell the defenders will meet

We go to the back and blow open the door
I spray with my Thompson until it fires no
more
I step inside and I look on the gore
A dead boy of seventeen lie dead on the
floor

I leave the bunker and enter the trench
There's a dead man in there, I can smell his
stench

More and more men land on the beach
As the rear defenses I now reach

We've done it, we made it, we got a beach
head
But what was the cost, how many are dead?

This day has meant death for many and
glory for some
Today, Omaha, Berlin here we come!

Another explosion sound here

Song comes to a climax here with the main
character killing the people in the bunker

Song shifts back to the opening arpeggio
from the first song as these are the same
people

The song stays on this theme for the rest of
the song but thickens it up with the other
instruments and some distorted guitar.
Song ends on this riff.

NOTES PAGES



Notes Pages

Song 1 – “The Premonition”

This song is about the defenders in the drama that was D-Day. I think that in order to properly represent a conflict between nations, it is important to represent both sides of the conflict. So this first song is about the side we never hear that much about. This song’s lyrics also have some foreshadowing and things that will lead into the other songs. It is a good way to start out this “album.”

The general story is that the character is sitting in a concrete pillbox on Omaha beach. He is one of the defenders and is supposed to watch over the beach in case the Allies ever invade. It is rather boring sitting in a bunker all the time watching over this beach so he spends a lot of time thinking about his former life and the oncoming war. He knows that he won’t survive when the attack finally does come. The young soldier goes to bed the night of June 5, 1944 and has a dream in which he sees explosions and other visions of war. He is shaken from his dream by an explosion that claims the life of his friend. This explosion is part of the bombing and naval bombardment that took place before the Americans in the landing craft hit the beach. The character runs to the opening in the pillbox and sees all the boats coming in. From this point on, the character and the other defenders fire machine guns and mortars down on the attacking Americans. This continues until the Americans make it up to the pillbox and kill everybody inside. His premonition was right. He did not survive the ordeal.

The main character in this song is a seventeen year old soldier fighting for the Nazis. It is possible that he is a German himself, or he may be a member of an Ost battalion. Many of the defenders of the Atlantic Wall were young or old and a great many were also taken from nations that had been conquered by the Nazis. These soldiers were mostly taken from Eastern European countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia. The word Ost in German means east. These troops were not that committed to the Nazi cause; they were on the front because it was either that or a labor camp somewhere. So our character is one of these varieties of soldier and although they may not be the best, they can still inflict heavy casualties as the song shows.

There is a line in the song in which the German defenders are described as being spread too thin like too much butter on too much bread. The Nazis had a huge amount of French coastline to defend from the Allies invasion. There were huge gaps in the defenses and there weren’t really enough troops to properly defend the areas that they did have fortified. This is why the Nazis had to use young boys and old men and even soldiers from Eastern European countries to defend. By putting this line in, I make it seem kind of inevitable that the German lines will be broken and that the Allies will indeed establish a foothold on the beach.

The title of the song, “The Premonition” speaks to the way that the main character has these bad feeling all the time about what is going to happen. He knows that there is going to be an attack. He knows that lots of people are going to die. He knows that he, himself, is going to die. A good portion of the song consists of our character reflecting on this and the life he used to live before he was part of the war.

The lyrics contain metaphors and similes that reference the ocean. The setting for this story is Omaha Beach in Normandy. The waves falling on the shore of the beach are used as a way to express the feelings that our character is having. “Crushing waves of dread” is how the character’s emotion is described when he knows that he is sure to die when this attack does come. The oceanic theme is also used to represent the invasion itself. With lines like “a great

flood of men” and “each wave of men breaks against the shore” the idea that these American troops are coming from the sea, that they are the sea, and they are smashing into the shore and like the ocean changes the shape of beaches, the Americans destroy the Nazi defenses. It is a gradual process. When something is weathered, it takes a long time. The first waves of the assault were not successful.

The music in the song reflects the moods and action of the lyrics. In the beginning the music is calm and foreboding sounding. This gives the listener a relaxed but uneasy feeling. The listener would hear this and know that something bad is going to happen. Once that attack actually happens, the music gets intense and violent. The guitar riffs will recreate the sounds of battle with really fast picked lines that sound like machine guns firing. The music also gets chaotic sounding to give the listener a confused feeling similar to what the character was feeling. At the end of the song the music returns to the calm style that opened the song. The character has died and is at peace now, so the music gets peaceful.

The song ends with the last thoughts of our character. He sees the overwhelming force that the Americans showed with the invasion and how the waves of men just kept coming. He knows that Nazi Germany was doomed now that the Allies had invaded. This is the final premonition of the soldier. The listener gets the feeling that the character is not particularly fond of Germany. He does not seem that disappointed that the Third Reich will fall. This may be further evidence that he was indeed part of the Ost battalions.

The main sources I used for the information in this song were two books: *D-Day* by Stephen Ambrose and *Eyewitness D-Day* by D.M. Giangreco and Kathryn Moore. These books provided information about the defenders and this is where I got the information about the Ost battalions. As far as the description of battle in this song, I used the movie *Saving Private Ryan* as the best reproduction of the battle. When I was visualizing what was going on in the song I was thinking about the movie and how it portrayed things. I tried to describe things in the movie in this song and in a later song as well.

Song 2 – “The Drop”

When I was writing these songs it made sense for me to order them as chronologically as possible. The first song kind of covers a time span from D-Day -1 through D-Day. That song has elements from the beginning of this whole time span and it ends towards the end of the time I am discussing. It was picked to be the first because it starts out before the invasion happens. So what comes next? The Airborne drops into Normandy in the small hours of D-Day are next up on the timeline of events. Both Song 2 and Song 3 deal with Airborne troops. Song 2 is about the Americans while Song 3 is about the British.

The general story in this song revolves around a paratroop in one of the American Airborne divisions. He is either in the 82nd or the 101st. There is no real way to tell from the song’s lyrics. Both divisions had similar objectives and they were both heavily scattered on the drop. So the listener can take his preference over which division this soldier is actually part of.

The song begins with the paratroop sitting in a C-47 transport plane on his way across the English Channel. He is part of the initial attack on D-Day. The narrator is thinking about things in the beginning of the song. He makes note of how dark everything is, both within the plane and outside. He then begins to talk about paratroops in general. Being a paratroop was a job that people volunteered for. One reason that many people volunteered was the extra 50

dollars they got on their paychecks for hazard pay. The hazard was that they were jumping out of perfectly fine airplanes. Since the Airborne Divisions were volunteer based, they already had a higher quality of soldier. The icing on the cake was the superb training that they went through. Grueling training shapes those boys into one of the most elite fighting units of the war.

The song continues with the narrator coming back into the present. He stops thinking about things that happened in the past and he begins to examine the current situation. The plane is getting closer to land and he knows there is going to be a lot of anti-aircraft fire and it is going to be dangerous. He wonders about how many of the men in his unit will make it safely to the ground and then survive the fighting they will face.

The next stanza in the song talks about how our character is feeling drowsy and he mentions pills that he had to take. These pills were given to the paratroops as a way of fighting off airsickness. The side effect of the pills was that they practically knocked many of the guys out. Many people slept on the way over the channel. The paratrooper worries that he won't wake up by the time he hits the deck and he will be killed. This stanza gives some nice atmosphere with the description of the hum of the planes' engines. I can almost hear them now.

Just as our paratrooper is settling into this comfortable relaxed state, the anti-aircraft fire begins. The C-47 next to him is shot down. Machine gun fire hits his plane and kills some of his fellow paratroopers. The pilot tries to get them out of there by speeding up and he tries to maintain the course. The plane is hit, probably by an 88mm shell. The plane is going to crash and the surviving Airborne troops rush to the door to get out before they crash.

The main character makes it out and he drifts to the ground. The song mentions that his leg bag ripped off and fell to the ground. Leg bags were bags that the paratroops packed extra gear into. Paratroops had as much as 100 pounds of gear to jump with. They were going to be surrounded by the enemy so they needed whatever they could carry. People put all kinds of stuff in the leg bags, sometimes even their weapons. The bag was tied to the paratrooper's leg and the idea was that the bag would hang below them as they parachuted to the ground. There was either a design flaw or just too much stuff packed in the bags because when soldiers would jump, most of the time the bag would just tear free and fall.

The paratroop continues to drift down while things are falling and bullets and shells are flying by him. He makes it safely to the ground and he lands in water. The Germans had flooded many of the areas that the Americans were jumping into as a way to deter invasion. The flooded fields made travel difficult but they also meant the death of many paratroopers. Many men drowned in these fields, entangled in their parachutes and wires. The main character doesn't drown but he doesn't have his gun. The gun was in his leg bag and that could have landed anywhere. All paratroops had two knives. One for general use and fighting, the other was a jump knife that was mainly for cutting oneself out of a parachute harness. So he takes his knife, as it is his only weapon, and sets out into the night.

While the paratroop is slogging through the water he hears someone shout "flash" and he replies with "thunder." This was a way that soldiers in the invasion could identify each other. One would say the first part of the code and the other would have to reply correctly or they could be shot. If someone didn't reply correctly they were probably the enemy, or they were just absent minded and forgot. This happened a lot as well and the challenged trooper would

have to explain himself. Another way that paratroopers identified each other as friendlies was a small metal clicker or cricket. The paratroops were all issued these and they made a distinctive clicking noise that they could easily identify.

So the paratrooper meets up with another paratrooper who was actually on his plane, or part of his “stick.” The new guy gives the main character a rifle that he has taken from one of their dead comrades. The man had likely drowned or maybe his chute didn’t open or maybe he was shot. When soldiers lost their weapons in the jump, they had to scrounge up what they could, sometimes they even used German weapons. In the case of our paratroop, he got an M-1 Garand rifle. This was the standard issue for a rifleman and was a semi-automatic rifle that could hold eight .30-06 rounds. It was a great rifle and the paratroop was lucky to have found one.

Once the soldier is armed, he and his fellow paratroop set out to find more of their men and they head off towards their objectives. The song says that their objective was a small town. They do not land in the correct drop zone so they have to find out where they are and then they will have to get to the town and take it. The town likely has some crossroads that will be important to the linkup of the troops coming from the beaches. The whole point of the airborne invasion was to open up the way for the main assault coming from the sea.

Once again I use guitar sounds and effects to emulate the sounds of battle. The machine gun riffs from the first song return with some variance. I also try to make sounds that replicate the sound the planes make. I add a couple of new effects in this song as well. There is a riff that is meant to sound like the anti-aircraft fire. It is a steady pounding at a rather quick pace. I also use a long slide or pick scrape to make the sound of a falling plane. Other than those elements, the song is a typical metal song.

The sources that were most helpful in the writing of this song were the books *Band of Brothers* and *Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends*. These books both tell the story of Easy Company, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division. *Band of Brothers* was written by Stephen Ambrose while the *Brothers in Battle* book was written by two of the soldiers who were in Easy Company, Bill Guarnere and Babe Heffron. They both have really good explanations of the ordeal the paratroopers went through. I also used the *Band of Brothers* miniseries in much the same way that I used *Saving Private Ryan* in the first song. The *Eyewitness D-Day* book also came in handy as well as *The War* documentary series. Both offered insight by veterans of the jump on D-Day.

Song 3 – “The Wait”

The third song is about the British 6th Airborne and what they went through on D-Day in the hours before the beach landings. The information that I used to write this song was mostly taken from Stephen Ambrose’s *Pegasus Bridge* and the *Eyewitness D-Day* book. *Pegasus Bridge* is all about the British 6th and their efforts to take the bridges in Benouville. *Eyewitness D-Day* and *D-Day* both have information about Pegasus Bridge as well and I used the ideas in all three of these books to piece together the story in the song.

Unlike the Airborne troops in “The Drop,” the British 6th were a gliderborne force. That is they entered combat by flying in on plywood and canvas gliders. The gliders they used were called Horsa gliders. These gliders were towed across the English Channel by planes such as the

C-47s and once they were close enough to the landing zone, they would be cut loose and would glide toward a landing which was often very rough.

The song begins with the glider hitting the ground and splitting in two. As I mentioned earlier, these gliders land hard and they are not the sturdiest of vehicles. The main character in this song is in this glider and he is tossed about with the other soldiers. For the most part the glider troops are ok. There are some minor casualties, but overall they have an intact fighting force. They landed without even alerting the occupying Germans.

The song mentions Rommel's Asparagus. Erwin Rommel was one of the generals in charge of defending Normandy against invasion. One of the defenses that Rommel had built was called Rommel's Asparagus by the Allies. These were telephone poles placed in holes in open fields and other places where gliders could land. The idea was that if a glider tried to land in that area, it would be torn apart by the poles. So they were used as a deterrent from landing in certain places and as a weapon. In the song, the pilot of the main character's glider avoided these poles and landed relatively safely.

There were six gliders in all that were tasked with taking two bridges, one over the Orne River and one over the canal that runs parallel to it. These bridges would prove to be important in the coming days as they would provide a way for the soldiers coming off the beaches to move further inland. Also if the Allies controlled these bridges, it would be much harder for the Germans to counter attack with their armor. They would need to go way out of their way to attack the forces on the beach.

The Germans were taken by complete surprise and the British 6th took the two bridges, the anti-aircraft gun, and machine gun pillboxes nearby in only about 10 minutes. One line in the song sounds rather weird if the listener doesn't know what it means. "Ham and Jam" is the confusing part of the line. Ham and Jam were the code words for the bridges. When the soldiers reported back to their commanders after taking the bridges they said the code "Ham and Jam" which meant that they had taken both of the bridges. It was also very very early in the morning so I put the "Ham and Jam for breakfast part in there." Ham and jam are breakfast foods after all. The canal bridge became known as Pegasus Bridge, named after the emblem that the British 6th wore on their shoulders which has a warrior riding on the mythical creature.

The song gets kind of somber when it discusses Den Brotheridge. He was killed by enemy fire when taking the bridge. He was actually the first man killed in the invasion. The music in this part of the song reflects the mood and it gets mellower and sadder sounding.

The issue of the counter attack was the next thing that the troops had to deal with. They set up some defenses and prepared to hold out until they were relieved by soldiers coming from the beaches. The counter attack comes in the form of Panzer tanks. The British then use the only weapon they can to fight off the tanks. The Nazis knew that the bridges had been attacked but they didn't know where the airborne troops were hiding. Sgt. Thornton waited with a piat gun to take out the lead tank, which was coming down the road that led to the bridges. The piat gun was somewhat like the American bazooka. It was a spring loaded weapon that was really hard to cock. Once it was ready to fire, the gunner had to just aim and pull the trigger. The piat fired a bomb that would have a concentrated explosion that would pierce the armor of a tank. The problem was that the effective range of the piat was short. It was supposed to be able to fire one hundred yards but veterans who actually used them said they were useless at ranges over fifty yards. This meant that Thornton had to wait until the

tank was really close before he fired. The title of this song, “The Wait” speaks of the wait for the Panzer to get close enough to fire on.

The music in this part of the song is made to represent the tanks that are headed towards the bridges. The music is heavy and lumbering. It plods along and sounds quite menacing. The riff also builds up as the tanks get closer and closer to the British troops. When Thornton fires the piat the guitar makes an explosion type sound and kicks into the next riff.

The piat’s bomb hits the tank and the explosion inside sets off a chain reaction that ignites the machine gun rounds, the tank rounds, and the tank’s fuel. It wasn’t a pretty sight. The tank behind the lead tank sees the explosion and assuming there is a stronger British force than there actually was, the tank commander retreats. The British celebrate their victory over the tanks but there will be more counter attacks as the day goes on and they have more objectives to accomplish. The song ends with the idea that they have a long day ahead of them still.

Song 4 – “The Climb”

Songs 4 and 5 return to the actions on the beaches. Both of these songs are about the experiences of American soldiers on the beaches. The British and Canadian landings did not make the final cut for getting a song as those were easier landings and did not have as much hardship and drama as the American landings.

This song is about the American 2nd Rangers at Pointe-du-Hoc. Pointe-du-Hoc is atop cliffs overlooking the English Channel. The Nazis had a coastal battery of big guns at Pointe-du-Hoc. It was up to the 2nd Rangers to take them out as the guns would be able to cover the landing beaches with artillery fire, spelling disaster for the other American soldiers coming ashore. In order to attack the guns, the Rangers would have to scale the 100 foot tall sheer face of cliffs. The song title comes from the climb that they had to make and also the whole war can be seen as a climb towards the goal of victory.

The song begins with the Rangers loaded into their LCAs (Landing Craft Assault). They are headed to shore in the armored boats and the main character is thinking about the mission and what is ahead of them. This time the soldier is a BAR (Browning automatic rifle) gunner. The BAR was a powerful weapon that was used to suppress enemy fire. This weapon will come in handy later in the battle.

One of the problems with the landings at the beaches on D-Day was confusion and people being in the wrong places. Landing craft were landing all over, many times far from where they were supposed to be. This made it harder to complete objectives and just to get the men ashore as nobody really knew what to do. In this song, the coxswain, or driver of the LCA, is headed towards the wrong landform. They realize this and then have to change their direction and head to Pointe-du-Hoc. The boats begin to be fired on by machine guns on the shore. The LCAs had a lot of armor and were loaded with men and equipment so they sat relatively low in the water. Since they sat so low, water easily splashed over the side. The men inside had to avoid the bullets coming from shore and try to bail water out of the boat at the same time. All of these things compounded to make the confusion even greater.

The Germans did not expect an attack from the sea in this area as the huge cliffs were a natural barrier. Nobody could have predicted that there would be soldiers scaling the rock face. There were no beach obstacles as a result. This made it possible for the Rangers to come

in when the tide was higher. At other beaches, the landing craft came ashore at low tide so all the underwater obstacles would be out of the water, where they couldn't harm any boats. So the Rangers at Pointe-du-Hoc land with only a very thin beach to cross before they began climbing.

The LCAs came equipped with rocket propelled grappling hooks attached to ropes and rope ladders. The rockets would fire when the boats got close enough to the cliffs and the hooks would latch onto the ground at the top of the cliff. The ropes were wet and heavy though and often the grappling hooks would not make it far enough. In the case of the Rangers in the story, everything went according to plan up to this point.

After the ropes are secured the Rangers exit the LCAs. The main character jumps over the side of the boat, expecting the water to be shallow below. Little does he know that there is a bomb crater below the surface of the water. Instead of landing in shallow water, he goes all the way under and has to swim to shore. This crater and others at Pointe-du-Hoc came from the intense naval bombardment and the aerial bombing before the invasion. These craters helped and harmed the troops in various ways. This was an example of a time when the crater was harmful.

The Ranger crawls ashore and makes his way to the rope, dodging bullets along the way. He reaches out for the rope but it is wet and slimy, hard to grip. Then the defenders at the top of the cliff start firing down from the edge. As a BAR gunner, it is our Ranger's duty to keep these Germans away from the edge so his fellow Rangers can make their way up the cliff. He fires his gun at the Germans until it is time for him to make his way up the rocks.

Climbing a 100 foot cliff is hard enough without being fired at. The character uses a great deal of energy climbing up the slippery rope. On his way up he is still getting fired at. Some of his fellows get shot and tumble down the rope. The falling bodies had the possibility of knocking the living off the rope so the Rangers had to stay aware. As the Ranger climbs a German grenade comes over the edge and explodes near him. German grenades did not have a great deal of fragmentation; they were mainly a concussion type of weapon. The Ranger survives the blast and continues to climb the cliff.

The Ranger finally gets to the top and joins the attack. There is a MG-42 machine gun and a 20 mm cannon on the flanks firing at the Americans. They ignore them and make their way through trenches and craters towards the concrete artillery encasements. They fight Germans on the way across but they make it. When they finally get to where the cannons were, they are surprised to find wooden poles instead of Czech cannons. The Germans had moved the guns to the rear as a response to the pre-invasion bombardment. The Rangers felt that they had made heavy sacrifices and suffered many casualties to accomplish an objective that wasn't even there. They moved on to start completing other objectives, like setting up roadblocks. Eventually the Rangers would find the guns set up in an orchard. They destroyed the guns and prevented them from doing any harm. After completing these objectives they had to hold out against counter attacks until they could be relieved by the main force coming in from Omaha beach.

The music in this song is similar to the others. The only new things are that the beginning of the song utilizes some chorus effect that sounds like water flowing. This guitar effect and a calm melodic line make the listener feel like they are on the water. Also the guitar makes a sound that emulates the whooshing sound of the rocket propelled grappling hooks.

The sources that I used to get the information in this song were Ambrose's *D-Day* and *Eyewitness D-Day*. Both of these books contain a great deal of information about Pointe-du-Hoc and the Rangers that attacked it. There is a whole chapter in *D-Day* about this topic. The books also explain what happens with the Rangers afterward, as I briefly discuss here.

Song 5 – “The Beach”

This last song is the quintessential D-Day story. When people hear “D-Day” they think of what this song is about. The American landings at Omaha beach were some of the bloodiest fighting in the whole war and for that reason they are also one of the most memorable moments in war as well. This song is about one soldier's experience as he storms the beach and cracks Fortress Europe and like the other songs, the story is told from his perspective as the events are taking place.

Most of the song is made up of descriptions of what is going on around our main character. We hear about the things that he is seeing and the things that he does as he makes his way from his LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel aka Higgins Boat) up the beach. We get to experience what he experienced and the thoughts that he was having on his first day of combat.

The song begins with the ramp on the Higgins boat dropping and the men inside rushing out into the fray. The song mentions that the boat is vomit-filled. The combination of seasickness and the worries of facing death caused many men to get sick. Not everybody could aim it over the side.

There is chaos all around. The sky is dark and dreary. Boats are exploding and getting shot up. People are being dragged underwater by their heavy gear and drown. Bodies are floating in the water. Machine gun rounds and mortar rounds are falling everywhere. Amid the chaos the landing craft scatter to avoid destruction. This may save a few lives in the short term but it bogs down the whole landings because things diverge from the plan.

As the soldier is watching all of this go on around him he feels like is watching a fireworks show. He kind of zones out and loses touch with reality. I got this idea from the book, *Band of Brothers*, in which one of the soldiers has a similar experience during an artillery strike in the Ardennes forest. The soldier is shaken out of his daydream by an officer yelling at him to get off the boat.

He hits the beach and makes note of the blood that is already coloring the sand. He also references the tracers that are flying through the air. Tracers are rounds that burn as they fire. They look like a flash and are visible to the people on both sides of the gun. Tracers are used in automatic weapons to let the person firing the gun know where the bullets are going. They are spread out within a magazine with actual bullets between them. The real bullets are practically invisible though. So when a person sees lots of tracer rounds all around, it is a scary thought that for every tracer there are several bullets whipping through the air as well.

The narrator mentions that the men storming the beach were supposed to have armor support from DD tanks. The DD stands for Dual Drive. These were Sherman tanks that were made amphibious with propellers and canvas canopies that allowed them to float. The exhaust pipes on the tanks were raised up as well to allow for operation in the water. While the idea behind the DD tanks was sound and they did work how they were supposed to, rough seas claimed many of these tanks. Waves would go over the edges of the canvas and swamp the

tanks. Very few actually made it ashore. When they did, they were very helpful to the soldiers on the beach if they could actually maneuver without getting destroyed by artillery.

The soldier moves up the beach to a hedgehog, a metal beach defense, and takes cover. While he there he thinks about things and also sees more destruction around him, including the death of one of his friends. He finally gets out his weapon, a Thompson submachine gun and proceeds up the beach to the sea wall. The sea wall is made up of shingle or stones and there is a concrete wall beyond it. On top of the sea wall was coiled wire. The sea wall offered cover to the men coming up the beach but they needed to get beyond it if they wanted to survive.

The soldier makes note of the medics running around the beach helping the wounded and dying. The medics practiced something called triage. This means that they moved from person to person only offering aid if there was a possibility that the person was going to make it. It is sad to think about it but by not wasting their time on someone who was going to die anyway, the medics could help people that they could save.

The troops get through the barbed wire with a Bangalore torpedo. This was a long explosive charge that was effective in clearing wire as if would explode and sent shrapnel that cut the wire. The troops flood across and use bomb and artillery craters as cover. The machine gun pillbox is still firing at them and an open machine gun pit is firing at them as well. The gunner in the pit is taken out by a sniper and the Americans continue to make up the beach.

They flank the concrete bunker and move around behind it. They blast the door open and our soldier sprays the inside with rounds from his .45 caliber Thomson. He kills everyone inside. When he goes in to make sure it is clear he sees that he has killed a seventeen year old soldier. This is the same soldier from the first song. The musical theme returns to the original motif that that song opened and closed with. The song continues for a bit as our main character and other soldier finish making their way through the defenses, clearing them of the defenders. The song ends with the idea that this was just the beginning. He says "Berlin, here we come!" They sure have a long haul ahead of them.

This song is pretty straight forward. There are not many deep metaphors or similes going here, just a lot of description of the carnage. The music is really chaotic and intense, just like the battle. There are not really any new musical themes, just further development of some of the earlier motifs such as the mellow arpeggiated riff from the first song.

Ambrose's *D-Day*, *Eyewitness D-Day*, and *Saving Private Ryan* were the sources I used to write this song. The books contained all the hard facts and details about the vessels, weapons, defenses, and topography. The movie gave me a visual representation of the landings on Omaha that I tried to recreate with music and lyrics. I think this song properly conveys the intensity that is present in the first half hour of that film.

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